

“Mingled vanity and pride appear in this, that when miserable men do seek after God, instead of ascending higher than themselves as they ought to do, they measure him by their own carnal stupidity, and neglecting solid inquiry, fly off to indulge their curiosity in vain speculation. Hence, they do not conceive of him in the character in which he is manifested, but imagine him to be whatever their own rashness has devised. This abyss standing open, they cannot move one footstep without rushing headlong to destruction. With such an idea of God, nothing which they may attempt to offer in the way of worship or obedience can have any value in his sight, because it is not him they worship, but, instead of him, the dream and figment of their own heart. This corrupt procedure is admirably described by Paul, when he says, that ‘thinking to be wise, they became fools’” (Rom. 1: 22.) [John Calvin, Institutes, 1.4.1]

Most who call themselves “Reformed” or “Calvinist” measure God by their own carnal stupidity by presupposing that human responsibility implies human freedom from the active control of the Sovereign God of heaven and earth. In Scripture, we see that human responsibility implies a Sovereign God who commands obedience to His laws and threatens punishment for disobedience to His laws. The Calvinist Reformed consensus is that Divine sovereignty + human responsibility = “Grand Paradox.” They prattle on in their false piety about how both are indeed true and do not contradict, though they cannot see exactly how this can be. Curt Daniel, in his History and Theology of Calvinism, says that Divine sovereignty and human responsibility “form an antinomy” (p. 213). Daniel then quotes J.I. Packer’s observation (presumably this quote is taken from Packer’s, Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God):

“It is an apparent incompatibility between two apparent truths. An antinomy exists when a pair of principles stand side by side, seemingly irreconcilable, yet both undeniable...You see that each must be true on its own, but you do not see how they can be true together.” [End Packer quote—CD]

To adapt a Calvin quote: Men like Curt Daniel and J.I. Packer, by means of tortuous windings, make a show of being near to God at the very time they are rebelling against Him.

“For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, ‘For this very thing I raised you up, so that I might display My power in you, and so that My name might be publicized in all the earth.’ So, then, to whom He desires, He shows mercy. And to whom He desires, He hardens. You will then say to me, Why does He yet find fault? For who has resisted His will? Yes, rather, O man, who are you answering against God? Shall the thing formed say to the One forming it, Why did You make me like this? Or does not the potter have authority over the clay, out of the one lump to make one vessel to honor, and one to dishonor? But if God, desiring to demonstrate His wrath, and to make His power known, endured in much long-suffering vessels of wrath having been fitted out for destruction, and that He make known the riches of His glory on vessels of mercy which He before prepared for glory, whom He also called, not only us, of Jews, but also out of nations” (Romans 9:17-24).

Paul’s critic labors under the same exact delusion as Daniel and Packer, which is that the Sovereign King cannot also be Judge UNLESS He fits into their carnal mutinous mold. The reason why Daniel and Packer speak the blasphemous nonsense that they do is because they do not see how God can hold humans responsible while irresistibly hardening them and making them sinners in order to show His power and wrath. What it boils down to in the blinded minds of the apostolic critics (e.g., J.I. Packer, Curt Daniel) of the world is this:

Man cannot be judged responsible by His Maker unless he is his own maker. The irony here is that if pots could indeed make themselves, then they would be responsible to no one—for they, in making themselves, would actually become the Potter. Of course, the Potter does not “make Himself” since He is eternal and self-existent, but the point is that the pots would become the Potter insofar as they are the ultimate metaphysical cause of their own actions and destiny.

God is accountable to no one precisely because He IS free. Man is accountable to God precisely because he is NOT free. If men were free from God’s active control, then they would NOT be accountable to God (for they would be God). If men were free from God actively controlling them, then they would be the ultimate metaphysical controllers of their own actions, which means that they would be God, rather than God being God.

Curt Daniel quotes W.J. Styles (I've never heard of Styles):

“Since human responsibility and divine sovereignty do not simply involve a paradox but are destructive to each other, one must be untrue.” [end of Styles quote—CD]

Daniel labels Styles as a hyper-calvinist and comments further:

“Styles thus denied human responsibility, though he did accept that man is accountable. One outcome was that Styles said that lack of faith is not a sin” (Curt Daniel, p. 214).

What Paul's critic, Styles, Daniel, and Packer insist on clinging to is the heretical assumption that man is free from God. Styles is seemingly more honest in his mutiny against his Maker, while the others seek to vainly cloak their mutiny in “reverence” and “humility.”

