

Belgic Confession (1561)

Article 16: The Doctrine of Election

We believe that all the posterity of Adam being fallen into perdition and ruin, by the sin of our first parents, God showed himself to be as he is: merciful and just. God is merciful in withdrawing and saving from this perdition those who, in the eternal and unchangeable divine counsel, have been elected and chosen in Jesus Christ our Lord by his pure goodness, without any consideration of their works. God is just in leaving the others in their ruin and fall into which they plunged themselves.

Arminian Remonstrance (1610)

Article 1 [Conditional Election]

God, by an eternal and unchangeable purpose in Jesus Christ his Son, before the foundation of the world, hath determined, out of the fallen, sinful race of men, to save in Christ, for Christ's sake, and through Christ, those who, through the grace of the Holy Ghost, shall believe on this his son Jesus, and shall persevere in this faith and obedience of faith, through this grace, even to the end; and, on the other hand, to leave the incorrigible and unbelieving in sin and under wrath, and to condemn them as alienated from Christ, according to the word of the Gospel in (John 3:36).

Article 2 [General Atonement]

That agreeably thereunto, Jesus Christ the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer, according to the word of the Gospel of John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And in 1 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."

Article 3 [Depravity]

That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the energy of his free will, inasmuch as he, in the state of apostasy and sin, can of and by himself neither think, will, nor do any thing that is truly good (such as saving faith eminently is); but that it is needful that he be born again of God in Christ, through his Holy Spirit, and renewed in understanding, inclination, or will, and all his powers, in order that he may rightly understand, think, will, and effect what is truly good, according to John 15:5, "Without me ye can do nothing."

Article 4 [Resistable Grace]

That this grace of God is the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment of all good, even to this extent, that the regenerate man himself, without prevenient or assisting,

Reformed Canons of Dort (1619)

Part I, Article 9 [Unconditional Election]

Election was not founded upon foreseen faith, and the obedience of faith, holiness, or any other good quality or disposition in man, as the pre-requisite, cause or condition on which it depended; but men are chosen to faith and to obedience of faith, holiness, etc., therefore election is the fountain of every saving good; from which proceed faith, holiness, and the other gifts of salvation, and finally eternal life itself, as its fruits and effects, according to that of the apostle: "He hath chosen us (not because we were) but that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love" (Eph. 1:4).

Part II, Article 8 [Particular Redemption]

For this was the sovereign counsel, and most gracious will and purpose of God the Father, that the quickening and saving efficacy of the most precious death of his Son should extend to all the elect, for bestowing on them alone the gift of justifying faith, thereby to bring them infallibly to salvation: that is, it was the will of God, that Christ, by the blood of the cross, whereby he confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation, and given him by the Father...

Part II, Article 2, 3 [Total Depravity]

All the posterity of Adam, Christ only excepted, have derived corruption from their original parent, not by imitation, as the Pelagians of old asserted, but by the propagation of a vicious nature. Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

Part III, Article 9 [Effectual Calling]

That some who are called by the gospel, obey the call, and are converted is not to be ascribed to the proper exercise of free will, whereby one distinguishes himself above others, equally

awakening, following and co-operative grace, can neither think, will, nor do good, nor withstand any temptations to evil; so that all good deeds or movements, that can be conceived, must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But as respects the mode of the operation of this grace, it is not irresistible, inasmuch as it is written concerning many, that they have resisted the Holy Ghost. Acts 7, and elsewhere in many places.

Article 5 [*Falling From Grace*]

...But whether those who are incorporated into Christ are capable, through negligence, of forsaking again the first beginning of their life in Christ, of again returning to this present evil world, of turning away from the holy doctrine which was delivered them, of losing a good conscience, of becoming devoid of grace, that must be more particularly determined out of the Holy Scripture, before we ourselves can teach it with the full persuasion of our mind.

Five Points of Arminianism

- **Depravity:** Mankind is utterly helpless to exercise faith apart from God's assisting, prevenient grace. That grace is given to all in some measure, so every person is able to accept or reject the gospel by their own free will.
- **Conditional Election:** God elected those whom he saw would want to be saved of their own free will and would persevere in faith and obedience.
- **General Atonement:** Christ died to make salvation possible for every person.
- **Resistable Grace:** The Holy Spirit's regenerating work may be resisted. One becomes born again upon exercising faith.
- **Falling from Grace:** A saved person could lose his or her salvation. Man takes the initiative in his salvation and thus retains responsibility for the final outcome.

furnished with grace sufficient for faith and conversions, as the proud heresy of Pelagius maintains; but it must be wholly ascribed to God, who as he has chosen his own in Christ, so he confers upon them faith and repentance, rescues them from the power of darkness, and translates them into the kingdom of his own Son, that they may show forth the praises of him who hath called them out of darkness into his light...

Part V, Article 6 [*Perseverance of the Saints*]

But God, who is rich in mercy, according to his unchangeable purpose of election, does not wholly withdraw his Holy Spirit from his own people, even in their melancholy falls; nor suffers them to proceed so far as to lose the grace of adoption, and forfeit the state of justification, or to commit the sin unto death; nor does he permit them to be wholly deserted, and to plunge themselves into everlasting destruction.

Five Points of Reformed Soteriology

- **Radical Depravity:** Our bondage to sin in Adam has made us guilty and corrupted every aspect of our existence, including the will. We must be brought to life by God's Spirit to be enabled to exercise faith.
- **Unconditional Election:** The Father chose a people from fallen humanity to be redeemed by his Son and regenerated by his Spirit apart from anything foreseen in the believer.
- **Particular Redemption:** Christ's death is sufficient for the world, but secured the redemption of the elect.
- **Effectual Grace:** The Holy Spirit unites sinners to Christ through the gospel and faith is the effect, not the cause, of the new birth.
- **Preservation of the Saints:** All those chosen, redeemed, and regenerated will be given the gift of persevering faith and not one will be lost.

GLOSSARY

- **synergism:** "working-together" — this view maintains that salvation is attained through a cooperative process between God and human beings
- **monergism:** "one-working" — this view maintains that God is the sole active agent in salvation; it is not a process of human cooperation with God's grace