

NOTES ON  
**CALVINISM**

*By*  
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# LESSON ONE: INTRODUCTION

- I. Tip-Toe Through the TULIP
- II. Pelagian Controversy
- III. John Calvin

## **I. Tip-Toe Through the TULIP**

*Calvinism* refers to the body of doctrine taught by John Calvin (1509-1564).<sup>1</sup> His doctrines can be conveniently remembered with a simple acrostic:

### **T – Total Inherent Depravity (or Total Hereditary Depravity or Total Inability)**

As a result of Adam’s original sin, all humanity is born with (1) the guilt of the sin of Adam and (2) a nature that is incapable of doing right and is only capable of doing evil.

### **U – Unconditional Election (or Unconditional Predestination)**

God has arbitrarily chosen (elected) the number of people and the individuals themselves that will be saved from their sins. The choice is made apart from human will.

### **L – Limited Atonement**

The salvation appointed by God to the elect and the blood of Christ that goes with it is only for the elect. Some are not selected by God for salvation and, due to their depravity, are thereby irrevocably condemned.

### **I – Irresistible Grace**

Grace is the force used by God to impose salvation on His elect. Since the election of the saints is certain, being made by God, the grace/force that causes salvation to occur cannot be withstood by human will.

### **P – Perseverance of the Saints**

Since the election of the saints by God is certain and His grace irresistible, no person that has been elected and saved can ever lose that salvation. This, too, is ensured by God’s grace.

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<sup>1</sup> Fox, p. 72.

Calvinism is largely internally consistent. Each of the main points leads logically to the next. Agreeing to a single point of Calvin's TULIP will lead an honest and logical person to each of the other points. However, that does not mean that Calvinism contains no contradictions. As we will see later on, Calvin has difficulty explaining some very important subjects such as the fall of Adam, "reprobates" (Calvin's word for those excluded from Limited Atonement), and free will. One historian said, "The mysteries of predestination and election he did not pretend to fathom."<sup>2</sup>

This body of doctrine is critical to every denomination in existence today and has influenced many in the Lord's church. Fox claims that Calvinism has entered the church through four means at the least.<sup>3</sup> Those converted out of denominations are sometimes not taught on these issues and the ideas of Calvinism linger waiting to crop up later. Calvinism has also affected our brethren that have gone to get theology degrees from denominational seminaries, especially if these men then teach at colleges associated with the church of Christ. Brethren often read Bible resource books, like commentaries and lexicons that commentate on the side, written by Calvinist and fail to sort the wheat from the chaff. However, most frightening is the influence of translations of the Bible that permit or even endorse Calvin's doctrines by render Calvinist proof-text in a Calvinist friendly fashion. Christians ought to make themselves very aware of these avenues and earnestly contend for the faith against the attack of these doctrines.

Also worthy of note is the pertinence of Calvinism on the modern debate of the work of the Holy Spirit in conviction, conversion, and sanctification. The Holy Spirit is often considered the being (or force) that imposes God's grace and salvation on depraved subjects of God's election. Furthermore, various parts of Christian life and even commands given to Christian's are alleged to be impossible without the direct intervention of the Holy Spirit, further implying a reprobate humanity. Understanding and dispelling Calvinism will result in a better understanding of these matters as well.

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<sup>2</sup> Fisher, p. 322.

<sup>3</sup> Fox, p. 94.

## II. Pelagian Controversy

The doctrines under the heading of Calvinism have been under debate throughout history. Notably, the early 5<sup>th</sup> century witnessed a battle within the early Catholic Church between a British monk, named Pelagius, and the man considered to be the foremost of the Latin fathers, Augustine. This debate is called by historians the Pelagian Controversy and the tenets of each are set forth in the table below. The debate concerned divine and human agency, sin, and the operations of grace in man's salvation.<sup>4</sup>

<b>Augustine</b>	<b>Pelagius</b>
Divine energy is perpetually needed.	Inherent, furnished powers are sufficient for self-movement and self-guidance.
Freedom is the union of the will with the divine law resulting in voluntary, spontaneous obedience where freedom and necessity coalesce.	Freedom is power of choice.
Adam's sin brought on Adam and all his race physical death, guilt, and a bondage of will, or an inherited dominion of sin in the soul.  Humanity was in Adam and acted in him and was corrupted in him. We are responsible at birth for that act and share all its consequences.	We sin only by imitation of Adam, and there is no helpless slavery of the will. Physical death is a natural necessity apart from the effect of Adam's sin.  Character, instead of being (a single dominating principle, either good or evil), is a series of acts, or traits, some right and some wrong.
Conversion is wholly the result of the efficiency of divine grace, which touches the springs of choice, is irresistible, and is bestowed on those whom God has purposed.	Submission to God's will is optional to the sinner. Continued obedience is optional to the believer.
Predestination is the determination of God of the number of the saved and the assignment of that determination not being left to man.	Augustine's predestination was destructive to human responsibility.

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<sup>4</sup> Fisher, p. 129.

### III. John Calvin

The modern heir and champion of the wrong side of this ancient debate is a Frenchman named John Calvin. He was born into a religious revolution known as the Reformation Movement. The Reformation was a movement aimed at Reforming the Catholic Church. During the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Catholicism came under fire from within as many of the clergy called into question the doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church. Men such as Occam cut away at Catholic philosophy, papal infallibility, and the pope's power over civil government.<sup>5</sup> The stage was set for a general uprising.

The revolt took shape under a German named Martin Luther. Having studied Augustine, Luther objected to the notion of indulgences and the Catholic system of salvation by merit. In 1517, at the age of 34, Luther nailed ninety-five theses on the door of the Church of All Saints, at Wittenberg.<sup>6</sup> A controversy quickly arose between the Reformers and the defenders of indulgences, and the controversy escalated beyond philosophy and into military combat. Luther was condemned by the Catholic Church as an outlaw, but he was nonetheless joined by a legion of likeminded men. Zwingli, for example, led Swiss reformation. Zwingli took a copy of Erasmus's Greek Testament and copied by hand the epistles of Paul so that he might have a portable set for himself.<sup>7</sup> Fisher says, "Zwingli did not seek to preserve, as did Luther, who had a far deeper reverence for the past, those rites and ceremonies of the medieval Church which the Bible did not prohibit."<sup>8</sup> Zwingli was also a patriot and saw Catholicism as harmful to his country. He marched with an army as a chaplain when they opposed the military might of the Catholic Church.

John Calvin, the character of interest in this study, is generally considered part of the second generation of Reformers, as by the time he penned his famous text, Martin Luther had already established himself and his views in Germany and Zwingli had already died as the Catholic armies crushed his Protestant forces at Cappel.<sup>9</sup> To Calvin and the second generation was left the daunting challenge of unfolding and codifying the principles of the Reformation. At age 27, Calvin took up the challenge and wrote the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, called "The Koran of the Heretics" by his enemies.<sup>10</sup> The text systemized Calvin's view of the principles of reformation theology. However, it should be noted that not all reformers agreed with all of Calvin's points. For example, neither Augustine nor Luther openly held that a believer cannot fall from grace.<sup>11</sup> He was further opposed by Jacob Hermansz, known as Arminius, who claimed that atonement was not limited and that predestination was conditional. His views were rejected by all parties except the Anglicans and John Wesley's Methodists in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Fisher, p. 271.

<sup>6</sup> Fisher, p. 292.

<sup>7</sup> Fisher, p. 306.

<sup>8</sup> Fisher, p. 308

<sup>9</sup> Fisher, p. 318.

<sup>10</sup> Fisher, p. 320-321.

<sup>11</sup> Fisher, p. 321.

<sup>12</sup> Barzun, p. 33.

*Institutes* is a lengthy text divided into convenient sections. It covers Calvin's views from their earliest misconceptions to their logical end. Some important points are highlighted in the following table.<sup>13</sup>

Major Divisions	Some Important Points
<p><b>Book I.</b> The Knowledge of God the Creator.</p>	<p>BELIEF IN GOD IS BASIC. Book I Chapter 3</p> <p>DISCUSSION OF HUMAN NATURE. Book I Chapter 15</p>
<p><b>Book II.</b> The Knowledge of God the Redeemer in Christ, First Disclosed to the Fathers under the Law, and Then to Us in the Gospel.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE OF GOD WITHOUT FAITH IN CHRIST. Book II Chapter 6</p> <p>EXPOSITION OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS. Book II Chapter 8</p>
<p><b>Book III.</b> The Way in Which we Receive the Grace of Christ: What Benefits Come to Us From It, and What Effects Follow.</p>	<p>WHAT IS FAITH? Book III Chapter 2</p> <p>THE CHRISTIAN LIFE. Book III Chapter 6-8</p>
<p><b>Book IV.</b> The External Means or Aids by Which God Invites Us Into the Society of Christ and Holds Us Therein.</p>	<p>JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH. Book III Chapter 11-18</p>

<sup>13</sup> *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, <http://www.smartlink.net/~douglas/calvin/>

## LESSON TWO: CALVIN'S PREMISES

- I. Sovereignty of God
- II. Free Will
- III. The Fall

### I. Sovereignty of God

Calvin explains his view of God's omnipotence with the following:

