

CALVINISM: RELATED ISSUES

T^{otal} Depravity

Pelagianism. Pelagius (ca. 400), an opponent of Augustine, taught that Adam's sin was only a bad example for us [i.e., only Adam fell]. Therefore, man's will remains free so that he can of his own ability take steps toward God.

Arminianism. Arminians and Wesleyans teach that Adam's sin brings corruption to his descendants but not guilt. Guilt comes [i.e., is imputed to us] when we voluntarily choose to sin.

Calvinism. All of Adam's descendants without exception are guilty of Adam's sin. There are two explanations, which are not mutually exclusive, of how we are connected to Adam: [1] **Federalism** — Adam was our representative, therefore his sin is imputed to us, [2] **Realism** — All mankind was "seminally present" in Adam when he sinned, therefore we all sinned "in him." The result in either explanation is the same — all are born bearing the guilt of original sin.

I

U^{nconditional} Election

Arminianism. Election based upon foreseen faith and foreseen perseverance was the view of Arminius. Thus, the elect are those individuals whom God knows ahead of time will believe and remain faithful to the end. A second approach, corporate election, says that God does not elect *individuals* rather he elects a *group* — those who meet the condition of faith and perseverance. In either case, election is conditional.

Calvinism. God is not merely prescient (i.e. He knows ahead of time), rather He has this foreknowledge because He has foreordained (i.e. predestined) individuals to eternal life apart from any merit foreseen in them. Calvinists point out that the biblical term "foreknow" involves more than information — it involves relationship and prior arrangement by God.

I

L^{imited} Atonement

Calvinism. Calvin did not address the issue of the extent of the atonement during his lifetime. Later Calvinists [ex. Synod of Dort, 1618 & the Westminster Confession, 1648] did concluding that Christ's death was intended for and extended to the elect only.

Amyraldianism. Moises Amyraut in 1634 presented a modified Calvinism in which he argued that Christ's death was a substitution for all, but only the elect would appropriate it's benefits. This view is called "hypothetical universalism."

I rresistible Grace

Arminianism. The Arminian and Wesleyan doctrine of prevenient [Latin = coming before] grace explains how fallen man possesses a will that is free to choose or reject the gospel. This grace is extended to all but does not guarantee salvation — it only provides divine enablement to make a choice. A person must cooperate with this grace by exercising personal faith.

Calvinism. Calvinism argues that since fallen men are spiritually dead and not merely sick, they can not grab the lifeline [i.e. exercise faith]. God's drawing of the elect includes the gift of saving faith itself and not simply ability to choose.

P erseverance of the Saints

Arminianism. The Arminian and Wesleyan doctrine of falling away or total apostasy teaches that a believer may turn from grace and forsake his salvation. Opinion is divided over whether such people could later regain their faith and salvation. Personal assurance of salvation in the Arminian / Wesleyan system can never extend beyond the present.

Calvinism. Calvinism teaches that genuine believers, i.e. those who have been regenerated [born again] are kept by God's power for eternity. They are secure because a sovereign God oversees the entire process. How one is assured of his salvation is a topic upon which Calvinists differ. Some emphasize subjective criteria [ex- the inner witness of the Spirit that we are His] while others emphasize a more objective criteria [ex- fruit exhibited in one's life].