

PART III  
ARMINIANISM: A MAN-CENTRED  
GOSPEL  
Chapter 11

The Origins of Arminianism

James (Jacob) Arminius (1560-1609) was a Dutch theologian who studied and taught the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ that had been rediscovered and proclaimed by the Reformation. Subsequently he changed his position and began to preach and teach a man-centred gospel. Calvin, Luther, Cranmer, Latimer, Zwingli, and Knox, among many other great preachers, taught the centrality of the grace of God and His gift of faith alone, for salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ. This Christ-centred gospel was, and is "*the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*"<sup>1</sup> In this section we set out to study the man-centred gospel that has become standard in many parts of what is still called "Evangelicalism." This man-centred message sees the receiving of the Gospel as deriving from a person's own faith. It assumes wrongly that salvation originates with the will of man by his choice or decision and it is finally to be positioned in the human heart. The Scriptures make clear that salvation originates with God, not to be within the human heart but to be "in Christ." For example, the Apostle Paul states in his own testimony "*... that I may win Christ and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.*"<sup>2</sup> How then did this man-centred salvation come into the Christian church? As we shall seek to show there has been a great falling away from the truths that were proclaimed at the time of the Reformation.<sup>3</sup> Many modern evangelicals, in sharing their gospel, publicly offer "invitations" such as, "Accept Jesus into your heart", "Invite Jesus into your life" or "Make a decision for Christ." Like Roman Catholicism, such a gospel looks for salvation in the human heart, and is thought to be brought about by man's own choice.

The author asks for the reader's patience in studying this third section of the book, in order to carefully take note of the record of history, the witness of Scripture and the testimony of post-Reformation servants of Christ who have warned of "*another gospel*" and "*another spirit.*"<sup>4</sup> All that follows has been documented in order to demonstrate that much of what has come to be accepted as Christianity is misconceived. Totally missing in the modern man-centred message is the defining Biblical truth spelled out by the Apostle Paul, "*There is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understands, there is none that seeks after God.*"<sup>5</sup> In fact the Apostle makes clear to the would-be convert that there is absolutely nothing we have to offer to contribute to our salvation. God makes alive those "*who were dead in trespasses and sins.*"<sup>6</sup> We shall show from the record of history that this man-centred Christianity has become what is now the official teaching of the Roman Catholic Church. The Second Vatican Council has taught that man is simply incapacitated or wounded by sin, and he can decide his own destiny in the sight of God.

" ... Nevertheless man has been **wounded by sin**. He finds by experience that his body is in revolt. His very dignity therefore requires that he should glorify God in his body, and not allow it to serve the evil inclinations of his heart. ... When he is drawn to think about his real self he turns to those deep recesses of his being where God who probes the heart awaits him, and **where he himself decides his own destiny in the sight of God.**"<sup>7</sup>

Arminianism among evangelicals has been described as a half-way house to Roman Catholicism and has been responsible for much of the growth of the Ecumenical Movement.

Man-centred "free-will" Christianity and Roman Catholicism are equally wedded to a wrong message. To understand this more fully we need the historical explanation of just how this whole system of thought arose. In this section we will use the eponymous term Arminianism to refer to that system which upholds a man-centred message.

### **An Historic Heresy**

Dr. Lorraine Boettner, American author of two important books, *Roman Catholicism and The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, has given us an helpful observation to begin examining this difficult subject.

"...Arminianism existed for centuries only as a heresy on the outskirts of true religion, and in fact it was not championed by an organized Christian church until the year 1784, at which time it was incorporated into the system of doctrine of the Methodist Church in England [by John Wesley]."8

We have shown earlier in this book9 how in the sixteenth century Jesuit scholars were commissioned to undermine the Received Text and to re-interpret Bible prophecy in order to vindicate the Papacy from its widely held identification as the Antichrist. However, shielding the Church of Rome from the sword of the Spirit would not be enough. The Reformation's newly rediscovered doctrines of grace, underlining the sovereignty of God and underpinning the eternal security of the believer, altogether at odds with the pretensions of the Pope, would need to be challenged and overturned. The Jesuits were commissioned to infiltrate the church and its institutions of learning.

The Pope's secret army of infiltrators was prophesied in the Scriptures, " ... *false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:*"10 The Apostle Peter also described them and what they would do.

*"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."*11

In his book *Arminianism: The Road Back to Rome*, Augustus Toplady, preacher, scholar, theologian, and hymn-writer ("Rock of Ages" and "A Debtor to Mercy Alone"), wrote that "as Arminianism came from Rome, so it leads thither again."12 Also, he added the following:

" ... the Jesuits were moulded into a regular body, towards the middle of the sixteenth century; towards the close of the same century, Arminius began to infect the Protestant churches. It needs therefore no great penetration to discern from what source he drew his poison. His journey to Rome ... .. was not for nothing. If, however, any are disposed to believe that Arminius imbibed his doctrines from the Socinians in Poland, with whom, it is certain, he was on terms of intimate friendship. I have no objection to splitting the difference; he might import some of his tenets from the Racovian brethren, and yet be indebted, for others, to the disciples of Loyola."13

In England, in the seventeenth century during the Arminian regime of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 to 1645 and a persecutor of both Puritans and Covenanters, zealous Arminians were promoted to the best bishoprics. A famous letter written by a Jesuit to the Rector of Brussels and endorsed by Laud himself was found in the Archbishop's own study at Lambeth. A copy of this same letter was also found among the papers of a society of priests and Jesuits at Clerkenwell in 1627 . The following is an extract from this notorious letter:

"We have now many strings to our bow. We have planted the sovereign drug Arminianism which we hope will purge the Protestants from their heresy; and it flourisheth and beareth fruit in due season ... .. I am at this time transported with joy to see how happily all instruments and means, as well great as smaller, co-operate with our purposes. But to return to the main fabric; OUR FOUNDATION IS ARMINIANISM."<sup>14</sup>

In his book *Justification by Faith Alone* Dr. Joel Beeke, Professor of Systematic Theology at the Puritan Reformed Seminary at Grand Rapids, exposing the error at the heart of the *free will* system, stated:

"Arminianism errs in making part of the foundation of justification to rest on faith. By advocating conditional predestination and conditional faith in justification (God elects and saves those who believe), Arminianism is a cruel hoax. John Owen, the great Puritan divine, ridicules the Arminian condition of salvation by faith as an impossibility, saying it is 'as if a man should promise a blind man a thousand pounds upon condition that he will see.' Owen views the Christ of the Arminian as 'but a half-mediator' because He procures the end of salvation but not the means of it. Charles Spurgeon is more graphic. He likens Arminianism and Calvinism to two bridges. The Arminian bridge is wide and easy but does not bring its traveler safely to the opposite shore of the river. It stops short of eternal communion with God because something is left for the depraved will of the natural man to accomplish – exercising faith in Christ. The Calvinist bridge is narrow but spans the entire river, for Christ Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega for salvation and justification. Arminianism *looks* promising, but it cannot live up to its promises because it depends upon depraved humanity to act. In doing so, it deceives myriads of souls who think that they accept Christ by a simple act of their own will but do not bow under Christ's lordship. They imagine they have saving faith while their lives evidence that they remain spiritually dead. Calvinism is promising, for it places the entire weight of justification and salvation on the sufficiency of Christ and the operation of His Spirit who bestows and sustains saving faith.

"In the final analysis, if we base our justification on human faith, works, or anything else, the very foundations of justification crumble. For inevitably, the agonizing, perplexing, and hopeless questions of having enough of anything would surface: Is my faith strong enough? Are the fruits of grace in my life enough? Are my experiences deep enough, clear enough, persistent enough? Every inadequacy in my faith will shake the very foundations of my spiritual life. My best believing is always defective. I am too ungodly, even in my faith. Apart from Christ, the best of my best is '*as filthy rags.*' (Isaiah 64:6).

"Too many Christians despair because they cannot distinguish between the rock on which they stand and the faith by which they stand upon it. Faith is not our rock; Christ is our rock. We do not get faith by having faith in our faith or by looking to faith, but by looking to Christ. Looking to Christ is faith."<sup>15</sup>

### **The Founder of Arminianism, Its Articles, and the Synod of Dort**

James Arminius (1560-1609) is generally regarded as the founder of the system of Arminianism. He was educated at the new Dutch University at Leyden and then at Geneva under the tutelage of Theodore Beza, Calvin's well respected follower and successor. Around 1591, after only a year at the Geneva Academy, he began to develop views that were to become diametrically opposed to the doctrines of free and sovereign grace that were taught at Geneva. He departed and continued his education elsewhere. He became a minister in Amsterdam and

was later invited to become Professor of Divinity at the University of Leyden. It was from this point that he began propounding his theories with (guarded) vigour.

As the doctrines of *free grace* were in the ascendancy at the time, his teachings on *free will* were bound to arouse controversy and bring him into conflict with the ecclesiastical authorities. This was a dangerous activity, as heresy could be a capital offence. Perhaps because of this Arminius was difficult to pin down. His teachings could be very ambiguous and sophisticated. In 1605, for example, the Synod set nine simple questions for Arminius to answer in an attempt to clarify his position. He responded with nine opposite questions and employed scholarly and philosophical devices to avoid giving simple, straight answers. The first question was, "Which is first, Election, or Faith Truly Foreseen, so that God elected his people according to faith foreseen?" Arminius did not – perhaps dared not – give a straight answer. And so the controversy rumbled on even until after his death in 1609.

Eventually his followers, known as the *Remonstrants*, petitioned the Government of Holland with a five-point *Remonstrance*, which was a development of the core teachings of Arminius. It was systematised and published in January 1610 by Jan Uytenbogaert and Simon Episcopius, both former students of Arminius. They led forty-three fellow ministers in introducing their document *The Arminian Articles of Remonstrance* to the ecclesiastical authorities. Their objective was to bring about the convening of a synod, which would overthrow the Doctrines of Grace, which had been freely preached since the Reformation, and make the teachings of Arminius the official doctrine of the Reformed Churches in all of Europe. They were successful in the first part of their endeavour; a General Synod at Dordrecht (Dort) was called in 1618, and representatives attended it from all of the Reformed Churches in Europe, including those from England. The following is a summary of the five Remonstrance articles:

- **Free Will or Human Ability** – Arminius believed that the fall of man was not total, maintaining that there is enough virtue in man to enable him to choose to accept Jesus Christ unto salvation.
- **Conditional Election** – Arminius taught that election is based on the foreknowledge of God as to who would believe. Man's "act of faith" is the "condition" governing his being elected to eternal life, since God foresaw him exercising his "free will" in response to Jesus Christ.
- **Universal Atonement** – Arminius held that Christ died to save all men, but only in a potential fashion. Christ's death enabled God to pardon sinners, but only on condition that they believed.
- **Resistible Grace** – Arminius believed that since God wants all men to be saved, He sends the Holy Spirit to draw all men to Christ. But since man has absolute "free will", he is able to resist God's will for his life. Therefore God's will to save all men can be frustrated by the finite will of man. Arminius also taught that man exercises his own will first, and then is born again.
- **Falling from Grace** – If man cannot be saved by God unless it is man's will to be saved, then man cannot continue in salvation unless he continues to will to be saved.

