

## Chapter 10 – *Of Effectual Calling*

*All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of the state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation, by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone, and giving unto them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and, by his almighty power, determining them to that which is good, and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ: yet so, as they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.*

WCF 10.1

### INTRODUCTION

- Ephesians 2:1-10
- Augustine & Pelagius – *causa gratiae* ‘case for grace’<sup>1</sup>
- The Synod of Dort (1518-19)
- TULIP<sup>2</sup>

### 10.1 ALMIGHTY GOD

- The doctrine of calling is rooted in the Reformed doctrines of God and God’s works *ad extra*.
- Calling is a work of God’s sovereign power in which he *infuses life* into spiritually dead sinners.
- The unregenerate man
  - Rejection 4: That the unregenerate man is not really or utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good, but that he can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life, and offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit, which is pleasing to God.
  - For these are contrary to the express testimony of Scripture. “Who were dead in trespasses and sins”; “Even when we were dead in sins” (Eph. 2:1,5); and: “every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Gen 6:5); for the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth” (Gen 8.21).
- WCF 6.4 From this original corruption, whereby we are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil, do proceed all actual transgressions.
- WCF 9.3 Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether

<sup>1</sup> Peter Brown, *Augustine of Hippo* (Faber & Faber, 1967, 200), 354-77.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Horton, *For Calvinism* (Zondervan, 2011).

averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.

- So pervasive is the effect of sin that he cannot even make himself receptive to spiritual good.<sup>3</sup>
- The infusion of life – by the word and Spirit – transforms every aspect of the creature’s being: Mind, Heart, and Will.
- Regeneration: And this is the regeneration so highly celebrated in Scripture, and denominated a new creation: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid. But this is in no wise effected merely by the external preaching of the gospel, by moral suasion, or such a mode of operation, that after God has performed his part, it still remains in the power of man to be regenerated or not, to be converted, or to continue unconverted; but it is evidently a supernatural work, most powerful, and at the same time most delightful, astonishing, mysterious, and ineffable; not inferior in efficacy to creation, or the resurrection from the dead, as the Scripture inspired by the author of this work declares; so that all in whose heart God works in this marvelous manner, are certainly, infallibly, and effectually regenerated, and do actually believe. - Whereupon the will thus renewed, is not only actuated and influenced by God, but in consequence of this influence, becomes itself active. Wherefore also, man is himself rightly said to believe and repent, by virtue of that grace received.<sup>4</sup>
- Yet the creature is not forced: come most freely.

## 10.2 BY ‘FREE AND SPECIAL GRACE’

- God the Creator is active, the (spiritually dead) creature is passive.
- 10.2 ‘Quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit’
- That principle of grace that is in the hearts of the saints is as much a proper communication or participation of the Spirit of God, the third person in the Trinity, as that breath that entered into these bodies is represented to be a participation of the wind that blew upon them. The Prophet says, "Come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live" [*Ezekiel 37:9*]; it was the very same wind and the same breath, but only was united to these bodies to be a vital principle in them, which otherwise would be dead. And therefore Christ himself represents the communication of his Spirit to his disciples by his breathing upon them, and communicating to them his breath (*John 20:22*).

We often, in our common language about things of this nature, speak of a principle of grace. I suppose there is no other principle of grace in the soul than the very Holy Ghost dwelling in the soul and acting there as a vital principle. To speak of a habit of grace as a natural disposition to act grace, as begotten in the soul by the first communication of

<sup>3</sup> Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly: Reading Its Theology in Historical Context* (Presbyterian & Reformed, 2009), 246.

<sup>4</sup> The Canons of Dort, Third & Fourth Heads of Doctrine, Article 12.

divine light, and as the natural and necessary consequence of the first light, it seems in some respects to carry a wrong idea with it. Indeed, the first exercise of grace in the first light has a tendency to future acts, as from an abiding principle by grace and by the covenant of God, but not by any natural force. The giving one gracious discovery or act of grace, or a thousand, has no proper natural tendency to cause an abiding habit of grace for the future; nor any otherwise than by divine constitution and covenant. But all succeeding acts of grace, must be as immediately and to all intents and purposes, **as much from the immediate acting of the Spirit of God on the soul as the first**; and if God should take away his Spirit out of the soul, all habits and acts of grace would of themselves cease as immediately as light ceases in a room when a candle is carried out. And no man has an habit of grace dwelling in him any otherwise than as he has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him as his temple, and acting in union with his natural faculties after the manner of a vital principle. So that when they act grace, 'tis, in the language of the Apostle, "not they, but Christ living in them." Indeed, the Spirit of God, united to human faculties, acts very much after the manner of a natural principle or habit, so that one act makes way for another, and as it were settles the soul in a disposition to holy acts; but that it does so is by grace and covenant, and not from any natural necessity.

