

**CHRISTIAN
DOCTRINE
REVISION NOTES**

AUGUSTINE'S DOCTRINE OF PERSEVERANCE AND WIDER ISSUES

Key theological issues in perseverance are (1) nature of election (2) degree can be certain of own election (3) nature of regeneration as permanent or not

Summary

God allowed fall of angels and of men out of respect for creaturely freedom and for good that would come out of it. God could have condemned man, in bondage to sin, like the rebel angels who got no second chance, instead sent Christ.

Basic capacity of faith is in men's natures. Both beginning of faith and the continuation are **gifts of grace of a sovereign God and not merited**. If God gives gifts then he knows to whom he gives them, so to those he gives these gifts are **predestined**. Romans 8:29-30 "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

Predestination defined as foreknowledge and preparation of works he himself performs. To reject it need to deny foreknowledge or assert salvation given by autonomous human works and not gifts of God.

Regeneration is through baptism, John 3:5 "no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit". Question why one man is called and assisted to salvation and the other is not. **Experience shows God does not will all to be saved** (e.g. babies not baptised, beyond reach of Gospel). External circumstances influence inner destiny. Many cases where specific divine action could have saved but doesn't. We are **judged by what have done** (2 Cor 5:10) and not by what might have done if received Gospel (men of Sidon and Tyre). Otherwise the missions of Christ and the church are pointless – God could have judged as people would respond had Christ lived.

Types of gifts: God sovereignly withholds assistance from those who are not elect. Gift of faith is prepared for those who do not seek it (i.e. no free choice) while gift of perseverance is for those who do seek it.

Types of grace: Prevenient or operating grace before conversion, saved from original sin. Accommodates a person's assent to preaching by internal inspiration hidden in heart. Holy Spirit gives faith. Get indwelling of Holy Spirit by which they love God and are inclined for good works. John 6:63 "The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing". God takes first step Romans 9:10-11 "before the twins were born or had done anything good or bad--in order that God's purpose in election might stand: not by works but by him who calls--she was told, "The older will serve the younger." Just as it is written: "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated."

Then freely willingly serve God – **co-operating grace work together**. Without God's help defeated by sin. Depend on faithfulness but sustained by grace. Divine mercy moves a person to repentance and good works – not own inclination so not earned. Not just provide assistance that make good willing and action possible but guarantees performance by affecting individuals willing. God gives strength and willing, but also active engagement of human agent. "Grace through Christ gives power, desire and willing of good, and overcomes the opposition of the carnal desires in performance".

Divine sovereignty, God accomplishes purposes through human voluntary action. No one can be sure of own salvation as do not know what will do in future but by trusting in God bring in contact with power leading to salvation.

Gift of perseverance for final salvation gift of God told to pray for, unlike conversion, see below. If heard will not fall away. Not same as **gift of charity** – which does not guarantee performance and leaves decision at discretion of human.. Also contrast to **grace given Adam** – possible not to sin. **Ultimate beatitude** – impossible to sin. **Grace to elect** – not defined by possibility or impossibility but by

performance. Do good and avoid evil due to grace, or at least avoid sin separating from eternal life.

Can be converted by God's grace but not elect, although given gifts of faith and charity. This shows that they forsake God by their free choice, falling away decided not by God but selves – not prayed for gift of perseverance. Fall away at last as lack grace producing willing and action. Gives elect a salutary lesson that they depend on God's mercy. They cannot be sure they are among the elect "uncertain anyone received this gift as long as alive" so believers life in this world is a state of trial.

God is not mocked (Gal 6:7) – would mock divine power by asking God to grant something and thanking him for accomplishment unless also acknowledge the achievement is divine not human.

Christian prayer – Cyprian shows that every phrase in Lords Prayer except that for forgiveness asks for continuation in good. e.g. hallowed be thy name that God's name be hallowed in us, thy kingdom come that it should come to us, thy will be done that persevere in what begun etc. And especially "lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil". Asking for God to give perseverance in each case. Similarly Jesus prayed for Peter. Paul prayed for brothers to persevere in good. Odd to thank God for martyr's courage and not that of a man dying faithfully in bed.

Teaching perseverance is a divine gift does not exclude encouraging Christians to continue in goodness. Peace, charity etc seen as gifts of God but also things to be exhorted to. Helps Christians to hope in God's fidelity and not despair in their weakness. And rebuke helps get back on track like Peter.

Criticisms

Implied reprobation of non-elect... Must also be due to Gods foreknown inaction. Is it just punishment for first sin? God is surely responsible for failure of an elect who fails to persevere. Augustine left as a mystery. Calvin made more explicit.

And **call of some to grace but not to glory**. Do not persevere / perform. Augustine claims no more mysterious than loss of a baby on basis of Adam's sin.

How to **bring grace and freedom into right balance**. External factors in predestination at beginning of faith but internal factors as Christian life proceeds. Why not extend latter to the former? He seemed to be moving to put more stress of the inward factors in conversion too.

Others

New Testament texts -

How to balance **danger of loss** Hebrews 6:4-8, Parable of sower – 2 sprout but bear no fruit, **God given perseverance** for salvation Philippians 1:6 "he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus". versus **human endurance/responsibility** to persevere Mark 13:13 "he who stands firm to the end will be saved" and those who **fall away had no true faith** 2 Tim 2:18 "who have wandered away from the truth. They say that the resurrection has already taken place". Also **forgiveness** 1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" and **God's desire that all should be saved** 1 Tim 2:4 "wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth".

Aquinas – justified can turn away and be lost. Focus on free will, which is changeable, and changeability not removed by grace. Good intentions don't guarantee good results, but may with God's grace.

Luther – regeneration through baptism can be lost. Some fall 2 Peter 2:20 "If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning." Causes of falling unbelief or false confidence in works. High degree of assurance possible existentially if not theologically if keep faith.

Compare **Calvin** – all with true saving faith will persevere and be saved. Regeneration through Spirit can't be lost 1 John 3:9 “No one born of God commits sin” – inflexible perseverance added to newness of life. May fall as Peter but be reinstated. Judas etc appeared to be Christians but weren't – invisible vs. visible church - 1 John 2:19 “went out from us”. If have gift of perseverance, free will overruled. High assurance for elect - still element of doubt as not sure if own faith genuine “help my unbelief” – if fall not Christian in first place though “enjoy some taste of his grace”. Issue of heart and not good deeds. Feed on preaching and grow in faith to not fall like Peter. **Synod of Dort** – as Calvin but also believers get assurance “according to measure of faith” TULIP Total Depravity (also known as Total Inability and Original Sin) Unconditional Election Limited Atonement (also known as Particular Atonement) Irresistible Grace Perseverance of the Saints and **Westminster**.

Trent - no believer should presume to have certain knowledge of predestination. Cooperation of God and man. Need persistent prayer.

Arminius – although believed in perseverance, allows are Bible texts that believers can fall away and lose salvation, and while followers felt abundant grace for true believers to persevere but people can turn away nonetheless. “Know have salvation but fear to lose it”. Wesley – Scriptures such as Hebrews 6:4 “It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace” show true believer can shipwreck faith. No unconditional predestination or infallible perseverance.

Only **moderns have once saved always saved** focus e.g. John 10:28 “I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand” only worry is about size of crown – unbiblical see above – way lead lives not seen as evidence of faith –

decisionism – complacency of Christian life, salvation without discipleship.

McKnight on Hebrews – futurity of salvation at time of Jesus' return. Can lose faith and hence not gain future salvation, by apostasy, done willingly and not worried. Not everyday sin.

Carson – Calvin and Arminius same practical effect. Apostasy is decisive turning away from belief, calculated, decisive and irrevocable unlike backsliding. Reject entire position and stance. (Cook) radical act of choice.

Marshall – Calvinism is divine determinism, contrast to scripture where God treats people as free agents, while Arminians ignore Scripture saying salvation start to finish is work of God. Need to trust in God!

Shank – Eternal life in Christ is our present possession only on condition of present living faith.

CLASS DISCUSSION: TRULY CONVERTED CHRISTIANS CAN FALL AWAY AND BE LOST

Callistus

God poured out Spirit Grace to Whole World – we need to respond to grace. His grace is resistible. He has foreknowledge of who will accept.

Other views

Grace is limited to a few and Christ did not die for everyone?

Grace irresistible?

Grace by God's good pleasure

His view

John 3:16 “God loved the world.....whoever believes in him.....”

Grace – Christ's death on cross. If believe in Christ, saved.

1 John 2:2 “He is the propitiation of sins....of the whole world”

Calvinists hence faulty.

1 Peter 1:1-2 “Peter...elect according to foreknowledge of God”
God’s election is by foreknowledge not good pleasure or random
Romans 8:29 “For whom he foreknew he elects”

If grace irresistible everyone would be saved, if poured out for whole world.
If Christ died for few, then contrary to merciful God who loves world.
Again arguments faulty.

Why can fall away
Hebrews 7:4 “It is impossible for those enlightened...if they fall away, to come to repentance” i.e. lost forever
2 Pet 1:1 “there were false prophets...bring on selves destruction”
12 disciples – when were they saved? John 15:3 “already clean due to word spoken to you” i.e. before cross – but Judas lost salvation.

