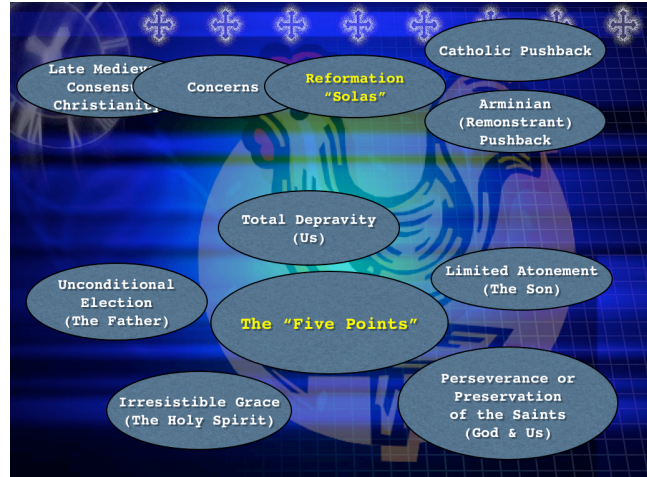


Week 10 • October 29, 2008

What's the "Calvinism" Kuyper's been advocating?

Review: Late Medieval Consensus Christianity ("Great House" handout)

- Trinity
- Chalcedonian Christology
- Creation, Fall, Redemption
- We don't save ourselves
- We aren't saved *by* ourselves



Review: Concerns (Week Seven Notes)

- Displacement of God
- Removal of Salvation as a Gift
- Loss of Christ "for Us" behind Christ "above and beyond Us"
- Diminishing of the Authority of God's Word

Review: Reformation "Solas" (Week Seven Notes)

- *Sola Scriptura*: Scripture Alone
- *Soli Deo Gloria*: For the Glory of God Alone
- *Solo Christo*: By Christ's Work Alone
- *Sola Gratia*: By Grace Alone
- *Sola Fide*: Justification by Faith Alone

<http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/topic/fivesolas.html>

The Catholic "Push Back" — The Council of Trent

Ignatius of Loyola (Spanish, 1491-1556)

- Founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits)
- A voice of personal renewal and personal (but not institutional) reformation in the RCC

Council of Trent (1545-1563)

- *Contra sola scriptura*: a) the “apostolic tradition” needs to be honored as much as Scripture (the concern is with “private interpretation”) — b) while the Reformers called for a return to the original languages, Trent asserted the authority of Jerome’s Latin *Vulgate*
- *Contra sola gratia*: a) free human cooperation must augment God’s grace; b) justification involves an **infusion** of God’s grace into us so that God is actually pronouncing a true verdict about us (as opposed to the Reformers’ Pauline insistence that God **imputes** [or credits or reckons] to us Christ’s righteousness as our own — to a Catholic sensibility, this involved an unsatisfactory legal fiction); c) Christ’s substance is transferred to the bread and wine in Communion (reassertion of transubstantiation)
- Contra an emerging Reformed consensus to go lean on the aesthetics of worship: if the Protestants don’t want art in worship, we will maximize art

The Pelagian “Push Back” — Jacob Arminius (Dutch, 1560-1609) & the “Remonstrants”

- We are not in such bad shape that we cannot muster up for ourselves the faith that saves
- Therefore, God predestines those he perceives beforehand will believe
- Jesus died for everybody — but only those who believe will enjoy the benefits.
- We do need rebirth by the Holy Spirit, but this regeneration is predicated upon our faith. We do need the power of the Holy Spirit to do any good, but that power is a power that we can resist.
- If we are in Christ, we have his power to fight for us — but we need to be “ready for the conflict” (what is left open is whether we can fall from the state of being “in Christ”)

Synod of Dort (1618-1619) — Response to Arminius & the Remonstrants: generally summarized under “The Five Points of Calvinism” (The TULIP, with apologies to Roger Nicole)

Please note: 1) John Calvin was long dead when the “Five Points” were formulated; 2) “The Five Points” were a response to a reaction against a chief Reformational concern: that when it comes to salvation, “It’s all about God, not

about us” — though the “Five Points” are often the first thing people think of when they think of Calvinism, the TULIP is not how you should define Calvinism.

