



WHY DO WE BELIEVE *THAT* ?

Introduction to Reformed Theology

Class 16

ULTIP, PART 5

Education Year 2024-2025

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1

Review – ULTIP Part 4

- Total Depravity and Total Inability
- Rationalism / Empericism and Arminianism / Culture
- Irresistible Grace
 - John 6:44 and “to draw”



2

Small Step Back – “Original Sin”

- Sometimes there is confusion over what is implied by the term “original sin”
 - Yes, Adam’s first sin was the “original” sin, but in Reformed Theology when we use that term we generally mean: “All men are born in a sinful state and condition, which is called original sin, and is the root of all the actual sins that are committed.

Original sin includes both *guilt* and *pollution*. The guilt of Adam’s sin is imputed to us. Because he sinned as our representative, we are guilty in him. Moreover we also inherited his pollution, and now have a positive disposition toward sin.”¹

- BC 15
- As a result of Adam’s sin we are born guilty.
 - We sin because we are sinners, *not* we are sinners because we sin.

1. Berkhof, *Summary*, 58-59.



Perseverance of the Saints

- Better term, “preservation of the saints”
 - Sproul, “The reason true Christians do not fall from grace is that God graciously keeps them from falling. Perseverance is what we do. Preservation is what God does. We persevere because God preserves.”¹
- Berkhof, definition: “...that continuous operation of the Holy Spirit in the believer, by which the work of divine grace that is begun in the heart, is continued and brought to completion.”²
- Implications of the other “Doctrines of Grace”
 - “Unconditional Election” – God chose us to be saved unto eternal life.
 - “Definite Redemption” – Christ made full atonement for the elect.
 - “Total Depravity” – Even though we are still sinful...
 - “Irresistible Grace” – God calls his people and regenerates them.

1. Sproul, *Chosen by God*, 174-173.
2. Berkhof, *Summary*, 118.



Scripture Passages

- John 6:37-40
- John 10:7-16; 25-30
- Romans 8:9-11
- Romans 8:30 (discussed in Class #14)
- Romans 8:31-39
- Romans 11:29
- 1 Peter 1:3-5, 8-9
- Philippians 1:6
- 2 Thessalonians 3:3
- 2 Timothy 1:12
- 2 Timothy 4:18



Believers and Sin

- Romans 7:7-25
 - Is Paul saying this what he was like before or after his conversion?
- 1 John 1:8-2:2
- Turretin, “The state of the believer is twofold: one of wrestling or victory; either while he fights and contends hand to hand with the enemy or while he triumphs over the prostrate foe. Thus faith, and the certainty arising from it, differs in each. In the former it is weak; in the latter it is strong. In the first, it fears and hesitates; in the second, it confides and rejoices. In the first, it utters groans and sighs from a sense of God's anger and the burden of sins; in the other, it experiences inexpressible joy from the sweetness of redeeming grace. Therefore although the believer in the struggle cannot elicit an act of certainty, this does not hinder him (when the temptation has been overcome and his strength renewed by grace) from coming out stronger and more confirmed.¹

1. Turretin, *Institutes*, 1.378-379.



Assurance

- Hebrews 6:11-12
- Hebrews 10:19-22
- 2 Peter 1:10

1. Points above from VanDrunen, Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Class Notes, 10.28.08.
2. Ibid.



Assurance

- There is a general Reformed consensus on assurance, with some outlying groups.
 - Assurance is attainable
 - Assurance should be sought
 - Some sense of assurance will always be present with a believer (although it may be meager at times)
 - Assurance coexists in this life with temptations, doubts, anxieties.
- Puritans vs. Continental?
 - Some try to make a distinction between the Puritan understanding and the Continental understanding—no difference in doctrine.¹
 - WCF 18 & HC 21, 59-61
 - “There is never true faith without some assurance, however, the infallible assurance isn’t always present.”²