In short, Divine sovereignty and human responsibility is NOT a paradox, antinomy, or a contradiction. If you believe they are, then you are Paul's objector, a God-hater who is blurring the distinction between Potter and pot, between Creator and creature.

“They deem it enough that they have some kind of zeal for religion, how preposterous soever it may be, not observing that true religion must be conformable to the will of God as its unerring standard; that he can never deny himself, and is no specter or phantom, to be metamorphosed at each individual’s caprice. It is easy to see how superstition, with its false glosses, mocks God, while it tries to please him. Usually fastening merely on things on which he has declared he sets no value, it either contemptuously overlooks, or even undisguisedly rejects, the things which he expressly enjoins, or in which we are assured that he takes pleasure. Those, therefore, who set up a fictitious worship, merely worship and adore their own delirious fancies; indeed, they would never dare so to trifle with God, had they not previously fashioned him after their own childish conceits. Hence that vague and wandering opinion of Deity is declared by an apostle to be ignorance of God: ‘Howbeit, then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.’ (Gal.4:8) And he elsewhere declares, that the Ephesians were ‘without God’ (Eph. 2: 12) at the time when they wandered without any correct knowledge of him. It makes little difference, at least in this respect, whether you hold the existence of one God, or a plurality of gods, since, in both cases alike, by departing from the true God, you have nothing left but an execrable idol.” (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.4.3.)

Those who believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception have some kind of zeal for God, how preposterous soever it may be, not observing that it is Christ who saves the sinner from perishing, and NOT the other way around. Those who fashion Christ after their own vain and self-righteous conceits are saying in effect that the sinner redeems the Redeemer; that the sinner saves the Savior’s work from becoming of no effect. Their “acceptance” of Christ is in reality a mockery and rejection of Him. Their self-righteous “acceptance” of the work of Jesus Christ is what makes the difference between salvation and damnation RATHER THAN the work itself. This is another clear example of the spirit of antichrist that is so prevalent in this world (cf. 1 John 4:1-3).

Those who truly accept the work of Jesus Christ believe that His work makes the difference between salvation and damnation. Those who believe that Christ died for everyone without exception do NOT believe that

His work makes the difference between salvation and damnation. Therefore, those who believe that Christ died for everyone without exception have NOT truly accepted the work of Jesus Christ. Those who believe Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception believe that self made the difference. True believers believe that Christ made the difference. Those who think self (i.e., the efforts of self) made the difference have their boast in an execrable idol. Those who think Christ made the difference have their boast in the true God and His Son, Jesus Christ.

“And we know that the Son of God has come, and [He] has given to us an understanding that we may know the true [One], and we are in the true [One], in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and the life everlasting. Little children, guard yourselves from idols. Amen” (1 John 5:20-21). And even among certain Calvinists who do not believe that Christ died for everyone without exception nevertheless have some kind of zeal for God that is preposterously ignorant of the fact that Christ is the end of Law for righteousness (Romans 10:4). Jesus Christ met in full, both the penal and the preceptive demands of God’s law and justice (Romans 10:5; Galatians 3:10-12). This law grabs the sinner by the throat and says, “Pay me what thou owest.” Christ paid the debt in full on behalf of His people. He does not need the sinner to contribute his anti-christian, zealously-ignorant, self-righteousness-establishing “two cents” in order to improve upon and supplement His already efficacious work (cf. Romans 10:1-4). Said Calvinist, out of ignorant zeal seeks to establish his own righteousness by meeting “non-meritorious conditions” for salvation (cf. Romans 11:6).

“And yet hypocrites would fain, by means of tortuous windings, make a show of being near to God at the very time they are fleeing from him. For while the whole life ought to be one perpetual course of obedience, they rebel without fear in almost all their actions, and seek to appease him with a few paltry sacrifices; while they ought to serve him with integrity of heart and holiness of life, they endeavour to procure his favour by means of frivolous devices and punctilios of no value. Nay, they take greater license in their grovelling indulgences, because they imagine that they can fulfil their duty to him by preposterous expiations; in short, while their confidence ought to have been fixed upon him, they put him aside, and rest in themselves or the creatures” (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.4.4).

Many who call themselves Christian (e.g., Calvinists and Arminians) set forth all kinds of examples of feigning nearness to God while fleeing from Him in reality. The Godhood of God is an obvious one where we witness the “tortuous windings” of many a Calvinist as he attempts to explain how God is in control of everything without actually controlling everything. The Arminian view of God’s sovereignty (aka “The Godhood of God”) is probably less ridiculous than the Calvinist view since it is more heretically consistent.