In order to deal with these five articles of Arminianism, a conference was convened in 1618, which became known as the *Synod of Dort*. It was no convention of novices or of weaklings that met at Dort in 1618. Rev. J.A. McLeod, Principal of the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh, described the Synod thus.

"They had among their leaders and counselors some of the foremost divines of their day. And the conclusions at which they arrived in the avowal of their faith and in the condemnation of error were not hastily come to. They were the ripe decisions of a

generation of theologians who were at home in their subject, expert in wielding their weapons and temperate and restrained in the terms in which they set forth their judgment. Coming as they did in point of time after the National Confessions and Catechisms of the Reformed Churches ... .. except the documents of the Westminster Assembly, they with these documents of British origin are the culminating exhibition of our common Reformed Faith, when it was called upon to unfold its inmost genius and essence in self-defence against the revived Semi-Pelagianism of the early Arminians."<sup>17</sup>

These great theologians of the day sat for one hundred and fifty four sessions over a period of seven months, assessing the teachings of Arminius in the light of Scripture and concluding that they could find no Biblical basis for his propositions. The Synod finally determined there was no reason to overturn the teaching of the Reformation. It reaffirmed the position that Arminius opposed. *The Articles of Dort* declared that God is entirely sovereign in salvation, " ... Salvation is of the LORD"<sup>18</sup>, and formulated five statements rebutting Arminian theology. In time these statements became known as The Five Points of Calvinism.

"That Christ, which natural free-will can apprehend, is but a natural Christ of a man's own making, not the Father's Christ, nor Jesus the Son of the living God, to whom none can come without the Father's drawing, John 6:44."<sup>19</sup>

" ... and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed."<sup>20</sup>

Thus, the teachings of Arminius and his cadre were unanimously rejected by the venerable divines assembled at the Synod of Dort. They were declared to be heresy. The positive response of the Assembly was the reaffirmation of the *Doctrines of Grace* as taught at the Reformation.

In order to refute the five points asserted by the Arminians, the Synod issued four canons, which were subsequently revised to five. These canons have come down to us today as the *Five Points of Calvinism* and are often remembered as "TULIP", an acronym that was devised to summarise the Canons of Dort in response to the heretical five-point scheme of the *Arminian Remonstrance*.

● **Total Depravity** – This refers to the total inability of man to change his fallen state, 'dead in trespasses and sins'.<sup>21</sup> Because man is utterly dead, spiritually, he has not the capacity to do good or to exercise faith. Moreover, he does not have free will as it is " ... in bondage under the elements of the world:"<sup>22</sup>

● **Unconditional Election** – "Those of mankind who are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ unto everlasting glory out of His mere free grace and love without any other thing in the creature as a condition or cause moving Him thereunto."<sup>23</sup>

● **Limited Atonement or Particular Redemption** – Christ died only for His sheep, for His church, for those numbered in the Elect, by name, from all Eternity.<sup>24</sup>

● **Irresistible Grace** – Calvinists believe that the Lord possesses grace that cannot be resisted. The free will of man is so far removed from salvation that the elect are regenerated or made spiritually alive by God even before expressing faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. If God hath purposed from all Eternity to save His Elect, it follows that He must also provide the means for calling them into so glorious a Salvation. "*All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*"<sup>25</sup>

● **Perseverance of the Saints** – The 1689 Baptist Confession again closely agrees with Dort. "Those whom God hath accepted in the beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His

Spirit, and given the precious faith of His Elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from that state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and calling of God are without repentance ... "26

### **Pelagius and Semi-Pelagianism – the Forerunner of Arminianism**

There is nothing new under the sun.<sup>27</sup> Essentially the Arminian controversy has been a re-run of a similar controversy which, more than a thousand years earlier, was waged between the British monk Pelagius and Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, as the early Church sought to formulate its theology.

Pelagius arrived in Rome at the dawn of the fifth century and spent most of his life in that city, studying, writing and teaching theology. He began asserting the self-governing ability of man before God. He denied original sin and the depraved state of mankind as well as the absolute requirement of God's Sovereign Grace in the salvation of His saints. Pelagius was condemned as a heretic by the Roman Church and the modified form of his heresy, *semi-Pelagianism*, was also condemned at the Council of Orange in 529. Semi-Pelagianism, the fore-runner of Arminianism, essentially teaches that humanity is tainted by sin, but not to the extent that we cannot cooperate with God's grace on our own – in essence, partial depravity as opposed to total depravity.<sup>28</sup>

However, the same Scriptures that refute Pelagianism also refute semi-Pelagianism. Romans 3:10-18 most definitely does not describe humanity as only being partially tainted by sin.<sup>29</sup> The Bible clearly teaches that without God drawing a person, we are incapable of cooperating with God's grace. "*No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him ...*"<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless the semi-Pelagian view of man's ability to cooperate and to possess inherent or conferred righteousness is widely prevalent today.

As R.C. Sproul writes, " ... the basic assumptions of this view persisted throughout church history to reappear in Medieval Catholicism, Renaissance Humanism, Socinianism, Arminianism, and modern Liberalism. The seminal thought of Pelagius survives today, not as a trace of tangential influence, but is pervasive in the modern church. Indeed the modern church is held captive by it."<sup>31</sup>

### **Pelagius, Augustine, and Luther's *The Bondage of the Will***

In AD 411, with the onset of Alaric's second raid on Rome, Pelagius fled the city with his pupil Coelestius, finding a safe haven in North Africa. In the purposes of God this brought him into the orbit of Augustine, although Pelagius soon moved on to Palestine. He left his protege Coelestius behind at Carthage, but both men continued to promote the heresy of the autonomy of man and his free will over against the free grace and the Sovereignty of God. Pelagius was shocked by the prayer in Augustine's Confessions, "Grant what thou dost command, and command what thou wilt," which seemed to remove from man all freedom, and therefore all responsibility. Pelagius certainly thought that man needs God's grace, but by grace he meant man's power to choose the good, and God's revelation of that good in the Law, the Prophets, and, above all, in Christ. Each soul, he taught, comes into being in the same condition as Adam. There is no inherited guilt, no sin inherited from Adam by virtue of the Fall. The confrontation between Augustine and Pelagius about the will of man in his fallen condition was re-echoed eleven hundred years later in Erasmus' semi-Pelagian Diatribe<sup>32</sup> and Luther's answer in *The Bondage of the Will*. The able reformer, like Augustine, knew from Scripture that sinful man has a will, but his will is enslaved and bent towards evil, and can do no good thing. For until man is converted and is renewed by the Holy Spirit, his will is captive to Satan and is "taken captive by him at his [Satan's] will."<sup>33</sup>

The publisher's comments on *The Bondage of the Will* state that,

"*The Bondage of the Will* is fundamental to an understanding of the primary doctrines of the Reformation. In these pages, Luther gives extensive treatment to what he saw as the heart of the gospel."<sup>34</sup>

J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston add to this in the "Historical and Theological Introduction" to *The Bondage of the Will* by stating, "*The Bondage of the Will* is the greatest piece of writing that came from Luther's pen.

"In ... its vigour of language, its profound theological grasp, ... and the grand sweep of its exposition, it stands unsurpassed among Luther's writings.

"'Free will' was no academic question to Luther; the whole gospel of the grace of God, he held, was bound up with it, and stood or fell according to the way one decided it.

"In particular, the denial of 'free-will' was to Luther the foundation of the Biblical doctrine of grace, and a hearty endorsement of that denial was the first step for anyone who would understand the gospel and come to faith in God. The man who has not yet practically and experimentally learned the bondage of his will in sin has not yet comprehended any part of the gospel;

"'Justification by faith only' is a truth that needs interpretation. The principle of *sola fide* [by faith alone] is not rightly understood till it is seen as anchored in the broader principle of *sola gratia* [by grace alone]. ... for to rely on oneself for faith is no different in principle from relying on oneself for works, ..."<sup>35</sup>

Yet another comment on this work of Luther's offers that, "Luther here refutes the Romish notion of 'free will' in man and upholds the absolute sovereignty of God in the salvation of sinners ... as well as justification by faith alone. Luther clearly saw the issue of free will as the primary cause of his separation from Rome."<sup>36</sup>

The Bible teaches that faith itself is, and has to be, *a gift of God, by grace, and not of self.*<sup>37</sup>

Though the will is never forced, nor destined by any necessity of nature to perform evil, yet sinful man has lost all ability of will to perform any of the spiritual good which accompanies salvation. He is not able, by an act of the will, to repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. He is not willing to be converted. Unless the Lord intervenes, man remains bound, for "*... men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*"<sup>38</sup> A corrupt tree bears corrupt fruit. That is all it can do. The natural man is not able by his own strength to turn to God, or even dispose himself towards God, for "*No man can come unto me, except the Father which have sent me draw him: ...*"<sup>39</sup> He is "*... dead in trespasses and sins;*"<sup>40</sup> He is at "*enmity against God.*"<sup>41</sup> Grace or unmerited favour is essential, for man does not seek God. It is God who seeks him. It is instructive to note that all the sixteenth century Reformers were originally Augustinians, that is, they believed in the total depravity of man's nature and the absolute sovereignty of God's grace.

Pelagius denied all of this and instead asserted the full ability and potential of the human will. He taught that man can eliminate sin from his life by the exercise of his will and can keep the commandments of God if he really wants to. He arrived at this conclusion by twisted logic that concluded, "God would not command man to do what cannot be done by man." Thus Pelagius, in considering the will, ignored, or rather played down, the consequence of Adam's fall. The Scriptures show us that man was created able, but lost his ability through his apostasy. But Pelagius insisted that no obligation could ever be placed outside man's limitless capacity for good. He established the definitive Pelagian view that if God commands anything we must be able to obey. God has no right to command if we are unable to obey!

In July AD 415, at the Synod of Jerusalem, Pelagius was condemned *in absentia*. In December

of the same year, at the Synod of Lydda (Diospolis), he appeared, but managed to escape condemnation by what B.B. Warfield has described as follows:

" ... only by a course of the most ingenious disingenuousness and of leading the Synod to believe that he was anathematizing the very doctrines that he himself was proclaiming. ... Pelagius obtained his acquittal by a lying condemnation or a tricky interpretation of his own teachings. In the words of Augustine, 'Heresy was not acquitted, but the man who denied the heresy',<sup>42</sup> and he would have himself been anathematized if he had not anathematized the heresy."<sup>43</sup>

As with Arminius, in Pelagius we see a man purporting to contend for truth who brims with equivocation. He exploited his escape from condemnation to the maximum, falsely claiming an endorsement for his heresies. But he was soon to be undone. A two-pronged attack by Augustine and Jerome – a powerful combination – led to Pelagius's condemnation by two African councils in 416, a decision upheld by Pope Innocent I, who in 417 excommunicated Pelagius and Celestius. Though Innocent's successor, Zosimus, at first overturned this verdict and action, he was shaken by such a storm from the African bishops that he not only changed his mind, but also wrote a letter requiring Western bishops to endorse the condemnation. On May 1, 418, the teachings of Pelagius were declared to be anathema. His supporters deserted him in droves to save their own skins, although his heretical teachings on *free will* continued "underground." After this nothing more is heard of Pelagius. One source has him dead by 420, another report says he lived for at least another twenty years. Despite his formal discrediting, his teachings kept resurfacing for more than a century until they were firmly repudiated at the Council of Orange in 529.