Conclusion, possible for someone to fall away.

More on the same side

Calvinists know cannot fall but don’t know if chosen or not
Suppose God knows who is in or out, can truly converted Christians fall away and be lost.
Issue of Apostasy – Calvinists can lead to complacency – not going to church.
Wesleyans - inadequate to have irresistible grace.

Examples of apostasy. Apostasy radical act of choice.
Adam and Eve shows impulse turn from God.
Israel at Sinai. Paul – falling away comes before the Day of the Lord, i.e. faith. Hebrews – writer warns that more sever penalties for those trampling Christ underfoot. In Revelations – Thyatira church had had people fall away.
Shepherd of Hermas – apostasy as major problem in early church.
Grace is not suppressing but a free choice.
Continuous salvation can make for weakness in faith and deeds.

Even in Calvinists believer has to return to God to renew faith? Never sure whether we are elected.
God promises no temptation beyond what we can bear.

Response

If salvation is eternal, and God knows everything, how can the saints be damned?
If God has foreknowledge, why does God take it away – free gift offered?
“If anyone does not abide in me, he is cast into fire.” – can step out of boat...
Question how far can fall away – is it possible to get redeemed?
How about prodigal son? There is forgiveness. Wilful and continuous sin.
Lamb’s book of life.

In early church, 3 very serious sins, murder, adultery and apostasy. Thought at times there was no way back. Apostasy – either sacrifice to gods or beheaded. Not being willing to give life and compromise faith. Gradually, loosened and view came whatever do, are forgiven.

Deliberately keep on sinning – not in all the translations. But does suggest ingrained habit. Conscience is gone. Worse than backsliding, lost contact with Holy Spirit.
Evidence is no fruit.

Only true Christians have the possibility to fall back.
If can lose faith one day are we not saved?
Being saved?

Clarify – truly converted Christians can fall back – don’t have to be Calvinists.
Phil 1:6 “he who began good work....will carry it on”.

People who profess to be truly converted Christians can fall away.

BARTH vs BRUNNER DOCTRINES OF NATURAL THEOLOGY

Bible

On the one hand John 1:9 “The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.” Acts 17:22 “I see that in every way you are very religious.” Romans 1:18 ““Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.” Psalm 19 The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language here their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.”

Passages refer to potential receptivity to true God through special revelation – or at most of responsibility to “God”, not a complete theology. Psalm 19 goes on to exalt the special revelation “The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul.” Indeed the awareness of “God” is used sinfully as a barricade against God as Romans 2 goes on to state “their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened”.

On the other 2 Corinthians 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. Romans 10:14 “How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” 2 Corinthians 5:17 see above Passages talk of blockage for man not accepting God, and miracle performed on man by grace making him a new creature

Background to debate (1) In history of church God seen as **revealed through nature and reason so those not knowing Bible can know God.**

Clement of Alexandria, philosophy prepares Greeks for Christ.

Augustine, aid of Platonism coming to faith. **Aquinas**, theology can be on basis of reason alone –existence of God via 5 proofs, and some attributes show by reason God is love, wise, omnipotent. But didn't consider most come to faith that way. 2 storeys so risk Natural Theology lays foundation and revelation is roof, Natural Theology determines shape.

Calvin in Institutes natural knowledge of God based on Romans 1 – but we sinfully suppress it. Scripture like glasses to see God in nature but those without revelation ignore.

(2) **Natural theology of RC** on basis of reason – one God, can know, is good.

(3) **Deists** faith based purely on nature and reason accepted by most Protestants just said revelation needed to supplement.

(4) 19th century **liberals** adding Christian gloss to achievements of culture in Europe – theological agenda based on secular world. Feuerbach theology = anthropology so God is love is celebrating value of human love. Schleiermacher – Bible just records religious experience (absolute dependence), low view of sin, Jesus just a teacher.

(5) In **1930s rise of Nazis** – some argue German culture and nationalism should be seen as general revelation and blended with Christian truth to which Barth replies “no other gods but God” (6) Barth's view of Word of God (below). Start with God as dynamic event revealed in Jesus and not some abstract idea of God. Not to confuse God's will with our wishes.

Agreement between Barth and Brunner

God is hidden God who cannot be known except by faith in his act of self-revelation. Only **special revelation leads to salvation and not reason**. Man **unable to do good of own will**. Proofs of existence of God no use (require human reason, destroy qualitative distance). “Cannot be conceived” (Barth) not “nothing greater can be conceived” (Anselm). Revelation **dynamic, personal and nonpropositional**.

Against RC and liberal view that grace does not destroy nature but perfect it.

Nature resists grace, so redemption not evolution, development, perfection but revolution, crisis, crucifixion.

Barth's case

Discontinuity of nature and grace, reason and revelation, time and eternity (concept of God). Actual content of knowledge of God excludes natural theology as irrelevant/too independent.

Theology to be based on **God's word alone and nothing else** (as reformers). **No knowledge of God outside Jesus** (all doctrines interpreted Christologically) and saving grace only found in him. God is free and unknown till chooses to reveal self. Divine revelation not mediated through reason, creation, history, and culture.

Uniting man to God in man's strength like uniting Yahweh and Baal. God not made in man's image (cf liberals) - **image of God eradicated by Fall**. Idolatry no preparation for Gospel, other religions worthless – no natural knowledge of God – man is godless, no God shaped hole.

Revelation is active encounter of God with us in Christ (see above) Knowing God is obeying him and fully recognising – not feasible in general revelation.

God is hidden to those unaware of Revelation, mind blocked leading to false gods - non-Christian religions devoid of truth -- no new awareness of sin.- rejects sense of right and wrong as point of contact.

Gospel not answer to world's questions (health, wealth, happiness) but brings **own agenda**. Goal of creation to make possible reconciliation of God and man; "new creation" 2 Cor 5:17 "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come".

Concept - bomb clearing own space – God's self-presentation.

Lights of creation the "lesser lights" later **acknowledged display God's glory** but not revelation (like cat's eyes).

Criticisms

- (1) Concept of **revelation non-standard** – dynamic happening and nothing else.
- (2) All doctrines Christological implies **incarnation not because men sinned** (all forgiven in Christ but some fail to recognise – work of God to choose some). Those not Christ don't recognise sin. And Brunner criticised as Marcionism.
- (3) Odd concept of **Romans 1:18** – revelation spoken about is of Christ.
- (4) **Overstates "new creation"** – gracious not creative act (capacities cf. stocks and stones)
- (5) **Baillie** – people **do feel consciousness of a higher power** – in West can ignore Christ but no peace of mind from it. **Preaching has no effect** based on what it finds in human consciousness.
- (6) **Demarest** – OK for Barth (and Brunner) to say man finite, radically sinful God can't be subject to rationalism, Christ centre of salvation, no value to other faiths and his resurrection gave word of God – not OK to have **God so transcendent, unknowable (Kant), loss of image (can still dialogue)**, Romans 1:18 not about creation and to say Gentiles **know God but consciousness blocks**.
- (7) Bouillard – **natural theology not required for faith but necessarily implied by rational condition of man**.
- (8) Makes Christian doctrine an alien message – **no God shaped hole** – takes atheist views too seriously.
- (9) Ignores idea that Christ created everything.

Brunner's case

Mankind's ability to reason and personality part of God's image – not obliterated by fall – supported by Bible quotes – all have God's law in heart as witness conscience. **Formal aspect of Image of God kept** (intelligence and responsibility) **but not material one** (ability not to sin). So can understand **words** we are addressed by God "word of God does not have to create man's capacity for words" and formally responsible.

Separates preserving and saving grace that Barth puts together.

“Nature and Grace” Barth belittles creation too much - 6 points.

2 Revelations (1) In God – leads to salvation and illuminates (2); (2) **In nature** – no salvation but some knowledge of God, passively revealed although changed to an illusion – “heavens declare” God’s workmanship even after Fall. **Preparation for meeting Christ. (Not natural theology though.)** And also links to responsibility and guilt of sin – and consciousness of it.

Gospel needs **point of contact** with human condition, address as rational beings, aware of sin. Necessary preliminary if not substitute. **Sin only partly wipes out general revelation.** Gentiles could know responsibility through it (Romans 1:18). And other religions distort general revelation. If don’t know God how can man sin (although can’t help it).

Concern was to avoid Marcionism, with God only of salvation and not of creation. Or “death of 1000 qualifications”.

2 meanings of natural revelation (1) capacity for revelation God gave universe and formal image in man (2) what sinful man makes of ignorant knowledge)

Aeroplane landing – I thou personal encounter God and man, need consciousness of God. Possible due remaining formal likeness to God. Without this we are floating in mid air.

Criticisms

Danger of **making non-Christian thought normative**. Start with scientific worldview, no resurrection. Once humans see God and see they sin naturally they will deny Christ as creator and suppress truth. General **dangers of natural theology distorting faith**. Should let Bible raise questions and not just give answers.

Plays down new creation too much (renewal not replacement). Limit God’s sovereignty (man needs consciousness of God for God to reach him). Drift away from **sole revelation in Jesus via scripture. Both contribute to rescue (swimmer) suggesting original righteousness, openness to hear.**

Inconsistency of image of God not formally (responsible) but materially lost (sinful). If forced to sin, no choice.