Our focus on the absolute sovereignty of God is due to its necessary implications for the gospel of Jesus Christ. We could also speak of our focus on the elementary doctrine of God as Creator (A true Creator is really in control of that which He creates!) The most salient instances of false religionists masquerading as true Christians—that is, feigning nearness while fleeing from Him—is seen in the tolerant Calvinists. They make a show of believing in the true Christ until their marvelous transformation is made manifest by telling us which “christ” was revealed to them upon regeneration. The “christ” that is revealed to the tolerant Calvinist as an immediate fruit of regeneration is NOT the Christ whom the apostles preached (cf. 2 Corinthians 4:6, 11:4). Of course, this also reveals to us which “gospel” they believe is the power of God unto salvation to everyone believing. For if every newly regenerate person (i.e., “babe in Christ”) does not believe the gospel, then something other than the gospel must be the power of God to salvation.

These tolerant Calvinists think that a newly regenerate person is ignorant of the righteousness of God (Romans 10:1-4). What the apostle Paul calls ignorant zeal, they call “childlike faith.” They think that “childlike faith” includes ignorance of the only ground of acceptance before God. Specifically, I am talking about the tolerant Calvinist view that a true Christian starts out his Christian life believing Jesus died for every sinner without exception. This view has Christ establishing an everlasting righteousness for everyone without exception and yet multitudes perish notwithstanding. And so in this view, the sinner has to establish his own righteousness lest he perish along with the others. The righteousness (or effort) that makes the difference between salvation and damnation is the righteousness that is being established for that person. In the case of those who believe that Jesus Christ died for everyone without exception, the righteousness that is being established is clearly their own (Romans 10:3). Honesty and consistency would compel the tolerant Calvinists to charge the apostle Paul with advocating “doctrinal perfectionism” in Romans 10:1-4.

Here is John Calvin commenting on Augustine and supposed “deep mysteries”:

“Having elsewhere shown more fully, when treating of the corruption of our nature, how little able men are to believe, (Book 2, c. 2, 3,) I will not fatigue the reader by again repeating it. Let it suffice to observe, that the spirit of faith is used by Paul as synonymous with the very faith which we receive from the Spirit, but which we have not naturally, (2 Cor. 4: 13.) Accordingly, he prays for the Thessalonians, “that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power,” (2 Thess. 1: 2.) Here, by designating faith the work of God, and distinguishing it by way of epithet, appropriately calling it his good pleasure, he declares that it is not of man’s own nature; and not contented with this, he adds, that it is an illustration of divine power. In addressing the Corinthians, when he tells them that faith stands not “in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God,” (1 Cor. 2: 4,) he is no doubt speaking of external miracles; but as the reprobate are blinded when they behold them, he also includes that internal seal of which he elsewhere makes mention. And the better to display his liberality in this most excellent gift, God does not bestow it upon all promiscuously, but, by special privilege, imparts it to whom he will. To this effect we have already quoted passages of Scripture, as to which Augustine, their faithful expositor, exclaims, (De Verbo Apost. Serm. 2)

‘Our Savior, to teach that faith in him is a gift, not a merit, says, ‘No man can come to me, except the Father, which has sent me, draw him,’ (John 6: 44.) It is strange when two persons hear, the one despises, the other ascends. Let him who despises impute it to himself; let him who ascends not arrogate it to himself.’

In another passage he asks,

‘Wherefore is it given to the one, and not to the other? I am not ashamed to say, This is one of the deep things of the cross. From some unknown depth of the judgments of God, which we cannot scrutinize, all our ability proceeds. I see that I am able; but how I am able I see not:—this far only I see, that it is of God. But why the one, and not the other? This is too great

for me: it is an abyss a depth of the cross. I can cry out with wonder; not discuss and demonstrate.'

The whole comes to this, that Christ, when he produces faith in us by the agency of his Spirit, at the same time ingrafts us into his body, that we may become partakers of all blessings” (John Calvin, Institutes, 3.2.35).

Why one and not the other? Could it possibly be it is because God desires to save the one for whom Christ died and to damn the other for whom Christ did not die? No. Couldn't be that. That would be too simple. And too Biblical:

“For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory, Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? (Romans 9:17-24).

