

d. Resistible Grace

"The Doctrine of Vocation. This is the doctrine of God's call. The grace of God is magnified, not only in the provision of salvation, but also in the offer of salvation to the undeserving. We may define God's call as that act of grace by which He invites men to accept by faith the salvation provided by Christ. Strong distinguishes between God's general or external call to all men, and His special efficacious call to the elect But if our conception of election is correct, there is no just ground for such a distinction.

"1. The Persons Called. The Scriptures indicate that salvation is offered to all we dare not distinguish between a general call to all and a special call to the elect. Nor need we decide whether God's general call is sincere and His special call is irresistible. God does not mock men. If He offers salvation to all, then He also desires to save all, and to extend the same help to all who choose Him. Man's will is the only obstacle to the salvation of anyone. God does not give one man the will to do good and leave the other without all help in this respect.

"2. The Object of The Call. . . The things to which He calls men are repentance. . . and faith. . . . May we repeat: God does not call upon anyone to do anything he cannot do or for which He is not anxious to give man help in doing." (pp. 349-350)

e. Perseverance of the Saints

"The Scriptures teach that all who are by faith united to Christ, who have been justified by God's grace and regenerated by His Spirit, will never totally or finally fall away from the state of grace, but certainly persevere therein to the end. This does not mean that every one who professes to be saved is eternally saved. Nor even does it mean that every one who manifests certain gifts in Christian service is necessarily eternally saved. The doctrine of eternal security is applicable only to those who have had a vital experience of salvation. Concerning such it affirms that they shall 'never totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace.' This is not equivalent to saying that they shall never backslide, never fall into sin, and never fall to show forth the praises of Him Who has called them out of darkness into His marvelous light. It merely means that they will never totally fall away from the state of grace into which they have been brought, nor fall to return from backsliding in the end." (p. 385)

A comparison of Thiessen's view on the "five points" with that of the Arminian Remonstrance elicits the following observations:

Both hold to total depravity. Thiessen, seeing that no man who is totally depraved will believe on Jesus Christ, posits prevenient grace for all man.

Both hold to an election to salvation conditioned upon foreseen faith in Christ. The Arminian Remonstrance adds the foreseen perseverance in faith and obedience to the end.