Danger of going beyond grammar to “everything connected with a natural knowledge of God”

Not OK to have God so transcendent, unknowable (Kant)

Talking past each other?

Barth’s Fear (1) **compromise of authority of God and of man** – Feurbachs ideas – God made in man’s image (2) that allowing **natural theology would lead to liberalism** and distort Gods revelation. Brunner wants to assure that God is the **author of creation and not just salvation**, and world we live in is God’s. Risk of Marcionism.

Misunderstanding of **revelation** – Barth’s emphasis on dynamic initiative of God as opposed to natural hearing Brunner.

Misunderstanding of **capacity** – active seeking God (Barth) versus passive as opposed to stocks and stones (Brunner). In fact Barth agrees on passive

Barmen declaration (Barth) – 6 articles

Jesus Christ only word of God we are to hear trust and obey.

No area of life like politics to be outside Jesus’ lordship

Church cannot change its proclamation to suit politics

Should not be powerful church rulers only clergy

State not to usurp role of church over life and death or church become part of state

Mission of church cannot be subordinated to worldly goods.

THE TRUE GOD IS KNOWN ONLY THROUGH THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN REVELATION

Definitions:

True – the God who reveals himself in history as recorded in the Bible

Known – ability to relate – personal communion, living experience of God’s

presence. But it could be to reject his salvation as well as accept it.

Revelation – not just Jesus but the whole scripture and the God whose acts in history it records. God as creator – man’s alienated through sin – God’s plan to redeem man.

Question is in battlefield of natural theology

Natural theology suggests knowledge of God is possible from the creation and pure reasoning – at creation God gave man a power of reason, and by unaided exercise of that reason man could find things about God (often called general revelation) – speculative reason (Spinoza), arguing from a first cause (Aquinas) or intuition (Tillich). Sometimes called general revelation.

Theologians views

Barth – no knowledge of God outside Jesus – God is hidden to those unaware of Revelation – image of God eradicated by Fall

Goes further than I would and than the question does, which allows for revelation in Judaism, as well as possibility of false gods.

Brunner – natural theology conceivable – only hiddenness relating to truth and significance for salvation of the divine word. Agrees that man is only human via revelation but stresses the role of general revelation and not just special.

My view

Not denied that humans have a feeling for the spiritual but that is not the question

Also admit we are in the image of God so potential for a relationship

Sin has fatally distorted any natural ability to know the true God apart from revelation

Fallen rationality can itself put barriers in the way of God – humanism (although historically unusual)

God – wholly different from man - sovereignly chooses whom he will reveal himself to – he is not knowable by human effort

True image of God in man is only recreated in Christ

An empirical assessment

No-one ever came to know the living God by arguments of natural theology - at most deism and the divine watchmaker. There are still religious people. Has anyone attained

knowledge of the true God outside the revelation? Most evidence suggests false gods

Babylonians – pantheon of Gods and man created as slaves Gilgamesh

Canaanites – nature worship and idols Isaiah 44

Romans and Greek – pantheon of Gods, all too human – unknown god of Acts 17

Greek philosophers – not a religion

Hindus/Buddhists – creation always existed, cycle of reincarnation, no relationship, many Gods/all is God, or no God?

Islam – a heresy of the Judeo-Christian tradition?

Modern spirituality – often linked to Hinduism

Modern rationality – worships human

autonomy – albeit often aware of true God in rejecting him

Not based on God’s revelation in history but (1) person/event or (2) legend/myth 1 Timothy 4:1 states that “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.”

Theologian Kraemer says teach “self redemption, self justification and self sanctification”

To disagree, need to take pluralist position (all religions lead to the true God) or inclusivist (anonymous Christians) – neither very attractive! Exclusivist as Jesus was John 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Case against

Man sees himself as in confrontation with God Has to be a basis of need in converted man

Also a basis for choice – offer of God’s grace and not God’s imposition upon us.

Preacher pleading with audience is appealing to something present in them

Moral and religious knowledge derived from unaided exercise of God given powers of mind and heart

Degeneracy of humanism.

Bible sees rejection of God as disobedience and not ignorance.

Jesus was the agent of the creation anyway.

Muslims and dreams – Melchizedek ”priest of God most high”.

BARTH AND REVELATION

Kierkegaard as background – gulf God to humanity, eternity and time, downplay experience and focus on revelation; but subjective not rational, leap in dark; crucial sense of sin; God alone can fill gap; historical knowledge valueless; faith no proof.

Barth's theology of Word of God

Revelation a miracle of grace. Dialectical theology – infinite qualitative distance of us from God or discontinuity from us to him – only continuity is him to us – subject that escapes our grasp, reason. **God can't be known** directly as the finite can't grasp infinite; reason corrupted by sin; knowledge of God a fruit of grace not reward of human effort.

I.e. as natural men can only think of him what we think of ourselves, leading to isolation from him. Human response is a miracle, surprise, new not an "object of which we have reminiscence". But still unlike Bultmann (purely personal understanding and "demythologisation") God is knowable by his actions, revelation – a miracle. To know him is to be saved by him.

Distinguish person as a creation and one receiving God's grace – **God spoke first, all we can do is respond in faith, both are revelation.**

All doctrines Christological. No analogies natural to divine permitted – instead Christ to creation and humanity.

Seeks to **rescue theology** from philosophy and experience (risk that talk of God is talk of humanity, Feuerbach) – to be based on **word of God alone** not experience. God has spoken to man through Jesus alone through Scripture and preaching, not through feelings or sense of ultimacy. Word of God equals event of God speaking to us not the Bible.

(1) **God's revealed word** is God's word **speaking to us today dynamically in Jesus.** "To say revelation is to say the word became flesh" **Event** of God's revelation of himself in God's will and works, wrought by Spirit

identical to his being – a subject met today by **personal encounter** that controls and acts on us, demands response of faith. Like Paul on Damascus Road. Not our "possession". Not just information and not just static word of God to be analysed and dissected (Calvin). Also human aspect due to incarnation.

Compare (2) **God's written word – witness to event of God's revelation.** Looks forward to Jesus (OT) or look back in recollection (NT). It authenticates itself and is not authenticated by the church. Nor is it at man's disposal. Is God's word as witness to past and when Jesus speaks through it. "**Revelation engenders the scripture which attests it.**"

Scripture is historical monument to Word event of God already happened but still active via Holy Spirit; Word should interpret church not vice versa; Spoken word subordinate to written word (concretely confronted); and Church confronted by scripture so proclaims it, not itself

Bible is God's word for attesting past revelation and promising future revelation. "**Revelation engenders the scripture which attests it**".

And (3) **God's proclaimed word** – preaching, theology and sacraments of church to be **based on written word and nothing else. Passive to dynamic like Lord's Supper.** Word commissions proclamation, Word is object given to proclamation to make it real; Word judges whether proclamation is genuine and word is event, way proclamation gets real. Against RC view only need tradition.

Interrelation: (2) and (3) bear witness to (1). They are **weak and fallible as human**, Barth accepts Bible and proclamation can err. Like Christ both **human and divine** "no form and comeliness that we should desire them" – veil reality of God. **Scandal** is that such human and fallible material becomes divine in revelation as God tears veil away "open blind and simple eyes and ears" – a miracle. Jesus, Word and preaching are equal in divine sense (when God acts by his Spirit) but ordered in human terms as latter are witnesses and sinful unlike Jesus.

Biblical criticism (accepted for intellectual reasons) can only touch “fallible human witness” not revealed word. But it is Barth’s view of revelation that makes him conclude on its humanity and fallibility. Infallibility denies miracle like immaculate conception of Mary.

(2) and (3) become God’s word when he chooses to speak through them by Holy Spirit and opens blind eyes. Infallibility of Scripture elevates human aspect too much. 3-fold form like Trinity (but later found this unsatisfactory). To ensure not 3 different revelations but different forms.

Order of knowing is preaching, Bible, Jesus and **order of being** is opposite (Christ calls Scripture to witness which is preached on) – otherwise absolutise Bible text or preaching drifts from truth.. Concept of concentric circles

Trinity are revelation, revealed and revealer

Criticisms

Focus on **John 1** Jesus as word of God.

Demotes Bible too much; static, just information not God’s word per se. Like a reporter’s note book. Surely Bible is word of God even if closed. Response to rational attacks?

God hidden too much – emphasising transcendence God gets impersonal..

What is **our role**? Divine determinism. “Wholly other God leaves no room for human freedom, sin, rebellion). Isn’t our role to recognise it and reach out Acts 17:27.

Barth says each of 3 is **divine and human** – but church and Scripture is fallen in humanity, Jesus isn’t.

How can we know it’s real revelation if we don’t start from man. Reason works in own system but **can’t be critiqued from outside** – and not allowed to question.

Not much use of scripture in his argument. Where was theology from the Bible – fallible human words.

How can **Canon authenticate itself** if fallible (witness of Holy Spirit).

No role for historical Jesus (Pannenberg) “history marginalized and forgotten about”. Christ of faith and not Jesus of history. Don’t need proof of resurrection – Barth opposes view historical and just available to faith. (Pannenberg focuses too much on rational evaluation of evidence and not enough on role of Holy Spirit.