“And truly God claims omnipotence to himself, and would have us to acknowledge it, - not the vain, indolent, slumbering omnipotence which sophists feign, but vigilant, efficacious, energetic, and ever active, - not an omnipotence which may only act as a general principle of confused motion, as in ordering a stream to keep within the channel once prescribed to it, but one which is intent on individual and special movements. God is deemed omnipotent, not because he can act though he may cease or be idle, or because by a general instinct he continues the order of nature previously appointed; but because, governing heaven and earth by his providence, he so overrules all things that nothing happens without his counsel. For when it is said in the Psalms, "He has done whatsoever he has pleased," (Ps. 115:3 cf. Ps. 113(b):3) the thing meant is his sure and deliberate purpose. It were insipid to interpret the Psalmist's words in philosophic fashion, to mean that God is the primary agent, because the beginning and cause of all motion. This rather is the solace of the faithful, in their adversity, that every thing which they endure is by the ordination and command of God, that they are under his hand. But if the government of God thus extends to all his works, it is a childish cavil to confine it to natural influx. Those moreover who confine the providence of God within narrow limits, as if he allowed all things to be borne along freely according to a perpetual law of nature, do not more defraud God of his glory than themselves of a most useful doctrine; for nothing were more wretched than man if he were exposed to all possible movements of the sky, the air, the earth, and the water. We may add, that by this view the singular goodness of God towards each individual is unbecomingly impaired. ... Those who attribute due praise to the omnipotence of God thereby derive a double benefit. He to whom heaven and earth belong, and whose nod all creatures must obey, is fully able to reward the homage which they pay to him, and they can rest secure in the protection of Him to whose control everything that could do them harm is subject, by whose authority, Satan, with all his furies and engines, is curbed as with a bridle, and on whose will everything adverse to our safety depends. In this way, and in no other, can the immoderate and superstitious fears, excited by the dangers to which we are exposed, be calmed or subdued. ... Let him, therefore, who

would beware of such unbelief, always bear in mind, that there is no random power, or agency, or motion in the creatures, who are so governed by the secret counsel of God, that nothing happens but what he has knowingly and willingly decreed.”<sup>14</sup>

Below are Calvin’s claims compared to Bible truth:

1. God is omnipotent and active with His power.
  - God is omnipotent (Gen. 17:1) and God is active (Deu. 5:26).
  - However, we should be careful to note that God acts and exerts His power as He pleases. That may not fit into my view of what an omnipotent, active God would do (Is. 55:9).
2. God does not rule the Universe through laws and guidelines (medium) but through the purposeful manipulation of every piece and motion in the Universe.
  - Notice Calvin does not supply a passage that actually says this.
  - God does use the medium of law (Gen. 1:25)
  - One may oppose the will of God (Mt. 7:13-14; II Pet. 3:9).
  - God claims that He has not done some things (James 1:13-14).
  - God claims that He cannot do some things (Tit. 1:2)
3. Limiting God to laws and guidelines is to impair His power and goodness.
  - Not so! (James 1:25; I Tim. 4:4)
4. There is no agency in the creatures that God has made. Here, **agency** means the capacity, condition, or state of acting or of exerting power. Remember that man is a creature. This topic requires more reading from Calvin and its own section in our notes.

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<sup>14</sup> Institutes, 1.16.3



## II. Free Will

Calvin states concerning election and grace:

“Although it is now sufficiently plain that God by his secret counsel chooses whom he will while he rejects others, his gratuitous election has only been partially explained until we come to the case of single individuals, to whom God not only offers salvation, but so assigns it, that the certainty of the result remains not dubious or suspended.”<sup>15</sup>

This kind of statement is made often in Calvin’s text. This thinking results directly from his view of God’s sovereignty. Remember that Calvin’s view of God’s omnipotence demands that every single event happens at God’s choosing. In the prior section, Calvin claimed there was no agency in any of God’s creatures. However, notice as he dances around this important issue. Here, he quotes Augustine to make his point:

“He had said a little before, (cap. 100,) that the apostate angels, by their revolt, and all the reprobate, as far as they themselves were concerned, did what God willed not; but, in regard to his omnipotence, it was impossible for them to do so: for, while they act against the will of God, his will is accomplished in them. Hence he exclaims, ‘Great is the work of God, exquisite in all he wills! so that, in a manner wondrous and ineffable, that is not done without his will which is done contrary to it, because it could not be done if he did not permit; nor does he permit it unwillingly, but willingly; nor would He who is good permit evil to be done, were he not omnipotent to bring good out of evil,’ (Augustin. in Ps. 111: 2.)”<sup>16</sup>

We would ask how it can be that man could do evil at God’s demand and still be accountable for it instead of God. Read the following:

“From other passages, in which God is said to draw or bend Satan himself, and all the reprobate, to his will, a more difficult question arises. For the carnal mind can scarcely comprehend how, when acting by their means, he contracts no taint from their impurity, nay, how, in a common operation, he is exempt from all guilt, and can justly condemn his own ministers. Hence a distinction has been invented between doing and permitting because to many it seemed altogether inexplicable how Satan and all the wicked are so under the hand and authority of God, that he directs their malice to whatever end he pleases, and employs their iniquities to execute his judgements. The modesty of those who are thus alarmed at the appearance of absurdity might perhaps be excused, did they not endeavour to vindicate the justice of God from every semblance of stigma by defending an

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<sup>15</sup> Institutes, 3.21.7

<sup>16</sup> Institutes, 1.18.3

untruth. ... That men do nothing save at the secret instigation of God, and do not discuss and deliberate on any thing but what he has previously decreed with himself and brings to pass by his secret direction, is proved by numberless clear passages of Scripture. What we formerly quoted from the Psalms, to the effect that he does whatever pleases him (Ps. 115:3), certainly extends to all the actions of men. ... But the matter will be made clearer by special examples. ... The Jews purposed to destroy Christ. Pilate and the soldiers indulged them in their fury; yet the disciples confess in solemn prayer that all the wicked did nothing but what the hand and counsel of God had decreed, (Acts 4:28,) just as Peter had previously said in his discourse, that Christ was delivered to death by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, (Acts 2:23;) in other words, that God, to whom all things are known from the beginning, had determined what the Jews had executed. He repeats the same thing elsewhere, 'Those things, which God before had showed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he has so fulfilled,' (Acts 3:18.)<sup>17</sup>

Read that statement carefully! Calvin and Augustine claim that even actions intended to oppose the will of God can bring about the will of God. With this we would concur. We can find many examples, like the persecutors of Christ and the early church, where those bent on opposing God only manage to bring about or further His goal. However, this does not mean that God controlled them or denied them choice. Calvin asserts this but has never proven it! The death of Christ did come about as foreknown by God and as desired by God. In a sense, it is true that God even instigated Christ's death, but it must be understood that God did not instigate evil with evil. God knew that when light entered the world, darkness would reject it (John 3:16-21). He did not have to cause man to reject Christ; he only had to send him (James 4:4). It was an act of God that instigated wicked men to do evil. However, they did it by their own choosing in reaction to God's goodness not his omnipotence. This is the same method a good general or chess player brings about his goal; not by forbidding his opponent the ability to choose, but by doing that which will turn their choice to his advantage. Calvin's misses the mark here. God is no more guilty of Christ's death than would be a church that sent a preacher into Iran where he would eventually be put to death. Otherwise, Christ would be guilty of the blood of all who died preaching His gospel!

The Bible asserts man's ability to choose (and to choose rightly!) in the following ways:

- The doctrine of accountability (Rom. 14:11-12)
- Imperatives<sup>18</sup>
- Middle voice<sup>19</sup>
- Reference to choice (Joshua 24:15)

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<sup>17</sup> Institutes, 1.18.1

<sup>18</sup> To be discussed later

<sup>19</sup> To be discussed later

### **III. The Fall**

Calvin moves now from God to man, and he begins in the Garden. Review Gen. 1-3 in your mind and then compare to these statements:

“Therefore, God has provided the soul of man with intellect, by which he might discern good from evil, just from unjust, and might know what to follow or to shun, reason going before with her lamp; ... Man excelled in these noble endowments in his primitive condition, when reason, intelligence, prudence, and judgement, not only sufficed for the government of his earthly life, but also enabled him to rise up to God and eternal happiness. Thereafter choice was added to direct the appetites, and temper all the organic motions; the will being thus perfectly submissive to the authority of reason. In this upright state, man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life. ... Adam, therefore, might have stood if he chose, since it was only by his own will that he fell; but it was because his will was pliable in either directions and he had not received constancy to persevere, that he so easily fell. Still he had a free choice of good and evil; and not only so, but in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly framed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties, and destroyed himself. At present it is necessary only to remember, that man, at his first creation, was very different from all his posterity; who, deriving their origin from him after he was corrupted, received a hereditary taint. At first every part of the soul was formed to rectitude. There was soundness of mind and freedom of will to choose the good.”<sup>20</sup>

Calvin further states:

“After the heavenly image in man was effaced, he not only was himself punished by a withdrawal of the ornaments in which he had been arrayed, viz., wisdom, virtue, justice, truth, and holiness, and by the substitution in their place of those dire pests, blindness, impotence, vanity, impurity, and unrighteousness, but he involved his posterity also, and plunged them in the same wretchedness. This is the hereditary corruption to which early Christian writers gave the name of Original Sin, meaning by the term the depravation of a nature formerly good and pure. The subject gave rise to much discussion, there being nothing more remote from common apprehension, than that the fault of one should render all guilty, and so become a common sin. This seems to be the reason why the oldest doctors of the church only glance obscurely at the point, or, at least, do not explain it so clearly as it required. This timidity, however, could not prevent the rise of a Pelagius with his profane fiction - that Adam sinned only to his own

