

Calvinism

Calvinism: the most destructive and diabolical of error we studied?

- Named after John Calvin
 - He did not originate the doctrine
- Must first become acquainted with Augustine

Calvin quotes Augustine far more frequently than all Greek and Latin 'fathers' combined, and almost always with full approbation – Schaff VIII, 539.

I. Augustine

AD 354-430

- Mother: Monica
- Augustine: immoral
 - AD 386 . . . Ro.13:14
 - Broke radically with the world...
 - Credits prayers of mother, sermons of Ambrose, biography of “Saint Anthony,” and epistles of Paul for conversion, age 33
- Founder of Augustinian order
- Often preached five days in succession...

- Heart of system: free redeeming grace of God
 - Debated grace with Pelagius who denied THD and affirmed free will
- Augustine: thinker, not scholar...

“...depended mainly on his own resources, which were always abundant.” *** “Even in his theological works he everywhere manifests the metaphysical and speculative bent of his mind” –Schaff III, 1002ff.

- Heart of system: free redeeming grace of God
 - Debated grace with Pelagius who denied THD and affirmed free will
- The first to teach what we call ‘Calvinism.’
 - ▶ None of the ‘church fathers’ did so. ◀

“The connection between Calvinism and Augustine is that Calvin appealed strongly to Augustine as proof that the doctrines he was teaching were not new, but were in fact taught by a highly regarded church father.

... “In short, no, there is no real ‘proof’ that anyone between the times of the Apostles and the time of Augustine held to a system we would now call Calvinistic” – Reformed Answers

“It may occasion some surprise to discover that the doctrine of Predestination was not made a matter of special study until near the end of the 4th Century. The earlier church fathers placed chief emphasis on good works such as faith, repentance, almsgiving, prayers, submission to baptism, etc. They of course taught that salvation was through Christ; yet they assumed that man had full power to accept or reject the gospel...

“...They taught a kind of synergism in which there was co-operation between grace and free will... [Calvinistic Predestination] was first clearly seen by Augustine...he went far beyond the earlier theologians [and] taught unconditional election...” – Loraine Boettner, *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*, p.365.

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“He grounded his theology less upon exegesis than upon his Christian and churchly mind, saturated with Scriptural truths” –Schaff III, 1015.

- His source: great imagination...not Scripture

- Influenced Catholicism and evangelical Protestantism...
- No teacher did so much to mould Luther and Calvin
- He believed many are born into kingdom of grace only to perish again.

I. Augustine, AD 354-430

II. John Calvin
1509-1564

- French; theologian
- Confined saving grace to small circle (elect)
 - Held to religious views from youth to end of his life
- Elected pastor and teacher of theology at Geneva, 1536
- His predestination dwells on bright side: eternal election; not on reprobation and preterition (*God passed over the non-elect*)

- 1537: Council of the 200 ordered all citizens to assent to the Confession of Faith in Church of St. Peter...
 - This substituted modern Protestant popery for old Roman popery
 - Most rejected it; ran him out of town...
- Regarded immersion as primitive form of baptism, but pouring and sprinkling as equally valid
- Returned to Geneva, 1541: Theocracy
 - Executed Servetus and many others

- He fought Anabaptists et al. who endeavored to build up a new church of converts directly from the Bible, w/o any regard to the intervening historical church!
- Schaff: ‘How, then, with such high churchly views, could Calvin justify his separation from the Roman Catholic Church in which he was born and trained?’

I. Augustine, AD 354-430

II. John Calvin, 1509-1564

III. Summary of Calvinism

Five major points: T-U-L-I-P

T Total hereditary depravity

U Unconditional election

L Limited atonement

I Irresistible grace

P Perseverance (preservation) of saints

I. Augustine, AD 354-430

II. John Calvin, 1509-1564

III. Summary of Calvinism

**IV. Consequences of
Unconditional Election**

1. Conflicts with biblical conditions of salvation

- Mt.7:21; Lk.13:3
- Did Lord say these things to **non-elect** who could not believe or repent?
- Did Lord say these things to **elect**, who were already saved . . . making the conditions a lie?

1. Conflicts with biblical conditions of salvation

2. Cancels exhortations, promises, warnings of Bible.

- Mt. 11:28, meaningless mockery
 - Elect are **already** 'to' Him
 - Non-elect **cannot come**
 - Who needs this invitation?

1. Conflicts with biblical conditions of salvation
2. Cancels exhortations, promises, warnings of Bible.

3. Characterizes God as cruel, capricious

- Jn.3:16
- Calvin Commentary... (Jn.3:16)

‘Let us remember, on the other hand, that while life is promised universally to all who believe in Christ, still faith is not common to all. For Christ is made known and held out to the view of all, but the elect alone are they whose eyes God opens, that they may seek him by faith.’

- Hold food before starving man tied to post

1. Conflicts with biblical conditions of salvation
2. Cancels exhortations, promises, warnings of Bible.
3. Characterizes God as cruel, capricious

4. **Convicts God of partiality.**

- Ac.10:34-35
- Make puppet do evil ... (inherit) the punish it for doing evil.
- Make puppet do good ... reward it.
- Why punish Cain?

1. Conflicts with biblical conditions of salvation
2. Cancels exhortations, promises, warnings of Bible.
3. Characterizes God as cruel, capricious
4. Convicts God of partiality.

5. Contradicts human responsibility.

- Ac.10:34-35
- We cannot command a puppet to act.
- We close with an invitation. Why?

Elect are
already saved

Reprobates
already lost

Conclusion: Ep.1:3-4

- How did God choose the saved? Who?

Those who are 'in Him'

1. Is His choice conditional or unconditional?
2. If unconditional: v.10, universalism.
(Col.1:20)
3. If “in Him” requires us to do something to get “into Him,” it is conditional.

- Ro.6:3-4; Ga.3:26-27
- 2 Th.2:13-14

Elect
president...
2 Pt.1:10-11