

Oral Comp Review: Reformed Confessions

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I. Belgic Confession: 1559 based much upon the Gallic Confession of same year. Revised in 1566 Synod of Antwerp. Official Text 1618-19. At first this gave persecuted church an identity and helped them distinguish themselves from the Anabaptist (anti-government). It also was a whole-catholic church document: it didn't attack the RC church directly and used a lot of common creedal material.

A) God and Revelation 1-11

1: There is Only One God

- We believe = like whole confession = person plural of baptism nature of Apostles Creed.
- Starting on common ground with Rome, by using common attributes.
- Simple = Lt. simplicitas = medieval term, not composed of parts, no derivation, no change
- =Western tradition that modes of subsistence are not parts = unity of singularity of God.
- Neal Plantinga says Western church emphasized too much, social trinity. "lacks Biblical support"
- Foundation of theology = everything else flows out of who God is.
- Pastoral: we live in uncertain times, but context is much larger, in God's unchanging good nature all OK.

2: Means by Which He is Made Known

- Striking: last article God is incomprehensible, but now we know him by two means. Can't know whole circle of who God is; but at the bottom of the circle, two small circles of revelation that we can apprehend = as far as revealed...
- Key = purpose of special revelation = many make this to be more than this vs. "as much as we need"
- For two reasons: 1. for his own glory 2. for our salvation
- Not a book on science, but salvation of His own

B) Creation/Fall 12-17

12: Creation

- Embraces both creation of material and spiritual ... service and the "de-railing" by demons = the shadow side of service = spiritual warfare integrated into our lives, not just above it!
- Parallels between angels and humanity = creation and fall, then division into elect and non-elect... = constituted elect or not, remain in original state by the grace of God vs. by their own wickedness = own will!! But spiritual influence man's fall.

14: Creation and Fall of Man

- God's Will keeps popping up as theme. We see God's will in creation, fall, and redemption (end of Article 15 = God works in us both to will and do = link to sanctification and good works as all of God!) = full circle to where creation begins with the will!

16: Election

- Election, not in theology proper or in soteriology, but in redemptive historical order by anthropology, right after the Fall = God immediately saves...how does he make this choice, well back to eternal decree.
- Onus of God's grace in chosen, with human responsibility for reprobation.
- Father as chooser, reprobater

C) Christ 18-21

20/21: Justice and Mercy together in Christ/ Satisfaction

- Anselm's view of mercy and justice together...
- We comfort in His wounds = sacrifice once made
- Mostly forensic ... legal atonement....passive obedience BUT also must include his active obedience and suffering.

22-26 Soteriology: Works of Christ applied by the Spirit

23 Justification

- Move from Christology to Soteriology = now talking about the RIGHTEOUSNESS of faith; not the acquiring but the application of Christ's work in believers of the life.

3rd last paragraph = free of conscience, not trembling, = comfort

24 = sanctification ... ends with pastoral issue of assurance.

25 = law = on section on works, showing Catholics as Judaizers...

26 = mediator not terrifying us by greatness but no one loves me like he does ...

- All shows them that problem of assurance, of comfort that marks the medieval period = comforting the distressed conscience...
- "nevertheless" shows ethics and law still matter...but reconfigured on third use of law = vs Anabaptist
- Intercession of Christ: How does it fit into theological argument of section = solo Christo, not just in sacrificial role by works, but even in life, sanct, no saints as intercessor = Christ alone for life....
- cf. 21 = double priestly work = justify and live to intercede...

D) Church and the Sacraments 27-36

27 and 28

not separated by invisible and visible church. But real issue through out is the invisible church as it comes to visible expression = very ideal view of visible expression; He fuses two dimensions

Two statements:

Church = entire salv in JESUS CHRIST

Church = no salva apart from IT

= fuse CHURCH (visible) as place where CHRIST carries out salvation. God as Father and church as Mother

= high ecclesiology = the place where a Christian is BORN and RAISED vs. Western indiv. religion....true does not = pure! "great weakness remains them" ...

33: Sacraments

Cf. WLC 82-83 there is a communion with Christ in glory, now and future, the Holy Spirit deepens and strengthens this union, real union...

34: Baptism

- Just as water washes, so too JUST AS= "in this way signifies" the same way; signification is parallel, but the thing signified is not pinned down to moment - Christ's blood does same thing (at some time) = in the soul
- Biblical doctrine of NT = adult converts = believe and immediately get water (not wait for 10 weeks of instruction, test faith) = NT closely aligns faith, internal promises, promises in external baptism = all happening simultaneously = Reformers close link too, (vs. modern separation of promises, baptism, active faith)...
- pure water = plain water, "unblessed"

35: Lord's Supper

- Now even clearer linked to time of sacrament.
- As surely as eating is taking place, so too spiritual eating is actually taking place; we are actually (spiritually) eating TRUE BODY AND TRUE BLOOD OF CHRIST...
- Things happening together ... when there is faith

Art 36 Civil Magistrate

Revisions in the CRC:

1898 = gravaman = not task of government to suppress false rel

1910 Footnote = what modern view of church and state is, leave footnote...

1938 Eliminate part of the original = delete "to removing ...antiChrist; but leave positive role,

1939 Elucidation = absolve government = german, dutch, vs. english text ...

1958: substitute wording of 38 provisionally put in footnote, but original stands

1985 substitute wording put into, and delete detesting of the Anabaptist...

