

The Five Points Contrasted

Arminianism

1. Man is able to believe

Man has been injured by the Fall but not left helpless, His eternal destiny depends on his use of his free-will - either to co-operate with the Holy Spirit who works equally on every sinner, or to resist God's grace and perish. He needs the help of the Spirit, but his faith is his gift to God.

2. God's choice is governed by man's choice

God chooses people - the people whom he saw in advance would believe. His choice is conditioned by what man does first - by his believing of his own free will.

3. Christ died to save every man

Christ died to make it possible for every person to be saved. While his purpose was to save everyone, only those who believe in him are actually saved. (Their free choice to accept it makes it effective.)

4. God's call can be resisted

The Spirit does all he can to bring every sinner to salvation. But since man is free, he has power to resist the Spirit, who cannot regenerate a person until he chooses to be regenerated, and born again. Until the sinner responds, the Spirit cannot give life.

5. Christians can fall away

Those who believe and are truly saved can lose their salvation by failing to keep up their faith, and turning away in unbelief.

IN SUMMARY

Salvation is won by the combined effort of GOD (who works equally on all sinners) and MAN whose response makes the difference. It is man, ultimately, who by his response, determines who is saved.

Calvinism

T 1. Man is unable to believe

The Fall of Adam left man dead, blind and deaf to the things of God. We are in bondage to our evil nature, and do not have the insight or will to choose good over evil. Man needs to be made alive (regenerated) first, and so made willing to receive faith which is God's gift to him.

U 2. God's choice is free and unconditional

God chooses people to be saved whom he first loves. The reason for his choice is based on something in him, and not in them. Faith is the result of his choice, not the cause of it.

L 3. Christ atones for the elect only

Christ's purpose in dying was to save the elect only, and he actually and really saves them. It was a specific death for specific sinners. It obtains their salvation, faith, and everything else they need.

I 4. God's call is effective

The Spirit gives a special inward call to the elect that irresistibly brings them to Christ. The outward call of the gospel can be, and is often rejected; the inward call cannot be resisted. The Spirit does not wait until the sinner is willing, but makes him willing.

P 5. Perseverance of the Saints

All whom God chooses, Christ saves and the Spirit calls, are saved eternally. God keeps them in faith by his power to the end.

IN SUMMARY

Salvation is obtained by God, Father, Son and Spirit. The entire process from beginning to end, is all the work of God. "Salvation comes from the Lord" (Jonah 2:9) is "the sum and substance of Calvinistic doctrine" (Spurgeon)

*Table from Rev. John Paterson,
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