Hence the Spirit of God seems in Scripture to be spoken of as to become a quality of the persons in whom it resided, so that they are called spiritual persons; as when we say "a virtuous man," we speak of virtue as the quality of the man. 'Tis the Spirit itself that is the only principle of true virtue in the heart. So that to be truly virtuous, is the same as to be spiritual.

And thus it is not only with respect to the virtue that is in the hearts of the saints on earth, but also the perfect virtue and holiness of the saints in heaven. It consists altogether in the indwelling and acting of the Spirit of God in their habits. And so it was with man before the fall; and so it is with the elect, sinless angels. We have shown that the holiness and happiness of God consists in his Holy Spirit; and so the holiness and happiness of every holy or truly virtuous creature of God, in heaven or earth, consists in the communion of the same Spirit.<sup>5</sup>

### 10.3 SOVEREIGNLY

- A very definite pastoral doctrine is outlined here. It is an application of a previous section: 5.3 'God in his ordinary providence maketh use of means, yet is free to work without, above, and against them, *at his pleasure*.'

### 10.4 NO SALVATION OUTSIDE OF CHRIST

- very pernicious, and to be detested
- *extra ecclesiam non sit salus (Extra ecclesiam nulla salus or Salus extra ecclesiam non est (Cyprian)*
- WLC60. *Can they who have never heard the gospel, and so know not Jesus Christ, nor believe in him, be saved by their living according to the light of nature?*
- A. They who, having never heard the gospel, know not Jesus Christ, and believe not in him, cannot be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, or the laws of that religion which they profess; neither is there salvation in any other, but in Christ alone, who is the Savior only of his body the church.

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<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise on Grace & other posthumously published writings including Observations on the Trinity Edited with an Introduction by Paul Helm* (James Clark, 1971), 74-5.

## CONCLUSION

- The place of prayer in evangelism and discipleship
  - The aim of our orator, then, when speaking of things that are just and holy and good – and he should not speak of anything else – the aim, I say, that he pursues to the best of his ability when he speaks of these things is to be listened to with understanding, with pleasure, and with obedience. He should be in no doubt that any ability he has and however much he has derives more from his devotion to prayer than his dedication to oratory; and so, by praying for himself and for those he is about to address, he must become a man of prayer before becoming a man of words. As the hour of his address approaches, before he opens his thrusting lips he should lift his thirsting soul to God so that he may utter what he has drunk in and pour out what has filled him.<sup>6</sup>
  
- The place of means in evangelism and discipleship
  - The Word of God
  - Take myself as an example. I opposed indulgences and all the papists, but never with force. I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing. And while I slept, or drank Wittenberg beer with my friends Philipp and Amsdorf, the Word so greatly weakened the papacy that no prince or emperor ever inflicted such losses upon it. I did nothing; the Word did everything. Had I desired to foment trouble, I could have brought great bloodshed upon Germany; indeed, I could have started such a game that even the emperor would not have been safe. But what would it have been? Mere fool's play. I did nothing; I let the Word do its work. What do you suppose is Satan's thought when one tries to do the thing by kicking up a row? He sits back in hell and thinks: Oh, what a fine game the poor fools are up to now! But when we spread the Word alone and let it alone do the work, that distresses him. For it is almighty, and takes captive the hearts, and when the hearts are captured the work will fall of itself.<sup>7</sup>
  
- Respecting humanity – people come willingly
  
- When means cannot work we still trust in God's character, *his good pleasure*.

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<sup>6</sup> Augustine, *Christian Teaching* (Oxford University Press), 121.

<sup>7</sup> The Second Sermon, March 10, 1522, Monday after Invocavit. [Luther, M. (1999, c1959). Vol. 51: Luther's works, vol. 51: Sermons I. (J. J. Pelikan, H. C. Oswald & H. T. Lehmann, Ed.). Luther's Works (51:III-78). Philadelphia: Fortress Press].