The Conclusion to the Canons of the Council of Orange begins with a clear and comprehensive statement that states,

"And thus according to the passages of holy scripture quoted above or the interpretations of the ancient Fathers we must, under the blessing of God, preach and believe as follows. The sin of the first man has so impaired and weakened free will that no one thereafter can either love God as he ought or believe in God or do good for God's sake, unless the grace of divine mercy has preceded him. We therefore believe that the glorious faith which was given to Abel the righteous, and Noah, and Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and to all the saints of old, and which the Apostle Paul commends in extolling them (Heb. 11), was not given through natural goodness as it was before to Adam, but was bestowed by the the grace of God. And we know and also believe that even after the coming of our Lord this grace is not to be found in the free will of all who desire to be baptized, but is bestowed by the kindness of Christ, as has already been frequently stated and as the Apostle Paul declares, '*For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake.*' (Phil. 1:29) And again, '*He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*' (Phil. 1:6). And again, '*For by grace you have been saved through faith; and it is not your own doing, it is the gift of God.*' (Eph. 2:8). And as the Apostle says of himself, '*I have obtained mercy to be faithful.*' (1 Cor. 7:25, cf. 1 Tim. 1:13). He did not say, 'because I was faithful', but 'to be faithful.' And again, '*What have you that you did not receive?*' (1 Cor. 4:7). And again, '*Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.*' (Jas. 1:17). And again, '*No one can receive anything except what is given him from heaven.*' (John 3:27). There are innumerable passages of holy scripture which can be quoted to prove the case for grace, but they have been omitted for the sake of brevity, because further examples will not really be of use where few are deemed sufficient."<sup>46</sup>

Truth is ever hammered out on the anvil of error, and in the purposes of God, this controversy



was the vehicle used to define the doctrines of *Free and Sovereign Grace*. Cometh the hour, cometh the man, and the servant of God in this watershed in the development of Christian Theology was Augustine of Hippo. For more than a millennium his teachings on the Sovereignty of God and His gift of Free Grace were held dear by true believers until the controversy was revived by Arminius and his followers in the seventeenth century. Like all of Adam's fallen race, the regenerate Augustine was most certainly prone to error. But at the same time the Lord endowed him with an insight into the workings of His Sovereign Grace that has not been surpassed. Augustine's influence was enormous. B.B. Warfield described the Reformation as "the triumph of Augustine's doctrine of grace over his doctrine of the Church." R.C. Sproul has written that "the Reformation witnessed the ultimate triumph of Augustine's doctrines of grace over the legacy of the pelagian view of man."<sup>47</sup> It was Augustine who was the bulwark chosen by God to stem the tide of error, which has ebbed and flowed over the centuries through the teachings of Pelagius.

Augustine was the first of the "church Fathers" to codify the Doctrines of Grace and to confront and refute the impostures of human *free will* in salvation. His recorded preaching and writings against Pelagius are so voluminous that we cannot begin to explore them here. It suffices to say that his wisdom was acknowledged even by Arminius and that he was the man principally responsible under God for the fact that the false teachings of Pelagius are widely recognised as such today.

What is mystifying, humanly speaking, is that, notwithstanding the above, the heresy of *free will* in salvation has repeatedly resurfaced, albeit in modified guises, and that the doctrines of Free and Sovereign Grace have been assailed at diverse times despite Augustine's masterful expositions of these cardinal doctrines and his systematising of them into a whole Body of Divinity.

#### Footnotes

1. Romans 1:16
2. Philippians 3:8-9
3. This is fully documented in *Evangelicalism Divided* by Iain Murray (Banner of Truth Trust, 2000).
4. 2Corinthians 11:4
5. Romans 3:10-11
6. Ephesians 2:1
7. Vatican II Documents No. 64, *Gaudium et Spes*, 7 Dec 1965 in *Documents of Vatican II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents*, Austin P. Flannery Ed. New Revised Edition, 2 Vols. (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975, 1934) Vol. I, Sec. 14, p. 915
8. Loraine Boettner: *The Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*
9. See Chapter 2, "Futurism – Devised by the Jesuits – The Wiles of the Devil" and Chapter 3, "The Counter-Reformation – The Source of the Futurist View of Prophecy"
10. Galatians 2:4
11. 2 Peter 2:1-2
12. Augustus Toplady: *Arminianism: The Road Back to Rome*, from *The Complete Works of Augustus Toplady*, Sprinkle Publications, [1794] 1987, pp. 54-55).

13. Ibid.
14. S.G.U. Publication, No. 173, 142.
15. Joel Beeke, *Justification by Faith* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Reformation Heritage Books)
17. John Macleod (1872-1948), Principal of the Free Church of Scotland College, Edinburgh. This address, "The Doctrine of the Sovereignty of God," was published in *The Evangelical Quarterly* (1941).
18. Jonah 2:9
19. Reverend Thomas Wilcox (1621-1687): Sermon entitled "Honey Out of the Rock -Psalm 81:16"
20. Acts 13:48
22. See Ephesians 2:1,5; Colossians 2:13; Psalms 80:18
22. Galatians 4:3; See also Romans 5:12; 2Timothy 2:25
23. This summary taken from the *Baptist Confession of Faith*, 1689. See also Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:4-5; John 15:16; Romans 11:5; etc.
24. See Ephesians 5:25; John 10:11
25. John 6:37; See also John 6:44-45; Psalms 110:3; Galatians 1:15; 1 Peter 2:9, 5:10; Romans 8:20; Acts 16:14; Mark 3:13; Psalms 100:3; Psalms 65:4; Isaiah 27:12
26. See Romans 8:27-30; Philippians 1:6; John 6:39,10:28; Romans 5:10, 8:1; etc.
27. Ecclesiastes 1:9 *"The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun."*
28. "What Is Total Depravity?," <<http://www.gotquestions.org/totaldepravity.html>> (accessed 16 September 2005)
29. Romans 3:10-18 *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, that are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet are swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes."*
30. John 6:44
31. R.C. Sproul, *Augustine and Pelagias* (Ligonier Ministries,1996)
32. *Diatribes seu collatio de libero* (Discussion, or Colation, concerning Free-will), 1524.
33. 2 Timothy 2:26
34. *The Bondage of the Will*, Fleming H. Revell, 1957, Collation.
- 35 J.I. Packer and O.R. Johnston: excerpts from "Historical and Theological Introduction" to *The Bondage of the Will* by Martin Luther, translated by Packer and Johnston, Grand Rapids, MI, Fleming H. Revell, division of Baker Book House Co., 1957, pp. 13-61.
36. Reg Barrow: "FREE WILL vs. THE BIBLE" Still Waters Revival Books, <<http://www.swrb.com/newslett/actualNLS/freewill.htm>>, accessed April 9, 2006.
37. Trinity Foundation: <<http://trinity2.envescent.com/journal.php>> See also Ephesians 2:8

38. John 3:19
39. John 6:44
40. Ephesians 2:1
41. Romans 8:7
42. St. Augustine's Anti-Pelagian Works, cited in *The Nicene & Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 5. pp.14-27
43. B.B. Warfield, *Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 13-71.
44. "AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO (354 – 430)," <http://www.tlogical.net/bioaugustine.htm>
- 45 "JEROME (C. 345 – C. 419)," <http://www.tlogical.net/biojerome.htm>
46. The Canons of the Council of Orange, (529 AD) <http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe>  
[http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons\\_of\\_orange.html](http://www.reformed.org/documents/canons_of_orange.html) (Accessed 25 February 2006)
47. Dr. R.C. Sproul, *Augustine and Pelagius*

Chapter 12  
Catholicism and Arminianism in England and  
France During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth  
and Eighteenth Centuries

The sixteenth-century Council of Trent was convened on December 13, 1545, ostensibly to discuss the reformation of the Roman catholic church. This was merely a subterfuge or, in up-to-date language, "spin." In reality, the purpose was to exonerate the church from its widespread identification as the Antichrist of Scripture and to attack and condemn the doctrines of the Reformation, particularly the doctrines of Free and Sovereign Grace. It declared these to be "anathema." Unlike the other councils and Synods we have considered in this section, the decrees of this "ecumenical council" have no validity whatsoever for saints of God, for Trent was an instrument of the Papacy to counter the Reformation. It was set up "hot on the heels" of the Roman church's Inquisition, which was instituted by Pope Paul III in 1542 to combat Protestantism.

Looking again at Trent, its decrees, and dogmas, we can demonstrate to Arminians that they can find their cherished semi-Pelagian views on *free will* enshrined in the decrees of this notorious council. Whilst Trent officially condemned the teachings of Pelagius, it succeeded in tacitly restating them, employing the "ingenious disingenuousness" and theological double talk which has been the hallmark of the Jesuit Order. The same equivocation and prevarication displayed by Pelagius and Arminius were to be found in abundance in this Council. From start to finish it was characterised by corruption, bribery deceit, and duplicity. Even its claim to be called "Ecumenical Council" was misleading. The Jesuits had seen to it that it was packed with placemen and cronies (closely resembling the First Vatican Council in 1870, which voted through Papal infallibility). The vast majority of bishops in attendance were Italians, many of them from a diocese especially created by the Pope so that they would represent his views and ensure that he would get his way, which of course he did.<sup>1</sup>

The canons of the Council of Trent are still binding on all Catholics to this day and are part of the *Dogma* of the Church of Rome. They oppose the core beliefs of the Reformation on free grace and justification and stress that salvation is impossible without adherence to these canons. They proclaim the Arminian view, *free will* being exalted over the Sovereign Grace of God. It is perhaps worth taking note of the irony that many who subscribe to these Tridentine views assert that "Calvinism" has its roots in Romanism, when their own *Arminian* soteriology was so firmly affirmed at this notorious council of the ancient enemy of the saints of God.

We make reference to Trent for another reason. It proved to be a watershed in the rapid ascendancy of Arminianism to its place of prominence in the church of our day. We shall see how both Roman Catholic monarchs and Anglo-Catholic Arminian prelates took the Canons of Trent as a licence to disenfranchise, persecute, torture, and murder the true saints of God after the manner of the Papal Inquisition.

### **The Council of Trent**

The infamous Council of Trent had been in session for some eight years when Mary Tudor ascended the Throne of England in 1553. In the words of Wetzel, "Bloody Queen Mary made England Catholic again."<sup>2</sup> The year after her coronation she married Philip II of Spain and very quickly the Catholic persecution of Protestants began, decreed by the Council of Trent and carried out by the Inquisition.

