



The Synod of Dordrecht

John E. Wilson

Professor Emeritus of History

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Charles I, 1625-1649

Growth of Independents (Congregationalists)

Archbishop Wm. Laud (d. 1645)

Migration to New England 1620, 1630ff

Synod of Dordrecht 1619

Arminianism

Covenant Theology

Presbyterian Parliament

Solemn League and Covenant 1643-1651

Westminster Confession 1646

Synod of Dordrecht 1619

TULIP

Total Depravity (no aspect of human life is free of sin)

Unconditional election

Limited Atonement (Christ dies only for the elect) [??]

Irresistible Grace

Perseverance of the Saints

Arminianism: By prevenient grace God prepares all humanity for faith in Christ, which makes all able to choose to have faith.

The choice of each person is an act of free will.

Covenants of the Old Testament:

If the people obey God, they will prosper,

- but if not, they will suffer. Ever again the people fail.
- Through the prophets
God promises a new covenant.

Covenant of Grace: Christ fulfills all conditions of the covenant with God and gives this benefit to all who believe. The gift of the Holy Spirit makes one able to believe, which means to enter into a personal covenant with God.

Wm. Ames England:

“Where two parties stand mutually obliged one to another in a voluntary agreement, there is a covenant.”

[The necessary factors: rational understanding and will.]

John Preston, England:

“I will not only express to thee in general that I will deal well with thee...but I am willing to enter into covenant with thee, that is, I will bind myself, I will enter into bond, as it were, I will not be at liberty any more, but I am willing to even to make a covenant, a compact and agreement with thee.”

Francis Willard, New England:

“A covenant must be a voluntary obligation between persons about things wherein they enjoy a freedom of will and have power to choose or refuse. It must be a deliberate thing wherein there is a counsel and a consent between rational and free agents.”

Thomas Bulkeley, New England:

“The covenant is offered universally to all wherever it is presented.” “The covenant is thrust upon one so persuasively that, as long as he retains the faculties of reason and will, he is accountable for not accepting.”

Perry Miller, The New England Mind (I):

The covenant theory permitted one to conceive of divine grace as an opportunity to strike a bargain, to do himself a good turn, to make a sure profit ... through the ministry and the plain, demonstrative sermon. [394] -- It was possible for theologians to demonstrate that, the terms of the covenant being eminently rational, no person of understanding could be exonerated for refusing them. [402]