Nothing much said about **role of Holy Spirit in revelation**, compare Calvin inner witness to God’s word – convicts us Scripture is word of God. Rationality as secondary to faith “he seals our minds with truth of Gospel”. – word and Spirit together – Holy Spirit does not invent new revelation.

Fideism – the leap of faith in the dark (Pinnock) and no need for reason – Kierkegaard’s infinite qualitative distance.

Problem of incarnation - later balanced by recognising **humanity** of God in incarnation – no such distance any more – but not till 1956.

CALVIN'S DOCTRINE OF EUCHARIST AND WIDER ISSUES

New Testament

Names breaking of bread; Lord's Supper; Holy Communion; Eucharist. Celebration of Passover (Gospels). **Christ present** (Emmaus road). **Feeding on Christ in unity** 1 Cor 10 "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf." cf John 6. 1 Cor 11; Need **worthiness**. Fellowship **meal** in which context communion. **Remembrance** but also **Anticipation** "till he comes again". New **covenant**.

Aquinas

Transubstantiation – substance not material but metaphysical, accidents different from substance. Reformers united in opposition (also Mass as sacrifice, communion in one kind).

Luther

Ordination not a sacrament so not need priest for Eucharist; **faith of believer** apprehends Christ not ritual or priest.

Real presence of Christ in, with and under – not "changed into" but "both" BW and BB – sacrament administering grace.

Consubstantiation – side by side.

Ubiquity – Christ's body with God and on altar – transcendence and immanence in Christ. Oral **feeding**.

Penitence, all believers, less central.

Christ not sacrificed but ourselves in thanks and prayer.

Word essential to explain all this, through Bible and sacrament, so Christ received in faith – and also to unbelievers for death 2 Corinthians 2:15-16 "To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life."

Zwingli

Focus on **reason, and realist** (physical objects exist outside mind) cf. Luther – faith transcends reason.

Hence Christ's body **not ubiquitous** – this "signified my body" and "spirit gives life" – spiritual eating and command to believe.

Separates Christ's divinity and humanity – world and heaven – Gnostic – and also makes heaven a place not state of God's presence. No grace but **memorial in obedience** – remembrance and thanksgiving, symbol or sign of **grace already given**. Proclaim faith to each other, church as Christ's body brought together as one body

Christ in mind of faithful believer only.

Calvin's Via Media

Sought obedience to Bible in doctrine. As Luther, Zwingli need for preaching. Wanted weekly but failed, leading to downgrade.

Body and blood **offered to all but received inwardly by faith**, as in Gospels. We eat Christ's flesh and drink his blood while body is in heaven by virtue of his death. "Partakers of **real substance of body and blood of Jesus**" and how done a **mystery** as Paul Ephesians 5:32 "I rather experience than understand it" – power of Holy Spirit "surpasses all our conceptions". Contrary to Zwinglian reason. Also rejects Lutheran "absurdities" but by Christology not reason. **Danger of real presence** is that people think physical presence is enough and true faith not needed.

"From heaven Christ sends efficacy of his flesh to be present with us" by Holy Spirit. **Christ is present but not in a corporeal manner**. Spiritual communion, participation in Christ himself as living bread (John 6:51), unites us with his body and blood by the Spirit and not "real presence" (main interest of Zwinglians and Lutherans). Benefits won by Christ **available to our souls** "breathes life into our souls", nourishes, bread and wine signs of the spiritual food. We gain strength till immortality. "Just as bread and wine sustains physical life, souls fed by Christ." Also Lords Supper **strengthens our assurance**, proclaims to us Christ's body and blood, seal for us **promise of perpetual feeding** John 6:54 "spiritual banquet on the life giving bread".

“This is my body.” The “**is**” is not literal but is **metonymy** “use of a single characteristic to identify a more complex entity” or name of visible sign given to thing signified e.g. the White House for US Presidency – as “lamb is the Passover” and “circumcision is a covenant” so “this is my body” means “**symbol by which the Lord offers us true eating of his body**”. Also cites anthropomorphisms in Bible such as the Lord is a man of war.

Emphasis on '**Feeding on Christ**' rather than **the presence of Christ**. Calvin felt closer to Luther (eat Christ's flesh by believing) than Zwingli (to believe is to eat Christ's flesh) yet reached agreement with Bullinger, an associate of Zwingli - Zurich Agreement. Hence the **Lutherans rejected him**. So Calvin thought of himself as more of a Lutheran yet the Lutherans thought of him as more of a Zwinglian.

Anti-zwingli

(1) Bread and wine are **signs and symbols, but not 'lying' signs** i.e. the truth they signify are truly exhibited and offered to us. If we find that the blood and flesh are not really there behind the symbol it's a lying symbol. Compare it to a cheque; when you receive a cheque something is offered. Contrast to monopoly money (Zwingli) symbolising real money but no actual value.

(2) For Zwingli, 'feeding on Christ' is simply another way of saying **we believe in him**. Body present only in mind and memory; actually in heaven – **Holy Spirit there as in any gathering** but not body and blood “Doctrine of real absence.” For Calvin 'feeding on Christ' **truly means feeding** substantially on his human flesh and blood.

(3) Sacraments a **means of grace and not a visual aid** or even confession of faith. Zwinglian communion service is all about **us doing something** and reminded of God's grace (pledge loyalty and so on); Calvinist one is all about **coming to receive**, word made flesh and received in faith.

So Calvin agrees with Luther in what 'feeding on Christ' means. But, differs also:

Anti-Luther

(1) Christ's **body is in heaven** not ubiquitous or why did he send the Holy Spirit, and how can he be human.

(2) **No local bodily** physical presence on earth; not even in, with and under the bread.

(3) We do not feed on Christ **orally** (by the mouth)

(4) **Wicked and unbelievers do not receive** his body, as through faith we receive his spiritual nourishment “as rain falls off a rock or seed germinate in a fire”. (Augustine agrees, Luther does not.) Christ's body and blood are offered to everybody but are received inwardly by faith. 'Feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving'.

(5) Lutherans focus on **eating** and Calvin on the **nourishment** that arises from eating.

Summary

Calvin saying there is a true feeding on Christ - against Zwingli

But Christ body in heaven - against Luther

Christ offered to us in symbols and we receive by faith because **Holy Spirit joins us to him**. Calvin known as theologian of the Holy Spirit. No just admiring photograph of Auntie on other side of the world, but able to be on the phone to her. This is a bit like Calvin's idea; Holy Spirit is the one who connects up.

Not that Christ literally descends to the bread and wine nor that we literally ascend to heaven. Rather the **Holy Spirit unites** us to Christ by faith, feeds us with them and gives us communion with them. We feed upon the substance of Christ's flesh and blood. Calvin say **this mystery and rather experience than explain**.

We can have **communion with sun** even though its 93,000,000 miles away, thru its rays. With Luther it's as if a bit of the sun actually comes down to you. With Zwingli its like shivering in middle of the night, remembering the sun and feeling a bit better. With Calvin it's the rays “believers raised by faith above the earth and Spirit removes obstacle of distance” “unites things separated in space”.

How all receive: Luther: Received orally
Zwingli: Remembered mentally Calvin:
Received through faith by the HS.

For Luther and Zwingli the real issue of debate is **whether Christ really present** which is why Lutherans saw Calvin as more Zwinglian. Both Z and C avoid risk of worship of elements. Calvin - not real presence, but real feeding. For him what really counts is the **real communion** and that why he felt closer to Luther.

Calvin accused of being Crypto-Zwinglian

- (1) Lutherans accused Calvin of **getting benefits without real communion** and partaking of body and blood. Through Lord's Supper body of Christ is not present.
- (2) And also as with Zwingli **perpetual feeding by faith** (John 6:54). Bread and wine point us to something that is **always available**. Before and after communion (Consensus Tigurinus) – Lord's Supper **reminds us** to this extent. Just as we have had our sins forgiven once for all, so we continually need to ask forgiveness for our sins.
- (3) Calvin conceded to Zwinglians that **sacrament is testimony of God's grace and not instrumental means of grace**.
- (4) We receive nothing that is not **also received through the gospel** (also form of feeding). Both provide the substance of Jesus as source of all good and the efficacy of the grace and blessing from his passion. Special means of grace but not a means of special grace. Special event but brings no special benefit.
- (5) Nothing that you especially get through communion. There is benefit in doing Lord's Supper but its just another opportunity. Just like responding to preaching. **“More ample certainty and fuller enjoyment” “more clearly”**.

Counter reformation

Belief in **real presence**. Aristotle, substance and not accident. “Truly, really, substantially.” Christ's **sacrifice renewed** and commemorated – propitiation, securing forgiveness.

Remaining issues today

Faith (“do this”) or **grace** (“participation in body”) need not be exclusive.

Difficulty of **sacrifice** (RC), appeasing of God. What about “it is finished” and Hebrews “once for all”? But in NT sacrifice also praise, etc.

Hebrews 13:15-7. Anglican – re-presentation?

Offertory – symbols of life and labour for God's service – Pelagian and nonscriptural.

Benediction adoring elements anathema to Protestants.

Real presence but not material Catholics easing on transubstantiation.