Mama Augustine (“Mama ‘Stine”): Auggy, did I not tell you clearly and lucidly to clean your room several hours ago?

Little Augustine (“Little Auggy”): Oh, Mama. Your ways are higher than my ways, and your ways are very mysterious and beyond finding out. Who could possibly fathom the unknown depth of your mysterious words, Mama? It is too great for me, Mama. Your wisdom is an exceeding deep abyss. I can only cry out with wonder; not discuss and demonstrate.

Mama Augustine (“Mama ‘Stine”): If you don’t go clean your room right this instant Mr. Smarty-pants, you and Mr. Wood-Paddle are going to have a discussion about parental authority and discipline.

Little Augustine (“Little Auggy”): Yes, Mama.

The following quote describes quite accurately the false religion, piety, and humility of Augustine:

“The religion that makes a show of proclaiming the greatness of God by declaring our inability to understand him, even though he tells us about himself and tells us to understand, is a lazy and unfaithful piety. True reverence studies God’s revelation and submits to all that it says, even if it challenges our prejudices and preconceptions, and even if it leaves no room for rebellion disguised as humility. This is a false humility that shouts praises in God’s face as he speaks, to drown out his voice, so as to make a way of escape from his doctrines and his commands” (Vincent Cheung).

This is not a blanket-endorsement of Vincent Cheung as a true Christian, but he describes the Augustino-Calvinistic consensus on God’s relationship to things like sin and evil quite well.

A quote by Calvin that applies to all sorts of idolatrous philosophies and religions — from the atheists and agnostics all the way to the Arminians and tolerant Calvinists. This quote is especially applicable to the Calvinist whose damnable theological journey consists of embracing-and-then-rejecting the non-sovereign “god” of Arminianism, followed up by embracing-and-then-retaining the partially-sovereign “no-god” (cf. Galatians 4:8) of popular and fashionable Calvinism. Said Calvinist is ever learning but never able to acknowledge the TRUTH.

“Hence that immense flood of error with which the whole world is overflowed. Every individual mind being a kind of labyrinth, it is not wonderful, not only that each nation has adopted a variety of fictions, but that almost every man has had his own god. To the darkness of ignorance have been added presumption and wantonness, and hence there is scarcely an individual to be found without some idol or phantom as a substitute for Deity. Like water gushing forth from a large and copious spring, immense crowds of gods have issued from the human mind, every man giving himself full license, and devising some peculiar form of divinity, to meet his own views. It is unnecessary here to attempt a catalogue of the superstitions with which the world was overspread. The thing were endless; and the corruptions themselves, though not a word should be said, furnish abundant evidence of the blindness of the human mind. I say nothing of the rude and illiterate vulgar; but among the philosophers who attempted, by reason and learning, to pierce the heavens, what shameful disagreement! The higher any one was endued with genius, and the more he was polished by science and art, the more specious was the colouring which he gave to his opinions. All these, however, if examined more closely, will be found to be vain show” (John Calvin, Institutes, Book First, Chapter 5, Section 12).

“I am not ignorant, indeed, of the assertion, which is now more than threadbare, ‘that images are the books of the unlearned.’ So said Gregory: but the Holy Spirit gives a very different decision; and had Gregory got his lesson in this matter in the Spirit’s school, he never would have spoken as he did. For when Jeremiah declares that ‘the stock is a doctrine of vanities,’ (Jer. 10: 8,) and Habakkuk, ‘that the molten image’ is ‘a teacher of lies,’ the general doctrine to be inferred certainly is, that every thing respecting God which is learned from images is futile and false” (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.11.5).

This quote from John Calvin brings to mind John Piper’s foolish defense of idolatry.

“What does an image profit, for its maker has carved it; a molten image, and a teacher of falsehood? For does the maker trust in his work on it, to make mute idols? Woe to him who says to the wood, Awake! To a mute stone, Rise up, it shall teach! Behold, it is overlaid with gold and silver, but no breath is in its midst. But Jehovah is in His holy temple; let all the earth be silent before Him” (Habakkuk 2:18-20).

Droves of professing Christians have a serious problem with making graven images of someone they’re calling “Jesus Christ.” The insatiable desire to make Jesus Christ an idolatrous object of physical vision reveals an obedience problem with Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 4:15-16, Isaiah 40:18, and Habakkuk 2:18-20. This is evident in their idolatrous picture books and also on their blogs and websites.

