

Scriptures and Doctrine :: What Pelagianism and Arminianism have in common

What Pelagianism and Arminianism have in common - posted by brnagn, on: 2009/7/7 13:16

Usually you don't have to define to others what you believe about certain things until it's challenged.

Re: What Pelagianism and Arminianism have in common - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/7 14:10

not sure what you mean really? but i would consider pelagianism a heresy, but some "branches" of arminianism I would not consider heresy, same with calvinism, some "branches" of calvinism are horrific in their doctrines, others are not.

But probably many have much in common, you can find common things in Roman Catholic churches doctrine and in reformed doctrines, but it may be small but many have much in common, some right, some hard to define, i found out for myself all "camps" have rights, and wrongs in their doctrines. The most balanced thing is the word.

Re: What Pelagianism and Arminianism have in common - posted by HomeFree89 (), on: 2009/7/7 14:22

brnagn,

What's is the point of this thread?

Re: - posted by brnagn, on: 2009/7/7 15:30

There is no such thing as "branches of Arminianism" because Arminianism is rooted in Pelagianism which was deemed Heresy.

The point of this thread is to put facts not what someone thinks is true.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/7 15:39

Quote:

brnagn wrote:

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The point of this thread is to put facts not what someone thinks is true.

perhaps, but that is as true as for me to say calvinism is rooted in gnosticism. Even tho i believe some parts of it is dont make it heresy in the "normal" form, neither is arminianism, and the root is wrong, arminianism is to be found in the early church fathers first century and second, pelagius if i remember right was 350 to 400 somewhere, free will is found much earlier, as early as people who were taught by Paul the apostle.

But i still dont see why you started this thread

Re: - posted by brnagn, on: 2009/7/7 15:48

Pelagius and Arminius didn't teach free will in that sense. They taught free will in the sense that it's not under the complete bondage of sin from birth.

and you can't say that about what Calvin taught because it's not true.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/7 15:53

calvin did not that is true, but some of the early church fathers did before Arminius and pelagius(?). So the root is older than what i am saying, the root is to the first church.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/7 16:00

here is the root of free will, but they also taught we inherited something from adam and we are born under wrath....

"If a man were created evil, he would not deserve punishment, since he was not evil of himself, being unable to do anything else than what he was made for." Justin Martyr (First Apology Chap. 43)

"If anyone is truly religious, he is a man of God; but if he is irreligious, he is a man of the devil, made such, not by nature, but by his own choice." Ignatius (Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume One, p. 61)

"The ScripturesÂ...emphasize the freedom of the will. They condemn those who sin, and approve those who do rightÂ... We are responsible for being bad and worthy of being cast outside. For it is not the nature in us that is the cause of the evil; rather, it is the voluntary choice that works evil." Origen (A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 289,

"Those who do not do it will receive the just judgment of God, because they had not work good when they had it in their power to do so. But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would not be deserving of praise for being good, for they were created that way. Nor would the former be reprehensible, for that is how they were made. However, all men are of the same nature. They are all able to hold fast and to do what is good. On the other hand, they have the power to cast good from them and not to do it." Irenaeus (A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 287,

Re: - posted by brnagn, on: 2009/7/7 16:01

What kind of free will did they teach? (Pelagius and Arminius?)

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/7 16:12

I havent studied Pelagius to deeply, but read some stuff that made me not read any more, arminius havent read either, other than he was a student of Calvin and later rejected calvins teachings, but this is vague memories, i read something from him and it struck me many probably make arminius more arminian than he really was. If that makes sense?

Anyway, the rejection of total depravity did not begin with these two, it started with the first church., in the meaning total depravity means a person can or can not chose to repent and believe God. That is my understanding, so to say Arminius and Pelagius are the root of free will, as in the possibility for all men to come to christ, did not start there. Just wanted to correct your statement, regardless off they have right or wrong doctrine your statement was not true.

But probably you can find an ocean of what they believed and not believed, but i rather encourage you spend time reading the bible, mostly these "hunts" seem to make the burning fire inside slowly "flicker" and burn less bright and our love for the Lord grows cold. I have found its better to hunt after God in his word. Have been down many paths myself searching for things and answers, many times you will find history is different depending whos telling it. And one man read arminius and understand him different from another man reading him. etc etc.... Anyway

God bless

Re: - posted by brnagn, on: 2009/7/7 16:20

I don't think at all that you're correcting me by any means, considering from your own statements you're not someone that has enough knowledge of these three persons to make sound judgement. They actually taught that man on his own is capable of working out all that God has requires and commands because God made men that way.