37 Last Judgment

II. CANONS OF DORT

Not THE five points of Calvinism; but 5 point Calvinism... = incomplete as definition.
In Form of Subscription = believe Belgic Confession, Catechism, and the explanation of the aforesaid in the C of Dort.

Context: Why sorteriology of Arminians taken so seriously? **We just fought this previenant grace 60 years ago and now we have the re-catholizing?** Also political battle of who will define the church = if Remonstance group wins = state will define church contrary to Belgic Confession.

A. TULIP Misunderstood:

- not absolute/utter depravity = as bad a could be
- not limited atonement in the sense of deficient atonement
- not irresistible,

B. RULES

Radical Corruption/Depravity
Unconditional election = Father's work
Limited Atonement = Particular = Son's work
Effectual Calling = Spirit
Preservation

C. FAITH - Oosterhouse

Fallen humanity
Adopted By God
Intentional Atonement
Transformed by the Holy Spirit
Held by God.

Head 1 : Election and Reprobation

Starts with history, not decrees in eternity. = commentary on Article 16 of Belgic Confession: it begins with perdition and ruin in history (explains before time, then right back into history).

Background of Article 1: The Fall, and Total Depravity (see 3/4 Head).

How is it fair that it is God's just judgment... RC Sproul = God chose the representative, he was the best possible ...

Article 1 = depravity = breadth of corruption

Article 3 = total inability = depth of corruption = it goes so deep that it renders unable/willing to save ourselves

In perfect justice could have left all in the pit, but display justice and mercy = BC Art 13, Anselm.

= RH, sinful humanity... sends Son into world, not dealing with decree right away...like BC 16,18 = move from election alusion right away into Incarnation = like Dort = "mercifully sends proclaimers of joyful message to sinners...

Article 6: God's action = choosing/decreeing, softening hearts = AND passively...giving up...

"Unfathomable act, as Merciful as it is Just, = for comfort... = BC 16...

Election and reprobation seen as "ONE ACT" = placing the dividing line in the one human family...

ARTICLE 7 = CHRIST AS CHOSEN BY FATHER = HEAD OF CHOSEN = INCORPORATED BY HOLY SPIRIT = FATHER AND SPIRIT'S ACTION FOCUS ON CHRIST....

"not of many kinds" = single one act = community and certain particular people (Art 10)...

ARTICLE 8-14: Unconditional = we don't have to meet certain conditions that God for-sees;

Issue of assurance: not just election to salvation but whole range of blessing of Christ!!

Article 13 = Humbling doctrine...adore fathomless mercy... = return love back to God vs. sense of pride (Israel's election)...

Article 14: doctrine that is specifically intended for God's church (just inside family? i.e. not evangelism, but look back after salvation)...

Always treat each person, as looking in face of potentially elect ...right up to death = what dignity we must teach all!!

Head 2: Death of Christ and Redemption of Men

HEAD 3 and 4: The Corruption of Man, His Conversion to God...

Article 1: balance of good and fallen human being

total = mind, heart, will, emotions = total corruption = not a room in the house that hasn't been infiltrated with this stink!

Article 15: Why are some mercy exhibits, some justice exhibits? Rom 9:22,23

1. Wrong question: maybe first question is why does God choose even one of this rebellious race, should fathom at the grace of one even like myself!! What condescension!
2. Hoeksema and Rom 9; His glory and majesty and grace are displayed even more brightly against His wrath = seem like pawns
3. Plantinga; maybe not so much a question of what God is doing here, but a question of our understanding of God; we only have part of the story, missing part of overall picture
4. Boer Gravamen: was a missionary, crisis of 1952 = let go as missiologist of seminary, along with 5 others?
 - a. When OT even NT talks of judgment, it is often corporate and historical response, not indiv eternal
 - b. Synod 1980 rejects Boer gravamen because ... but he is basically right that the Scripture passages don't explicitly teach, but what the Canons teach is that reprobation is just the shadow side... but he characterized canons as teaching damned without regard to demerit on their part...

Article 8 = **well meant offer** = preceptive will of command vs. decretal will = last part = promises for their souls and eternal life to all who come to him and believe = Article 9 responsible for rejecting it...

Article: 11 = by effective operation penetrates into in most being = infused new qualities = IRRESISTABLE GRACE = DEAD WILL MADE ALIVE

Articles 13-17

- Work out your own salvation, for it is God who works in you = both the willing and the doing.
- "good works paradox"... being activated, our will is active = 100% each...
- God produces will to believe and the belief itself, but it is our belief and will.
- Most of NT ref. are faith that is our responsibility. = STILL USE MEANS OF GRACE

Head 5: The Perseverance of the Saints

Articles 1-8 = balance and interweaving of God's work and our work in reference to persevering = same tension in faith,...in Scripture too!

Art 1 = preservation = positive work of Spirit in healing process = mortification and vivification, life long process;

Art 2 = perseverance = us by Spirit

Art 3 = Preservation

Art 4 = Reformed Scholastics; God is efficient cause of election, and defficient cause of reprobation... God does not remove the obstacle...

Art 5: Faith and Assurance: Stronger faith = strong assurance...weaker...weaker

Art 9 Concerning this preservation and perseverance = summarizes whole section...

Action of human and God in each step is not always the same:

1. internal call/external call = both
2. regeneration = divine
3. repentance/conv = both
4. Just = divine
5. sanct = both
6. perseverance = both
7. Glorification = divine