"In reference to the Calvinistic doctrines – the doctrines of free and sovereign grace held by

the Reformers in England, Toplady observes, 'Queen Mary and her Spanish husband well knew that Calvinism is the very life and soul of the Reformation; and that Popery would never flourish till the Calvinistic doctrines were eradicated.' Her efforts to destroy by sword and faggot those who upheld the Truth earned for her the unenviable appellation of 'Bloody Mary.' The charge on which many of them were burnt at the stake was that they held to the doctrine of predestination and rejected the Arminian and Popish doctrine of free-will."<sup>3</sup>

Yet, as J.C. Ryle reminded us late in the nineteenth century,

"A very popular history of our English Queens hardly mentions the martyrdoms of Queen Mary's days! Yet Mary was not called 'Bloody Mary' without reason, and scores of Protestants were burned in her reign. It is ... as certain that the Romish Church burned our Reformers as it is that William the Conqueror won the Battle of Hastings."<sup>4</sup>

Mary Tudor so detested *free grace* that " ... life alone was wanting to her to have completely overthrown the Reformation in England and to have placed again the kingdom beneath the Romish yoke."<sup>5</sup> During the short reign of "Bloody Mary" John Rogers (translator of the Matthew Bible), Bishops Hugh Latimer and Nicholas Ridley, Archbishop Thomas Cranmer, and two hundred eighty-one other men and women were martyred.

In the seventeenth century during the reigns of the four Stuart Kings – James I, Charles I, Charles II and James II – Arminianism grew to become the prevalent faith of the Church of England and made considerable progress in Scotland, too.

James I, although himself a Calvinist in soteriology, with a robustly Calvinist archbishop of Canterbury George Abbot, favoured "High Churchmen" who accepted his doctrine of "the divine right of kings." They tended to be Arminian in sympathy.

William Laud, who later became archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I, was one of them. Led by Laud, and greatly disliking Puritans, " ... Charles promoted many Arminians as Prelates. ... Absolute personal predestination had come to be thought of as a distinctly Puritan assertion, and, when, after 1660 the Restoration set the pendulum swinging against all that Puritanism had stood for, Calvinism had the status of an oddity maintained by nonconformists. Anglican theologians with few exceptions were Arminian in type, as indeed they are still."<sup>6</sup>

In the twenty years from Laud's being made a bishop in 1621 until his imprisonment in the Tower of London in 1640, he wreaked, almost single-handedly, more havoc and destruction on our nation and on the cause of God's Truth than any other individual professing Christian in our history. Even from 1602, while he was still at university, "Laud became a marked man and known as a very lukewarm Protestant, if not a friend of Popery and an open enemy of the pure Gospel of Christ. ... In 1622, before he had been a Bishop for a year, ... [he] ... ordered, that no one, under the degree of a Bishop or a Dean, shall 'preach on such deep points as predestination, or election, or the universal efficacy, resistibility, or irresistibility of God's grace.'"<sup>7</sup>

In 1623, when Charles I ascended the throne and married Henrietta, a zealous Papist, Laud, by now Bishop of London, encouraged them to oppress the Puritans and their true gospel of *free grace*. "It really came to this, that men said you might lie or swear or get drunk, and little notice would be taken; but to be a Puritan or a Nonconformist, was to commit the unpardonable sin."<sup>8</sup> In 1633, by means of political manipulation and Jesuitical intrigue, Laud became Archbishop of Canterbury. He had assumed for his party and himself unquestionable powers (in the style of the Papacy), which undermined even the authority of the King. "Laud obtained an undivided ascendancy over Charles I, prohibited doctrinal controversy respecting Arminian tenets, and commanded the suppression of afternoon lectures, which were generally

conducted by Puritan divines.<sup>9</sup>

The character of Laud may be seen in relation to his part in the trial, sentencing, imprisonment, and torturing by the notorious Star Chamber of Dr. Alexander Leighton in London. Leighton, a courageous and plainspoken Scotsman, declared that both king and Anglican state-church were "under the laws from the Scripture." Later he described Arminianism as "The Pope's Benjamin, the last and greatest monster of the man of sin; the elixir of Anti-Christianism; the mystery of the mystery of iniquity; the Pope's cabinet; the very quintessence of equivocation."<sup>10</sup>

"A sketch of Leighton's history is given in the preface to a letter which Samuel Rutherford wrote to him while in prison. The sketch says that Leighton, because of his zeal for Presbyterian (Calvinistic) principles and against the innovations of Laud, was arrested in 1629 and kept in an abominable cell sixteen weeks before his trial by the Star Chamber. Because of his severe distress that had brought skin and hair almost wholly off his body, he could not attend his trial. The Star Chamber condemned the afflicted and aged divine to be degraded as a minister, to have one of his ears cut off and one side of his nose slit, to be branded on the face with a red-hot iron, to stand in the pillory to be whipped at a post, to pay a fine of £1000, and to suffer imprisonment until the fine was paid. When this inhuman sentence was pronounced, Laud took off his hat, and holding up his hands, gave thanks to God who had given the Church victory over her enemies! The sentence was executed without mercy, and Leighton lay in prison till upwards of ten years. When liberated he could hardly walk, see, or hear. He died in 1649.

"Three other brave Puritans – Burton, Bastwick and Prynne – each of whom spoke openly of his own resolution to follow the Bible only, suffered similar cruelties. Henry Burton (1578-1648) was one of the Puritan divines whose fate was intimately bound up with that of Laud. On April 23, 1625, shortly after Charles I acceded to the throne, Burton wrote to the King complaining that both Laud and Richard Neile (Archbishop of York) harboured Catholic sympathies. This threw him out of favour with all concerned, and was the first step in a chain of events which led to Burton's imprisonment, together with William Prynne (1600-1669), who confronted Laud's Arminianism, and John Bastwick (1593-1654). All three men were condemned in 1636 to have their ears chopped off and to be imprisoned for life, together with sundry fines and other penalties. Prynne's ears were only partially lopped, but he suffered the additional indignity of being branded on the cheeks with the letters "S.L" ("seditious libeler"), and great numbers were reduced to entire destitution, because they dared to write against Laud's popish ceremonies."<sup>11</sup>

The most godly men were ruthlessly persecuted, many having to flee the country and take refuge in Europe and the American colonies. The patience of a largely God-fearing nation finally was exhausted, and the people rebelled. This precipitated the English Civil War.

In the events preceding this national disaster, Laud was impeached on November 3, 1640. A few days earlier, the Earl of Strafford who was Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and a Papist was also impeached. It was discovered that the two had been in league for twelve years. Papers seized demonstrated that these men were indeed administrators of the "Sovereign Drug Arminianism" and were prepared to go to any lengths in pursuit of their goals. Though Laud and Strafford were incarcerated in the Tower, their confederates continued to plot to capture London and Parliament itself. This plot was revealed to the Commons on May 2, 1641, by Mr. John Pym. The conspirators absconded and the usual mendacity of the captive Arminians began. However, in the same year, "Arminianism was officially condemned by the House of Commons."<sup>12</sup>

On June 12, 1643, Parliament issued an order for an assembly of Puritan divines, chaired by William Twisse, to meet at Westminster to redefine the creed and doctrine of the Church of England. This Westminster Assembly completed its work in 1646 and "affirmed a strong Calvinistic position and disavowed the errors of Arminianism, Roman Catholicism and sectarianism."<sup>13</sup>

Of Laud and his confederates, the evangelical Bishop J.C. Ryle stated, "Had half the zeal he displayed in snubbing Calvinists, persecuting Puritans, promoting Arminians, and making advances towards Rome been shown by ... [Anglican divines] ... in propagating Evangelical religion, it would have been a great blessing to the Church of England."<sup>14</sup> To which we add, to all the Church in England. But God was and is Sovereign in all of human history.

After the Civil War (1642-1651), the monarchy was restored, and Charles II, son of Charles I and his French Queen Henrietta Maria, ascended the throne of England. Like his father, Charles II was married to a Roman Catholic, Catherine of Braganza. The Jesuit and Arminian influence was restored to the Court of the Monarch.

James II, brother of Charles II, succeeded him and attempted to re-establish the Church of Rome in England. He promoted Catholics to high office and put seven leading bishops on trial for refusing to allow his declarations to be read out in all the churches. His actions stirred up longstanding public fears of a return of Popery.

The Protestant opposition, represented by seven prominent noblemen, was emboldened to invite William of Orange to assume the crown and his wife, James' elder daughter, to become Queen Mary II. Thus, by the grace of God, began the Glorious (and bloodless) Revolution of 1688 in England and Scotland. The Bill of Rights was enacted the following year, restoring Parliament's proper powers and securing the Protestant Throne and the Reformed religion established by Law.

### **Persecutions in France**

At that same time, in the late seventeenth century the experience of Christians in France was very different. *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes* in 1685 led to the martyrdom of many members of the French Reformed Church. As the nineteenth-century American historian John Dowling records, "King Louis XIV of France, a bigoted papist, at the persuasions of La Chaise, his Jesuit confessor publicly revoked that protecting edict, and thus let loose the floodgates of popish cruelty upon the defenceless protestants ... In the cruelties that followed, the policy of Rome appeared to be changed. She had tried, in innumerable instances, the effect of persecution unto death, and the results of the St Bartholomew's Massacre had shown that it was not effectual in eradicating the heresy. Now her plan was by torture, annoyance, and inductions of various kinds suggested by a brutal ingenuity, 'to wear out the saints of the Most High.'"<sup>15</sup>



Engravings of Papal Medals struck in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries by triumphant "Vicars of Christ" illustrate the malevolent spirit masquerading as the "Holy Spirit" which persecuted the French Protestant Huguenots.

Special commemorative medal struck by Pope Gregory XIII ( 1572-85)<sup>6</sup>

"When news of the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre reached the Vatican there was jubilation! Cannons roared – bells rung – and a special commemorative medal was struck – to honor the occasion! The Pope commissioned Italian artist Vasari to paint a mural of the Massacre – which still hangs in the Vatican!"<sup>17</sup>

Henry IV adopted the Roman Catholic faith, but issued the Edict of Nantes (1598), which both recognised Catholicism as the official religion and gave the Huguenots certain rights, such as freedom of worship. Under Louis XIV, the clergy regained its influence, and the Huguenots were again persecuted. A medal was struck to commemorate the massacre of the Huguenots in the Cevennes, one of the persecutions directed by Louis XIV against Protestants during this period. This wave of persecutions eventually led finally to the total revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, which destroyed the civil and religious liberties of the Huguenots.