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/7 16:32

Quote:

brnagn wrote:
I don't think at all that you're correcting me by any means, considering from your own statements you're not someone that has enough knowledge of these three persons to make sound judgement. They actually taught that man on his own is capable of working out all that God has requires and commands because God made men that way.

Well you are right i dont know so much about these men, havent read all what they taught, but i know enough christian history to know they where not the root of free will, if you mean free will totally apart from any working from God maybe you are right, but the early church fathers, many of them taught and believed in free will, so that would make them the root, outside of scripture. even the most hard core calvinist can not deny the early church fathers taught free will.

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/7/7 16:42

Just adding to thread:

Speaking of free will...

THIS is one of the great guns of the Arminians, mounted upon the top of their walls, and often discharged with terrible noise against the poor Christians called Calvinists. I intend to spike the gun this morning, or, rather, to turn it on the enemy, for it was never theirs; it was never cast at their foundry at all, but was intended to teach the very opposite doctrine to that which they assert. Charles H. Spurgeon (From article listed below)

(http://www.the-highway.com/Freewill_Spurgeon.html) Free Will - A Slave by C.H. Spurgeon

(<http://www.the-highway.com/Myth.html>) The Myth Of Free Will

Re: - posted by hulsey (), on: 2009/7/7 19:10

Has anyone on here read the works of Arminius in order to come to such a drastic conclusion that he rejected total depravity?

I'm not Arminian btw. Not a Calvinist either as that goes :)

Re: - posted by tjservant (), on: 2009/7/7 19:31

I believe Jacobus (James) Arminius believed in total depravity.

This article may shed some light on the thread...

Differences between Semi-Pelagianism and Arminian Beliefs
and why both still appeal to natural human ability, apart from grace.

While not denying the necessity of Grace for salvation, Semi-Pelagianism maintains that the first steps towards the Christian life are ordinarily taken by the human will and that Grace supervened only later.

In contrast to semi-pelagianism, Arminianism teaches that the first steps of grace are taken by God. This teaching derives from the Remonstrance of 1610, a codification of the teachings of Jacob Arminius (1559-1609). Here are the 3rd and 4th articles of five to show how close it actually approaches traditional Calvinism, but still leaves man with a small island of righteousness, as it affirms that unregenerate man can think spiritual thoughts, perceive the beauty and excellency of Christ, create affections for Him and thus turn in faith to Him, apart from the quickening of the Holy Spirit. They affirm that

God's grace is always resistable, therefore, when one believe, it is not grace which makes one to differ from another, but naturally produced faith:

III. That man has not saving grace of himself, nor of the working of his own free-will, inasmuch as in his state of apostasy and sin he can for himself and by himself think nothing that is good--nothing, that is, truly good, such as saving faith is, above all else. But that it is necessary that by God, in Christ and through his Holy Spirit he be born again and renewed in understanding, affections and will and in all his faculties, that he may be able to understand, think, will, and perform what is truly good, according to the Word of God.

IV. That this grace of God is the beginning, the progress and the end of all good; so that even the regenerate man can neither think, will nor effect any good, nor withstand any temptation to evil, without grace precedent (or prevenient), awakening, following and co-operating. So that all good deeds and all movements towards good that can be conceived in the world must be ascribed to the grace of God in Christ. But with respect to the mode of operation, grace is not irresistible; for it is written of many that they resisted the Holy Spirit.

Reformed Theology by contrast teaches that the natural man may have common grace, common illuminations, and common affections that are from the Spirit of God. Natural men have sometimes the influences of the Spirit of God in His common operations and gifts, and therefore God's Spirit is said to be striving with them, and they are said to resist the Spirit, (Acts 7:51;) to grieve and vex God's Holy Spirit, (Eph. 4:30; Isaiah 63:10;) While indeed fallen men resist grace every day when the gospel is presented to them, for that is their nature and desire. But it is important to note that God can and does make His grace effectual or irresistible at a time of His sovereign merciful choosing (John 6:37, 39, 44, 63-65; John 3:8; Matt 11:27; 1 Corinthians 1:9; Paul's conversion in Acts 2:39, Acts 9; Rom 8:30 ROM 9:11-24; 1 Cor. 1:9-26; Gal. 1:6-15; 1 Thess. 1:5, 6; 1 Thess. 2:12; 5:24; 2 Thess. 2:14; Eph. 1:18; 4:1-4, 5; 2 Tim. 1:9; Heb. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:9; 5:10; 2 Pet. 1:3-10). If this kind of effectual grace can be resisted, as Arminians claim, then faith is understood as a natural preparation for saving grace, as the fulfillment of a condition for receiving supernatural grace by the performance of something that is within man's natural capacity/desire to do. Man, in this scheme, cooperates with God's prevenient grace according to his native ability. But the Scripture teaches that salvation is not a faith-contribution or a principle standing ultimately independent of God's action of grace. Rather, it does not owe exclusively to man's natural endowment with a free will and does not arise out of an inherent capacity of the natural man, as Arminians teach. Rather, God acts unilaterally and exclusively, taking the sole initiative in a free act of sovereign grace—grace that is altogether prior to, and productive of, justifying faith.