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<sup>20</sup> Institutes, 1.15.8

hurt, but did no hurt to his posterity. Satan, by thus craftily hiding the disease, tried to render it incurable. But when it was clearly proved from Scripture that the sin of the first man passed to all his posterity, recourse was had to the cavil, that it passed by imitation, and not by propagation. The orthodoxy, therefore, and more especially Augustine, laboured to show, that we are not corrupted by acquired wickedness, but bring an innate corruption from the very womb. It was the greatest impudence to deny this. But no man will wonder at the presumption of the Pelagians and Celestians, who has learned from the writings of that holy man how extreme the effrontery of these heretics was. Surely there is no ambiguity in David's confession, 'I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me,' (Ps. 51: 5.) His object in the passage is not to throw blame on his parents; but the better to commend the goodness of God towards him, he properly reiterates the confession of impurity from his very birth. As it is clear, that there was no peculiarity in David's case, it follows that it is only an instance of the common lot of the whole human race. All of us, therefore, descending from an impure seed, come into the world tainted with the contagion of sin. Nay, before we behold the light of the sun we are in God's sight defiled and polluted. 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one,' says the Book of Job, (Job 14: 4.)"<sup>21</sup>

In summary, Calvin states:

- Adam was created with choice and the ability to do right. The Bible concurs (Ecc. 7:29).
- Adam sinned and lost for himself and humanity the ability to do good. However, no passage states this for Adam or his children.
- Children are born with the guilt and consequence of Adam's sin. This is left for another lesson (Total Inherent Depravity).

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<sup>21</sup> Institutes, 2.1.5

## LESSON THREE: TOTAL INHERENT DEPRAVITY

- I. Calvin's Words
- II. Bible Doctrine & Implications<sup>22</sup>

### I. Calvin's Words

Recall Calvin's statement concern Adam's sin:

“After the heavenly image in man was effaced, he not only was himself punished by a withdrawal of the ornaments in which he had been arrayed, viz., wisdom, virtue, justice, truth, and holiness, and by the substitution in their place of those dire pests, blindness, impotence, vanity, impurity, and unrighteousness, but he involved his posterity also, and plunged them in the same wretchedness. This is the hereditary corruption to which early Christian writers gave the name of Original Sin, meaning by the term the depravation of a nature formerly good and pure.”<sup>23</sup>

### II. Bible Doctrine

See Fox, p. 75-81.

**WARNING:** New versions render some passages in a way that permits or directly teaches Total Inherent Depravity. See the following examples:

#### **Psalms 51:5**

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (NIV)  
For I was born a sinner -- yes, from the moment my mother conceived me. (NLT)  
I've been out of step with you for a long time, in the wrong since before I was born.  
(Message)

#### **Romans 8:3**

For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, (NIV)  
The law of Moses could not save us, because of our sinful nature. But God put into effect a different plan to save us. He sent his own Son in a human body like ours, except that ours are sinful. God destroyed sin's control over us by giving his Son as a sacrifice for our sins. (NLT)

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<sup>22</sup> This section will be taken from Fox

<sup>23</sup> Institutes, 2.1.5

## LESSON FOUR: UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION<sup>24</sup>

- I. Calvin's Words
- II. Bible Doctrine Concerning Conditions
- III. Bible Doctrine Concerning Election & Predestination

### I. Calvin's Words

Calvin defines predestination with the following:

By predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and, accordingly, as each has been created for one or other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death. This God has testified, not only in the case of single individuals; he has also given a specimen of it in the whole posterity of Abraham, to make it plain that the future condition of each nation lives entirely at his disposal: "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. For the Lord's portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance," (Deut. 32:8, 9). The separation is before the eyes of all; in the person of Abraham, as in a withered stock, one people is specially chosen, while the others are rejected; but the cause does not appear, except that Moses, to deprive posterity of any handle for glorying, tells them that their superiority was owing entirely to the free love of God. The cause which he assigns for their deliverance is, "Because he loved thy fathers, therefore he chose their seed after them," (Deut. 4:37); or more explicitly in another chapter, "The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people: for ye were the fewest of all people: but because the Lord loved you," (Deut. 7:7, 8).<sup>25</sup>

Calvin continues in the next two sections to show how God narrowed the selection of Abraham's posterity to Isaac and then to Jacob. Then he takes a leap from that selection to our election:

Although it is now sufficiently plain that God by his secret counsel chooses whom he will while he rejects others, his gratuitous election has only been partially explained until we come to the case of single individuals, to whom God not only offers salvation, but so assigns it, that the certainty of the result remains not dubious or suspended.

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<sup>24</sup> Additional material is in Fox

<sup>25</sup> Institutes, 3.25.5

These are considered as belonging to that one seed of which Paul makes mention (Rom. 9:8; Gal. 3:16, &c). For although adoption was deposited in the hand of Abraham, yet as many of his posterity were cut off as rotten members, in order that election may stand and be effectual, it is necessary to ascend to the head in whom the heavenly Father has connected his elect with each other, and bound them to himself by an indissoluble tie. Thus in the adoption of the family of Abraham, God gave them a liberal display of favor which he has denied to others; but in the members of Christ there is a far more excellent display of grace, because those ingrafted into him as their head never fail to obtain salvation. ... We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment. In regard to the elect, we regard calling as the evidence of election, and justification as another symbol of its manifestation, until it is fully accomplished by the attainment of glory. But as the Lord seals his elect by calling and justification, so by excluding the reprobate either from the knowledge of his name or the sanctification of his Spirit, he by these marks in a manner discloses the judgment which awaits them.<sup>26</sup>

Thus, we may summarize Calvin's doctrine with the following:

- Prior to Creation, God selected (elected) some people to be saved and others lost in their depravity.
- This selection is not in anyway subject to any action or decision of man (unconditional).
- The token or sign of election is the calling and justification of the individual.
- This follows the pattern of the selection of the nation of Israel.

Calvin next spends a lengthy section answering the alternate doctrine that those elected by God were elected because God knew of their good works before He created them. While his answers to this are shallow, so is the doctrine itself. A better alternative will be seen in the Scriptures later on in the notes. Finally, Calvin says the following with which we would agree:

The words of Christ are too clear to be rendered obscure by any of the mists of caviling. "No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him." "Every man, therefore, that has heard and learned of the Father comes unto me," (John 6:44, 45).<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Institutes, 3.25.7

<sup>27</sup> Institutes, 3.26.7

## II. Bible Doctrine Concerning Conditions

All that is necessary to disprove “unconditional election” is to show one condition that man must fulfill. **WARNING:** if you assume Total Inherent Depravity, this is impossible, because every conditional text you will read will be interpreted to mean “X is a condition for salvation but X can only be done with direct intervention from God because you are depraved!” Thus, the following examples are useless without either disproving depravity or understanding the Imperative arguments that will be set forth later in this text.

The Calvinist needs to ask himself this question and give an honest answer: If God was setting a condition, what would it look like or what would God have to say to make a condition? If you are hooked on depravity, you have no answer to that because nothing God could ever say would convince you. The honest person will say that there must be a way for God to give a condition had He so intended. Logically, conditions can be set forth in at least four ways:

- 1) A statement can be explicitly conditional (“if”, “without”, or “except”).

**I John 1:7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.**

**Heb. 11:6 But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: ...**

**Luke 13:3 I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.**

- 2) The subject of a statement may be qualified (“everyone that ...”).

**I John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.**

- 3) When an imperative is given and a result is attached, the imperative may be necessary for the result.

**Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.**

- 4) A statement may simply state a relationship that implies a condition to a result.

**Heb. 11:6 ... for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.**



### III. Bible Doctrine of Election & Predestination

The election/predestination in the scriptures is far different from Calvin's, as can be demonstrated by using simple passages to interpret more difficult ones. The key to these studies will be two simple rules: (1) context is the most basic aid for Bible interpretation, and (2) passages can be said to have the same context if they have the same subject, quote similar passages from the Old Testament, and/or make use of several of the same terms. Our difficult passage will be Romans 8:28-39. Notice some important terms: foreknow, glorified, predestinate, all things, justification, called, and purpose to name a few. Also note that "all things" does not mean "everything in general" but "the things as defined by this context".

Now consider Eph. 1. This chapter has similar terminology. Next, read I Peter 1, and see the same terminology as the prior two passages. Understanding Peter's point will help us with the other two passages. The table below has a cursory comparison of terms.

<b>I Peter 1</b>	<b>Ephesians 1</b>	<b>Romans 8:28-39</b>
Elect, v. 2		Elect, v. 33
Foreknowledge, v. 2		Foreknow, v. 30
Glory, v. 7, 8, 11	Glory, v. 6, 12	Glorified, v. 30
Foundation of the world (KOSMOS), v. 20	Foundation of the world (KOSMOS), v. 4 [v. 21]	
	Predestinated, v. 5, 11	Predestinate, v. 29, 30
	All things, v. 10, 22	All things, v. 28, 32
Inheritance, v. 4	Inheritance, v. 11, 14, 18	
Redeemed, v. 18	Redemption, v. 7	Justification, v. 30
Called, v. 15		Called, v. 28, 30
	Purpose, v. 9, 11	Purpose, v. 28
Born again, v. 23	Adoption, v. 5	Many brethren, v. 29

Consider these passages together and notice the following:

- None of the passages made specific application to **individuals**.
- The purpose of God is referenced, and we know what that is (Eph. 3:11).
- The mystery of God is referenced, that God sent Christ to offer redemption to all.