This medal, executed in Rome by the Italian medallist Giovanni Hamerani (1673), commemorated the massacre of the Huguenots in the Cevennes, one of the persecutions directed by Louis XIV against the Protestants during this period. It appears to celebrate rather than criticise this massacre, with Religion guiding the slaughter.<sup>18</sup>

These engravings of Popish medals, triumphantly glorying in massacre and slaughter, reveal that Antichrist spirit which deserves the thoughtful (and prayerful) attention of all who profess faith in Christ; especially in this age where "evangelicals" are seeking reunification with the Church of Rome. The discerning reader will note that the acclaimed victory of the Antichrist Papacy was over Calvinism or the doctrines of Free & Sovereign Grace. So-called Arminian Protestants have never been a threat to the Papacy. She has no cause to fear her own spiritual offspring. When a Pope strikes a medal celebrating "Arminianism overthrow," we might have reason to believe that the Leopard has changed its spots; but that shall never happen. The "*house divided against itself shall not stand.*"<sup>19</sup>

### **Whitefield and Wesley**

The eighteenth-century Evangelical revival in England, "the Great Awakening," was led by George Whitefield, a Calvinist, and by John Wesley, an Arminian. Although they were able to cooperate with each other publicly in apparent harmony, controversy and doctrinal conflict were inevitable for they were not preaching the same gospel. In 1739, Whitefield invited Wesley to share with him the spectacular open-air ministry that he had established in Bristol, London, and in Gloucester and, in 1739, asked him to take charge of it while he was in America. On his return from evangelising New England, Whitefield returned to Bristol and



discovered that all was not well. In his splendid biography of Whitefield, Arnold Dallimore records the great evangelist's reaction to what he found:

"Sad tares have been sown here,' he wrote. 'It will require some time to pluck them up. The doctrines of the gospel are sadly run down, and most monstrous errors propagated.'"<sup>20</sup>

By sad tares and monstrous errors Whitefield was referring not only to the Wesleys' "dressing up the doctrine of Election in such horrible colours," but also the "Perfection" teaching which had become particularly prevalent at Bristol. During his former ministry in England, Whitefield had taken it for granted that by Perfection Wesley did not mean anything more than a high state of Christian maturity. But, while in America, he had learnt that Wesley was teaching his hearers that they could actually come into a condition of entire sinlessness. Whitefield heard people assert that they had reached this condition, and one of Wesley's close friends in Bristol, Edward Nowers, was particularly zealous in this assertion. Whitefield wrote:

"Brother N[owers] tells me that, for three months past, he has not sinned in thought, word or deed. He says he is not only free from the power but from the very in-being of sin. He now asserts it is impossible for him to sin."<sup>22</sup>

The following year Whitefield wrote Wesley a letter as a response to his sermon entitled "Free Grace." The letter, dated December 24, 1740, included the following extracts:

"From some time before and especially since my last departure from England, both in public and private, by preaching and printing, you have been propagating the doctrine of *universal redemption*. And when I remember how Paul reprov'd Peter for his dissimulation, I fear I have been sinfully silent for too long. O then be not angry with me, dear and honoured Sir, if now I deliver my soul, by telling you, that I think in this you greatly err. ... I shall only make a few remarks upon your sermon, entitled 'Free Grace.' ... Honoured Sir, how could it enter into your heart, to chase a text to disprove the doctrine of election, out of the 8<sup>th</sup> of Romans, where this doctrine is so plainly asserted. ... Indeed, honoured Sir, it is plain beyond all contradiction, that St Paul, through the whole 8<sup>th</sup> of the Romans, is speaking of the privileges of those only who are really in Christ. And let any unprejudiced person read what goes before, and what follows your text, and he must confess 'all' only signified those that are in Christ. Had anyone a mind to prove the doctrine of election as well as of final perseverance, he could hardly wish for a text more fit for his purpose, than that which you have chosen to disprove it. After the first paragraph, I scarce know whether you mentioned it so much as once, through your whole sermon. But your discourse, in my opinion, is as little to the purpose as your text, and instead of warping, does more and more confirm me in the belief of the doctrine of God's eternal election. I shall not mention how illogically you have proceeded. ...

"Without the belief of the doctrine of election, and the immutability of the free love of God, I cannot see how it is possible that any should have a comfortable assurance of God's eternal salvation. ... If I must speak freely, I believe your fighting so strenuously against the doctrine of election, and pleading so vehemently for a sinless perfection, are among the reasons or culpable causes why you are kept out of the liberties of the gospel, and from that full assurance of faith that they enjoy, who have experimentally tasted and daily feed upon God's electing, everlasting love ... The doctrine of universal redemption, as you set it forth, is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God and the merit of His blood. "Consider whether it be not rather blasphemy to say as you do, 'Christ not only died for those that are saved, but also those

that perish."<sup>23</sup>

A misleading, hagiographic image of John Wesley has filtered down to us, which is widespread in today's Evangelical circles. Harold Vinson Synan, an Arminian and Pentecostal historian, has given this appraisal of Wesley and the age in which he lived.

"In arriving at his mature theological convictions, Wesley borrowed from many sources. His doctrines were distilled primarily from the Anglo-Catholic tradition in which he was educated, rather than from the continental Reformed Protestant tradition. Methodism, with its strong Arminian base, was in essence a reaction against the uncompromising Calvinism, which had dominated English social, religious, and political life during much of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. If the Calvinists taught that only the elect could be saved, the Methodist taught that anyone could find salvation. If the Calvinist could never be certain that he was in the elect circle, [a misrepresentation]<sup>24</sup> the Methodist could know from a crisis experience of conversion that he was saved. From the beginning, Methodist theology placed great emphasis on this conscious religious experience. This empirical evidence of salvation is what Wesley and his followers have since offered to the world".<sup>25</sup>

Synan's sympathetic appraisal portrays Arminianism in a favourable light, but, as a Canadian publication of fifty years ago continues to warn us, "Let us not think that the malignant spirit of persecution that moved the Arminians – led by Scottish Bishop Thomas Sydserff, Archbishop Laud, and others – died at the end of the Covenanting Struggles of long ago. The Arminians of today hold precisely the same false doctrines, and are just as relentlessly opposed to the absolute sovereignty of God and to unconditional election as were the Arminians of old."<sup>27</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. William Cunningham: *Historical Theology*, Vol. 1, p.483 ff.
2. "A Chronology Of Biblical Christianity" by R.C. Wetzel, *Reformation History Library*, CD-ROM (Rio, WI: Ages Digital Library), 154.
3. "Arminianism," from the tract, "Another Gospel," by William Maclean.
4. Bishop J.C. Ryle: *Light From Old Times*, p.16.
5. *History of the Westminster Assembly*, p. 27.
6. J.I. Packer: *Arminianism*
7. Bishop J.C. Ryle *Light From Old Times*, p.266 -276.
8. *Ibid*, p.278.
9. William Maxwell Hetherington, *History Of The Westminster Assembly*, p.63.
10. Christopher Ness: *An Antidote Against Arminianism* (published in 1700)
11. *History Of The Westminster Assembly*, p.65
12. Wetzel, p.164.
13. *Ibid*.
14. *Light From Old Times*, p.278.
15. John W. Dowling: *The History of Romanism* 1847
16. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre on August 24<sup>th</sup> of 1572 – The horrendous slaughterer

of men, women, and children of over 100,000 people including over 50,000 in Paris alone. The reason: religious intolerance of the French Protestants involved in the Reformation. What did Pope Gregory XIII – the Vicar of Christ on Earth – think about such merciless killing? He praised Catherine de Medici (the instigator) and commissioned a medal to be cast in honor of the event, with the inscription "Slaughter [strages] of the Huguenots." <[www.reformation.org/bart.html](http://www.reformation.org/bart.html)>

19. Matthew 12:25

20. Arnold Dallimore, *George Whitefield* (Banner of Truth, 1980), 66.

22. *ibid.*

23. *ibid.*, 553.

24. Author's note

25. H.V. Synan: *The Holiness-Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971), p. 14.

27. *The Contender* – Nova Scotia, April 1955

## Chapter 13

### "New Revivalism"

Charles Finney, D.L. Moody, and a Man-Centred Gospel

"Revivals changed into revivalism as subjective experience was emphasised above objective truth."<sup>1</sup>

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Holiness Movement swept through both America and Europe. This new revivalism was a victory of pragmatism over the authority of scripture. It was a further erosion of earlier Calvinistic beliefs, especially the doctrines of election and predestination. The so-called "Second Great Awakening," which sprang out of the Holiness Movement in the late 1820s and the 1830s, was, as author Michael Bunker has suggested, "really just a Jesuitical backlash against the staunch Grace doctrine focus of the real Great Awakening."<sup>2</sup>

"Reacting against the pervasive Calvinism of the Great Awakening, the successors of that great movement of God's Spirit turned from God to humans (to a man-centered gospel) from the preaching of objective content, namely Christ and Him crucified, to the emphasis on getting a person to 'make a decision.'"<sup>3</sup>

#### **Charles Finney**

Charles Grandison Finney (1792-1875) was the man who created the "decisionism" concept in evangelism. where a person is led through an "altar call" and is pressured to "decide for Christ." There are no "altar calls" and there is no "decisionism" to be found in the New Testament. The Bible merely declares that after the preaching of the true Gospel, "many believed."<sup>4</sup>

In his day, Finney was extremely influential. He still is. He has been described as "the icon of modern evangelicalism." Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell said that Finney "was one of my heroes and a hero to many evangelicals, including Billy Graham."

Finney ministered in the wake of the "Second Awakening" and began conducting revivals in upstate New York. One of his most popular sermons was "Sinners Bound to Change Their Own Hearts." This was the theological understanding from which he developed his new methods. One result of Finney's revivalism was the division of Presbyterians in Philadelphia and New York into Arminian and Calvinistic factions. His "New Measures" brought about a whole new era of Christian evangelism. They included the "anxious seat" and "mourner's bench," which led to the "invitation" or "altar call", the now common practice of calling sinners to come to the front to receive Christ. He instituted emotional tactics that led to fainting and weeping, and other "excitements," as Finney and his followers called them. A sermon preached by Pennsylvania Pastor Fred Zaspel, focusing upon the impact of Finney and his new revivalism, provides a solemn warning about what is happening in the Arminian-dominated church today.

"He could work a crowd to fever pitch and to fanaticism ('excitements') of various forms – faintings, shakings, weepings and so on; and all for good reason! Decisions for Christ were made! Sinners made profession of faith! This is the foundation of Finneyism, which lives today. Revival can be brought to town in a briefcase. It is not a supernatural work of God; it is simply the right use of the constituted means. And this is the fountain of his 'new measures' which are so well known to us today. But again it does work. It gets results. It gets people to make 'decisions.' And so how could it possibly be wrong? Should we allow some tradition and prescribed ideals to interfere with success? Finney himself writes with considerable embarrassment shortly after

these 'Western revivals' were over. The results, it turned out, were not what they appeared. Few contacts 'stuck.' The area where Finney had been and where such excitement had been generated was now 'burnt ground' unable to be burned by the gospel again. People were turned off like never before. Their 'decisions' were spurious, and now they were more hostile to the gospel than they had been before.

"This then is the fountainhead of much modern Christianity. Today's 'church growth' seminars insist that theology gets in the way of seeing sinners saved. Instruction is given in 'the art of appeal' and 'the effective altar call' and 'how to get decisions' and 'the use of story in preaching', sad stories, emotional manipulation, seventeen stanzas of the invitation hymn. In all this we reflect our debt to Charles Finney. In some circles it is the 'barking' and screaming and roaring and laughing, the gibberish of tongues, and other rather strange things that work. All this is the outgrowth of Finney, whose theology of manipulation 'got results'. With him, a new era of Christian evangelism was born which lives strong today."<sup>6</sup>

As Michael Horton wrote of the revivalist in Modern Reformation,

"Finney believed that human beings were capable of choosing whether they would be corrupt by nature or redeemed – referring to original sin as an 'anti-scriptural and nonsensical dogma.' In clear terms Finney denied the notion that human beings possess a sinful nature. ... Not only did the revivalist abandon the doctrine of justification, making him a renegade against evangelical Christianity; he repudiated doctrines such as original sin and the substitutionary atonement, that have been embraced by Roman Catholics and Protestants alike. Therefore Finney is not merely an Arminian, but a Pelagian. He is not only an enemy of evangelical Protestantism, but of historic Christianity of the broadest sort."<sup>7</sup>

Let us just pause here. We do know that "there is no new thing under the sun."<sup>8</sup> Here we are back again to the denial of original sin and the Sovereign grace of God, the exaltation of the free will of man amounting to the rejection of the entire Reformation view of Christianity. That "Sovereign Drug Arminianism" can be seen to have become the potent and all pervasive potion coursing through the veins of the professing churches, seemingly with no antidote short of another Reformation.

