INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

ST502 Kelly

PURPOSE: In this course we shall look at the basic structure of Biblical truth regarding God's plan of salvation and our life of service to His glory. After placing the Reformed Faith in both its historical and contemporary context, we shall consider the content of the doctrines of grace--including the traditional "five-points of Calvinism." Then on the basis of these truths, we shall consider the living of our lives in the modern culture to the glory of God.

Thus we shall survey the foundations of Biblical truth from a soteriological viewpoint. Then, we shall look at these truths from a devotional perspective, guided by John Calvin's Institutes III. chapters vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xx. Next, we shall conclude our foundational theological studies in a cultural context under the guidance of Abraham Kuyper's Lectures on Calvinism.

TEXTS:

(1) James I. Packer's "Introductory Essay" to John Owen's Death of Death in the Death of Christ.

(2) John Calvin's Institutes, Book III, ch. vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xx.

(3) W.J. Seaton, The Five Points of Calvinism (The Banner of Truth).


(7) Abraham Kuyper, Lectures on Calvinism.


On reserve in the Library, please read:

(1) B.B. Warfield's article, Selected Writings, Vol. 1, (pp. 389-392).

REQUIREMENTS: Read all of the required material. Attend class faithfully and participate in the seminar-type discussions. The course work will consist of both lectures and seminar discussion periods. During the seminars we will divide into small groups to facilitate discussion, and then bring reports from each group to a plenary session.

THERE WILL BE A MID TERM, FINAL EXAM, AND TERM PAPER.
The Midterm will cover the reading assignments and will be due **Oct 21**.
The Essay will be due **Nov 4**.
The Final will be taken during finals week.

**ITS Paper**

You are required to write a 4 to 6 page essay interacting with one of the following texts: Please write clearly and do not quote too much, although some quotation is perfectly appropriate.

E. Michael Jones, *Degenerate Moderns*

John Blanchard, *Does God Believe in Atheists?*

Charles Norris Cochrane, *Christianity and Classical Culture*

Herbert Schlossberg, *Idols for Destruction*

Timothy George, *Is the Father of Jesus the God of Muhammad*

**SCHEDULE:** While not rigidly bound to the following, it will be our general class outline:

I. **Introduction**
   1. Importance of Truth
   2. A God-centered Faith

II. **Soteriological**
   1. Introductory lecture--The Reformed Faith in History
   2. Introduction to "The Five Points of Calvinism"
   3. "Total Depravity"
      a. Exegetical background
      b. Theological implications
   4. Class Discussion of "Total Depravity"
      a. "Unconditional Election"
         (1) Exegetical background
         (2) Theological implications
      b. Class discussion of "Unconditional Election"
   5. "Limited Atonement"
      (1) Exegetical background
      (2) Theological implications
      Class discussion of "Limited Atonement"
   6. "Irresistible Grace"
      (1) Exegetical background
      (2) Theological implications
      Class discussion of "Irresistible Grace"
   7. "Perseverance of the Saints"
      (1) Exegetical background
      (2) Theological implications
Class Discussion of "Perseverance"

III. Devotional and Practical
   1. Calvin’s *Institutes* III. vi. – ‘Motives for the Christian Life’
   2. III. vii. – ‘Self-Denial’
   3. III. viii. – ‘Cross-Bearing’
   4. III. ix. – ‘Meditation on the Future Life’
   5. III. x. – ‘How to use the present life’
   6. III. xx. – ‘Prayer’

III. Cultural
   1. Introductory Lecture to Kuyper's Volume on Calvinism
   2. Lecture on the concept of "A Life System"
   3. Lecture on the wider implications of a Biblical world and life view.
QUESTIONS TO FACILITATE CLASS SEMINAR DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION ONE - TOTAL DEPRAVITY

What do you understand to be some of the specific results of Adam's Fall on (a) the human mind? (b) the human will? (c) the human emotions?

How "total" is "total depravity"?

If mankind is only "partially depraved," then what parts of his nature are unaffected by the fall into sin?

Is there Biblical evidence that the whole human race has had their depravity partially repaired by the general effects of the work of Christ?