Words of hymns more ecumenical.

Validity from **church** (priest, liturgy) or **word** of God?

Charismatic renewal – subjective experiences given Holy Spirit experience giving way forward – but risk of moving Galatian (grace restricted to legal) to Corinthian (grace restricted to experience) problem.

3 principles for reconciliation (1) true Eucharist expresses grace of God (brought to now by Holy Spirit) (2) and priority of faith (3) and expression to church as body of Christ.

SEMINAR DISCUSSION – “THE BREAD AND THE WINE OF THE EUCHARIST ARE MERELY SYMBOLS”

Symbol is nothing in itself. Represents something else.

FAVOUR

Not going to argue St Oddo saw blood from bread into chalice.

Nor going to argue physical body is bread and wine.

Not mean just symbols even if physical flesh and blood not present

Appeal to scripture, reason, faith

Scripture

John 6:51 I am the living bread that came from heaven...live forever. It's me who feeds you, after the 5000.

John 6:5 for my flesh is real food and blood real drink

1 Cor 10 Therefore flee from idolatry. Is not the cup a participation in blood of Christ...?

Not symbolism or significance.

1 Cor 11:24 "This is my body" Not symbolises or signifies.

Elsewhere, Jesus uses symbolism.

Reason

Imagine engaged and got a ring. Symbol of love, feel deceived if not married.

Sandwich and picture from magazine.

Loving God would not miss out on feeding us. As promised.

God wanting intimacy gives bread and wine. Closest to union with him.

"We have taken the divine life into ourselves, halleluiah" Celtic liturgy.

Calvin, Lord pleased by bread to allow his life to pass into us...

None can happen if bread and wine merely symbols.

Faith

Neither Calvin nor Crammer could say how happens. Holy Spirit. We can't explain how virgin birth happened either. Think too rationalistically, will miss out on what God does.

OPPOSITION

Negative picture of symbols has to be overcome. Powerful and effective.

Dubiety of mere presence. Calvin was like Zwingli.

Symbol. Rich and powerful symbolism of upper room. Jesus saw the meal as like Passover – hope and history on himself. Call of 12, subverting nation, temple etc comes o focus in upper room. Told Passover story and his own and wove them into one. **Passover** – New Exodus. Forgiveness, Israel's God becoming king. Arrival of kingdom m through his own fate.

Bread as own body as Ezekiel brick for Jerusalem. So showed his death would bring life. Messianic act already accomplished as Passover was a symbol too. Jesus was in drama showing about to die. If Jesus body and blood prophetic symbols in upper room, why would they be after his death.

Efficacy of symbols. If symbolic how effective?

Model of **social anthropology**. Identity with Christ transcends other identities – transcends Jew and Greek. Cultural. Ritual context. Like Bread and wine. And day-to-day cultural experiences, as forgiveness, in identity in Christ. Comes together when join in community. Symbols impart meaning to us. And emotional affiliation to symbols. Symbols are emotive tools in creating identity. Culture without common understanding and meaning disintegrates. So get sense of belonging. Brings new perspective to **though we are many we are one body**.

Think of a flag – symbolic but can lead to anger and hatred when burnt.

Dubiety of real presence. Lords supper is remembrance – remember and proclaim. "Do this in remembrance of me". Bread represents his body. Cup is new covenant.

I am the true vine and I am the good shepherd – symbolic – he is not every vineyard and shepherd.

Calvin - to looking too much at bread and wine is a distraction from looking at him in heaven.

Logic, if bread and wine more than symbols, at what point do they become?

Mystery – concept of mystery surrounds feeding on Christ but the bread and wine remain symbols – don't become Jesus who is in heaven.

DISCUSSION

Jesus acted symbolically in declaring New Exodus through his work, especially in upper room.

Was foot washing symbolic or not?

It feeds our lives?

Becomes more than symbol when taken with faith..

How far can we deviate from bread and wine – brioche and orange juice?

Can just a symbol create us as a group –one body?

Do this till I return – why?

THE BAPTISM OF CHRISTIANS' INFANTS IS NOT A LEGITIMATE PRACTICE AND WIDER ISSUES

What does baptism do

Leads to **salvation**, 1 Peter 3:21 "Baptism now saves you"; **Union with Christ**, Col 2:11 "Buried with Christ in Baptism"; **forgiveness and receipt of Holy Spirit** Acts 2:38 "Repent and be baptized...for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit", **washing/regeneration**, Titus 3:5 "He saved us through the washing of rebirth", **joining church** 1 Cor 12:13 "all baptized by one Spirit into one body", **confession of faith**, Acts 16:33 "be baptised calling on his name".

Unity and no separation of faith and baptism. Faith is expressed in baptism and baptism is expression of faith. In Acts comes as part of **fourfold aspect** of becoming a Christian – repentance, faith, baptism and receiving the Spirit. All baptised unlike evangelical "repent and believe" truncated sequence.

We present the case as if there is one point of view on infant baptism. But in fact there is no argument for infant baptism acceptable to all who practice it (Beasley Murray).

Legitimacy "the state of being allowed by law or reasonable and acceptable". **Definition** – infant as opposed to child that can answer for self.

Biblical case is weak

Link to circumcision "covenant theology" (also Zwingli). If babies were circumcised under Old Covenant, they should be baptised under the New. But New supersedes Old and does not imply continuity in this manner. **Old Covenant was case of God choosing Israel**, no option, passive election, while **New Covenant is active** as Gal 5:6 "faith that works by love". And **external to internal** change. Furthermore, when Paul argues with Judaisers in Gal 5:6 he doesn't argue circumcision is irrelevant on grounds of now valid baptism instead faith.

Jesus calling little children to him in Mark 10 – but no obvious link to baptism as admitted by

supporters of paedobaptism. **Blessing is not baptism, closer link to dedication**. And, focus is on **attitude** with which an adult approaches the Kingdom of Heaven. "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it."

Baptism of households. Case can be made for children being left out. Always after faith and instruction, link to worship and never explicit link to children.

In Acts 10, example of **Cornelius**, suggests details inconsistent with children being baptised; Holy Spirit fell on *all* who heard the Word...they heard *them* speaking in tongues and ordered *them* to be baptised.

Or 1 Corinthians 1 **Stephanas** household who at end of letter are praised for devotion to ministry of the saints, readers urged to be subject to them – including babies? Suggests the household covers only adults.

Philippian jailer in Acts 16 "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household" – i.e. the way of faith is open to them also.

Against the idea of unity of households, idea of **individual responsibility in Ezekiel 18:4** "The soul who sins is the one that dies" and Jesus talks of the gospel dividing families in Luke 18.

Beasley Murray – possible link from "baptism of dead" in 1 Corinthians 15:29 to emergency baptism of children (sacramental magical perversion of Paul).

1 Corinthians 7:14 "the **unbelieving husband** has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy" **needn't imply baptism**; otherwise holiness would be grounded on that.

Great Commission emphasises teaching, understanding and faith before baptism.

Berkhof "The New Testament contains no direct evidence for the practice of infant baptism from the days of the Apostles" and furthermore "there is no explicit command to

baptise children in the Bible” But nor is there a command not to.

Theological case is weak

Williams “rests solely on the actual practice of the church”. Whereas appropriate for Catholics to take this point of view enshrining tradition, unclear why Protestants placing higher value on Word of God should accept it.

Theologically **baptism is widely seen as “effective”** not just a sign owing to the step of the one being baptised attaching significance to it. “testimony of the union of individual with Christ” etc.

RC – forgive past sins and only way enter church.

Luther – effective through life as means of grace if faith, and only way enter church.

Zwingli – sign with no spiritual effect but still support infant, cf. most Baptists such as Strong “symbol of already existing union” just act of obedience.

Calvin – sacraments are “visible words” “outward sign by which God seals on our consciences promise of his good will” Sign of initiation into church, forgiveness of sins, union with Christ, regeneration BUT no power on own apart from Christ and Gospel and confers benefits only when received by faith (may be later). Other Baptists like Calvin, Grenz, channel of Holy Spirit working in lives.

But not babies. **Hard to see Infant Baptism as having the same meaning** as Baptism in the New Testament notably as latter presupposes faith, e.g. Colossians 2:12 “buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead”. Also repentance and forgiveness Acts 22:16 “be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name”. Receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38) “you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”. Sacrament and form of oath to be loyal to God (Reicke) 1 Peter 3:21 “saves you also.....the pledge of a good conscience toward God.”

Has either to suggest that **Baptism can be divorced** from its 3 accompanying factors in the New Testament – repentance, faith and

baptism in the Holy Spirit (UK tradition). Or, pace Lutherans and Calvinists – that it **does have these elements** (e.g. as emphasis on passivity of man before God). Neither is satisfactory. Particular **weakness is lack of a link to faith** (baby unaware of what is going on) and repentance (new born has nothing to repent of). Without faith baptism cannot convey salvation. Need for active steps by person as well as God. “Infant baptism is unable to bear the tremendous weight of significance assigned to baptism in the New Testament” (Beasley Murray) and furthermore “belief one can exercise faith on behalf of another for his salvation is inconsistent with New Testament teaching”.

Even **Barth** contradicts himself – baptism has absolute efficacy applied to an infant but is of no avail without faith.