J.H. Merle d'Aubigne, theologian and preacher, 'the People's Historian' (1794-1872) stated in his History of the Reformation in England:

"To believe in the power of man in the work of regeneration is the great heresy of Rome, and from that error has come the ruin of the Church. Conversion proceeds from the grace of God alone, and the system which ascribes it partly to man and partly to God is worse than Pelagianism."<sup>9</sup>

### **Dwight Lyman Moody**

Whilst Finney was Pelagian in his teachings, D.L. Moody, the American Evangelist, was the great apostle of the Arminian gospel in the nineteenth century. In 1873-74 he and Ira D. Sankey (the gospel singer and hymn writer) conducted a major evangelistic campaign in Scotland, in the course of which thousands professed to have believed in Christ. They held campaigns throughout all of Britain. Although most were impressed with the many thousands of "conversions" – there were many "Reverend" gentlemen who sat quietly at Moody's feet to be lectured by the great Revivalist – there were a small few that opposed what was going on. One who did was James Kidwell Popham (1847-1937), a pastor in Brighton in England who expressed his concern passionately:

"Disclaiming the bigotry I am bound to say I am opposed to the religious movement of

which Messrs. Moody and Sankey are the leaders. I am opposed to it because I fail to see what Mr. Moody so confidently asserted at Birmingham – that the present work is God's. Every religious movement must be judged more by its doctrines than by what we usually see paraded – results. The teachings of its leaders must be brought to God's word, and tested by it. *'To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'*<sup>10</sup> ... .. It is truly awful to see the dishonour done to Christ by the preaching and singing of these 'evangelists.' Where are the scripture evidences that Christ is knocking, and 'has knocked many times already,' at the heart of every person to whom Messrs, Moody and Sankey may speak or sing? If He desires to dwell in this or that particular heart, what shall hinder? ... Assuming that it is the will of God that every creature should be saved, which is not true, men have made the conversion of sinners an art, and have resorted to all sorts of unscriptural methods to compass their end. 'Sadly forgetful' of him who said *'I kill and I make alive,'*<sup>11</sup> they are 'madly bold' in their efforts to wrest God's special work out of His hands. We have the new doctrine of Regeneration by faith, singing theology, sudden conversions, the enquiry room, sensational advertisements such as 'February for Jesus, Liverpool for Jesus, body and soul for Jesus, etc.' And when these new appliances have completed the task allotted them, we have an exhibition of the work done! ... .. The parable of the sower is not applicable to this religious movement, since Mr. Moody has *no* good seed to sow. To be sure he reads the Word of God, but then he endeavours to expound it, and this exposition is nothing less than a fouling of the pure waters of truth." (Ezekiel 34:19)<sup>12</sup>

Later, describing Moody and Sankey's evangelism, Popham wrote, "By the galvanising apparatus these men are using, they succeed in evoking 'mere emotion,' and this is called conversion, and these galvanised, but dead souls, are then called Christians. Oh, horrible profanity! A shocking caricature of a true Christian of God's living army." (Ez. 37:10).

The concerns of Pastor Popham were shared by the Reverend Dr. John Kennedy of Dingwall a well-respected evangelical leader in Scotland at the time of the campaign. He felt that the preaching made light of sin and wrote a tract, "Hyper-Evangelism, Another Gospel, Though a Mighty Power," which listed his objections to Moody's movement.

- That no pains were taken to present the character and claims of God as Lawgiver and Judge, and no indication given of a desire to bring souls in self-condemnation to "accept the punishment of their iniquity."
- That it ignored the sovereignty and power of God in the dispensation of His grace.
- That it afforded no help to discover, in the light of the doctrine of the cross, how God is glorified in the salvation of the sinner that believes in Jesus.
- That it offers no precaution against tendencies towards Antinomianism on the part of those who professed to believe.

Warnings given about the "great" revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries equally apply today. One such warning was given by American theologian Robert Lewis Dabney at the end of the nineteenth century.

"American Protestantism is characterized by a peculiar evil which I may describe by the term 'spurious revivalism.' The common mischief resulting from all its forms is the over-hasty reception into the communion of the churches of multitudes of persons whom time proves to have experienced no spiritual change. In most cases, these mischievous accessions are brought about by sensational human expedients. It is an unpopular thing for a minister of the gospel to bear this witness. But it is true. And my

regard for that account which I must soon render at a more awful bar than that of arrogant public opinion demands its utterance."<sup>13</sup>

Another more recent warning has been given by The Trinity Foundation.

"There was too little discrimination between true and false religious feeling. There was too much encouragement given to outcries, faintings, and bodily agitations as probable evidence of the presence and power of God. There was, in many, too much reliance on impulses, visions, and the pretended power of discerning spirits. There was a great deal of censoriousness and of sinful disregard of ecclesiastical order. The disastrous effects of these evils, the rapid spread of false religion, the dishonour and decline of true piety, the prevalence of erroneous doctrines, the division of congregations, the alienation of Christians, and the long period of subsequent deadness in the church stand up as a solemn warning to Christians, and especially to Christian ministers in all times to come."<sup>14</sup>

Charles Spurgeon, fighting the downgrade controversy, expressed his concern too.

"A very great portion of modern revivalism has been more a curse than a blessing, because it has led thousands to a kind of peace before they have known their misery; restoring the prodigal to the Father's house, and never making him say, 'Father, I have sinned.' How can he be healed who is not sick, or he be satisfied with the bread of life who is not hungry? The old-fashioned sense of sin is despised. ... Every thing in this age is shallow. ... The consequence is that men leap into religion, and then leap out again. unhumbled they came to the church, unhumbled they remained in it, and unhumbled they go from it."<sup>15</sup>

Those who encourage visions, dreams, faintings, slaying in the "spirit" and bodily agitations are, in effect, advocating a return to Roman Catholic mysticism. Revival can be characterised by mysticism, and it was carried directly into Protestant thinking through the revivals of John Wesley in eighteenth-century England. Wesley was very well versed in the writings of Roman Catholicism's mystics. He was not reticent in speaking of them fondly and was instrumental in publishing a great number of them. Although Wesley identified the Papacy as the Antichrist of scripture, this adopted mysticism stayed with him all his life. It is to be observed today in revivalism.

"The emphasis on visions and dreams, special extra-Biblical revelations, and the guidance of the Spirit through these revelations all belong to the tradition of mysticism. Indeed there is a striking resemblance between revivalism and the modern Charismatic movement. Yet, mysticism is contrary to the Scriptures it is a theology of feelings, emotions, and imagination with scant regard for doctrine. Of course we would not include all revivalists in this. George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards are notable exceptions. However, in most instances revivalism pays little attention to doctrine, and at worst, is an enemy of the truth."<sup>16</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Alan Morrison, Diakrisis Ministries: <<http://www.diakrisis.org>>
2. Michael Bunker: *Swarms of Locusts -The Jesuit Attack on the Faith*, P.O. Box 216, Smyer, Texas 79367, p.80.
3. Ibid.
4. Michael Horton: "The Disturbing Legacy of Charles Finney," *Modern Reformation Magazine*, Jan/Feb 1995.

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9. J. H. Merle d' Aubigne: *The Reformation in England* (London, 1962), Vol. 1. p. 98.
10. Isaiah 8:20
11. Deuteronomy 32:39
12. J.K.Popham, "Moody and Sankey's Errors Versus the Scriptures of Truth," <www.truegospel.net>
13. R.L. Dabney, "The Modern Invitation System Examined," 1892, from "Revival in the Church – Do We Need It?"  
<hnp://www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm./Psychology/revival.htm> *Biblical Discernment Ministries*, accessed 3/19/06
14. The Trinity Foundation: Review, July/August 1991, <http://trinityfoundation.org>
15. C.H. Spurgeon, Metropolitan Tabernacle, (1882).
16. <www.rapidnet.com/~jbeard/bdm/Psychology/revival/htm>



## Chapter 14

### The Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements

John Wesley's Arminian teachings had inspired the founders of The Holiness Movement, who introduced into the Christian community the idea that "sinless perfection" or "entire sanctification" can be achieved in this life through a second work of grace or a "second blessing." In time this would become identified with "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit" and the speaking with tongues of Pentecostalism and the Charismatic Movement. In his book *The Holiness – Pentecostal Movement in the United States* (see footnote 124), pentecostal historian Vinson Synan's description of the arrival of the "first wave" of Pentecostalism (preceding the Charismatic second and the current signs and wonders' "third wave") is instructive:

"Although the Pentecostal Movement began in the United States, itself a significant fact, its theological and intellectual origins were British. The basic premises of the movement's theology were constructed by John Wesley in the Eighteenth century. As a product of Methodism, the Holiness-Pentecostal movement traces its lineage through the Wesleys to Anglicanism and thence to Roman Catholicism."

"This theological heritage places the Pentecostals outside the Calvinistic, Reformed tradition which culminated in the Baptist and Presbyterian movements in the United States. The basic Pentecostal theological position might be described as Arminian, perfectionistic, premillennial and charismatic."<sup>1</sup>

#### **Evan Roberts and the Welsh Revival**

At the beginning of the twentieth century once again there was much talk of "revival". Historian R.C. Wetzel notes that in 1904, "Evan Roberts began the Welsh Revival."<sup>2</sup> This comment seems perceptive, for it is unlikely that this year long aberration was begun by GOD, marked as it was with a "de-emphasis on preaching, ... interruptions by worshippers, stress on the baptism of the spirit, and Spirit guidance ... (and) ... Lay preachers such as Evan Roberts at center-stage ..."<sup>3</sup> This appears to have been a thoroughly Arminian event.

Its historical significance lies in the fact that it was the precursor to, and has been linked with, the "Pentecostal Revival" which began at Azusa Street in Los Angeles in 1906 and is said by many to be continuing today. *The Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements* records that "in 1904-05 reports came to Los Angeles of a substantial revival that was taking place in Wales, largely associated with the work of Evan Roberts. In Chicago, 'Holiness' publisher, S.B. Shaw was the author of *The Great Revival in Wales* (1905), which was widely read in the Los Angeles area in 1905 and 1906. People who read the book began to establish cottage prayer meetings where they sought God for a similar revival among the churches of Los Angeles."<sup>4</sup>

Therefore it is clear that the name of Evan Roberts is closely connected with both the Welsh revival and with later happenings at Los Angeles. A quote from the preface written for Frank Bartleman's book, *What Really Happened at Azusa Street*, seems to be both ironical and self-contradictory:

"To the praise and honor of God, the Azusa Street Revival brought glory to *no man*. As testimony to this, no man's name is connected with it. However, it can be safely said that no more faithful witness to its events could be found than Frank Bartleman."<sup>5</sup>

In fact, it can be argued that Azusa Street was not, as Pentecostals now insist, a spontaneous "revival", nor a sovereign work of the Holy Spirit, but was initiated by Evan Roberts in Wales via his correspondence with Frank Bartleman in Los Angeles.