Consider this statement of the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapter IX, section 3, and discuss it in light of the proof texts and any other relevant Scriptural texts. Do you think the Scriptures quoted support this section of the Confession? Why or why not? (Quote WCF I, section 3 and also proof texts here...)

How much influence does Satan seem to exercise over fallen humanity? (Consider such texts as John 8:44; Ephesians 2:12, II Timothy 2:25,26; I John 3:10; I John 5:19; Romans 6:20; Titus 3:3).

Discuss the teaching of Christ in John 6 on man's capacity (or lack of it) to come to him.

What does he mean (in John 6) by "drawing"?

What is the relationship of the natural (unregenerate) mind to the truth of God (as in 1 Corinthians 2:14?)

What is the relationship of the unconverted Jewish mind to the truth of the Gospel as in (2 Corinthians 3:12-18?)

Can you think of any evidence from modern literature or politics bearing on this subject?

Is there Biblical evidence that the depravity of mankind is in some sense restrained by the grace of God (even in a non-saving way?) Discuss.

If it is true that mankind is so depraved that it will not turn to God on its own accord, then why does Scripture hold it responsible for doing so?
DISCUSSION TWO - UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION

If man is "dead in sin and trespasses," what will enable him to come to God?

In light of such passages as Deuteronomy 7:7 and 10:14,15, did the Israelites deserve to be chosen by God? Why did God say He chose them?

According to Ephesians 1:4,5, what is the goal of God's having chosen us? Compare and discuss how the goal of predestination and foreknowledge in Romans 8:28-30 is related to this.

Discuss and correlate what it means when we are chosen "in Christ" in such passages as: Eph. 1:4,6,7,10,11; John 17:22,23; John 15:1-5.

How does our being "chosen in Christ" relate to the dynamic power for sanctification which flows from our historical union with Christ in Romans 6:3-14?

What would be the difference of emphasis in preaching between the Biblical concept of our being chosen in Christ and the popular concept of our being chosen in ourselves as pure individuals?

How do you relate the Pauline concept of two Adams (as in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15) to the reality of corporate union with Christ?

What seems to be the ethical results of being chosen in Christ (as in Titus 1:1 and 1 Peter 1:1,2; 2:8,9)?

What do the following passages teach about the time of believers being chosen in Christ: Ephesians 1:4; II Thessalonians 2:13; II Timothy 1:9; Revelation 13:8; 17:8?

Romans 8:29 teaches a relationship between foreknowledge and predestination. Discuss the meaning of this relationship. Take into consideration the general Biblical usage of the concept of "knowledge" and "foreknowledge."

Often the various verbal forms imply more than mere cognition. They mean something like "to love," "to set one's affection upon," "to differentiate favorably." See: Genesis 18:19; Exodus 2:25; Psalm 1:6; 144:3; Jeremiah 1:5; Amos 3:2; Hosea 13:5; Matthew 7:23; I Corinthians 8:3; Galatians 4:9; II Timothy 2:19; I John 3:1; Romans 11:2.

Even if God foresees faith, where does man's faith come from (Ephesians 2:8,9; Acts 13:48)?
How does the theory that God chooses people because he foresees their good actions fit with Romans 9:6-13?

How does Romans 9:14-23 deal with the objection that election is unfair?

Is God morally obligated to elect anyone? Why or why not?

Should the Biblical doctrine of election encourage or discourage evangelism and missions? Why or why not?

What is the relationship of election and preaching?
DISCUSSION THREE - LIMITED ATONEMENT

If God elected sinners to be saved, why was the atonement of Christ necessary?

Does the atonement of Christ have infinite or only partial value? What reasons would you give for holding either of these two positions?

If Christ's death is held to have infinite (or "unlimited") value, then what is meant when we speak of "limited" atonement? Does the Bible seem to indicate that the atonement is "limited" either in its power or its design? Or neither? Or both?

What limitation to the atonement (if any) do the following theological theories give to the atonement:

1. Christ died to save all men without distinction (universalism)
2. Christ died to save no one in particular (Arminianism)
3. Christ died to save a certain number (Calvinism)

QUESTIONS ABOUT EACH OF THE THREE THEORIES:

1. Does universalism fit with the Scriptural teaching that not all men will be saved? Why or why not? If it is held that Christ dies for all, but that not all are saved, why did his death for them not work?