Here’s John Piper answering the question, “What do you think of pictures of Jesus?” (paraphrasing and transcription are mine):

“I’m a little hesitant about portraits of Jesus at all. And there’s an argument about whether that’s breaking the first commandment...you know...don’t make any graven images...don’t have any pictures of Jesus in your house. The reason I’m not a stickler on that is because Jesus became incarnate... and therefore we know He had a face. God the Father didn’t have a face except insofar He and the Son are One...Jesus had a face and so even

though we don't know what it looked like, I think renderings of it to show various things are okay.

And if we're gonna do that they should be real diverse. I think they should be real diverse...cause...you lock in on that famous one...I don't know what it's called...the long-hair...the idyllic face...blue eyes...that's absolutely absurd. But I think there should probably be black portrayals of Jesus and white portrayals of Jesus and Chinese portrayals of Jesus. And everybody knows that they're not accurate...there isn't one that's accurate. That's why it's legitimate to do lots of inaccurate ones...cause you just say we all know...that we don't know what He looked like. So what we want to say with our inaccurate Jesus is something true about Jesus. Namely, He's there for everybody" (John Piper, <http://www.desiringgod.org/interviews/what-do-you-think-of-pictures-of-jesus>).

Piper piped:

"So what we want to say with our inaccurate Jesus is something true about Jesus."

God through Habakkuk said the image is "a teacher of falsehood."

It is true that the "inaccurate Jesus" is a teacher of falsehood. Hebrews 1:3 speaks this of Christ:

"... who being the shining splendor of His glory, and the express image of His essence, and upholding all things by the Word of His power, having made purification of our sins through Himself, He sat down on the right of the Majesty on high."

Apparently to Piper the "image" described in Hebrews 1:3 is "just a little bit different" than the "image" denounced in Exodus 20, Deuteronomy 4:15-16, Isaiah 40:18, and Habakkuk 2:18-20.

Book 1 Chapter 11 of Calvin's Institutes is entitled "Impiety of Attributing a Visible Form to God. The Setting Up of Idols a Defection from the True God." In section 7 he speaks of "The use of images condemned by the luxury and meretricious ornaments given to them in popish churches." Calvin further adds this particularly exquisite zinger:

"Let papists, then, if they have any sense of shame, henceforth desist from the futile plea, that images are the books of the unlearned — a plea so plainly refuted by innumerable passages of Scripture. And yet were I to admit the plea, it would not be a valid defense of their peculiar idols. It is well known what kind of monsters they obtrude upon us as divine. For what are the pictures or statues to which they append the names of saints, but exhibitions of the most shameless luxury or obscenity? Were any one to dress himself after their model, he would deserve the pillory. Indeed, brothels exhibit their inmates more chastely and modestly dressed than churches do images intended to represent virgins. The dress of the martyrs is in no respect more becoming. Let papists then have some little regard to decency in decking their idols, if they would give the least plausibility to the false allegation, that they are books of some kind of sanctity" (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.11.7).

“For although the sad devastation which everywhere meets our view may proclaim that no church remains, let us know that the death of Christ produces fruit, and that God wondrously preserves his church, while placing it as it were in concealment. Thus it was said to Elijah, ‘Yet I have me seven thousand in Israel’ (1 Kings 18:18)” (John Calvin, Institutes, 4.1.2).

First, wherever “the true Church is found, the true gospel is always found.” Second, while John Calvin DID believe “that the death of Christ produces fruit” in the case of the elect, he did NOT believe Christ’s death produced fruit for EVERYONE for whom Christ died. Thus, Calvin did NOT believe that the death of Christ was efficaciously able to produce the fruit of salvation of itself apart from the sinner’s efforts. The following shows Calvin’s damnable belief that Christ died for everyone without exception.

Dr. Curt Daniel writes:

“Calvin usually preached in French and wrote in Latin. His literary career lasted only 33 years, but he remains one of the three most prolific Christian writers of all time (with Luther and Spurgeon). On average, he wrote about 1,000 pages a year. This is astounding when one considers that he did not write simple religious pabulum but only solid and scholarly theology” (Curt Daniel, The History and Theology of Calvinism, p. 27).

What Calvin wrote was certainly scholarly. But solid? Here are John Calvin’s far-from-solid comments on Romans 5:18:

“He makes this favor common to all, because it is propounded to all, and not because it is in reality extended to all; for though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered through God’s benignity indiscriminately to all, yet all do not receive him.”