Historical case is weak

Again, seems to be **supported mainly because it exists**. If starting again, unlikely to introduce it. Unlikely was introduced uniformly in early church. And even in one church only some infants baptised. Jewish Christian children more likely circumcised in earliest Jerusalem church.

First account of believer’s baptism at Pentecost but no account of children. Didache 100 and Justin Martyr 150 don’t mention it. Didache – preparation implies capable of acting responsibly. Although some infer from Justin’s “disciples from childhood” – suggests youth baptism. Aristides 117 – young believers (slaves’ children). Irenaeus – 180 includes infants among ages of men Christ came to save, reborn (= baptism)

Aland – no clear source that all Christians practiced infant baptism. But still acknowledge that practice may go back to early church.

Jeremias - Given Jewish background conclude baptised babies instead of circumcision? (Jewish proselyte baptism given to whole families.) Corporate belief in solidarity of families. Baptism in converted families but not of children born in Christian families. Or given New Testament theology would wait till speak for selves?

The first accounts of infant baptism date from the third century - **Tertullian** 206 who was opposed to it but didn't say recent innovation. Fear of sin after baptism, as only wash away past sin (began in 2nd century) and Mark 10:14 know Jesus first. Emergency accepted, if dying. But also no evidence before this of non-infant baptism.

Hippolytus 215 did mention it – child believers baptism “little ones” in proselyte baptism (Easter), assume able speak for selves. Special provision for those can't answer for selves = abnormal but routine.

Cyprian 250 assumes it – issue when birth or 8th day – forgiveness of original sin and parallel to circumcision. First account baptism of newborn.

Origen 3rd century says goes back to apostles, justifies by original sin claims apostolic (born 185).

Tomb inscriptions in 3rd century – say if Christian - imply often baptised not at birth but when in danger of death. But may not have been baptised at all.

Communal memory Irenaeus knew Polycarp who sat at John's feet.

By mid 3rd century universally attested as from Apostles – not always done as fear of sin.

Augustine – for forgiveness of sins, minority practice as fear of post baptismal sin. Like sowing seed could fail to be saved.

Gregory of Naziansen – suggest wait till 3 so spiritual understanding, but accept variety. Only standard by 5th century as acceptance of Augustine's doctrine of original sin, and separated from laying on of hands to receive Holy Spirit.

Best case is for variety – NT no positive evidence for or against. Later variety suggests early variety too.

First objection to child baptism by Anabaptists in 16th century. Much of **opposition to adult baptism** in Continental Europe stems from distrust of Anabaptists and historical memories (anti state). Others still have folk memory of the original sin applying to newborn infants, which is not now accepted by theologians.

In **Anglican Church Baptism often given for non-biblical reasons** – to evangelise the parents, to keep people quiet, as a Christian

nation, people have the right to have children baptised (Buchanan).

Practical case is weak

Idea that baptism is a **means whereby a child becomes a member of the family of God**. But what does entering the church mean? Can see **church as two circles** – fellowship of Christ's people generally or “the Body of Christ” that shares in his death and resurrection. Catholics and Orthodox see grace in sacraments so infant does join the inner circle, subject to later catechism in Catholic Church but not Protestant view (theologically unconvincing). On the other hand, seeing it as entering fellowship may dilute too much the meaning of baptism – need alternative rite.

Symbol of salvation – just a beginning? Some say it must be valid baptism as some people who are baptised as infants believe God has dealt with them in New Testament manner – but what about the many who don't. And God's will is for all to be saved anyway independent of baptism. Possible exception in persecuted church where risk of children being taken away if not baptised.

Or view of **baptism as in terms of hope and anticipation** – weight cast on sponsors to help child to faith. Then it is just a “**sermon**” saying what will happen if child becomes a Christian later. Even if infant baptism is seen as a starting point it is too **often indiscriminate and given to children of parents unlikely to bring them up in the Christian faith**. Godparents function as present givers! Inconsistent. Risk is that those who are baptised as infants and never make an adult profession of faith think they are saved when they may not be (issue warrants discussion).

BEM – Importance of Christian nurture; RC – those baptised as infants need inward conversion as grow up.

On all these practical grounds, **dedication is more appropriate** as it does not have overtones of requiring faith and repentance on behalf of the child. Or (Beasley Murray) 2 baptisms. In all traditions but the Greek Orthodox, full entry to the church awaits a **mode of confession of faith** e.g. confirmation.

Conclusion We have argued that **infant baptism is not a legitimate practice**. It is not the baptism of which the New Testament speaks so it is inappropriately named. It divides up the fourfold process of initiation in an undesirable way. It may even risk the salvation of those who fail to make a commitment as adults. But there is a line between this and refusing to recognise it. Out of love those who oppose it should still recognise baptism from other churches. Also possible exception in persecuted church where risk of children being taken away if not baptised.

NIEBUHR'S DOCTRINE OF SIN AND THE ISSUE OF THE FALL

Background

Concept of sin disappeared in 19th Century. Niebuhr seeking to save Christianity and culture from “absurd insistence on natural goodness of man” No way understand God’s grace without understanding sin.

Niebuhr’s doctrine of sin

For Niebuhr, **distinguishing marks of Christian faith** are (1) **man as creature (finiteness)** and (2) **image of God (freedom)**. Paradox of freedom and finiteness. Sin not due to natural impulses but freedom to throw natural harmonies out of joint.

Man is in **unique position between nature and spirit as free creature**. Anxiety to escape finiteness. Mystery (1) man’s responsible freedom and (2) **corruption of freedom** leading to sin and guilt (by Devil – symbol that sin not from man’s original nature) “Before man fell Devil fell.

Devil presents to man temptation to reject position to which appointed by creator.

Arises from (1) man’s natural limitations and finitude as part of nature leading to insecurity (2) further insecure as self transcendence can anticipate death (3) through ability of self transcendence can envision infinite possibilities of perfection and overestimates abilities.

In other words, **anxiety of finite creatures to secure own position in contrast to order of God**. Once reject dependence on God becomes more and more anxious leading in a context of freedom to desire to **transcend limitations in a sinful way**. Rebellion against God and injustice to others results.

Double existence in nature and spirit – greatness and weakness – good and evil. Contradiction does **not necessarily lead to sin (as freedom)** but makes it likely.

And he considers that this **can be overcome by learning to trust God** (anxiety purged of

sinful self assertion), without reference to a transformation wrought by God.

Most basic sin is unbelief leading man to set up false gods and not trusting God to keep us secure in insecurities of existence. Society is in similar position to the individual. Anxiety leads groups too to be creative or destructive.

Anxiety itself is not sin. Anxiety seen as antecedent to sin and presupposes choice of good and evil – but experience shows man chooses evil. Not seen as belonging to essential nature.

For Niebuhr **Fall is not event in the past** but a symbolic truth about man’s universal and incorrigible tendency to sin “original sin is the inevitable taint on the spirituality of a finite creature (i.e. sinful as created). **Sin grows from present freedom and not event of past**. Based on Kierkegaard – double nature as animal and spirit – anxiety - sin. Man still feels responsible and this shows he is free, sin inevitably not necessarily. Reason for responsibility is that self can transcend its actions in contemplation. Logically absurd, universal sin contradicts belief in freedom. Not involving all cosmos and nature. “Ontology depersonalises.”

Concept of original righteousness in man so can’t see sin as normal. “Faith, hope and love.” Heighten sense of sin as see how fall short or try to live up to them.

What is sin?

Two types of sin (1) **rebellion against God** and order he established for man’s life (wrong use of freedom, rebellion against God, worship of false centres, self worship) (2) **human values the self destroys**, treating other persons as objects (pride, injustice, sensuality, and self-centeredness at expense of others).

Includes all lawbreaking but also pride and sensuality, indifference, sloth

Close to core is pride – identify self with spirit – even for “good” people - unwillingness to acknowledge creatureliness, self-elevation. Main interest was sins law can’t combat. (1) Pride of power – including greed

- (2) Intellectual pride – imagining one finds ultimate truth
- (3) Moral pride – like Pharisees, standard of righteousness seen as ultimate.
- (4) Spiritual pride – self’s righteousness conforms to God’s righteousness “religion as battleground between God and man’s self esteem” Risk even for Christians that the shattering of pride becomes a source of pride.

Deception about own status leads to dishonesty. Niebuhr’s answer to psychologist taking about lack of self-love is that there can be pride masquerading as self-deprecation.

Distinguish guilt (unequal – in terms of consequences – e.g. strong and weak) **from sin** (equal before God). Level of guilt awareness however rises with moral sensitivity “discovery of sinful taint is an achievement of freedom”.

Group pride even “more arrogant, hypocritical and ruthless than individual” Make idolatrous claims about selves. Fruitful source of guilt as more pregnant source of injustice. Example of fascist state making itself an idol – lust for power. Worst are the inferior people.

Sensuality – identify self with nature – self-gratification that never satisfies. Idolatry making self god and seeking space by making some other god. Or escape consciousness by shifting to nothingness. Luxury, drunkenness and sexual passion.

Criticisms

Original sin doctrine **raises “logical absurdity”** difficulty of reconciling universal and necessary – if so how can man be responsible? Does it not make God responsible? Atonement is emptied of meaning and is God cleaning up mess. Humanity is guiltless.