Hannah More said:

"The sacred writings frequently point out the analogy between natural and spiritual things. The same Spirit, which in the creation of the world moved upon the face of the waters, operates on the human character to produce a new heart and a new life. By this operation the affections and faculties of the man receive a new impulse -- his dark understanding is illuminated, his rebellious will is subdued, his irregular desires are rectified; his judgment is informed, his imagination is chastised, his inclinations are sanctified; his hopes and fears are directed to their true and adequate end. Heaven becomes the object of his hopes, and eternal separation from God the object of his fears. His love of the world is transformed into the love of God. The lower faculties are pressed into the new service. The senses have a higher direction. The whole internal frame and constitution receive a nobler bent; the intents and purposes of the mind, a sublimer aim; his aspirations, a loftier flight; his vacillating desires find a fixed object; his vagrant purposes a settled home; his disappointed heart a certain refuge. That heart, no longer the worshiper of the world, is struggling to become its conqueror. Our blessed Redeemer, in overcoming the world, bequeathed us his command to overcome it also; but as he did not give the command without the example, so he did not give the example without the offer of a power to obey the command."

While it is clear that Arminian Theology and Semi-Pelagianism have a different view of grace; (Arminianism believes God must initiate with grace and Semi-pelagianism believes man must initiate to receive grace), but both systems ultimately share in common a characteristic - synergism. The question Arminians still need to answer is why do some people believe the gospel and not others? Is the power/desire to cooperate with God's grace itself a work of the Holy Spirit or of the natural man? How can a natural man produce holy affections without God illuminating the mind and heart? What ultimately makes men to differ? grace or faith?

(http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/Arm_Semi_Differences.html) Source

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2009/7/8 2:50

Here is Arminius own words on the free will.

THE FREE-WILL OF MAN

This is my opinion concerning the free-will of man: In his primitive condition as he came out of the hands of his creator, man was endowed with such a portion of knowledge, holiness and power, as enabled him to understand, esteem, consider, will, and to perform the true good, according to the commandment delivered to him. Yet none of these acts could he do, except through the assistance of Divine Grace. But in his lapsed and sinful state, man is not capable, of and by himself, either to think, to will, or to do that which is really good; but it is necessary for him to be regenerated and renewed in his intellect, affections or will, and in all his powers, by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit, that he may be qualified rightly to understand, esteem, consider, will, and perform whatever is truly good. When he is made a partaker of this regeneration or renovation, I consider that, since he is delivered from sin, he is capable of thinking, willing and doing that which is good, but yet not without the continued aids of Divine Grace.

from (<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/arminius/works1.iii.vi.iii.html>) Works of Arminius vol1

Re: - posted by brnagn, on: 2009/7/8 9:58

I never said that they were the ones who started teaching free will. My thing is people have alot to say about alot of thing s they don't know. So I started this thread to read facts not what people think they taught.

As far as free will goes, I belive that man has free will. I don't believe that it's as free as some make it out to be though.

Prior to being made alive this is how free the will is. Eph. 2:3, "among whom also we all conducted ourselves in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and mind..."

I'm not a Calvinist because it's the Scriptures alone that have the authority to bind my conscience.

Re: - posted by yoadam (), on: 2009/7/11 1:40

Pelagius was condemned as a heretic at the council of orange. Over 300 men made the judgement during a period of several MONTHS gathered together in Carthage, Africa. I wonder if we in America would ever settle anything if we sat down in a large council-- we would probably argue for years!

" About the Council of Orange

The Council of Orange was an outgrowth of the controversy between Augustine and Pelagius. This controversy had to do with degree to which a human being is responsible for his or her own salvation, and the role of the grace of God in bringing about salvation. The Pelagians held that human beings are born in a state of innocence, i.e., that there is no such thing as a sinful nature or original sin.

As a result of this view, they held that a state of sinless perfection was achievable in this life. The Council of Orange dealt with the Semi-Pelagian doctrine that the human race, though fallen and possessed of a sinful nature, is still "good" enough to be able to lay hold of the grace of God through an act of unredeemed human will. The Council held to Augustine's view and repudiated Pelagius. The following canons greatly influenced the Reformed doctrine of Total Depravity."

