

The Third and Fourth Main Points of Doctrine:
Human Corruption, Conversion to God, and the Way It Occurs

Synod of Dort. The Canons of Dort . Chapel Library. Kindle Edition.

Article 1: The Effect of the Fall on Human Nature

Article 2: The Spread of Corruption

Article 3: Total Inability

Article 4: The Inadequacy of the Light of Nature

Article 5: The Inadequacy of the Law

Article 6: The Saving Power of the Gospel

Article 7: God's Freedom in Revealing the Gospel

Article 8: The Serious Call of the Gospel

Article 9: Human Responsibility for Rejecting the Gospel

Article 10: Conversion as the Work of God

Article 11: The Holy Spirit's Work in Conversion

Article 12: Regeneration a Supernatural Work

Article 13: The Incomprehensible Way of Regeneration

Article 14: The Way God Gives Faith

Article 15: Responses to God's Grace

Article 16: Regeneration's Effect

Article 17: God's Use of Means in Regeneration

Rejection of the Errors

Having set forth the orthodox teaching, the Synod rejects the errors of those,

I. Who teach: That it cannot properly be said that original sin in itself suffices to condemn the whole human race or to deserve temporal and eternal punishment.

II. Who teach: That the spiritual gifts or the good qualities and virtues, such as goodness, holiness, righteousness, could not belong to the will of man when he was first created, and that these, therefore, cannot have been separated therefrom in the fall.

III. Who teach: That in spiritual death the spiritual gifts are not separate from the will of man, since the will in itself has never been corrupted, but only hindered through the darkness of the understanding and the irregularity of the affections; and that, these hindrances having been removed, the will can then bring into operation its native powers, that is, that the will of itself is able to will and to choose, or not to will and not to choose, all manner of good which may be presented to it.

IV. Who teach: That the unregenerate man is not really nor utterly dead in sin, nor destitute of all powers unto spiritual good, but that he can yet hunger and thirst after righteousness and life, and offer the sacrifice of a contrite and broken spirit, which is pleasing to God.

V. Who teach: That the corrupt and natural man can so well use the common grace (by which they understand the light of nature), or the gifts still left him after the fall, that he can gradually gain by their good use a greater, that is, the evangelical or saving grace, and salvation itself; and that in this way God on His part shows Himself ready to reveal Christ unto all men, since He applies to all sufficiently and efficiently the means necessary to conversion.

VI. Who teach: That in the true conversion of man no new qualities, powers, or gifts can be infused by God into the will, and that therefore faith, through which we are first converted and because of which we are called believers, is not a quality or gift infused by God but only an act of man, and that it cannot be said to be a gift, except in respect of the power to attain to this faith.

VII. Who teach: That the grace whereby we are converted to God is only a gentle advising, or (as others explain it) that this is the noblest manner of working in the conversion of man, and that this manner of working, which consists in advising, is most in harmony with mans nature; and that there is no reason why this advising grace alone should not be sufficient to make the natural man spiritual; indeed, that God does not produce the consent of the will except through this manner of advising; and that the power of the divine working, whereby it surpasses the working of Satan, consists in this that God promises eternal, while Satan promises only temporal goods.

VIII. Who teach: That God in the regeneration of man does not use such powers of His omnipotence as potently and infallibly bend mans will to faith and conversion; but that all the works of grace having been accomplished, which God employs to convert man, man may yet so resist God and the Holy Spirit, when God intends mans regeneration and wills to regenerate him, and indeed that man often does so resist that he prevents entirely his regeneration, and that it therefore remains in mans power to be regenerated or not.

IX. Who teach: That grace and free will are partial causes which together work the beginning of conversion, and that grace, in order of working, does not precede the working of the will; that is, that God does not efficiently help the will of man unto conversion until the will of man moves and determines to do this.