If sin is universal aspect of human nature, was Christ human.

Why not **allow that Fall was original occurrence** (orthodox theology). A window and not just a mirror.

[Or that can avoid sin by free will – sins due “deliberate malice” (Pelagians) or man lost something on top of nature in Fall (RC) or can ignore original sin (liberals)]

Ignore some sins e.g. indifference, apathy, sloth.

“THE WORLD MAKES NO SENSE WITHOUT A DOCTRINE OF THE FALL AND ORIGINAL SIN”

Extent of sin

800,000 Rwandans hacked to death by their countrymen
Hitler’s Germans kill 6,000,000 in death camps
Pol Pot re-educates fellow countrymen and 1,500,000 die

Genesis 8:21 “every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood”

Jeremiah 17:9: The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?

Deceitfulness leads us to underestimate importance of sin.

Isaiah 64:6: All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags; we all shrivel up like a leaf, and like the wind our sins sweep us away.

Romans 3:23 “All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God”

Ephesians 4:17 “[Gentiles] are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.

Although sin is universal still relative sin and should criticise people for particular sin and not original sin.

Human nature in history

History uncovers man’s universal sin. History shows that **only the institution of government** and its legitimate force prevents barbarism (Hobbes – without the Leviathan life is nasty brutish and short). Only difference of civilisation and barbarism is **same human nature in different circumstances**. Nations seen in a “state of nature” with each other,

always likely to seek dominance. Historical changes starting as good such as French Revolution ending tyranny, end as bad. Worst effects from self-righteousness.

What is sin? (see Neibuhr above)

What observable effects of sin can we see? (Erickson)

Effects on relation to others – competition (conflict of egoists), inability to empathise (can't see others' needs), rejection of authority (possibly trampling others' rights) and inability to love (as motive is self satisfaction)

Effects on the sinner – enslavement (becomes habit or addiction), flight from reality (especially try to ignore death), denial of sin (relabelled as sickness, deprivation etc.), self deceit (denial of sin or shifting the blame), insensitivity (becoming less responsive to prompting of conscience), self centeredness (ignore needs of others), restlessness (never satisfied)

Effects on the relation with God – divine disfavour (wrath), guilt from violating law (e.g. in killing Christ), punishment (e.g. manifested in cause and effect), death (physical, spiritual, eternal)

Where does sin come from? Other explanations besides a Fall and Original Sin are unsatisfactory.

Our animal nature (Tennant) - we have natural tendencies to self preservation that can be used to harm others, fall is moral consciousness of this leading to scope for improvement to perfection – not very apparent in the cases above – no animal does such deeds!

Economic struggle as a cause of sin (liberation theology/Marxism) humans good and evil from capitalism – implies that those oppressed are not sinners, which experience of Soviet Union and China does not support, once they gain power. Redistribution of power and wealth doesn't eliminate sin!

Sociologists and psychologists – crime is due to environment such as ignorance and poverty and criminals cannot help it – denies human

responsibility – we become objects. Or may be due to genetic makeup – temptation for particular sin – but can't escape responsibility.

Lack of education(Rousseau) - needed to stop sin and bring out inherent good in man.

Individualism and competitiveness (Eliot) – suggests that man is inherently good and better education and less competition will eliminate sin. Not very evident! Note: All businessmen and government act on bases of original sin (human egotism). Economics assumes self interest is the only driving force and ignores altruism.

Anxiety of finite creatures implying God made us that way (see Niebuhr above)

Coincidence – all make same choice?

Bible teaching – Our forebears were created “able not to sin” good but not perfect with free choice. At the Fall they chose to become arbiters of good and evil, in opposition to God “Like God, . This led to Original Sin, which has left the human race on the wrong path.

Both in Eden and now God does not cause sin, we do when we give in to temptation, following Adam. James 1:13-14 “God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.”

We have **desires**, which are legitimate, and we can choose and imagine things different from what they are. Owing to **choice, we are responsible for our actions**. Then, sin occurs when **desires transcend natural and proper limitations** (e.g. eating-gluttony or sin-sloth) and are at cost to others, or are rebellion against God. All mankind sins as we have seen. The heart is the problem. Jesus said in Mark 7:22 “from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly”

We are held responsible for sin Deut 24:16 “Fathers shall not be put to death for their

children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sins”

Cure is supernaturally produced alteration of human nature and divine help countering temptation (conversion and regeneration through Christ). A new heart Ezekiel 36:26-27 “I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees”. In the interim, due to sin, government is seen as a creation of Providence to limit sin.

Theologians:

Pelagius – Adam’s fall only guilt for him – no inherited corruption or bias to sin. We can not sin by act of will and Holy Spirit not needed to change us.

Augustine – **Adam created with bias to good but possibility of sin.** Fell of own choice. Adam immortal in perfect world contrary to modern science.

We **sin or fall “in Adam”**, share his guilt (shared responsibility of human race – individual product of society) Romans 5:12 “sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned”.

We cannot avoid sin like addicts enslaved to lust. Own free choice but inevitable – bondage to sin Romans 8:5 “Those who live according to the sinful nature have their minds set on what that nature desires”. Can’t follow Law hence; 2 Cor 3:6 “the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life”. We need mercy. Lust rules us, we turn from God and seek satisfaction in material things, money, sex and power. Deeds of fallen humanity tainted by sin – pride and lack of love for God.

Born sinful Psalm 51:5 “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Original sin passed on by inordinate lust in sex act. Children at early age show tendency to sin so unbaptised babies go to hell. Fall was from a great height. Immortal Adam and Eve in a perfect world – for 6 hours!

Irenaeus – Adam and Eve morally and spiritually **like children**. God planned to bring them closer by long process. Creation mutably good not immutably perfect (Isaiah 11:6 is vision of end). At some stage humans in image of God but took a wrong turn.

Calvin – Adam sinned and due to him we all have a sinful nature – denies responsibility? Unjust while Augustine gives a mystery. But still said **fallen human nature is corrupt and not just human nature**. Loss of supernatural gifts and corruption of natural gifts.

Barth – Adam is a mirror to show what we are like. Immediately first sinner.

Modern science – challenges Fall

Tony - Genesis 3 not just a mirror but a window showing origin of sin – otherwise God created us like that. Corporate aspect across human race not just individual. Fall led not to omniscience but first hand experience of good and evil, and moral autonomy – loss of innocence.

Paradox of original sin – inevitable but our responsibility, universal but personal choice, slave to sin but free. Know sinned but believe responsible.

“Practically every school of modern culture rejects the concept of original sin” but there is no alternative.

WARFIELD'S DOCTRINE OF SCRIPTURE AND WORD OF GOD

Why Word of God - Jesus believed so: John 10:35 "Scripture cannot be broken"; NT writers see above and Hebrews 3:7 "the Holy Spirit says"; Testimony of church till 19th century; doctrine of personal God fitting to reveal by written word.

Background to Warfield's thought

Basis in "rational religion" where conviction leads to confidence, so man-based rather than God-based (self consciousness and Scottish common sense school, cf. Kant). Meant **paradoxes could not be tolerated perfect inerrancy needed.**

God as explanation for what exists, in world and in Bible. Took **natural revelation as key for supernatural**, cf. Barth. Bible miracles to ratify scripture to man – proof of Bible.

Miracles outside Bible counterfeit as imply other revelation than Bible (supernatural revelation to men). More focus on **inspiration (supernatural revelation through men)**. Inseparability of word and Spirit – without Spirit can understand Bible but not be saved by it – and vice versa. Bible itself is a redemptive act aimed at achieving God's purposes. But **inspiration not key to faith.**

Is Scripture divine (main line of his argument)

Focus on divine as under attack. **Bible inspired** (1) because it says so and (2) as writers have separately been seen as accredited messengers of a God that cannot lie (historical verification)

Inspiration is poor translation of Theopneustos (2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.") – better is spiring – **God breathes out** not humans breathing into, Divine product produced by instrumentality of men. Scripture **originates in God, Holy Spirit draws humans into right position** (2 Peter 1:21 "men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.")

NT authors see divine (it is written, Scriptures, oracles of God). Authority of NT same level as OT (2 Peter 3:16 re Paul "unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures") 1 Cor 14:37 "what I am writing to you is the Lord's command."

Some aspects purely divine – external manifestation (miracles) and internal manifestation (prophecy/vision/dreams) – rest concursive

Is Scripture human as well as divine? (Concession to his argument)

Rejects pure divine authorship (dictation) as **too many human signs** (styles) texts like 2 Cor 12:11 "I have made a fool of myself" 1 Cor 1:16 "I don't remember if I baptized anyone else" – also "Moses told us" Matt 22:24. But also **rejects purely human** (same care as old oak tree); God just put ideas into humans and left to work out as best they could.

Can still describe events from standpoint of speaker (sun rise, number of casualties) Human authors Addressed to specific historical situations, in which God condescends to speak (time conditioned and culture conditioned), gives need for interpretation. Manner is a mystery beyond comprehension.

Error arises from belief that human and divine **lie over against and exclude** each other. "Human element larger equals divine smaller" Deistic

God is **immanent as well as transcendent**. Parallel with Christ and incarnation or the work of God in grace we work out salvation in fear but God works in us too.