- 1) We are radically lost (some call this teaching, “**total depravity**”). That is, while every person is not as bad as he or she could be, every one of us in all of our being is in total and utter rebellion against God. We are therefore unable to work or will our way back to God. Spiritually dead, blind, and dumb, we are unable even to believe the gospel in a saving way apart from God’s loving election and effectual call. (Ephesians 2:1-4) — See esp. Frame *SBL*, Ch. 8, “Sin and Evil”
- 2) When God chooses any of us to salvation, therefore, he does so without condition outside himself (popularly dubbed, “**unconditional election**”). God’s electing love is contingent solely on God’s electing love, not on anything intrinsic to or foreseen in us who are the objects of his love. It is to this effect that Paul the apostle says God foreknows (i.e., fore-loves) and predestines us to be conformed to the image of his Son. (Romans 8:29-30) — See esp. Frame *SBL*, the first part of Ch. 13, “Election, Calling, and Regeneration”
- 3) Christ’s atoning death was definite or bounded in scope (this notion is normally called, “**limited atonement**” — Roger Nicole suggests instead the more positive terms, “**particular redemption**” or “**definite atonement**”). Though Christ’s obedience, suffering, death, and resurrection were of infinite worth, their saving compass was determined by the will and design of God. Jesus’s death accomplished an altogether personal salvation for concrete, particular, actual people: those whom the Father had foreknown and predestined to be united to his Son. By his death and resurrection, Jesus did not create the mere possibility for a faceless, impersonal glob of humanity to be saved. Jesus accomplished the full redemption of all his own. If Christ died for you, he died for **you**. (John 6:37,40; 10:22-31; Romans 8:31-33) — See esp. Frame *SBL*, Ch. 11, “What Did Jesus Do?”
- 4) Even though we are radically fallen, if the Father has chosen us to salvation and if Christ has united us to himself in his saving work and if the Holy Spirit makes us alive in Christ, we cannot resist God’s saving grace. Within the hearts of the elect, God’s call to repentance and faith effects what it commands. (This is called “**irresistible grace.**”) (Acts 13:48; 18:27; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 1:29; 2 Timothy 2:25-26) — See esp. Frame *SBL*, the second part of Ch. 13, “Election, Calling, and Regeneration”; Ch. 14, “Faith and Repentance”
- 5) The saints persevere because God preserves us (the “**perseverance of the saints**”). (Philippians 1:6; 2:12-13)¹ — See esp. Frame *SBL*, Ch. 17, “Perseverance and Glorification”

Principal Summaries of the Reformed Faith

Calvin’s *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (I don’t care whether this gets assigned in toto or not — you need to read it cover to cover: get the 2 volume John T. McNeill translation [Westminster/John Knox Press, 1960])

¹ The summary here is mine. A thorough explanation and defense of the “Five Points” can be found in Steele, Thomas, Quinn, *The Five Points of Calvinism: Defined, Defended, and Documented*, 2nd ed. (P&R, 2004 — 1st ed., 1963)

The Heidelberg Catechism (1563) — the most warm hearted and pastorally intimate of the Reformed statements of belief

The Belgic Confession (1561) (Dutch, written under Catholic persecution) & **The Canons of Dort (1618-1619)** (Response to the Remonstrants)

The Westminster Standards (Confession, Larger & Shorter Catechisms, and Directory of Worship — 1643-1652) — there's a nice new edition: *The Confession of Faith and Catechisms: The WCF & Catechisms as adopted by The Orthodox Presbyterian Church* (OPC, 2005)

For the Heidelberg Catechism, The Belgic Confession, The Canons of Dort, and the Westminster Standards, see *The Spirit of the Reformation Study Bible* (Zondervan, 2003)— it has all of them; plus, the Bible study notes include the proof texts — invaluable!!