1. Points above from VanDrunen, Doctrine of the Holy Spirit Class Notes, 10.28.08.
2. Ibid.



Assurance

- Turretin, “Nor does it hinder that various persons can deceive themselves with a vain hope and by a rash presumption glory in the faith which nevertheless they do not possess. The vain boasting of hypocrites does not takeaway the true confidence of believers. If they who are destitute of that Spirit do not know him, it is not properly inferred that they who do possess it are ignorant of it and cannot discern it by its criteria. I confess that those marks do not always have an equal degree of clearness or certainty, but on that account they are not to be reckoned fallacious and merely conjectural. For as certainly as he who lives knows that he lives from the vital actions which he clearly perceives in himself, so he who lives by the spiritual life of the sons of God can know that he lives by the Spirit which works in him.”¹

1. Turretin, 375.



Assurance

- Berkhof, “...true faith including, as it does, trust in God, naturally carries with it a sense of safety and security, though this may vary in degree. This assurance is not the permanent conscious possession of the believer, He does not ever live the full orb'd life of faith, and as a result is not always conscious of his spiritual riches. He may be swayed by doubts and uncertainties, and is therefore urged to cultivate assurance, 2 Cor. 13:5; Heb. 6:11; 2 Pet. 1:10; 1 John 3:19. It can be cultivated by prayer, by meditating on the promises of God, and by the development of a truly Christian life.”¹

1. Berkhof, *Summary*, 108.



“Eternal Security”

- An idea that some think is the “Calvinist” position. Similar, but with some significant differences
- Horton:
 - *The Christian Faith*, p. 685
 - The Eternal Security position bifurcates Christians and the Christian life (carnal vs. victorious Christians). The eternal security position is that all Christians (“both kinds”) will make it heaven, but the carnal Christians will have a much more difficult time with fewer temporal benefits in this life and fewer rewards in heaven.
 - The emphasis is on our actions and piety to put us into the “victorious” category.
 - The understanding of this position is, in relation to Paul’s letter to the Galatians, “Their [the Galatians’] fall is from a standard of life, not a work of salvation.”¹

1. Horton, “A Classical Calvinist View” in *Four Views of Eternal Security*, 29.



Apostasy Passages

- Romans 9:6
- Hebrews 2:1
- Hebrews 3:14
- Hebrews 10:26
- Colossians 1:21-23
- 1 Timothy 1:19-20
- 2 Timothy 2:17-18
- 2 Timothy 4:10
- 1 John 2:19
- Revelation 3:1



Apostasy – Hebrews 6 – Horton's Argument¹

- We need to start with Covenant Theology!
 - CoR – there is intra-Trinitarian solidarity
 - CoW – Adam failed
 - CoG – God promises a Champion
 - Christ satisfies the CoW: so “the CoG rests on an unshakeable foundation” and makes believers “covenant keepers.”
- The CoG requires acceptance, we respond with faith
- Heb 4:1-2 – What is held out is consummation glory
 - Illustration of Israel in the wilderness, they fell away *outside* the Promised Land—they hadn't obtained it yet.

1. Horton, "A Classical Calvinist View", 30ff.



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Horton's Argument, cont'd

- Heb 6:4-6
 - The circle of the covenant community is bigger than the circle of election.
 - Paul in Romans 9, those in the outer circle can be broken off, not those inside.
 - P. 37 – first full paragraph
 - A sanctified sphere of the Spirit's work where even the unregenerate can taste, see, and experience.
 - Covenant Theology has a third category of person: saved, unsaved, *unregenerate but belongs to the covenant community*.
 - If we are not “in the Vine [of Christ]” we will be broken off regardless if we are a “covenant child” or not. We need to be united to Christ through faith.
 - P. 39-40, 42



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Canons of Dort – Head Five

- A great head of doctrine!
- 1-2 – Struggle with sin
- 3 – God preserves
- 4-5 – Serious sins
- 6 – God intervenes
- 7 – Renewal to repentance
- 8-II – Certainty / Assurance
- 12-13 – Godliness / Carelessness
- 14 – God uses means
- 15 – Reactions to this teaching



Next Week

- The Atonement
- Maybe the *Ordo Salutis*