The Canons of the Council of Orange (529 AD)

CANON 1. If anyone denies that it is the whole man, that is, both body and soul, that was "changed for the worse" through the offense of Adam's sin, but believes that the freedom of the soul remains unimpaired and that only the body is subject to corruption, he is deceived by the error of Pelagius and contradicts the scripture which says, "The soul that sins shall die" (Ezek. 18:20); and, "Do you not know that if you yield yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are the slaves of the one whom you obey?" (Rom. 6:16); and, "For whatever overcomes a man, to that he is enslaved" (2 Pet. 2:19).

CANON 2. If anyone asserts that Adam's sin affected him alone and not his descendants also, or at least if he declares that it is only the death of the body which is the punishment for sin, and not also that sin, which is the death of the soul, passed through one man to the whole human race, he does injustice to God and contradicts the Apostle, who says, "Ther

efore as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom. 5:12).

CANON 3. If anyone says that the grace of God can be conferred as a result of human prayer, but that it is not grace itself which makes us pray to God, he contradicts the prophet Isaiah, or the Apostle who says the same thing, "I have been found by those who did not seek me; I have shown myself to those who did not ask for me" (Rom 10:20, quoting Isa. 65:1).

CANON 4. If anyone maintains that God awaits our will to be cleansed from sin, but does not confess that even our will to be cleansed comes to us through the infusion and working of the Holy Spirit, he resists the Holy Spirit himself who says through Solomon, "The will is prepared by the Lord" (Prov. 8:35, LXX), and the salutary word of the Apostle, "For God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13).

CANON 5. If anyone says that not only the increase of faith but also its beginning and the very desire for faith, by which we believe in Him who justifies the ungodly and comes to the regeneration of holy baptism -- if anyone says that this belongs to us by nature and not by a gift of grace, that is, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit amending our will and turning it from unbelief to faith and from godlessness to godliness, it is proof that he is opposed to the teaching of the Apostles, for blessed Paul says, "And I am sure that 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 this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). For those who state that the faith by which we believe in God is natural make all who are separated from the Church of Christ by definition in some measure believers.

CANON 6. If anyone says that God has mercy upon us when, apart from his grace, we believe, will, desire, strive, labor, pray, watch, study, seek, ask, or knock, but does not confess that it is by the infusion and inspiration of the Holy Spirit within us that we have the faith, the will, or the strength to do all these things as we ought; or if anyone makes the assistance of grace depend on the humility or obedience of man and does not agree that it is a gift of grace itself that we are obedient and humble, he contradicts the Apostle who says, "What have you that you did not receive?" (1 Cor. 4:7), and, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (1 Cor. 15:10).

CANON 7. If anyone affirms that we can form any right opinion or make any right choice which relates to the salvation of eternal life, as is expedient for us, or that we can be saved, that is, assent to the preaching of the gospel through our natural powers without the illumination and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who makes all men gladly assent to and believe in the truth, he is led astray by a heretical spirit, and does not understand the voice of God who says in the Gospel, "For apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and the word of the Apostle, "Not that we are competent of ourselves to claim anything as coming from us; our competence is from God" (2 Cor. 3:5).

CANON 8. If anyone maintains that some are able to come to the grace of baptism by mercy but others through free will, which has manifestly been corrupted in all those who have been born after the transgression of the first man, it is proof that he has no place in the true faith. For he denies that the free will of all men has been weakened through the sin of the first man, or at least holds that it has been affected in such a way that they have still the ability to seek the mystery of eternal salvation by themselves without the revelation of God. The Lord himself shows how contradictory this is by declaring that no one is able to come to him "unless the Father who sent me draws him" (John 6:44), as he also says to Peter, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jona! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven" (Matt. 16:17), and as the Apostle says, "No one can say 'Jesus is Lord' except by the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:3).

CANON 9. Concerning the succor of God. It is a mark of divine favor when we are of a right purpose and keep our feet from hypocrisy and unrighteousness; for as often as we do good, God is at work in us and with us, in order that we may do so.

CANON 10. Concerning the succor of God. The succor of God is to be ever sought by the regenerate and converted also, so that they may be able to come to a successful end or persevere in good works.

CANON 11. Concerning the duty to pray. None would make any true prayer to the Lord had he not received from him the object of his prayer, as it is written, "Of thy own have we given thee" (1 Chron. 29:14).

CANON 12. Of what sort we are whom God loves. God loves us for what we shall be by his gift, and not by our own deserving.

CANON 13. Concerning the restoration of free will. The freedom of will that was destroyed in the first man can be restored only by the grace of baptism, for what is lost can be returned only by the one who was able to give it. Hence the Truth itself declares: "So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed" (John 8:36).