John Calvin is here saying that although Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, yet all do not receive Him. If he had just said, “Christ suffered

for the sins of the whole world,” we could have considered the possibility that he could have meant “the whole world of the Jews and Gentiles” or “the whole world of the elect” and not everyone without exception. But he goes on to say that “all do not receive him,” which means that he believed that Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, INCLUDING all who do not receive him. Thus Calvin denied the very heart of the gospel, which is the efficacious atonement of Jesus Christ.

The following are quotes from John Calvin, each followed by an explanation of what he was saying. You will find that what he was saying cannot be explained in any other logical way. John Calvin was an unregenerate man when he made these statements. Those “converts” from Roman Catholicism who believed what he said about the atonement were doing nothing more than going from the Roman Catholic Whore Church into the Protestant Whore Church. They were just going from wicked Roman Catholic universal atonement to wicked Protestant universal atonement, from being lost Roman Catholics to being lost Protestants.

“And, indeed, in the Second Epistle of Peter, Christ alone is mentioned, and there he is called Lord. But He means that Christ is denied, when they who had been redeemed by his blood, become again the vassals of the Devil, and thus render void as far as they can that incomparable price.” [Commentary on Jude 4]

Calvin is here saying that some of those who were redeemed by the blood of Christ go back to being vassals of the Devil. [These people that Calvin believed were redeemed by the blood of Christ are described in 2 Peter 2 as false teachers who bring in damnable heresies (v. 1), made to be taken and destroyed, who shall utterly perish in their own corruption (v. 12), and cursed children (v. 14), among other things.]

“Also we ought to have good care of those that have been redeemed with the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. If we see souls which have been so precious to God go to perdition, and we make nothing of it, that is to despise the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ.” [Sermon on Ephesians 5:11-14]

Calvin is here saying that souls that go to perdition are precious to God, because they have been redeemed with the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

“The four reasons, whereby Paul doth carefully prick forward the pastors to do their duty diligently, because the Lord hath given no small pledge of his love toward the Church in shedding his own blood for it. Whereby it appeareth how precious it is to him; and surely there is nothing which ought more vehemently to urge pastors to do their duty joyfully, than if they consider that the price of the blood of Christ is committed to them. For hereupon it followeth, that unless they take pains in the Church, the lost souls are not only imputed to them, but they be also guilty of sacrilege, because they have profaned the holy blood of the Son of God, and have made the redemption gotten by him to be of none effect, so much as in them lieth. And this is a most cruel offense, if, through our sluggishness, the death of Christ do not only become vile or base, but the fruit thereof be also abolished and perish ...” [Commentary on Acts 20:28]

Calvin is here saying that the lost souls within the church are part of the redemption gotten by Christ, and the fruit of the death of Christ is abolished and perishes when the pastors do not do their duty.

“He makes this favor common to all, because it is propounded to all, and not because it is in reality extended to all; for though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and is offered through God’s benignity indiscriminately to all, yet all do not receive him.” [Commentary on Romans 5:18]

Calvin is here saying that although Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, yet all do not receive Him. If he had just said, “Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world,” we could have considered the possibility that he could have meant “the whole world of the Jews and Gentiles” or “the whole world of the elect” and not everyone without exception. But he goes on to say that “all do not receive him,” which means that he believed that Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, including all who do not receive him.

“True it is that the effect of His death comes not to the whole world. Nevertheless, forasmuch as it is not in us to discern between the righteous and the sinners that go to destruction, but that Jesus Christ has suffered His death and passion as well for them as for us, therefore it behoves us to labour to bring every man to salvation, that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ may be available to them ...” [Sermon CXVI on the Book of Job (31:29-32)]

Calvin is here saying that Jesus Christ has suffered His death and passion for the righteous as well as the sinners that go to destruction. (Note also that Calvin used the term “whole world” to mean everyone without exception.)

“The word many is not put definitely for a fixed number, but for a large number; for he contrasts himself with all others. And in this sense it is used in Romans 5:15, where Paul does not speak of any part of men, but embraces the whole human race.” [Commentary on Matthew 20:28]

Calvin is here saying that in Matthew 20:28, the “many” for whom Christ was given as a ransom is not talking about any part of the human race but the whole human race. If he had just said that Christ is a ransom for the whole human race, we might be able to consider the possibility that he did not mean everyone without exception. But he contrasts “part” and “whole,” obviously meaning that he believed that Christ was given as a ransom for the whole human race as opposed to just part of the human race. After finding these quotes, we obviously could not call ourselves Calvinists (although we had already stopped calling ourselves Calvinists before finding these quotes), since we do not believe what Calvin believed regarding the essential gospel doctrine of the efficacious atonement of Jesus Christ. Calvin did not believe that the work of Christ secures the salvation of all whom He represented. He did not believe that the work of Christ alone is what makes the only difference between salvation and damnation.