We can conclude this about the Bible doctrine in these passages:

- God worked out a plan conceived in eternity – the offer of salvation to man.
- That offer was brought about by His efforts through the ages (all things) that came to fruition in Christ, the heir of all things (Heb. 1:1-3).
- Christ brought about salvation, the ultimate good (I John 3:1).
- The Elect are those that are called according to His purpose (salvation) and through obedience are adopted as sons of God (heirs, Gal. 4:7; Rom. 8:17). The adoption and redemption is predestinated, so all those are such can be called predestinated.

## LESSON FIVE: LIMITED ATONEMENT

- I. Calvin's Words
- II. Bible Doctrine

### I. Calvin's Words

Calvin prefaces his remarks on the subject of predestination with many comments warning the student not to try to reach too far into the complexities of the Eternal Mind. I personally feel that Calvin may be using this as a clever screen to hide his inability to substantiate his doctrine. However, I will take this moment to agree, adding only the same provision as the prophet once did: **“The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are revealed belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we may do all the words of this law.*”**<sup>28</sup>

Calvin makes this familiar refrain:

We say, then, that Scripture clearly proves this much, that God by his eternal and immutable counsel determined once for all those whom it was his pleasure one day to admit to salvation, and those whom, on the other hand, it was his pleasure to doom to destruction. We maintain that this counsel, as regards the elect, is founded on his free mercy, without any respect to human worth, while those whom he dooms to destruction are excluded from access to life by a just and blameless, but at the same time incomprehensible judgment.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore:

For the present let it suffice to observe, that though the word of the gospel is addressed generally to all, yet the gift of faith is rare. Isaiah assigns the cause when he says that the arm of the Lord is not revealed to all, (Isa. 53: 1.)<sup>30</sup>

Concerning the reprobate:

We come now to the reprobate, to whom the Apostle at the same time refers, (Rom. 9: 13.) For as Jacob, who as yet had merited nothing by good works, is assumed into favor; so Esau, while as yet unpolluted by any crime, is hated. ... Then after starting the objection, “Is God unjust?” instead of employing what would have been the surest and plainest defense of his justice, viz., that God had recompensed Esau according to his wickedness, he is contented with a different solution, viz., that the reprobate are expressly raised up, in order that the glory

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<sup>28</sup> Deut. 29:29; Calvin actually quotes this verse too, placing emphasis on the first part.

<sup>29</sup> *Institutes*, 3.21.7

<sup>30</sup> *Institutes*, 3.22.10

of God may thereby be displayed. At last, he concludes that God has mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth, (Rom. 9: 18.) You see how he refers both to the mere pleasure of God. Therefore, if we cannot assign any reason for his bestowing mercy on his people, but just that it so pleases him, neither can we have any reason for his reprobating others but his will. When God is said to visit in mercy or harden whom he will, men are reminded that they are not to seek for any cause beyond his will.<sup>31</sup>

In answer to an obvious question, Calvin says:

It now remains to see why the Lord acts in the manner in which it is plain that he does. If the answer be given, that it is because men deserve this by their impiety, wickedness, and ingratitude, it is indeed well and truly said; but still, because it does not yet appear what the cause of the difference is, why some are turned to obedience, and others remain obdurate we must, in discussing it, pass to the passage from Moses, on which Paul has commented, namely, "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth," (Rom. 9: 17.) The refusal of the reprobate to obey the word of God when manifested to them, will be properly ascribed to the malice and depravity of their hearts, provided it be at the same time added that they were adjudged to this depravity, because they were raised up by the just but inscrutable judgment of God, to show forth his glory by their condemnation.

In this typical section, we wince as Calvin comes close to the truth, only to miss entirely:

One of the passages adduced is, "have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God; and not that he should return from his ways and live?" (Ezek. 18: 23.) If we are to extend this to the whole human race, why are not the very many whose minds might be more easily bent to obey urged to repentance, rather than those who by his invitations become daily more and more hardened? Our Lord declares that the preaching of the gospel and miracles would have produced more fruit among the people of Nineveh and Sodom than in Judea, (Matth. 13: 23.) How comes it then, that if God would have all to be saved he does not open a door of repentance for the wretched, who would more readily have received grace? Hence we may see that the passage is violently wrested, if the will of God, which the prophet mentions, is opposed to his eternal counsel, by which he separated the elect from the reprobate.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *Institutes*, 3.22.11

<sup>32</sup> *Institutes*, 3.24.15

## II. Bible Doctrine<sup>33</sup>

To my persistent amazement, Calvin often refers to the very passages that would clearly destroy his position. He simply ignores their import by saying that they cannot say what they say. He is guided by his previous error and cannot be deterred. Below are some important points to observe:

- God is no respecter of persons.
  - This means that **God does not judge arbitrarily or based on outward appearances** but by works (I Pet. 1:17; Col. 3:22-25). Everyone starts on an even field and the judgment is of character and works.
  - This doctrine is explicitly affirmed (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9).
  - It is sinful to be a respecter of persons (James 2:9).
- The only firm evidence Calvin asserts for his doctrine is the validity of his other claims, i.e. election and predestination.
- I John 2:2 **And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*.**
- We have already demonstrated that it is God's will that all would be saved.

Concerning those that reject the gospel, remember that character and choice determine a person's response to the gospel. The offer is made to all. A brief commentary of the following passage may help:

II Th. 2:9-12 ***Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders*** {see context concerning the Son of Perdition}, **[10] And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not** {received [εδεξαντο – aor., middle voice<sup>34</sup>] not is the cause of the perishing} **the love of the truth, that they might be saved. [11] And for this cause** {no love of truth} **God shall send them strong delusion** {Bible designed to confound the proud}, **that they should believe a lie** {according to Calvin, God already gave all man this in their depravity, but this is future tense}; **[12] That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness** {hence, God rejects these, not arbitrarily, but on the grounds of character}. **[13] But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation** {election of character and purpose, not individual<sup>35</sup>} **through** {εν - possibly “by”<sup>36</sup>} **sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth** {we take that on the elected character by sanctification and belief}; **[14] Whereunto he called you by our gospel** {to be discussed more later}, **to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

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<sup>33</sup> See Fox, p. 85-87

<sup>34</sup> “In the middle voice the subject is acting so as to participate in some way in the results of the action.” (Summers, p. 38) This will be developed more later in its own section.

<sup>35</sup> In your notes, p. 17

<sup>36</sup> Summers, p. 31; also Thayer: “a primary preposition denoting (fixed) position (in place, time or state), and (by implication) instrumentality (medially or constructively) ...”

## LESSON SIX: IRRESISTIBLE GRACE

- I. Calvin's Words
- II. Drawn and Called
- III. Handouts

### I. Calvin's Words

Recall prior notes where Calvin tells us that God assigns election. Grace is mistreated by Calvin as if it were a force, and that force is the mechanism used to assign election. The force is as irresistible as the election, hence the term – Irresistible Grace. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is inseparably tied by Calvin to this grace/force. Read the following:

For as there are said to be three witnesses in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit, so there are also three on the earth, namely, water, blood, and Spirit. It is not without cause that the testimony of the Spirit is twice mentioned, a testimony which is engraven on our hearts by way of seal, and thus seals the cleansing and sacrifice of Christ For which reason, also, Peter says, that believers are "elect" "through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ," (1 Pet. 1: 2.) By these words he reminds us, that if the shedding of his sacred blood is not to be in vain, our souls must be washed in it by the secret cleansing of the Holy Spirit. For which reason, also, Paul, speaking of cleansing and purification, says, "but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God," (1 Cor. 6: 11.) The whole comes to this that the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually binds us to himself.<sup>37</sup>

But in order to have a clearer view of this most important subjects we must remember that Christ came provided with the Holy Spirit after a peculiar manner, namely, that he might separate us from the world, and unite us in the hope of an eternal inheritance. Hence the Spirit is called the Spirit of sanctification, because he quickens and cherishes us, not merely by the general energy which is seen in the human race, as well as other animals, but because he is the seed and root of heavenly life in us. Accordingly, one of the highest commendations which the prophets give to the kingdom of Christ is, that under it the Spirit would be poured out in richer abundance. One of the most remarkable passages is that of Joel, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," (Joel 2: 28.) For although the prophet seems to confine the gifts of the Spirit to the office of

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<sup>37</sup> Institutes, 3.1.1

prophesying, he yet intimates under a figure, that God will, by the illumination of his Spirit, provide himself with disciples who had previously been altogether ignorant of heavenly doctrine. ...<sup>38</sup>

As those sprinkled with the Spirit are restored to the full vigor of life, he hence obtains the names of "Oil" and "Unction." On the other hand, as he is constantly employed in subduing and destroying the vices of our concupiscence, and inflaming our hearts with the love of God and piety, he hence receives the name of Fire. In fine, he is described to us as a Fountain, whence all heavenly riches flow to us; or as the Hand by which God exerts his power, because by his divine inspiration he so breathes divine life into us, that we are no longer acted upon by ourselves, but ruled by his motion and agency, so that everything good in us is the fruit of his grace, while our own endowments without him are mere darkness of mind and perverseness of heart. ... By the same grace and energy of the Spirit we become his members, so that he keeps us under him, and we in our turn possess him.<sup>39</sup>