## Welsh "Revival" Spreads to North America

Frank Bartleman is described as "the primary chronicler of Pentecostal origins in Los Angeles."<sup>6</sup> In the preface to his book, originally entitled *How Pentecostals Came to Los Angeles*, it is stated, "pamphlets telling of the visitation of the Spirit of God in Wales in 1904 provided the spark for the great revival in Los Angeles in 1906. During 1905, as Frank Bartleman corresponded with Evan Roberts in Wales and they agreed in prayer, as he and others spread the message of the Welsh revival ... the spark became a spreading flame that burst forth into a world-wide conflagration of Pentecostal Revival in the Church of Jesus Christ."<sup>7</sup>

The various manifestations and excesses of the Toronto Blessing and its offspring, the Pensacola Outpouring (or Laughing Revival) in the 1990s are nothing new. The same characteristics and phenomena were to be found at Azusa Street and were experienced during the Latter Rain movement of 1948. In all of them the experiences or "blessings" were passed on from person to person. Just as more recently people have travelled to Toronto or Pensacola to obtain the "Blessing", in like manner an earlier generation travelled to Los Angeles to seek revival and the outpouring or "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" with "the gift of tongues."

All of these movements have one common denominator – they are all Arminian. They all preached and continue to preach a "gospel" that is unlikely to save. We know that the Sovereign God can save in any situation in which He is truly sought. We also know from the Apostle Paul that "*whether in pretence, or in truth Christ is preached*"<sup>8</sup> there can be cause for rejoicing. However, we remember "*that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.*"<sup>9</sup>

Scripture teaches us to expect apostasy, not revival. Church history demonstrates this over and over again. This has perhaps never been more true than it is today. For we are now in a time of great apostasy. Counterfeit Christianity is again in the ascendancy, with the foundations of the true faith very much under attack. "*Another gospel*" is being preached with "*another Jesus*", and "*Another spirit*"<sup>10</sup> to and with "*all deceivableness of unrighteousness*".<sup>11</sup> "*And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.*"<sup>12</sup>

This is a solemn matter. It is Almighty God Himself who sends delusion upon those who "*received not the love of the truth.*"<sup>13</sup> To those whom he has chosen, He says, "*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 and belief of the truth.*"<sup>14</sup> God's people will not ultimately be ensnared by apostate movements, which masquerade as "revival", nor will they succumb to "The Sovereign Drug Arminianism."

There is a misconception among the great majority of Charismatic and Evangelical churches in our day. It is the belief that the Charismatic Movement is a genuine work of the Spirit of God. But just as Pentecostalism was man-manufactured, so too was the Charismatic Movement, although both surely have very many genuine believers who belong to Christ but are caught up in the deception.

## Vatican II and the Charismatic Movement

What should deeply concern all lovers of Truth is the fact that from its beginnings in the early 1960s the Charismatic Movement had the full backing of the Vatican. In 1965, The *Second Vatican Council* officially opened the way for Charismatic "renewal" within the Catholic Church. It was also decreed that "the Church should become a full and active participant in the ecumenical movement."<sup>15</sup>

In a previous book *All Roads Lead to Rome*, this writer described in more detail the early

history of the Charismatic Movement and the involvement of the Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Augustin Bea (Jesuit personal Confessor to former Pope Pius XII and President of the *Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity*) spoke to the Council of the need for the Church to "strive to revitalise its own inner life, so that it can be manifested to our separated brethren, an ever clearer image according to the gospel."

"The 'separated brethren' had been 'heretics' for many hundreds of years before the Council was convened. Suddenly, with 'this new movement of the Holy Spirit' they were 'welcomed back into the fold.' David Du Plessis, the Pentecostal leader known as 'Mr. Pentecost', was invited to attend the third session of Vatican II as Cardinal Bea's personal guest. In 1967, two years after the Council officially opened the way for renewal, the first Charismatic 'Baptism in the Spirit' experiences of Catholics occurred at Duquesne and Notre Dame Universities. The Church of Rome officially adopted its own renewal movement – the only denomination to do so."<sup>16</sup>

### **Remembering Our History**

We do well to remember our history. We need to be aware that Vatican II reaffirmed the decrees and anathemas of the Council of Trent in the very same year, 1965, as it welcomed back the "separated brethren." As we have already seen, in order to counter the Reformation, Trent had asserted *free will* and denounced the Doctrines of Grace as "accursed."<sup>17</sup> Important to remember too is the excerpt from the Jesuit letter found in Archbishop Laud's study in 1627:

"We have now many strings to our bow. We have planted the sovereign drug Arminianism which we hope will purge the Protestants from their heresy; and it flourisheth and beareth fruit in due season. ... I am at this time transported with joy to see how happily all instruments and means, as well great as smaller, co-operate with our purposes. But to return to the main fabric; OUR FOUNDATION IS ARMINIANISM."

The calculating Papacy must have determined that the most effective method of undermining and destroying the gospel of the "heretics" was to replace it with the new revivalist gospel of so many of the "separated brethren." The hidden agenda of Vatican II was to undermine Calvinism and to promote Arminian ecumenism among the Protestant churches. Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea was the man chosen to play the key role.

The Charismatic Renewal Movement is viewed by many as the daughter of Pentecostalism; but it is also the product of Popery the implacable enemy of the true Gospel and of the saints of the Most High God. The Pope of Rome, the Cardinals, and the Jesuits must be delighted that their centuries-old strategy has proved to be so successful. They may struggle to believe their own good fortune that they have lived to witness "Protestant" evangelicals zealously promoting their Arminian doctrines " ... *with all power and signs and lying wonders* 'by' ... *even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan.*"<sup>18</sup>

They must thank their God as the "heretics" beat a path back to unity with the "Mother Church" and as Charismatic leaders queue up to meet with the Roman Pontiff and to join their flocks in "worship" with tongues-speaking Catholics. But, they do not recognise in themselves the fulfilment of the words the Lord Jesus spoke to His disciples: '*... there shall arise false Christs; and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect.*'"<sup>19</sup>

We ask the question, "What is it that unites supposedly Protestant evangelicals with Roman Catholics whose allegiance is to the avowed enemy of the Protestant Reformation?" Apart from widespread ignorance and neglect of Church History, we suggest a twofold answer –

shared "spiritual" experiences and Arminianism.

The main burden of this book has been today's neglect of history by both church and nation and the costly consequences of such disregard. History is the repository of experience and knowledge, of lessons learnt and unlearnt. It can be seen as the outworking of the Holy Spirit in the life of the invisible church, the elect of the Lord Jesus Christ. Few believers today know that historic evangelicalism has long shared a common heritage in the "solas" of the sixteenth century Protestant Reformation. The Reformation "solas" affirmed: Scripture alone (Sola Scriptura), Christ alone (Solus Christus), Grace alone (Sola Gratia), Faith alone (Sola Fide), and to God be the Glory alone (Soli Deo Gloria). In short, the "solas" were the rallying cry of the reformers.

#### Footnotes

1. Michael Bunker: *Swarms of Locusts*, Writers Club Press, P.O. Box 216, Smyer, TX 79367
2. R.C. Wetzel: *A Chronology of Biblical Christianity*, pp. 210, 211.
3. *Dictionary of Pentecostal & Charismatic Movements*, p.881: Regency Reference Library Grand Rapids, Michigan.
4. *Ibid.*, p.31
5. Frank Bartleman: *What Really Happened at Azusa Street*, Preface.
6. *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, p.50.
7. Derek Owers: *The Charismatic Movement* Bible Theology Ministries, P.O. Box 415, Swansea SA5 8YH
8. Philippians 1:18
9. 1 Timothy 4:1
10. 2 Corinthians 11:4
11. See Chapter 10, "Bible Verse Comparisons"; Comparison Number 22.
12. 2 Thessalonians 2:11-12
13. 2 Thessalonians 2:10
14. 2 Thessalonians 2:13
15. *Dictionary of Pentecostal & Charismatic Movements*, p. 111.
16. Michael de Semlyen *All Roads Lead to Rome – The Ecumenical Movement*: Dorchester House Publications, p. 24.
17. See Chapter 12, "Catholicism and Arminianism in England and France During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries"; Subheading "The Council of Trent."
18. 2 Thessalonians 2:9

## Chapter 15

### The Abandoning of the Protestant Reformed Religion

Apparently careless of all that has gone before, leading evangelicals have chosen to ignore the lessons of the past and the testimonies of the saints and martyrs of Jesus. Seduced by the wiles of the devil in compromising their once sound doctrine, they have bowed to the "modernising" pressures of the world, abandoning their Protestant identity, embracing ecumenism and accepting individual Roman Catholics as brothers and sisters in Christ. The first and second *National Evangelical Anglican Conferences* that met at Keele and Nottingham in England in 1967 and 1977, respectively, launched and furthered the new policy of Anglicans towards the fast growing ecumenical movement. There was a new desire on the part of the new evangelicals to be united with ritualistic Anglicans, essentially Roman Catholics in belief and practice; and also to liberals who believed in a fallible Bible. But, as the Prophet Amos enquired: "*Can two walk together except they be agreed?*"<sup>1</sup>

Well-respected English evangelicals such as John Stott and J.I. Packer, whose writings have been held in high esteem by conservatives for many years, endorsed the statements from these Conferences, and in so doing set aside Gospel truth in favour of accepting fellow Anglicans as true brothers and sisters in Christ.

John Stott, author of *Basic Christianity*, who chaired the first "NEAC" at Keele, gave that Conference a warning that "evangelicals had acquired a reputation for narrow partisanship and obstructionism and that they needed to repent and change." He made clear that the Conference was accepting not only Anglo-Catholics and liberals as fellow Christians but Roman Catholics too:

"All who confess the Lord Jesus as God and Saviour, according to the Scriptures, and therefore seek together their common calling to the glory of one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, have a right to be treated as Christians; and it is on this basis that we wish to talk with them."

Dr. Jim Packer, author of *Knowing God*, who just a few years before in 1961 had described the doctrine of justification by faith alone, *sola fide*, as " ... like Atlas, it bears a world on its shoulders, the entire evangelical knowledge of saving grace," changed his position in the early 1960s on this defining doctrine and signed up to Keele. Much later, in 1994, he demonstrated his revised, new evangelical view by also signing *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*, the document that has rocked American evangelicalism. In an article "Why I Signed It", Professor Packer refers to *Sola Fide* as "small print." He asked the question: "May ECT realistically claim, as in effect it does, that its evangelical and Catholic drafters agree on the gospel of salvation?" ... "Answer – Yes and No." "No", Professor Packer says, "with respect to the small print." Thus *Sola Fide*, a burning issue for Reformation martyrs, and for Professor Packer an issue that once bore a world on its shoulders, is relegated to "small print."