We hope that this article will make others think about what names they attach to themselves, now that the real meaning of some of these names

has been put forth. We are not “Reformed.” We are not “Calvinists.” We are followers of Christ – the true Christ whose atoning blood and imputed righteousness is the only ground of our salvation.”

John Calvin writes:

“But Ambrose, Origen, and Jerome, were of opinion, that God dispenses his grace among men according to the use which he foresees that each will make of it. It may be added, that Augustine also was for some time of this opinion; but after he had made greater progress in the knowledge of Scripture, he not only retracted it as evidently false, but powerfully confuted it (Augustine *Retract.* lib. 1, c. 13). No, even after the retraction, glancing at the Pelagians who still persisted in that error, he says, ‘Who does not wonder that the Apostle failed to make this most acute observation? For after stating a most startling proposition concerning those who were not yet born, and afterwards putting the question to himself by way of objection, ‘What then? Is there unrighteousness with God?’ he had an opportunity of answering, that God foresaw the merits of both, he does not say so, but has recourse to the justice and mercy of God,’ (Augustine *Epist.* 106, ad Sixtum)” (John Calvin, *Institutes*, 3.22.8).

Calvin stating that Ambrose, Origen, Jerome, and Augustine believed (some at least for a time) in election according to works.

“So then, also in the present time a remnant according to election of grace has come into being. But if by grace, no longer [is it] of works; else grace no longer becomes grace. But if of works, it is no longer grace; else work is no longer work” (Romans 11:5-6).

One question comes to mind in view of Philippians 3:1-9. Does **RETRACTING** something as evidently false necessarily mean **REPENTING** of it, and thus counting it as doctrinal dung?

John Calvin demonstrating his belief that Romans 10:14, 17 is ordinarily true:

“His [Servetus–CD] third point is, That all who believe not in the Son remain in death, the wrath of God abideth on them (John 3:36); and, therefore, infants who are unable to believe lie under condemnation. I answer, that Christ does not there speak of the general guilt in which all the posterity of Adam are involved, but only threatens the despisers of the gospel, who proudly and contumaciously spurn the grace which is offered to them. ... Servetus afterwards adds, that no man becomes our brother unless by the Spirit of adoption, who is only conferred by the hearing of faith. I answer, that he always falls back into the same paralogism, because he preposterously applies to infants what is said only of adults. Paul there teaches that the ordinary way in which God calls his elect, and brings them to the faith, is by raising up faithful teachers, and thus stretching out his hand to them by their ministry and labors. Who will presume from this to give the law to God, and say that he may not engraft infants into Christ by some other secret method?” (John Calvin, Institutes, 4.16.31)

Calvin makes exceptions to the Romans 1:16 rule, and completely undercuts and vitiates Paul’s argument in Romans 10:14. This appears to be the pernicious part and parcel of the rich Reformed Tradition.

“And he who curses his father or his mother, dying he shall die” (Exodus 21:17).

“Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long on the land which Jehovah your God [is] giving to you” (Exodus 20:12).

“Then the scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus from Jerusalem, saying, Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread. But answering He said to them, Why do you also transgress the command of God on account of your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honor your father and mother, and, The one speaking evil of father or mother, by death let him die. But you say, Whoever says to the father or the mother, A gift, whatever you would gain from me; and in no way he honors his father or his mother. And you annulled the command of God on account of your tradition. Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy concerning you, saying: This people draws near to Me with their mouth, and with [their] lips honor Me; but their heart holds far off from Me. But in vain they worship Me, teaching [as] doctrines [the] precepts of men” (Matthew 15:1-9).

[I am not endorsing or promoting John Calvin as a true Christian when I quote from him. But I think he writes some things that true Christians could benefit from.]