2. If Christ is held to have died generally for all, but for no one in particular, what do you make of C.H. Spurgeon's statement that Arminianism thus also holds to a limitation of the atonement (See Packer's introduction to Owen, p. 14, note 1)?

3. If it is held that Christ's death actually was designed to save a certain number, then what aspects of salvation can be traced to his death on their behalf? Be specific.

How do you interpret the scope of Christ's death in terms of Matthew 1:21? How would you relate this to the scope of his high priestly prayer in John 17:2,6,9?

What do you think is the relation between the Biblical corporate concept of our being "in" one of the two Adams and the concept of the merits (or demerits) of those corporate (covenant) heads affecting those who are "in" them?

Does the parallelism in Romans 5 and I Corinthians 15 between the First and Last Adams indicate that precisely the same number of persons are (or will be) in both Adams?

How do you interpret Christ's words (in John 10:14-18) that he is laying down his life for his sheep and his words (in John 10:24-29) that the unbelieving Jewish opponents were not among his sheep?

Discuss the limited scope of Christ's atonement (for a particular people) in these verses:
Discuss the texts which speak of Christ's death in *general* terms. There are two classes of these texts: (a) Those which use the word "world" and (b) those which use the word "all."

(a) John 1:9,29; 3:16-17; 4:42; II Corinthians 5:19; 1 John 2:1,2; 4:14.

(b) Romans 5:18; II Corinthians 5:14,15; I Timothy 2:4-6; Hebrews 2:9; II Peter 3:9.

Discuss these in light of the fact that "world" and "all" often are used in a context which shows that not just the Jews, but also the Gentiles are included, and that "all" often means "all kinds" without distinction (rather than absolutely every member of humanity). You may wish to use the exegesis of John Owen (in *Death of Death* Book IV, chs. 1-6) of several for these passages.

Discuss the implications of the term "particular redemption."

Would a belief in particular redemption encourage or discourage preachers? Why?
DISCUSSION FOUR - IRRESISTIBLE GRACE OR EFFICACIOUS CALL

Does the word "irresistible" have mechanical overtones to you?

Does the Biblical psychology of the dealing of the Holy Spirit with human personalities appear to you to be forced, external, mechanical or gentle, internal and personal? Why? What Biblical illustrations could you give?

How could God's grace in a person's life be "irresistible" without it being a violent and unwanted or mechanical forcing?

Is anything stronger than the spirit of God (see I John 4:4 and Luke 11:20-22)?

Discuss how the Holy Spirit changes the mind of a formerly rebellious person. See I Corinthians 2:10-14; 12:3.

How does the new birth change a person's orientation? See John 3:3-8; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:3,23; I John 5:4

How does the Son of God change a lost person? See John 5:21; Matthew 11:25-27.

How does the Father change people? See Deuteronomy 30:6; Ezekial 36:26,27; II Corinthians 5:17,18; Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13; Luke 10:21; Matthew 16:15-17; John 6:37,44,45,64,65; Ephesians 1:17,18.


Does the effectiveness of the call depend on God or man? See Romans 9:16; I Corinthians 3:6,7; 4:7?

What is the relationship of preaching to irresistible grace? See Isaiah 55:11; Romans 10:9,10,17; John 10:4.
DISCUSSION FIVE - PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

If Romans 8:29,30 is likened to "a golden chain" of salvation, does there seem to be any link that it is breakable? If so, which one? How would Romans 8:35-39 relate to the breakable (or unbreakable) linkage between Christ and the believer?


Will true believers live their lives under the domination of sin? Why or not?

What is the relationship of regeneration to continuance in faith and repentance? (John 3:3; I John 5:4, 11-13, 20).

If eternal life is granted to a person, does it cease to be eternal (in the sense that it can be lost or extinguished)? See John 3:36; 5:24; 6:47.

Will the Son lose anything (or anyone) whom the Father has given him? (See John 6:35-40; 17:11,12,15)?

Will the Father lose any who are in his hand? (See John 10:27-30).

Is there any Scriptural indication that those who are chosen in eternity to be in Christ could ever be lost in their historical experience?

Do you think the doctrine of perseverance encourages or discourages an active and devout Christian life? Why?