### **Evangelicals and Catholics Together**

What many Christians believe to have been the most significant event in almost five hundred years of church history took place on March 29, 1994. On that day twenty leading evangelicals and twenty leading Roman Catholics signed the joint declaration, *Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium*. Ten years later, on May 30, 2004, *The New York Times* reported on this alliance between Catholics and Evangelicals that is redefining Christianity in America.

"In 1960, the last time a Roman Catholic ran for president on the Democratic ticket, evangelical Protestant leaders warned their flocks that electing John F. Kennedy would be like handing the Oval Office to the Antichrist ... ... Forty-four years later Evangelicals

and conservative Catholics have forged an alliance that is reshaping American politics and culture ... Exactly 10 years ago, a group of Evangelical and Catholic leaders and scholars released a document called *Evangelicals and Catholics Together*. It was the result of a dialogue started by the Rev. Richard John Neuhaus, a Catholic priest in New York who edits the journal *First Things*, and Charles Colson. The two men convened a group of prominent theologians and religious leaders. The Evangelical side included the late Bill Bright, founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, the religious broadcaster Pat Robertson, and theologians like James I. Packer. The Catholic side included the late Cardinal John O'Connor of New York and the theologian Avery Dulles, now a cardinal. Their manifesto was primarily theological, but it included overt political pledges to work together on issues like abortion, government aid for religious schools, and strengthening the 'traditional family,' in part a reaction to the growing gay rights movement. The document shook the Evangelical world. By 2000, Mr. Colson and James Dobson, the broadcaster who founded *Focus on the Family*, were invited to the Vatican. ... Evangelical institutions like Wheaton College in Illinois and Gordon College in Massachusetts began inviting Catholics to speak on campus".<sup>2</sup>

The Evangelical and Catholics Together document, which overturns the Reformation and does devastating damage to the cause of Christ, was actually begun as a specific task in September 1992. Larry Lewis of the Southern Baptist Convention, Jesse Miranda of Assemblies of God, John White of the Geneva College of the National Association of Evangelicals, and others, including two Jesuits, Avery Dulles and Juan Diaz-Vilar, joined Colson and Neuhaus in the writing process. All of this was under the watchful eye of Jesuit Cardinal Idris Cassidy; the Head of Rome's *Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity*, said by Neuhaus to have given "very active support throughout the process." The document urges "Catholics and Evangelicals ... to stop aggressive proselytisation of each other's flocks," which is code for, "Evangelicals must not preach the True Gospel to Catholics." It further states, "Leading Catholics and Evangelicals are asking their flocks for a remarkable leap of faith: to finally accept each other as Christians."

As former Roman Catholic priest and author, Richard Bennett laments in his excellent book *Catholicism: East of Eden*,

"The devastating effect of the New Evangelical compromise with the Gospel is to put a stop to the evangelising of Roman Catholics across the world. If this compromise of the true Gospel of Jesus Christ is accepted, then Bible-believing churches will refrain from evangelising Catholics. The impact on the true church in third world Catholic countries of Central and South America, in Africa, as well as in Spain, Portugal and the Philippines, is already apparent. If this anti-evangelical trend continues unchecked it will become ruinous to the spiritual welfare of millions of souls. But this is exactly the policy the ECT signatories promote when they state, '... it is neither theologically legitimate nor a prudent use of resources for one Christian community to proselytise among active adherents of another Christian community.' Since when has it been theologically illegitimate to expose error and heresy?"<sup>3</sup>

Hence, the Counter Reformation objectives of the Council of Trent have almost been accomplished. The distinctive doctrines of the Reformation, which separated Evangelicals from the Arminianism of Popery are set at nought by our own "Protestant" leaders.

### **True and False Ecumenism**

True ecumenical unity is clearly defined in the Scriptures. In the words of the Apostle Paul, "*There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all,*

*and in you all.*"<sup>4</sup> Thus followers of Christ who place their faith solely in the one triune God and His written Word, as did the Lord and the Apostles after Him (*Sola Scriptura*), are one in body, in Spirit, and in truth. They are saved before the all-Holy God by grace alone (*Sola Gratia*), through faith alone (*Sola Fide*), and in Christ alone (*Solo Christo*), and all glory and praise is to God alone (*Soli Deo Gloria*). Through the centuries, these five biblical principles or "solas" have helped the persecuted church hold fast to the simplicity of the Gospel. True ecumenism is fellowship or working together in adherence to these "solas" which maintain the foundation of true unity in the Lord. To the degree to which these key basic biblical standards are embraced, true unity will be evident.

On the other hand, false ecumenism, typically institutionalised, joins together professing Christian groups in common causes and activities, with one or more of the parties involved unconverted. While purporting to confess the Lord Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures, for the most part the five biblical principles, the "solas" that display the basis of true unity in the Lord are compromised. The extent to which these principles are not upheld usually indicates the degree of submission of the particular church or organisation to Rome.

The *World Council of Churches* is such an institution. Those organisations participating within it have no agreement on any of the five principles demonstrating the foundation of true unity solely in the Lord Jesus Christ. Likewise the Pope and his Church, in apostasy from the true Gospel, are without any of the five biblical standards. Counterfeiting the body of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are intent on finding successful ways to bind all to the visible, active and attractive pontifical throne.

Let us recall the Jesuit statement in the notorious letter found in Archbishop Laud's study: "Our foundation is Arminianism."<sup>5</sup> What was written in the letter has proven to be prophetic: "It flourisheth and beareth fruit in due season" and "we hope (it) will purge the Protestants from their heresy". Yes, it does flourish in our day; and a the majority of Protestants have been purged from their faith of *Free and Sovereign Grace*. This faith, the one and only true Gospel which the Papacy set out to overturn with its Counter-Reformation launched at the Council of Trent (1545-1563), is often now derided even by professing Protestants as "Hyper-Calvinism". The Jesuits and Arminians would seem to have succeeded beyond their wildest dreams.

And the prophet saith: "*When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the **Spirit of the LORD** shall lift up a standard against him.*"<sup>6</sup> Friends, this is a solemn matter. The end result of Arminianism is this: "*There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness.*"<sup>7</sup> Is it not to the Arminian that the LORD saith: "*He feedeth on ashes; a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul nor say, is there not a lie in my right hand?*"<sup>8</sup> Woe Arminians! " ... *because with lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad.*"<sup>9</sup>

From his pulpit at the Metropolitan Tabernacle C. H. Spurgeon was forthright in his declarations of the doctrines that he believed comprised the revealed truth of God:

"It is no novelty, then, that I am preaching; no new doctrine. I love to proclaim these strong old doctrines, which are called by nickname Calvinism, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus. By this truth I make a pilgrimage into the past, and as I go, I see father after father, confessor after confessor, martyr after martyr, standing up to shake hands with me. Were I a Pelagian, or a believer in the doctrine of free-will, I should have to walk for centuries all alone. Here and there an heretic of no very honourable character might rise up and call me brother. But taking these things to be the standard of my faith, I see the land of the ancients peopled with my brethren – I behold multitudes who confess the same as I do, and acknowledge that

this is the religion of God's own church.

To lay aside the regeneration of the divine Person of the Holy Spirit and to replace this by faith and confidence in a man-centred message is fatal. In such teaching instead of a divine Person being the sole efficient cause of being "born again", an individual's thoughts and affections remain on himself. This is religion substituting for a real relationship with the living God. Indeed, sinful man likes to have it so; he wishes to have all aspects of life under his own control. In this respect, Catholicism and Arminianism serve him well, they both appeal to his pride. The great problem with all of this is the inner emptiness and unregenerated lifestyle that goes with such teachings.

Contrasting with this, the real Christian hope is that the Spirit of God will beget a man to new life in Christ. Those who are begotten to a new and spiritual life are quickened to a new and lively hope. In the words of the Apostle Peter, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*"<sup>11</sup>

Where there is true faith and love of the Lord, there is in the midst of all things "*a joy unspeakable and full of glory.*"<sup>12</sup> In Arminianism however, this foundation of deep inner fellowship with the Lord is missing. The belief that salvation begins by Christ first coming into the sinful heart of a man is unscriptural. The dead and ungodly person can be made acceptable to God only by being "*in Christ*", as the New Testament makes very clear: "*To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.*"<sup>13</sup> Compared to this, Arminianism is soul damning. It assumes that the human heart is a fit place for Christ to dwell and it takes for granted that the human person initiates salvation. We often hear appeals or invitations such as: "accept Jesus into your heart, as He Himself asks you in His Word;" and "*behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*"<sup>14</sup> The misuse of this text to imply that salvation does in fact begin in the human heart is a serious deception. The invitation expressed in Revelation 3:20-21 is given after the Lord had rebuked the Laodiceans with a list of reprehensible sins, and then commanded them to repent, " ... *I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.*"<sup>15</sup> Fellowship with the Lord is **not without repentance and faith**. The misuse of this text without this vital foundation is destructive to all Christian living. A person's only hope lies outside himself and in Christ Jesus by His worth and power. Christ Jesus Himself proclaimed the spiritual deadness and wickedness of the human heart: ... "*that which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*"<sup>16</sup> In the Scripture, salvation is seen consistently to be in Christ.

God's holiness is the distinguishing factor among all of His essential characteristics. We need to be in right standing before the All Holy Sovereign God on the terms He prescribes. God's Word determines that one cannot be right before God and remain true to Arminian teaching. As we have seen, it contradicts and opposes the truth of the Bible on the defining matter of how any person enters into a relationship with Him. You may cling to such teachings and traditions to your own eternal peril, or you may do what so many men and women have done before you.<sup>17</sup> Turn to the Sovereign God in faith alone for the salvation that He alone gives, by the conviction of the Holy Spirit, based on Christ's death and resurrection for His own elect, and believe on Him alone, "to the praise of the glory of his grace."<sup>18</sup>

We quote Spurgeon again and let him have the final word on this crucial matter:

"And I have my own private opinion, that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and



him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism. I have my own ideas, and those I always state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism. Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, ... .. unless we preach the sovereignty of God in his dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor, I think, can we preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the peculiar redemption which Christ made for his elect and chosen people; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called ... after having believed."<sup>19</sup>

*"Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein."*<sup>20</sup>

#### Footnotes

1. Amos 3:3
2. The *New York Times* May 30, 2004.
3. Richard Bennett: *Catholicism: East of Eden – Insights for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Berean Beacon Press, p.292.
4. Ephesians 4:4-6
5. See Chapter 11, "The Origins of Arminianism"; "An Historic Heresy."
6. Isaiah 59:19
7. Proverbs 30:12
8. Isaiah 44:20
9. Ezekiel 13:22
10. C. H. Spurgeon: Sermon "Election", delivered on 2 September 1855, at New Park Street Chapel. Southwark.
11. 1 Peter 1:3
12. 1 Peter 1:8
13. Ephesians 1:6
14. Revelation 3:20-21
15. Revelation 3:19
16. Mark 7:20-23
17. See Epilogue, Section E, "How Understanding the Doctrine of Election Changed My Life", for the personal testimony of one such person.
18. Ephesians 1:6
19. C. H. Spurgeon: Sermon "Christ Crucified", delivered on 11 February 1855, at Exeter Hall, Strand. 20. Jeremiah 6:16