

## Reformed Doctrine of Predestination, Lesson #10

### Outline of Systems (continued)

#### III. Calvinism

*Calvinism holds that as a result of the fall into sin all men in themselves are guilty, corrupted, hopelessly lost; that from this fallen mass God sovereignly elects some to salvation through Christ, while passing by others; that Christ is sent to redeem His people by a purely substitutionary atonement; that the Holy Spirit efficaciously applies this redemption to the elect; and that all of the elect are infallibly brought to salvation. This view alone is consistent with Scripture and with what we see in the world about us.*

#### IV. Arminianism vs Calvinism

*The chief fault of Arminianism is its insufficient recognition of the part that God takes in redemption. It loves to admire the dignity and strength of man; Calvinism loses itself in adoration of the grace and omnipotence of God. Calvinism casts man first into supernatural strength. The one flatters natural pride; the other is a gospel for penitent sinners. As that which exalts man in his own sight and tickles his fancies is more welcome to the natural heart than that which abases him, Arminianism is likely to prove itself more popular. Yet Calvinism is nearer to the facts, however harsh and forbidding those facts may seem.*

*"It is not always the most agreeable medicine which is the most healing. The experience of the apostle John is one of frequent occurrence, that the little book which is sweet as honey in the mouth is bitter in the belly. Christ crucified was a stumbling-block to one class of people and foolishness to another, and yet He was, and is, the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation to all who believe."*

- Nathaniel S. McFetridge, "Calvinism in History"

##### A. Against Arminianism's appeal

We are not at liberty to develop a system of our own liking.

*"The question which of these systems is true is not to be decided by ascertaining which is the more agreeable to our feelings or the more plausible to our understanding, but which is consistent with the doctrines of the Bible and the facts of experience...It is the duty of every theologian to subordinate his theories to the Bible, and teach not what seems to him to be true or reasonable, but simply what the Bible teaches...There would be no end of controversy, and no security for any truth whatever, if the strong personal convictions of individual minds be allowed to determine what is, or what is not true, what the Bible may, and what it may not be allowed to teach." - Dr. Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology*

### The Scriptures Are the Final Authority by Which Systems Are to Be Judged

*The Word of God is the great and final tribunal before which [doctrines] must be brought, and by which they must be tried. And the truth or falsity of our belief is measured by the corresponding agreement with, or diversity from, that form of doctrine which is set forth in the unerring revelation that God has given to us in His inspired Word. It is by this criterion that Calvinism must be tried. It is by this criterion that Arminianism or Pelagianism must be tried. It is by this criterion, and by this criterion alone, that every form of belief, be it religious, or be it scientific, must be tried; and if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them . . . We believe in the full, verbal inspiration of the Word of God. We hold it to be the only authority in all matters and assert that no doctrine can be true, or essential, if it does not find a place in this Word. - Ben A. Warburton, "Calvinism"*

WCF 1.4 *The authority of the Holy Scripture, for which it ought to be believed, and obeyed, dependeth not upon the testimony of any man, or church; but wholly upon God (who is truth itself) the author thereof: and therefore it is to be received, because it is the Word of God.*

WCF 1.10 *The supreme judge by which all controversies of religion are to be determined, and all decrees of councils, opinions of ancient writers, doctrines of men, and private spirits, are to be examined, and in whose sentence we are to rest, can be no other but the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scripture.*

*In connection with each of the doctrines discussed in this book we have presented a large mass of Scripture evidence—evidence both direct and inferential—evidence which cannot be answered or explained away—evidence greatly superior in strength, extent and explicitness, to any that can be adduced on the other side. The Bible unfolds a scheme of redemption which is Calvinistic from beginning to end. And these doctrines are taught with such inescapable clearness that the question is settled for all those who accept the Bible as the Word of God. These doctrines are set forth in the most impressive way; and the unstudied naturalness and simplicity with which they are given makes them all the more impressive.*

*In the light of modern scientific exegesis, it is quite evident that the objections which are raised against the Reformed Theology are emotional or philosophical rather than exegetical. So long as we hold to the Reformed principle that the Scriptures are to be accepted as the sole authority in matters of doctrine the Calvinistic system will stand as the only one which adequately treats of God, man, and redemption.*

#### **A Warning Against Undue Speculation**

*We are not under obligation to "explain" these truths; we are only under obligation to state what God has revealed in His word, and to vindicate these statements as far as possible from misconception and objections. In the nature of the case all that we can know concerning such profound truths is what the Spirit has seen fit to reveal concerning them, being confident that whatever God has revealed is undoubtedly true and is to be believed although we may not be able to sound its depths with the line of our reason. In our ignorance of His inter-related purposes, we are not fitted to be His counselors. "Thy judgments are a great deep," said the psalmist. As well might man attempt to swim the ocean as to fathom the judgments of God. Man knows far too little to justify him in attempting to explain the mysteries of God's rule.*

**Ps 36:6** Your righteousness is like the great mountains; Your judgments are a great deep;

**Deut 29:29** The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.