

The Doctrines of Grace

Ephesians 1:3-10

Ephesians 1:3-10 (NASB)

³ “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ,
⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love
⁵ He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,
⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.
⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace
⁸ which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight
⁹ He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him
¹⁰ with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, *that is*, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him”

These are the so-called Five Points of Calvinism.

These are sometimes set forth in the form of an acrostic on the word “TULIP”, as follows:

T Total Depravity (i.e. Total Inability)

U Unconditional Election

L Limited Atonement (i.e. Particular Redemption)

I Irresistible Calling

P Perseverance of the Saints

5. PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

And now, to the final point — the perseverance of the saints. Again, for the sake of summary, let us refer to the **Baptist Confession**, which agrees on this point with the other historic confessions of faith.

“Those whom God hath accepted in the Beloved,” it says, “effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, and given the precious faith of His elect unto, can neither totally nor finally fall from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved, seeing the gifts and callings of God are without repentance. . . .”

Again let us show that this is exactly what the Scriptures teach us.

Romans 8:27-39 (NASB)

27 And He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He intercedes for the saints according to *the will of God*.

28 And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His purpose*.

29 For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to *become conformed to the image of His Son*, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren;

30 and these whom He predestined, He also called; and these whom He called, He also justified; and these whom He justified, He also glorified.

31 What then shall we say to these things? If God *is* for us, who *is* against us?

32 He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him over for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?

33 Who will bring a charge against God's elect? God is the one who justifies;

34 who is the one who condemns? Christ Jesus is He who died, yes, rather who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us.

35 Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?

36 Just as it is written, "FOR YOUR SAKE WE ARE BEING PUT TO DEATH ALL DAY LONG; WE WERE CONSIDERED AS SHEEP TO BE SLAUGHTERED."

37 But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.

38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,

39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And again, let us recognize the fact that all that the men at the Synod of Dort [and those who teach likewise] were doing, was putting into small compass in a systematic form, the teaching of God's gospel of free and sovereign grace. If man cannot save himself, then God must save him. If all are not saved, then God has not saved all. If Christ has made satisfaction for sins, then, it is for the sins of those who are saved. If God intends to reveal this salvation in Christ to the hearts of those whom He chooses to save, then, God will provide the means of effectually doing so. If, therefore, having *ordained* to save, *died* to save, and *called* to salvation those who could never save themselves, He will also *preserve* those saved ones unto eternal life to the glory of His Name.

Thus following total depravity, and unconditional election, and limited atonement, and effectual calling, we have — *the perseverance of the saints*.

Philippians 1:6 (NASB)

6 “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

The Word of God is replete with references to this blessed truth.

John 6:39 (NASB)

39 “This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.”

John 10:28 (NASB)

28 “And I give eternal life to them, and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of My hand.”

Romans 5:10 (NASB)

10 “For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, having been reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.”

Romans 8:1 (NASB)

1 “Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.”

This is the believer’s hallmark, that he belongs to Christ; that he is persevering in the things of Christ; that he is “**giving all diligence to make his calling and election sure.**” The believer in Christ may fall into temptation, but the Lord will “**not suffer him to be tempted above that which he is able, but will with the temptation also make a way to escape,**” so that the believer comes forth, and goes forth again in the things pertaining to his salvation to the glory of Christ.

1 Corinthians 10:13 (NASB)

13 “No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what *you are able*, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.”

Those matchless verses of **Romans 8:28-39** show the Divine logic in God’s eternal salvation; the logic that Calvinism simply states. The salvation that begins in the mind and purpose of God must end in the fulfillment of His unthwartable purpose that those “**whom he did foreknow**” are eternally united with their Savior.

CONCLUSION

This, then, in very broad outline, is the teaching that is sometimes called Calvinism. Far from being an innovation of man, it is the doctrine of the Word of God clearly formulated and set forth.

The perennial question, however, is sure to be raised: **“But does not this Calvinism hinder the work of the gospel?”** The most casual glance at the history of the church of Christ in this world is sufficient to invalidate such an opinion.

The gospel of Christ has flourished most where and when the Lord’s people have held these doctrines of grace close to their hearts. We think of the zeal of **William Carey** that drove him from his shoe-maker’s shop to evangelize for Christ in India. Carey was a solid Calvinist, as also was **Andrew Fuller**, another great Baptist who helped form the Baptist Missionary Society. Consider these words of the godly **David Brainerd**, the man who believed that the Red Indians of America as well as the white men had souls; “I then had two desires”, he writes in his journal, **“mine own sanctification, and the ingathering of God’s elect.”** One of the greatest evangelists of modern times was the Calvinistic **George Whitefield**, yet his Calvinism never hindered his preaching the gospel of Christ: “With what divine pathos”, it was said of him, **“did he exhort the sinner to turn to Christ.”**

Calvinism, if we can use that word and not be misunderstood, was the gospel of **Robert Murray M’Cheyne**, as it was of **Andrew Bonar**, and **William Burns**, that great leader of revival and missionary to China. Martyrs, Reformers, leaders of Christ’s church on earth, when they tell of the gospel that they preached and died for, tell about the gospel of God’s saving grace to His own elect flock. How could one begin to list them? **Luther, Calvin, Tyndale, Latimer, Knox, Wishart, Perkins, Rutherford, Bunyan, Owen, Charnock, Goodwin, Flavel, Watson, Henry, Watts, Edwards, Whitefield, Newton, Spurgeon**, are but a few of God’s noble army of witnesses to the truth of sovereign grace. Was any of their work for the Lord hindered by what they believed? And what did they believe? They believed that God was sovereign Lord. They dared to believe that they worshipped and served a King who **“worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”**

Well did that prince of preachers, **Charles Haddon Spurgeon**, put it when he said, **“I have known men bite their lip and grind their teeth in rage when I have been preaching the sovereignty of God . . . the doctrinaires of today will allow a God, but He must not be a King.”** Did **Spurgeon** hinder the gospel? And yet, how many rose up in strife against him on account of his doctrine!

“We are cried down as *hypers*,” he could say, **“scarcely a minister looks on us or speaks favourably of us; because we hold strong views upon the divine sovereignty of God, and His divine electings and special love towards His people.”** Perhaps a word from that same giant of the church should set a closing exhortation before us to lay firm hold upon these blessed truths of God’s Word and tell them forth to the praise of His Name. **“The old truth that Calvin preached, that Augustine preached, that Paul preached, is the truth that I must preach today, or else be false to my conscience and my God. I cannot *shape* the truth; I know of no such thing as paring off the rough edges of a doctrine. John Knox’s gospel is my gospel; that which thundered through Scotland, must thunder through England again.”** Amen and Amen.