But as faith is his principal work, all those passages which express his power and operations are, in a great measure, referred to it, as it is, only by faith that he brings us to the light of the Gospel, as John teaches, that to those who believe in Christ is given the privilege "to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," (John 1: 12.) Opposing God to flesh and blood, he declares it to be a supernatural gift, that those who would otherwise remain in unbelief, receive Christ by faith. Similar to this is our Savior's reply to Peter, "Flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven," (Matt. 16: 17.) ... To the same effect Paul says to the Ephesians, "Ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise," (Eph. 1: 13;) thus showing that he is the internal teacher, by whose agency the promise of salvation, which would otherwise only strike the air or our ears, penetrates into our minds. ... Accordingly to make his disciples capable of heavenly wisdom, Christ promised them "the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive," (John 14: 17.) And he assigns it to him, as his proper office, to bring to remembrance the things which he had verbally taught; for in vain were light offered to the blind, did not that Spirit of understanding open the intellectual eye; so that he himself may be properly termed the key by which the treasures of the heavenly kingdom are unlocked, and his illumination, the eye of the mind by which we are enabled to see: hence Paul so highly commends the ministry of the Spirit, (2 Cor. 3: 6,) since teachers would cry aloud to no purpose, did not Christ, the internal teacher, by means of his Spirit, draw to himself those who are

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<sup>38</sup> Institutes, 3.1.2

<sup>39</sup> Institutes, 3.1.3

given him of the Father. Therefore, as we have said that salvation is perfected in the person of Christ, so, in order to make us partakers of it, he baptizes us "with the Holy Spirit and with fire," (Luke 3: 16,) enlightening us into the faith of his Gospel, and so regenerating us to be new creatures. Thus cleansed from all pollution, he dedicates us as holy temples to the Lord.<sup>40</sup>

We have now quoted Calvin at length to show the errors he commits in reasoning and interpretation. The same errors are made almost word for word today. Most these errors are going to be left for a full study of the Holy Spirit. Below I summarize a few notable ones.

- The word "spirit" is assumed to be the Holy Spirit in every text.
- No consideration is given to miracles as confined to a specific time period.
- Analogies are interpreted beyond the context.
- No consideration is given to possible mediums the Holy Spirit might use.

## II. Drawn and Called

Recall what Calvin said once before:

The words of Christ are too clear to be rendered obscure by any of the mists of caviling. "No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him." "Every man, therefore, that has heard and learned of the Father comes unto me," (John 6:44, 45).<sup>41</sup>

With this we agree. This passage indicates some important points.

- God draws men to him.
- The drawing is done through the agency (medium) of the word of God that must be "heard and learned". II Th. 2:14 **Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.**
- Man is responsible to hear and learn. They must exercise agency (here, the ability to choose and exert force) to hear and learn.

The drawing that God does (which results in us being called) is done through the medium of the Gospel. The Holy Spirit works through the Word.

## III. Handouts

Irresistible Grace is defended by irrational arguments and desperate interpretations. The following articles demonstrate this.

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<sup>40</sup> Institutes, 3.1.4

<sup>41</sup> Institutes, 3.26.7

## A Short Defense of the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace

By David Pyles

In this article we hope to prove to the reader's satisfaction the scriptural truthfulness of the doctrine of irresistible grace. This doctrine asserts that the quickening power of God's Spirit will be irresistibly imposed upon all the elect at some point in their lives. Therefore all chosen in Christ will experience the new birth before departing this life. We are firmly persuaded that this doctrine is absolutely essential to soundness in the general doctrine of salvation.

Now the skeptic might immediately object that the doctrine of irresistible grace presupposes the doctrine of election, and that one will never prove the former without establishing the latter. However, if it can be shown that God's Holy Spirit is irresistibly imposed upon some, then election is thereby largely confirmed, because it is certain that God's Spirit is not irresistibly imposed upon all. Therefore, election is implied by irresistible grace inasmuch as some are chosen for such grace while it is obvious that others are not. Moreover, it is an *unmerited* election that is implied by irresistible grace, for what purpose is served in applying *irresistible* grace to those offering no resistance? Since the third chapter of John contains some of the most important scriptures treating the new birth, we would expect it to say something of irresistible grace if the doctrine were indeed true. In fact a very important text comes from the eighth verse. Here the Lord says, *The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* Therefore, as the wind is sovereign and irresistible in its course (it *bloweth where it listeth*), so likewise is the Holy Spirit in His work of the new birth. He undertakes the spiritual quickening when and where He pleases, and His efforts never prove abortive. Further observe that there are no exceptions to the rule of John 3:8, *for so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* Therefore, if it can be shown that some are quickened under the power of irresistible grace, then it must be concluded that all are quickened under that same power.

Perhaps the clearest and most remarkable case of irresistible grace in the scriptures is that of the Apostle Paul's. He was set in total resistance to the Christ and the gospel, but was then changed to one of the greatest of all advocates of Christ. As remarkable as Paul's case may be, we may nonetheless conclude that irresistible grace pertains to all, *for so is every one that is born of the Spirit.* This is further confirmed by Paul's own statement in I Timothy 1:16 - *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* Which confirms Paul's case to be that of all believers inasmuch as Paul's case is a *pattern* for theirs.

Jesus said in John 6:37, *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* Therefore, the salvation of those given to Christ is an absolute certainty. However, Jesus also said in John 3:3, *Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man be born*



*again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.* It follows that all given to Christ will certainly be born again. But how could such certainty be achieved without the irresistible intervention of God?

Clearly, irresistible grace must pertain to those given to Christ in John 6:37. Now suppose that election is denied, notwithstanding the clear implications of John 6:37, and that persons apart from those given to Christ will finally be saved. Then these too must be the subjects of irresistible grace, *for so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*

It is unfortunate that John 3:16 is seldom understood within the light that John 3:8 casts upon it. John 3:16 clearly asserts that true believers in Jesus are saved. It therefore teaches us about the *proof* of salvation. However, it says little about the *cause* of salvation. The cause of salvation can be discovered only after determining the cause of belief, but John 3:16 says nothing of this. Unfortunately, the typical Christian interjects an untenable hypothesis at this point by assuming belief to be caused by the autonomous decision of the individual. But it is logically impossible to have an autonomous individual and, at the same time, a Holy Spirit imposing a sovereign and irresistible force such as the wind. Clearly, the usual hypothesis supporting verse 16 is at odds with the implications of verse 8. It is totally unnecessary to interject any hypothesis on this point for John 3:16 together with John 3:8 settle the matter: Belief is caused by the sovereign and irresistible power of the Holy Spirit upon the heart (John 3:8). This belief is in turn the proof of salvation (John 3:16).

It should further be observed that as the Spirit moves *where it listeth* in the work of the new birth, it cannot be deterred by the inability or unwillingness of man to disperse that gospel. We are compelled to conclude that either: 1) The Spirit uniformly uses the gospel as a means to the new birth, in which event the Spirit must compel men to preach the gospel to all who are to be born again, or 2) The Spirit may quicken without the agency of man, in which event the Spirit must quicken apart from the gospel or else become itself the preacher. We will not pursue this at length since it would carry us from our topic. Suffice it to say that the latter must be true because of scriptural statements concerning infants (Matthew 11:25, Matthew 21:16, and Luke 1:15) and scriptural statements concerning limitations on man's ability to deliver the gospel (Matthew 9:37, Romans 15:31, and II Thessalonians 3:1).

We may also infer the doctrine of irresistible grace from scriptures teaching the spiritual incapacity of natural man. For example, I Corinthians 2:14 reads, *But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Since natural man is both unwilling and unable to receive *spiritual things*, then it must certainly be the case that he is neither willing nor able to receive the Holy Spirit Himself. How is he then to experience the spiritual birth? Clearly, this can happen only if the Spirit irresistibly imposes Himself. But the objector will likely assert that this is an oversimplification. That in fact the Spirit partially capacitates the man to spiritual things, at which point the man must properly direct his own will for completion of the spiritual birth. Supposing this to be true, then what if the Spirit were to be successfully resisted in all of this? Then the intents of the Spirit could be frustrated by the uncooperation of man, and it could not be properly said

that the Spirit worketh *where it listeth*. We must conclude that the will of man has no *active* part in the spiritual birth, but his *passive* response will be that of Psalms 110:3 - *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power...* According, *The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord* (Proverbs 16:1).

On this point, the Lord establishes yet another unappreciated truth in John three when He says in verse six, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*. This truth derives from a principle governing all of God's creation; namely, that God has so arranged that like begets like in all things. A horse has never contributed to the birth of a cow; likewise, a natural man cannot contribute toward the birth of a spiritual man, either in himself or others. The claim that natural man contributes to any degree toward his spiritual origin is contrary not only to the express statement of the Lord, but also to all that we know about God from the creation.

Furthermore, were the cooperation of man required in the spiritual birth, then *spiritual birth* becomes a gross misnomer, for what living creature ever contributed toward its birth? Indeed, all scriptural analogies to the acquisition of spiritual life convey the truth of irresistible grace. These analogies include:

- 1) a birth - John 1:11-13, John 3:3-8
- 2) a quickening - Ephesians 2:1-5, Colossians 2:13
- 3) a translation - Colossians 1:12,13
- 4) a resurrection - John 5:25-29
- 5) a creation - II Corinthians 5:17, Ephesians 2:10

Clearly, no creature ever contributed toward its own creation. Accordingly, the dead cannot contribute toward their own resurrection. In fact all of these analogies suggest an irresistible power working on a passive object. We are compelled by their collective preponderance to conclude that irresistible grace is an irresistible truth.