Although divine in terms of being breathed out by God (Holy Spirit), Scripture, oracles of God and "it is written" ... Written in **human language** – so can still describe events from standpoint of speaker (sun rise, number of casualties). Human authors

"No quality inconsistent with either divinity or humanity to be found anywhere in Scripture.

Addressed to specific historical situations, in which God condescends to speak (time conditioned and culture conditioned), gives need for interpretation

Manner is a mystery beyond comprehension “men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God” – no violence to their natures Not in competition, partly divine, partly human.

Concursus - partnership as with grace and freewill – genuine authors who wrote what God wished “what Scripture says, God says” (Warfield) - God and humans work together. “Confluently” Humans write freely but God prepares for task via life story – providence and superintendation.

As divine speaks with authority - as word of man speaks to our hearts

Why could it imply errors?

Warfield **welcomes criticism but thinks it can be countered** (and also intellect not needed to understand faith).

Is fully true, authoritative, infallible, inerrant – a priori view that God could not convey truth through an errant document. True of history and science as well as faith

Needs to **take into account joint divine and human**. God’s talk to us in ways we understand culturally and from point of view of observer (not really errors) – constraints of humanity. Imperfections of human language. Some rough quoting of OT. Constraints of temporal and cultural settings – but didn’t accommodate to errant views. May be **difficulties but not errors** – need continual defence

Defends against charge that we **no longer have original manuscripts**, use of Septuagint – these may lead to some errors (cf. Westminster confession that is perfect keeping of sense).

Mystery way **God makes fallible humans write infallible Word of God**.

Possible problems

Scripture talks more of **Word of God** than of inspired text – product not process. Concursus suggests no human **admixture** while Warfield elsewhere and also Calvin say no sinful admixture.

Progressive revelation weaning people off polygamy.

How can Scripture be inerrant if no dictation? And if don’t accept salvation also joint product?

Where does **canon come from** if rejects ecclesiastical authority – apostolically imposition.

Problem of **rationality primacy** – dependence not on internal testimony of the Spirit. Man-based rather than God-based as for Calvin who did not wait to prove Bible before trusting it “testimony of scripture is superior to all reason”

Is the need for certainty man’s need? (Primacy of reason needs an infallible Bible or no way of getting certainty.)

Contradicted by his own view of our knowledge of Bible as word of God which is **experience based** “speaks to lives”

Disagree on **basis of authority** “writers have separately been seen as accredited messengers of a God that cannot lie”

Ignores Calvin view of **God condescending to human limitations** (mummy’s tummy). Implies knowledge of God not absolute perfection as 1 Cor 13:12 “Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face.”

Barth who accepts fallibility by **separating out God’s revealed word** from his written one. Inspiration not denied nor theological reliability but **capacity** of authors for error stressed (not **actual** errors). True as God speaks through but dales as words can be factually mistaken.

FURTHER NOTES:

What is inerrancy?

Total truthfulness of the Bible (Packer) as corollary of divine inspiration and fact God cannot lie but still human words
Tells truth about everything it talks about – need not always be precise
May quote freely rather than precisely so long as content correct
May have unusual grammar as doesn't affect truth
Disbelieve or disobey is to disbelieve or disobey God
But also limited in safeguarding a mystery by excluding current mistakes about it – advance commitment to receive as truth from God all Scripture teaches and methodological commitment to interpret according to “principal of harmony” (Packer)
Attitude of reverence
Not a blanket claim to know solutions to all apparent biblical discrepancies

Is Scripture human as well as divine?

No – just divine dictation and hence inerrant – possible reaction to historic critical approach – but problem obvious indices of human action.

Yes (Warfield) see above

Yes (Berkouwer)

God breathed, prophetic apostolic human witness or testimony to Christ
Servant form of scripture implying subjection and humility – but rejects link to incarnation – bibliolatry excluded
“Treasure in earthen vessels” – maid servant of Christ
Holy Scripture in its humanity, not distinguished from other human writing – not trustworthy or firm
In scripture we hear human voices – confessional response and not “transubstantiation”
But still God uses it as prophetic despite fallibility – human voices word of God but only due gospel contained in them
Scripture is word of God in context of confessional statement given in faith (hence only authoritative for faith and practice – not science etc.)
Focus on understanding of written scripture and not fact of it being produced by breath of God

Yes (Biblical case)

Man as carried by Holy Spirit
But NT willing to see OT as authoritative in all details
And human does not necessarily imply error

Why could it imply errors?

Warfield (see above)

Berkouwer

Abandon all attempts to settle between divine and human – sees as supernaturalism
So not formally word of God but insofar as it witnesses about Christ
Witness implies not from God only but not from man only either
Divinity is bound up with goal and purpose although human part is historical
Correctness and exactness not correct criteria, scriptures human and so obvious will have errors and inconsistencies – but infallible in terms of message and scope
So for example Genesis 1-3 is not literal but “represents Israel’s stance against mythical theologies and gives perspective on God’s incomparable nature”
Mystery is fact God uses human book for his purposes

Liberal scientific

Treat as purely human document, and separate the kernel from husk by “scientific method”

Would errors matter?

Lose religious as well as epistemological certainty
Purpose of Bible not just faith and practice
Bible has value in itself as sword of Spirit separate from its mission
Vulnerable to historical critical method
Content reduced to intolerable minimum
Have to say faith is based on kerygma outside Bible
Biblical interpretation problematic – what is inspired and what is not – where does it end
Lose internal consistency doctrine
Biblical authority becomes role of expert – “arbitrary reductionist liberalism” – human mind higher standard of truth than God
Implies we can imitate God and lie
May reduce trust in God

France – Concern for inerrancy should prevent use of critical methods. Can get too sensitive (1) no evidence that use of non-Canonical references like Jude and “rock that followed them” makes latter canonical. Also authors transform to make vehicle proclaim NT message, so no doctrinal problem. (2) discrepancies between NT authors reflect differences in intention of authors not errors; fig tree dies immediately in Matthew for dramatic effect of faith and 2 stage in Mark for reality – we incorrectly impose modern views of historiography. (3) while need to harmonise see different aims in telling story e.g. faith of centurion himself as Gentile in Matthew and his character, humility in Luke.

CLASS DISCUSSION THE HUMAN AUTHORSHIP OF SCRIPTURE IMPLIES THAT IT CONTAINS ERRORS

Seminar debate - Yes:

Are they infallible as written by humans?
Incapable of making mistakes or being wrong (dictionary)
Needn't affect faith – or whether it is word of god
Because penned by humans can find imperfection and error of humans
Errors in OT references in NT
Matt 27:9 Judas hangs himself (“spoken by Jeremiah” – took 30 silver coins and bought potters field – but doesn't exist, see NIV text reference; Zech 11:12 not written by Jeremiah and not in the Septuagint at his time)
Acts 7:14 Joseph sent for his father Jacob and family 75 strong. In Genesis 46 it is 70. Did Stephen make error in his case – or Luke's referencing? Stephen full of Holy Spirit and still fallible (number from OT).
Mark 15:22 third hour Jesus dies and in John Jesus at 6 is not yet crucified.
Extra donkey Luke and Mark only colt versus Matthew donkey with colt by her.
Genealogies of Christ in Luke and Matthew differ (Joseph versus Mary?)
2 Tim 3:16 God breathed – God has protected the message but not the precise content.
Insurance “If three witness accounts identical, then assume it is a fraud.”

Scriptures God's gift to us, chose to use mankind. If remove errors, remove man's part in it – part of beauty of what Bible is, way God wants to relate to us. Image of God reference. There can be unintentional errors – but is this circular – did God intend there to be such errors?

Errors in general are pretty trivial. Faith and Holy Spirit needed to protect against “cumulative loss”

Seminar debate – No:

Human authorship implies error? Been a lot of criticisms – Charles Davies – and hence not objective either.

Infallibility should not be pushed too far the way a parent talks to child
restrictions of human language

Infallibility is negative statement with positive function

BB Warfield – what scripture says, God says – doesn't focus on technique of inspiration but why?

Is 2 Tim 3:16 circular – basis of faith? Warfield says because people commissioned by God to write words, they could not lie, Holy Spirit involved. God's seal of authority implies no errors. Author's characteristics not to be separated from God's word. Meshed as one. Jesus had no problem with idea Bible authoritative, work of man and word of God. “David, inspired by Holy Spirit...” “Divorce is Moses' response to hardness of heart...”

“Scripture cannot be broken...” On Emmaus Road proves who he was from Scripture.

Errors come from bad exegesis and misunderstanding of Jewish tradition. Sun rising, seed filling into ground and dying, Numbers may be rounded up or symbolic. Theological aims of writers affect how they write. Blind men said 2 as only one – done deliberately.

In Luke when Jesus meets centurion, personal, while in Matthew meets men – point about character.

We need to rely on Holy Spirit to convict us that Scripture is true.

What seem to be errors may not be – rather, may be intention of the author – or later redactor.

What is scripture?

They are agreeing is infallible – number is a red herring. If useful for teaching, rebuking etc.
If God could make purpose infallible, why could he not make it avoid errors?