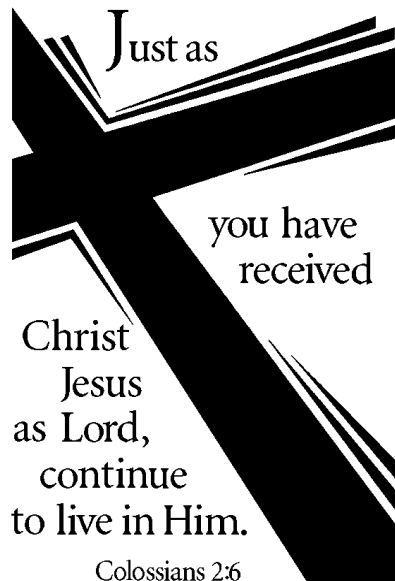


For HIS Glory
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Tell someone today how much you love Jesus Christ.

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In this and every issue, by His grace, our *only* purpose is to honor Jesus Christ.

The Doctrines of Grace ~ 8

Their Fourth Point—Irresistible Grace (1)

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The five points of the Doctrines of Grace are generally identified by the acrostic, **TULIP**:

Total Depravity **U**nconditional Election **L**imited Atonement **I**rresistible Grace **P**erseverance of the Saints

We here will observe the doctrine of the fourth point.

I. Irresistible Grace defined. *Grace* is “unmerited favor.” The grace of God is His unmerited favor to sinners who possess no merit, and can perform no works worthy of it. The grace of God to which we here refer is that of God the Holy Spirit in applying to the Father’s elect the benefits of salvation secured for them by Jesus Christ. This grace of the Holy Spirit is *irresistible* not because He is never resisted (see Acts 7:51), but because it is efficacious and invincible, and therefore overcomes all resistance. This doctrine is therefore called, by some, Efficacious Grace.

II. Irresistible Grace contrasted. The Irresistible Grace of the Holy Spirit is denied by both Pelagians and Arminians (or Semi-Pelagians), but for different reasons. (See previous messages in this series for the origins of these heresies).

Pelagians deny the Irresistible Grace of the Holy Spirit in salvation because they deny even the necessity of such a grace. Pelagians believe man is born perfectly good, and therefore can with equal ability choose either the good or the bad—or even be sinlessly perfect! Therefore there is no need for the Holy Spirit to enable or help man to obtain salvation.

Arminians deny the Irresistible Grace of the Holy Spirit because they believe He cannot perform His work of salvation apart from their *coopecration*. They believe not only in their own inherent power to successfully thwart God’s purpose in salvation, but also in the necessity of their working together with God for their salvation.

Their doctrine in this regard is identified as *synergism*, literally, “working together.” Synergists are often heard saying, “God has done His part for your salvation, now you must do your part, else He cannot save you.”

All the above heresies are diametrically opposed to the Scriptural maxim, “Salvation is of Jehovah”—from beginning to end and in its entirety (Jonah 2:9).

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III. Irresistible Grace Proven.

1. The Holy Spirit does, indeed, perform a work of grace in salvation. As the *Father* performed His work in the *election* of His people, and as the *Son* performed His work in the *redemption* of the elect, the *Spirit* performs His work in the *regeneration* of the redeemed elect. The Son graciously purchased the salvation of the Father’s elect; the Spirit in turn applies the benefits of that salvation to them. The objects of this work are therefore said to be, “elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, in sanctification of the Spirit, for obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:2). All who were in eternity “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ” will in time be “called [by the Holy Spirit]” (Jude 1). He calls God’s redeemed elect in His work of regeneration.

To regenerate is to “cause to be spiritually born-again.” This new birth is necessitated by the fall of all mankind in Adam’s transgression, which resulted in their spiritual death, or separation from God, and His kingdom (Gen. 2:15-17; 3:1-8; Rom. 5:12, 15a, 16a, 17a, 18a, 19a; Eph. 2:1-3). Regeneration is necessary in order to see or enter the kingdom of God (John 3:3): “Jesus answered and said to [Nicodemus], ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born-again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’”

Regeneration is in no way a work of man, but rather a work of God alone (Eph. 2:1-5): “And you He made alive,

who were dead in trespasses and sins...But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” The regenerated, having been spiritually dead when they were made spiritually alive, had as much to do with their second, or *spiritual* birth, as they did with their first and natural birth. They therefore are those “who were born, not of blood [not of blood relations, as in Matthew 3:9], nor of the will of the flesh [nor of a physical act, as in John 3:4, 6a], nor of the will of man [nor of man’s free-will], but of God” (John 1:13; cp. 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 5:4).

God performs His work of regeneration through the Person of the Holy Spirit (John 3:5-7): “Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born-again.”’” To be “born of water and the Spirit” is to experience “the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,” that is, “not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to [God’s] mercy” (Titus 3:5).

The result of regeneration is not a mere reformation, but an entirely new creation (1 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10): “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”

[To be continued, Lord willing, next month.]

“Who is a liar, but he that denies Jesus is the Christ?”

By John Gill (1697-1771)

On that very Christ and true Messiah who was spoken of by all the prophets since the beginning of the world, and so much, and so long desired by the Old Testament saints—he that denies that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah of the prophets, is not, indeed, the only liar in the world, but he is the greatest of liars! This is a consummate lie, being opposed to a glaring truth of God, to a fact clear and indisputable, and which rests not merely on the testimony of Jesus, who is truth itself, and who, in express words, more than once declared and asserted Himself to be the Christ, but all the characters of the Messiah—everything that is said of Him in the prophets meet in Jesus. And the miracles which were done by Him are flagrant proofs, and undeniable evidences of His being the Christ of God. All the apostles believed and were sure that He was Christ, the Son of the living God—to which may be added the testimony of John the Baptist who was sent, and came to bear witness of Him, and did. John was a prophet, and a man of great probity and integrity.

But there was a greater witness than he—even God Himself, by a voice from heaven, bore testimony to Him! And angels, at His incarnation, declared Him to be the Savior, which is Christ the Lord. Yes, the devil himself, who is a liar, and the father of lies in other things, knew and acknowledged Jesus to be the Christ, so that those that deny Him are the worst of liars, even worse than the devil himself!

This may have regard not only to the Jews, who deny Jesus to be the Messiah, but chiefly to such who go by the name of Christians—who deny either His proper Deity, or real humanity, as Ebion and Cerinthus, which were denying Him to be the God-Man, the Mediator, and Messiah. And it is also true of all such that deny Him in any of His offices, or in things relating to them, as His gospel, or any of the peculiar doctrines of it, delivered by Him, and so deny His prophetic office.

Those are liars who deny any of His ordinances, institutions, and appointments, as lawgiver in His house, King of saints, and so deny Him in His kingly office or reject Him as the alone Savior, joining their own works with Him, in the business of salvation, and oppose His sacrifice and satisfaction, and despise his imputed righteousness, and so deny Him in His priestly office.

Now these are instances of some of the liars, and these some of the doctrinal lies which are not of the truth of God, as in 1 John 2:22.

(John Gill was a gospel preacher, theologian, and commentator from England)

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