As any truth will harmonize with all scriptures, likewise the doctrine of irresistible grace accords perfectly with the numerous scriptures asserting that spiritual life derives from the will of God and not from the will of man. For example, John 1:13 tells us that we were born *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*. We may also add: John 5:21, Romans 9:11-16, II Timothy 1:9-10, Hebrews 10:7-10, and others.

But what of the texts that speak of quenching the Spirit (I Thessalonians 5:19) or of grieving the Spirit (Ephesians 4:30)? It is important to understand that the doctrine of irresistible grace refers to the work of the Spirit in the new birth only. It is clear from both scriptures and experience that the Spirit does not irresistibly impose Himself in all matters. The Lord's people can cause the power of the Spirit to be diminished in their lives through apathy, disobedience, and departures from the truth (e.g. I Corinthians 3:1 and Galatians 3:3). Accordingly, texts referring to the Spirit being quenched, grieved, etc. have no reference to the new birth, but are admonitions to those who have already experienced the new birth. May we ever proclaim the truth of irresistible grace and its accompanying doctrines that this never become the case among us.

**Pyles, David. "A Short Defense of the Doctrine of Irresistible Grace". The Primitive Baptist Web Station. 2/22/05. <http://www.pb.org/pbdocs/irrgrace.html>**

## **Irresistible Grace**

*by John Piper*

The doctrine of irresistible grace does not mean that every influence of the Holy Spirit cannot be resisted. It means that the Holy Spirit can overcome all resistance and make his influence irresistible.

In Acts 7:51 Stephen says to the Jewish leaders, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit as your fathers did." And Paul speaks of grieving and quenching the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30; 1 Thessalonians 5:19). God gives many entreaties and promptings which are resisted. In fact the whole history of Israel in the Old Testament is one protracted story of resistance, as the parable of the wicked tenants shows (Matthew 21:33-43; cf. Romans 10:21).

The doctrine of irresistible grace means that God is sovereign and can overcome all resistance when he wills. "He does according to his will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand!" (Daniel 4:35). "Our God is in the heavens; he does whatever he pleases" (Psalm 115:3). When God undertakes to fulfill his sovereign purpose, no one can successfully resist him.

This is what Paul taught in Romans 9:14-18, which caused his opponent to say, "Why then does he still find fault? For who can resist his will?" To which Paul answers: "Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me thus?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for beauty and another for menial use?" (Romans 9:20f).

*More specifically irresistible grace refers to the sovereign work of God to overcome the rebellion of our heart and bring us to faith in Christ so that we can be saved. If our doctrine of total depravity is true, there can be no salvation without the reality of irresistible grace. If we are dead in our sins, totally unable to submit to God, then we will never believe in Christ unless God overcomes our rebellion.*

Someone may say, "Yes, the Holy Spirit must draw us to God, but we can use our freedom to resist or accept that drawing." Our answer is: except for the continual exertion of saving grace, we will always use our freedom to resist God. That is what it means to be "unable to submit to God." If a person becomes humble enough to submit to God it is because God has given that person a new, humble nature. If a person remains too hard hearted and proud to submit to God, it is because that person has not been given such a willing spirit. But to see this most persuasively we should look at the Scriptures.

In John 6:44 Jesus says, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him." This drawing is the sovereign work of grace without which no one can be saved from their rebellion against God. Again some say, "He draws all men, not just some." But this simply evades the clear implication of the context that the Father's "drawing" is why some believe and not others.

Specifically, John 6:64-65 says, "'But there are some of you that do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the first who those were that did not believe, and who it was that should

betray him. And he said, "This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father."

Notice two things.

First, notice that coming to Jesus is called a gift. It is not just an opportunity. Coming to Jesus is "given" to some and not to others.

Second, notice that the reason Jesus says this, is to explain why "there are some who do not believe." We could paraphrase it like this: Jesus knew from the beginning that Judas would not believe on him in spite of all the teaching and invitations he received. And because he knew this, he explains it with the words, No one comes to me unless it is given to him by my Father. Judas was not given to Jesus. There were many influences on his life for good. But the decisive, irresistible gift of grace was not given.

2 Timothy 2:24-25 says, "The Lord's servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to every one, an apt teacher, forbearing, correcting his opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth."

Here, as in John 6:65 repentance is called a gift of God. Notice, he is not saying merely that salvation is a gift of God. He is saying that the prerequisites of salvation are also a gift. When a person hears a preacher call for repentance he can resist that call. But if God gives him repentance he cannot resist because the gift is the removal of resistance. Not being willing to repent is the same as resisting the Holy Spirit. So if God gives repentance it is the same as taking away the resistance. This is why we call this work of God "irresistible grace".

NOTE: It should be obvious from this that irresistible grace never implies that God forces us to believe against our will. That would even be a contradiction in terms. On the contrary, irresistible grace is compatible with preaching and witnessing that tries to persuade people to do what is reasonable and what will accord with their best interests. 1 Corinthians 1:23-24 says, "We preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jew and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God." Notice the two kinds of "calls" implied in this text. First, the preaching of Paul goes out to all, both Jews and Greeks. This is the general call of the gospel. It offers salvation to all who will believe on the crucified Christ. But by and large it falls on unreceptive ears and is called foolishness.

But then, secondly, Paul refers to another kind of call. He says that among those who hear there are some who are "called" in such a way that they no longer regard the cross as foolishness but as the wisdom and power of God. What else can this call be but the irresistible call of God out of darkness into the light of God? If ALL who are called in this sense regard the cross as the power of God, then something in the call must effect the faith. This is irresistible grace.

It is further explained in 2 Corinthians 4:4-6, "The god of this world has blinded the minds of unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God...It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ."

Since men are blinded to the worth of Christ, a miracle is needed in order for them to come to see and believe. Paul compares this miracle with the first day of creation when God said, "Let there be light." It is in fact a new creation, or a new birth. This is what is meant by the effectual call in 1 Corinthians 1:24.

Those who are called have their eyes opened by the sovereign creative power of God so that they no longer see the cross as foolishness but as the power and the wisdom of God. The effectual call is the miracle of having our blindness removed. This is irresistible grace.

Another example of it is in Acts 16:14, where Lydia is listening to the preaching of Paul. Luke says, "The Lord opened her heart to give heed to what was said by Paul." Unless God opens our hearts, we will not heed the message of the gospel. This heart-opening is what we mean by irresistible grace.

Another way to describe it is "new birth" or being born again. We believe that new birth is a miraculous creation of God that enables a formerly "dead" person to receive Christ and so be saved. We do not think that faith precedes and causes new birth. Faith is the evidence that God has begotten us anew. "Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God" (1 John 5:1).

When John says that God gives the right to become the children of God to all who receive Christ (John 1:12), he goes on to say that those who do receive Christ "were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God." In other words, it is necessary to receive Christ in order to become a child of God, but the birth that brings one into the family of God is not possible by the will of man.

Man is dead in trespasses and sins. He cannot make himself new, or create new life in himself. He must be born of God. Then, with the new nature of God, he immediately receives Christ. The two acts (regeneration and faith) are so closely connected that in experience we cannot distinguish them. God begets us anew and the first glimmer of life in the new-born child is faith. Thus new birth is the effect of irresistible grace, because it is an act of sovereign creation -- "not of the will of man but of God."

\*\* Excerpt Taken From What We Believe About the Five Points of Calvinism by John Piper & Bethlehem Baptist Church Staff

**Piper, John. "Irresistible Grace". Monergism, The Church of the Threshold. 2/22/05.  
<http://monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/piper/irresistible.html>**

## LESSON SEVEN: PERSERVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

- I. Calvin's Words
- II. Bible Doctrine
- III. "Really/Truly Saved"

### I. Calvin's Words

Recall this quote one more time.

Although it is now sufficiently plain that God by his secret counsel chooses whom he will while he rejects others, his gratuitous election has only been partially explained until we come to the case of single individuals, to whom God not only offers salvation, but so assigns it, that the certainty of the result remains not dubious or suspended.<sup>42</sup>

The "result" of election brings us to those Elect people who have been acted on and saved by Irresistible Grace. Now, Calvin says their lives **must** end in salvation. This doctrine is also called "Can't Fall From Grace".