CANON 14. No mean wretch is freed from his sorrowful state, however great it may be, save the one who is anticipated by the mercy of God, as the Psalmist says, "Let thy compassion come speedily to meet us" (Ps. 79:8), and again, "My God in his steadfast love will meet me" (Ps. 59:10).

CANON 15. Adam was changed, but for the worse, through his own iniquity from what God made him. Through the grace of God the believer is changed, but for the better, from what his iniquity has done for him. The one, therefore, was the change brought about by the first sinner; the other, according to the Psalmist, is the change of the right hand of the Most High (Ps. 77:10).

CANON 16. No man shall be honored by his seeming attainment, as though it were not a gift, or suppose that he has received it because a missive from without stated it in writing or in speech. For the Apostle speaks thus, "For if justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21); and "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men" (Eph. 4:8, quoting Ps. 68:18). It is from this source that any man has what he does; but whoever denies that he has it from this source either does not truly have it, or else "even what he has will be taken away" (Matt. 25:29).

CANON 17. Concerning Christian courage. The courage of the Gentiles is produced by simple greed, but the courage of Christians by the love of God which "has been poured into our hearts" not by freedom of will from our own side but "through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us" (Rom. 5:5).

CANON 18. That grace is not preceded by merit. Recompense is due to good works if they are performed; but grace, to which we have no claim, precedes them, to enable them to be done.

CANON 19. That a man can be saved only when God shows mercy. Human nature, even though it remained in that sound state in which it was created, could be no means save itself, without the assistance of the Creator; hence since man cannot safeguard his salvation without the grace of God, which is a gift, how will he be able to restore what he has lost without the grace of God?

CANON 20. That a man can do no good without God. God does much that is good in a man that the man does not do; but a man does nothing good for which God is not responsible, so as to let him do it.

CANON 21. Concerning nature and grace. As the Apostle most truly says to those who would be justified by the law and have fallen from grace, "If justification were through the law, then Christ died to no purpose" (Gal. 2:21), so it is most truly declared to those who imagine that grace, which faith in Christ advocates and lays hold of, is nature: "If justification were through nature, then Christ died to no purpose." Now there was indeed the law, but it did not justify, and there was indeed nature, but it did not justify. Not in vain did Christ therefore die, so that the law might be fulfilled by him who said, "I have come not to abolish them, but to fulfil them" (Matt. 5:17), and that the nature which had been destroyed by Adam might be restored by him who said that he had come "to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

CANON 22. Concerning those things that belong to man. No man has anything of his own but untruth and sin. But if a man has any truth or righteousness, it from that fountain for which we must thirst in this desert, so that we may be refreshed from it as by drops of water and not faint on the way.

CANON 23. Concerning the will of God and of man. Men do their own will and not the will of God when they do what displeases him; but when they follow their own will and comply with the will of God, however willingly they do so, yet it is his will by which what they will is both prepared and instructed.

CANON 24. Concerning the branches of the vine. The branches on the vine do not give life to the vine, but receive life from it; thus the vine is related to its branches in such a way that it supplies them with what they need to live, and does not take this from them. Thus it is to the advantage of the disciples, not Christ, both to have Christ abiding in them and to abide in Christ. For if the vine is cut down another can shoot up from the live root; but one who is cut off from the vine can not live without the root (John 15:5ff).

CANON 25. Concerning the love with which we love God. It is wholly a gift of God to love God. He who loves, even thou

gh he is not loved, allowed himself to be loved. We are loved, even when we displease him, so that we might have means to please him. For the Spirit, whom we love with the Father and the Son, has poured into our hearts the love of the Father and the Son (Rom. 5:5).

CONCLUSION. 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 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.

According to the catholic faith we also believe that after grace has been received through baptism, all baptized persons have the ability and responsibility, if they desire to labor faithfully, to perform with the aid and cooperation of Christ what is of essential importance in regard to the salvation of their soul. We not only do not believe that any are foreordained to evil by the power of God, but even state with utter abhorrence that if there are those who want to believe so evil a thing, they are anathema. We also believe and confess to our benefit that in every good work it is not we who take the initiative and are then assisted through the mercy of God, but God himself first inspires in us both faith in him and love for him without any previous good works of our own that deserve reward, so that we may both faithfully seek the sacrament of baptism, and after baptism be able by his help to do what is pleasing to him. We must therefore most evidently believe that the praiseworthy faith of the thief whom the Lord called to his home in paradise, and of Cornelius the centurion, to whom the angel of the Lord was sent, and of Zacchaeus, who was worthy to receive the Lord himself, was not a natural endowment but a gift of God's kindness.

<http://reformed.org/documents/index.html>