

8. THE SPREAD OF CALVINISM AND “REFORMED” DOCTRINE

Ephesians 1:11-12. *“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.”*

*May the Lord grant That we may contemplate The mysteries of His heavenly wisdom
With truly increasing devotion, To His glory And to our edification, Amen.*

1. THE SPREAD OF CALVINISM

(a) Where did Calvinism grow?

France:

- 1561 = 2,150 congregations (mainly artisans and nobility). “Huguenot” = French Calvinists
- Calvin’s Academy and Reformed printing industry in Geneva
- Paris: 23 August 1572 St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre – 6,000-30,000 murdered
- Toleration in 1598 Edict of Nantes, revoked 1685
- Persecution of the Huguenot remnant, e.g. Marie Durand

The Netherlands:

England, the Puritans and the New World:

- Cranmer and the early CofE: Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr Vermigli
- Puritans
- New World, especially after “Great Ejection” of 1662

Where do we find Calvinism today – and where did it come from?

- C.H. Spurgeon, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the *Banner of Truth Trust*, the American *Evangelism Explosion* project, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), J.I. Packer, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, John Piper.
- Conservative evangelical Anglicans; Oak Hill Theological College.
- New UK Presbyterian denominations

(b) Why did Calvinism grow in the 16th century?

1. The movement of refugees to and from Geneva enabled church planting
2. It was a highly disciplined movement which bred extremely tough pastors
3. The Calvinistic church planting movement was self-sustaining and flexible
4. The revolutionary political theology of Theodore Beza (and others) allowed revolution in the name of the Gospel.
5. The later Genevan church weakened and other Calvinist centres strengthened
6. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*
7. Distinctive Calvinist doctrines of *divine election* and the *remnant* encouraged boldness, perseverance under trial, and brought assurance of salvation.

2. JOHN CALVIN'S WRITINGS

(a) Getting the Bible out: Calvin's commentaries, exegetical sermons, and Genevan Psalter

E.g. Psalm 134. (sung to Loys Bourgeois' tune which we usually use for "All creatures that on earth do dwell")

*You faithful servants of the Lord,
sing out his praise with one accord,
while serving him with all your might
and keeping vigil through the night.
Unto his house lift up your hand
and to the Lord your praises send.
May God who made the earth and sky
bestow his blessings from on high.*

(b) A manual for doctrine: *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*

*Book 1. Of the Knowledge of God the Creator
Book 2. Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer
Book 3. The Mode of Obtaining the Grace of Christ
Book 4. Of the Holy Catholic Church*

3. THE DEVELOPMENT OF “REFORMED THEOLOGY”: CALVIN’S LEGACY

(a) What does it mean to be “Reformed”?

- “Reformation” or “Reformed”?
- “Reformed” = “Calvinist”
- Was Calvin a Calvinist?
- Defining Calvinism or the Reformed worldview

Benjamin Warfield: *“that sight of the majesty of God that pervades all of life and all of experience.”*

C.H. Spurgeon: “I love to proclaim those strong old doctrines that are nicknamed *Calvinism*, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus.”

Westminster Confession of Faith (1646)

(b) Reformed / Calvinist doctrinal distinctives

- **Threefold use of the law**
- **Covenant theology**
- **Regulative principle of worship** (vs “Normative” principle of Anglicans, Lutherans)
- **Liberty of Conscience**
- **The Sacraments**: Not a mere memorial (vs. Zwingli). Not bread and Christ’s body are both substantially present (vs. Luther). But a real feeding on Christ, by the Holy Spirit.

(c) The doctrines of grace (a.k.a. The Five Points of Calvinism)

- **Calvin vs. Arminius (1560-1609)**

Romans 7 struggle with sin is *not* the experience of a Christian
Arminian Remonstrance of 1610

Rejected by the Synod of Dort 1619 → Five Points of Calvinism / Doctrines of Grace

- **TULIP: a summary...**

1. **Total depravity**

Romans 7:18, "I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature."

= Every part infected with sin, and therefore unable to save ourselves.

2. **Unconditional election**

Ephesians 1:4, he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him." (See also Acts 13:48).

= Chosen to be holy – not chosen because holy.

3. **Limited atonement**

John 10:14-15, 26, "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me-- just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-- and I lay down my life for the sheep... but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock."

Acts 20:28, "Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood."

= If Christ died for you then you will be saved. An actual not potential redemption. The sins of the lost cannot be punished twice.

4. **Irresistible grace**

Romans 8:30, "Those he predestined, he also called, those he called, he also justified, those he justified, he also glorified."

= God calls people into union with Christ. He enables repentance and faith in the new birth.

5. **Perseverance of the saints**

John 6:39, "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."

= Christians will persevere... because the Lord will preserve them.