For those whom Christ enlightens with the knowledge of his name, and admits into the bosom of his Church, he is said to take under his guardianship and protection. All whom he thus receives are said to be committed and entrusted to him by the Father, that they may be kept unto life eternal. What would we have? Christ proclaims aloud that all whom the Father is pleased to save he has delivered into his protection, (John 6: 37-39, 17: 6, 12.) ... Let us, therefore, embrace Christ, who is kindly offered to us, and comes forth to meet us: he will number us among his flock, and keep us within his fold. But anxiety arises as to our future state. For as Paul teaches, that those are called who were previously elected, so our Savior shows that many are called, but few chosen, (Matth. 22:14.) Nay, even Paul himself dissuades us from security, when he says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall," (1 Cor. 10: 12.) And again, "Well, because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high-minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest he also spare not thee," (Rom. 11: 20, 21.) In fine, we are sufficiently taught by experience itself, that calling and faith are of little value without perseverance, which, however, is not the gift of all. But Christ has freed us from anxiety on this head; for the following promises undoubtedly have respect to the future: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that comes to me I will in no wise cast out." Again, "This is the will of him that sent me, that

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<sup>42</sup> Institutes, 3.21.7

of all which he has given me I should lose nothing; but should raise it up at the last day," (John 6: 37, 39.) Again "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father which gave them me is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand," (John 10: 27, 28.) Again when he declares, Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up," (Matth. 15:13,) he intimates conversely that those who have their root in God can never be deprived of their salvation. Agreeable to this are the words of John, "If they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us," (1 John 2: 19.) Hence, also, the magnificent triumph of Paul over life and death, things present, and things to come, (Rom. 8: 38.) This must be founded on the gift of perseverance. There is no doubt that he employs the sentiment as applicable to all the elect. Paul elsewhere says, "Being confident of this very thing, that he who has begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ," (Phil. 1: 6.) David, also, when his faith threatened to fail, leant on this support, "Forsake not the works of thy hands." Moreover, it cannot be doubted, that since Christ prays for all the elect, he asks the same thing for them as he asked for Peter, viz., that their faith fail not, (Luke 22: 32.) Hence we infer, that there is no danger of their falling away, since the Son of God, who asks that their piety may prove constant, never meets with a refusal. What then did our Savior intend to teach us by this prayer, but just to confide, that whenever we are his our eternal salvation is secure?<sup>43</sup>

But it daily happens that those who seemed to belong to Christ revolt from him and fall away: Nay, in the very passage where he declares that none of those whom the Father has given to him have perished, he excepts the son of perdition. This, indeed, is true; but it is equally true that such persons never adhered to Christ with that heartfelt confidence by which I say that the certainty of our election is established: "They went out from us," says John, "but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would, no doubt, have continued with us," (1 John 2: 19.) I deny not that they have signs of calling similar to those given to the elect; but I do not at all admit that they have that sure confirmation of election which I desire believers to seek from the word of the gospel. Wherefore, let not examples of this kind move us away from tranquil confidence in the promise of the Lord, when he declares that all by whom he is received in true faith have been given him by the Father, and that none of them, while he is their Guardian and Shepherd, will perish, (John 3: 16; 6: 39.) Of Judas we shall shortly speak, (sec. 9.) Paul does not dissuade Christians from security simply, but from careless, carnal security, which is accompanied with pride, arrogance, and contempt of others, which extinguishes humility and

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<sup>43</sup> Institutes, 3.24.6

reverence for God, and produces a forgetfulness of grace received, (Rom. 11: 20.) For he is addressing the Gentiles, and showing them that they ought not to exult proudly and cruelly over the Jews, in consequence of whose rejection they had been substituted in their stead. He also enjoins fear, not a fear under which they may waver in alarm, but a fear which, teaching us to receive the grace of God in humility, does not impair our confidence in it, as has elsewhere been said. We may add, that he is not speaking to individuals, but to sects in general, (see 1 Cor. 10: 12.) The Church having been divided into two parties, and rivalry producing dissension, Paul reminds the Gentiles that their having been substituted in the place of a peculiar and holy people was a reason for modesty and fear. For there were many vain-glorious persons among them, whose empty boasting it was expedient to repress. But we have elsewhere seen, that our hope extends into the future, even beyond death, and that nothing is more contrary to its nature than to be in doubt as to our future destiny.<sup>44</sup>

## II. Bible Doctrine<sup>45</sup>

The ability to fall can be demonstrated despite Calvin's evasiveness. Using the principle of parsimony<sup>46</sup> we can establish the following:

All that God does is necessary.

Telling saints not to fall is something that God does.<sup>47</sup>

Telling saints not to fall is necessary.

If the saints cannot fall, then telling saints not to fall is not necessary.

Telling saints not to fall is necessary.

Saints can fall.<sup>48</sup>

Calvin dodges this by claiming that Christians must not fall while at the same time telling us that the elect cannot. This is definitely inconsistent.

## III. Really/Truly Saved

The most common trick in this matter is to claim that those that seem to fall were not "truly" or "really" saved. This is a tricky word game. Let us define these terms. Truly means in truth. Really means in reality. Thus, the claim that some are not really saved is the same as saying were not saved in reality. Since, "unreality" is quite irrelevant, we can reduce this to say that they were not saved. However, note the following:

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<sup>44</sup> Institutes, 3.24.7

<sup>45</sup> Fox, p. 87-93

<sup>46</sup> God does nothing unnecessary and does everything that is necessary.

<sup>47</sup> See handout on Hebrews.

<sup>48</sup> This has a lot of "nots", but it is still a valid construction called Modus Tollens (Denying the Consequent)



**II Pet. 2:20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.**

Peter speaks of those that have escaped being entangled again. Did they not escape in reality? Did they not escape in truth? Either would make Peter's statement an untruth! They in truth escaped and in truth became entangled again.

**Gal. 5:1 Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.**

Similarly, Paul puts his salvation together with the Galatians. If they that were endanger of being entangled again were not truly saved, then neither was Paul, as he refers to their salvation collectively, using the word "us". Paul explains in the next several verses that if they leave Christ for the Old Law, then "ye are fallen from grace." This "truly" or "really" word game is a ploy. While it is true that some are baptized and fellowship the believers without being converted in truth, the Bible would never call them converted, saved, or saints. The Bible would call them lost, even if we ignorantly thought them to be saved.

**I John 2:19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us; but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.**

In this case, those that left might never have been converted or they may have forsaken Christ in their hearts long before their actions matched. The verse does not say that they were never saved. It is also speaking of particular men leaving over a particular doctrine (whether or not Christ came in the flesh). These points will help us to understand this verse. The simplest interpretation is this:

They went out from our fellowship, but they hadn't been in fellowship with us in heart for a long time because of their false doctrine concerning Christ. Had they held the same doctrine as we, they would have stayed. But they left, showing that they do not fellowship us or teach that Christ is come in the flesh.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> This is a paraphrase based on context, not Greek.

## LESSON EIGHT: IMPERATIVE MOOD<sup>50</sup>

- I. Grammar Rules
- II. Application

### I. Grammar Rules

Hermeneutical Rules:

- (1) Valid rules of grammar must always be recognized as binding unless there is a compelling reason to ignore them.
- (2) Context is the final determining factor of the meaning of a word, phrase, or sentence.
- (3) Only the one to whom a commandment is given may obey<sup>51</sup> the commandment.
- (4) Commandments given with regard to a set of circumstances, or events, or principles are universal regarding those circumstances, events, or principles.

The Imperative

“... the mood which expresses action which is to be realized by the exercise of the will of one person upon that of another.” – Summers, p. 112

Main Uses of Imperative:

- (1) Expresses positive or negative commandment.
- (2) Expresses permission.
- (3) Expresses condition.

If there are 100 passages all dealing with a subject and only one is imperative, then all can be understood to be imperative. This is true because God is consistent.

### II. Application

Various passages containing actions often assigned to direct action/influence from the Holy Spirit on us are in the Imperative Mood. Since the commandment is not given to the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit cannot obey it. Only we can obey these commands. The underlined terms are in the Imperative Mood.

Acts 3:19 **Repent ye therefore, and be converted<sup>52</sup>, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord;**

<sup>50</sup> The boxed portions of this section are taken almost word-for-word from lectures on the Holy Spirit given by Charles Pledge at Corinth, MS. The entire lesson reflects these lectures, including example verses.

<sup>51</sup> Another person may “do”, but not “obey”.

<sup>52</sup> This is also active voice, not passive.

Rom 6:12-13 **Let<sup>53</sup> not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. [13] Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.**

Rom. 6:19 **I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.**

Rom. 12:2 **And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.**

Rom. 12:16 ... **Be not wise in your own conceits.**

Rom. 12:21 **Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.**

Rom. 13:14 **But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to *fulfil* the lusts *thereof*.**

Eph. 4:26 **Be ye angry<sup>54</sup>, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:**

Col. 2:6 **As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him:**

If these commands are performed only by direct operation of the Holy Spirit (Irresistible Grace), then (1) we are still accountable for failure to obey the command, (2) God is irrational for giving a commandment to one who He knows cannot obey, and (3) God is irrational for condemning man for disobeying a commandment he could never keep.

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<sup>53</sup> “Let” in conjunction with a verb often expresses an imperative that is difficult to represent in English with a single word. It is not necessarily being used to express permission.

<sup>54</sup> This is probably the permissive use of the imperative mentioned earlier.

## LESSON NINE: MIDDLE VOICE<sup>55</sup>

- I. Grammar Rules
- II. Application

### I. Grammar Rules<sup>56</sup>

English Voices:

1. Active – subject is acting
2. Passive – subject is being acted on

Greek Voices:

1. Active – subject is acting
2. Passive – subject is being acted on
3. Middle – “subject is acting so as to participate in some way in the results of the action”<sup>57</sup>

### II. Application

Various passages containing actions often assigned to direct action/influence from the Holy Spirit on us are in the Middle Voice. With this voice, the subject must perform the action, generally to receive the result of his action for himself. The underlined terms are in the Middle Voice. Verses marked with an asterisk are also Imperative, making them very emphatic.

#### CONVERSION:

Rom. 6:18 **Being then made free from sin, ye became<sup>58</sup> the servants of righteousness.**

Acts 2:21 **And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.**

Acts 22:16 **And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized\*, and wash away\* thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.**

#### PUT OFF & PUT ON:

Gal. 3:27 **For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.**

Col. 3:10 **And have put on the new *man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:**

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<sup>55</sup> This entire lesson is also taken from the lectures mentioned in the prior lesson, including example verses.

<sup>56</sup> See additional notes from Fox Handout

<sup>57</sup> Summers, p. 38

<sup>58</sup> Could be passive ending, but context (Imperative Mood) demonstrates that it is Middle Voice.

Eph 4:22-24 That ye **put off** concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; ... [24] And that ye **put on** the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Rom. 13:12 The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore **cast off** the works of darkness, and let us **put on** the armour of light.

CHRISTIAN LIVING:

Rom. 12:2 And **be not conformed\*** to this world: but be ye transformed\*<sup>59</sup> by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

I Cor. 16:13 Watch ye\*, stand fast\* in the faith, **quit you like men\***, be strong\*.

Rom. 8:13 For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit<sup>60</sup> do mortify the deeds of the body, ye **shall live**.

Phi. 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, **think\*** on these things.

Gal. 6:10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us **do** good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Eph. 5:1 **Be ye\*** therefore followers of God, as dear children;

Eph. 6:10-17 Finally, my brethren, **be strong\***<sup>61</sup> in the Lord, and in the power of his might. [11] **Put on\*** the whole armour of God, ... [13] ... and **having done all**, to stand. [14] Stand therefore, **having** your loins girt ..., and **having [put] on** the breastplate ...; [15] And **[having]** your feet **shod** ...; [16] ... wherewith ye **shall be able to quench** ... [17] And **take\*** the helmet ... the sword ...

Phi. 1:27 Only **let your conversation be\*** as it becometh the gospel of Christ: ...

Phi. 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out\*** your own salvation with fear and trembling.

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<sup>59</sup> Passive voice is used, because the renewing of the mind does the action. But we renew our own mind!

<sup>60</sup> Probably disposition as contrasted with fleshly mind.

<sup>61</sup> This term is a little ambiguous in that it could be a Passive Voice ending, but context demands otherwise.

## **Appendix**

### **Influence of Calvinism**

In the Introduction, we mentioned the avenues of influence that Calvinism has taken. The following are primary source documents wherein you can see the obvious influence of Calvinism on the religious world in general and on the Lord's church.

## Southern Baptist Church and Calvinism<sup>62</sup>

### III. Man

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. **By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race.** Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby **his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin.**<sup>63</sup> Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

### IV. Salvation

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification. There is no salvation apart from personal faith in Jesus Christ as Lord.

A. Regeneration, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. **It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit**<sup>64</sup> through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

B. Justification is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

C. Sanctification is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is **enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit dwelling in him.**<sup>65</sup> Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

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<sup>62</sup> <http://www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp#iv> (All emp. added – BJW)

<sup>63</sup> Total Inherent Depravity

<sup>64</sup> Irresistible Grace / Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit

<sup>65</sup> Irresistible Grace / Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit

D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.

## V. God's Purpose of Grace

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. **It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable.**<sup>66</sup> It excludes boasting and promotes humility.

**All true believers endure to the end.**<sup>67</sup> Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, **will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end.**<sup>68</sup> Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

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## The United Methodist Church and Calvinism<sup>69</sup>

### Article VII—Of Original or Birth Sin

Original sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is **the corruption of the nature of every man,**<sup>70</sup> that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own **nature inclined to evil,**<sup>71</sup> and that continually.

### Article VIII—Of Free Will

The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that **he cannot turn and prepare himself,**<sup>72</sup> by his own natural strength and works, to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have **no power to do good works,**<sup>73</sup> pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

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<sup>66</sup> Unconditional Election

<sup>67</sup> Perseverance of the Saints

<sup>68</sup> Perseverance of the Saints

<sup>69</sup> <http://www.umc.org/interior.asp?ptid=1&mid=1649> (All emp. added – BJW)

<sup>70</sup> Total Inherent Depravity

<sup>71</sup> Total Inherent Depravity

<sup>72</sup> Total Inherent Depravity

<sup>73</sup> Total Inherent Depravity



## **False Teachers in the Church:**

From that holy Pentecost Day until now, the principal proof of the Spirit's presence has not been fire, noise, and miracles. It has been and remains and always will be changed lives that are being brought under the Spirit's control.

When a man or woman is baptized in Jesus' name, that person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). His body becomes the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 6:19), and her mind begins to be renewed by the Spirit's presence (Rom. 12:2). Selfishness and greed get transformed into generosity. Lust gets purified into love. Anger, pride, and self-absorption are metamorphosed into a forgiving spirit, unpretentious behaviors, and captivation with Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit within us moves us to worship, drives us to the Word of God, and stirs our consciences.

To believe in the Holy Spirit is to believe that the Living God is able and willing to enter human personalities to change them. The physical sign to us of his arrival is not fire or noise or tongues but the waters of baptism. And the proof of his work in us over time is not supernatural gifts but the fruit of God's love in a human life – joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23).

*Do you see this leather glove? It was once alive as a mooing, grass-devouring, cud-chewing, milk-producing cow. Then one day she became somebody's steak and my glove. **The glove is dead and can do nothing by itself.**<sup>74</sup> You can command it all you want, but it can't respond. But with my hand inside it, there is nothing I can do that it doesn't participate in or share in some way! True enough. It's not the glove that does those things but my living hand inside it. And that is why Christ sent the Holy Spirit to be in us. We are dead in our trespasses and sins. All the commandments and laws of heaven cannot bring us back to life. But we can be quickened and made alive by his indwelling presence – born from above by the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit. We are gloves. **The Holy Spirit is the living hand who works inside and through us.**<sup>75</sup> I want to be filled with his presence, animated by his power, and used for God's purposes in the world.<sup>76</sup>*

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It is the Spirit's work to transform sinners into saints. His power enables one to "put off" an old man or woman and "put on" a new personality and character. His primary task in Christian experience is to make those who follow Jesus "fruitful" in holy things.<sup>77</sup>

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There is a close association between the Word of God and the Spirit of God. But they are not the same. Their relationship is document to author, weapon to warrior, aspiration to competence. And while their relationship is important, it is not mutually exhaustive. Having a Bible isn't the same as being filled with the Spirit. Even sincere and diligent obedience to the steps to holiness we discern in the Bible isn't the same as "walking by

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<sup>74</sup> Total Inherent Depravity

<sup>75</sup> Irresistible Grace / Direct Operation of the Holy Spirit

<sup>76</sup> <http://www.rubelshelly.com/content.asp?CID=10415> (All emphasis added – BJW)

<sup>77</sup> <http://www.rubelshelly.com/content.asp?CID=10334>

the Spirit" or being "led by the Spirit." I like the way my friend Max Lucado illustrated this difference in his book *A Gentle Thunder*.

Max compares the role of the Spirit in our lives to a guy who wants to learn to dance. He's a rational, intelligent sort of guy, so he goes to the bookstore and buys a how-to book. He takes it home and begins studying. He does everything it says with meticulous care. When the instructions say sway, he sways. When the instructions say lean, he leans. When the instructions say spin, he spins. He even cuts out paper footprints and arranges them on the family room floor so he will know exactly where to step.

Finally, he thinks he's got it down pat. He calls his wife in and says, "Honey, watch!" With book in hand and reading aloud so she'll know he's done his homework, he follows the instructions step by step. It says, "Take one step with your right foot." So he takes one step with his right foot. Then it says, "Turn slowly to the left." He turns slowly to the left. He keeps it up, reading and then moving, reading and dancing, through the whole thing.

Then he collapses exhausted on the sofa and says to his wife, "What do you think? I executed it perfectly!" To which she replies, "You executed it all right. You killed it!"

The bumfuzzled husband says, "But I followed the rules, I laid out the pattern, I did everything the book said . . ."

"But," she sighs, "you forgot the most important part. Where was the music?"

With that, she puts on a CD. "Try it again. Quit worrying about the steps and just follow the music." She holds out her hand, and he gets up and takes it. The music starts, and the next thing the guy knows he's dancing — without the book!

Max closes the story with this: "We Christians are prone to follow the book while ignoring the music. We master the doctrine, outline the chapters, memorize the dispensations, debate the rules, and stiffly step down the dance floor of life with no music in our hearts. Dancing with no music is tough stuff. Jesus knew that. For that reason, on the night before His death He introduced the disciples to the song maker of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit."

If you will let him be your Holy Guest and move to the music he makes, you will be — to borrow Paul's language from Galatians 5:25 — "in step with the Spirit." A member of the family of God. Bolder in your struggles with temptation and the Evil One. Secure in your status as a co-heir with Christ. And living in spiritual unity with him — awaiting his glory, yet willing to suffer in the meanwhile.<sup>78</sup>

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Alien sinners cannot produce any of the fruits of the Spirit<sup>79</sup>. Only those with the personal indwelling can produce the fruits of the Spirit.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.rubelshelly.com/content.asp?CID=10330>

<sup>79</sup> The verse alluded to here (Gal. 5:22-23) probably refers to the "spirit" (disposition) as contrasted with a fleshly mind set.

<sup>80</sup> Various sources, including the last special issue of "Biblical Notes Quarterly".