Here is Calvin regarding honor claimed especially for parents:

“Wherefore, we ought to have no doubt that the Lord here lays down this universal rule, viz., that knowing how every individual is set over us by his appointment, we should pay him reverence, gratitude, obedience, and every duty in our power. And it makes no difference whether those on whom the honour is conferred are deserving or not. Be they what they may, the Almighty, by conferring their station upon them, shows that he would have them honoured. The commandment specifies the reverence due to those to whom we owe our being. This Nature herself should in some measure teach us. For they are monsters, and not men, who petulantly and contumeliously violate the paternal authority. Hence, the Lord orders all who rebel against their parents to be put to death, they

being, as it were, unworthy of the light in paying no deference to those to whom they are indebted for beholding it. And it is evident, from the various appendices to the Law, that we were correct in stating, that the honour here referred to consists of three parts, reverence, obedience, and gratitude. The first of these the Lord enforces, when he commands that whosoever curseth his father or his mother shall be put to death. In this way he avenges insult and contempt. The second he enforces, when he denounces the punishment of death on disobedient and rebellious children. To the third belongs our Saviour's declaration, that God requires us to do good to our parents, (Mat 15). And whenever Paul mentions this commandment, he interprets it as enjoining obedience" (John Calvin, Institutes, 2.8.36).

Calvin writes:

“In this upright state, man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life. It were here unseasonable to introduce the question concerning the secret predestination of God, because we are not considering what might or might not happen, but what the nature of man truly was. Adam, therefore, might have stood if he chose, since it was only by his own will that he fell; but it was because his will was pliable in either directions and he had not received constancy to persevere, that he so easily fell. Still he had a free choice of good and evil; and not only so, but in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly framed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties, and destroyed himself” (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.15.8).

Here are some insidious implications for Calvin’s statement that “man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life.”

“... if he chose, [man] was able to” usurp the throne of Christ and crown himself king by meriting eternal life and blessedness for himself and his posterity.

“... if he chose, [man] was able to” to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing (cf. Revelation 5:12).

“... if he chose, [man] was able to” obtain the SAME GLORY as Jesus Christ and thus profane and cheapen the absolute uniqueness and exclusivity of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ for His people. Of course, those who believe like Calvin would (probably) say that it is due to God’s “infinite and beneficent condescension” that man even possesses this grand and god-like ability to erase Jesus Christ from history by adorning himself with the glory that belongs SOLELY to Jesus Christ. This is to attribute to creature-man qualities of character that belong to Jesus Christ ALONE. This is to exchange the redemptive glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ for the self-righteous glory of man.

“I feel pleased with the well-known saying which has been borrowed from the writings of Augustine, that man’s natural gifts were corrupted by sin, and his supernatural gifts withdrawn; meaning by supernatural gifts the light of faith and righteousness, which would have been sufficient for the attainment of heavenly life and everlasting felicity. Man, when he withdrew his allegiance to God, was deprived of the spiritual gifts by which he had been raised to the hope of eternal salvation. Hence it follows, that he is now an exile from the kingdom of God, so that all things which pertain to the blessed life of the soul are extinguished in him until he recover them by the grace of regeneration” (John Calvin, Institutes, 2.2.12).

Here’s the insidious “covenant of works” in an “inchoate (just begun)” or “incipient (about to begin)” form [1]. In this Christ-Less covenant the creature possesses the sufficient and supernaturally-gifted potential TO ATTAIN “heavenly life and everlasting felicity” and TO DEPRIVE Jesus Christ of receiving power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing (Revelation 5:12).

This particular form of works-salvation whereby man forfeits his “opportunity” to deliver himself from a (presumably) “hypothetical fall,” is a grand and god-like scheme to erase Jesus Christ from history. This hypothetical [2] scheme “gifts” the creature with sufficient potential to crown himself king. It attributes to creature-man qualities of character that belong to Jesus Christ ALONE. It exchanges the redemptive glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ for the self-righteous glory of man.

[1] “While covenant theology in the Reformed tradition emerged with Zwingli and Bullinger in the 1520s, the term *foedus operum* (covenant of works) was not used until 1585, by the Puritan Dudley Fenner.⁶ Earlier, in 1562, in his *Summa theologiae*, the German Reformed theologian Zacharias Ursinus had written of a covenant of creation,⁷ so the idea had already been proposed. In the five years after Fenner’s work, a spate of theologians adopted the pre-fall covenant — including Caspar Olevian, Franciscus Junius, Lambert Danaeu, and Amandus Polanus.⁸ By 1590, it was common. However, it was by no means universally taught at this time. Bucanus’s *Institutiones theologiae* (1602) does not mention it. Some at the Assembly were hesitant about it and even opposed it.⁹ No confessional

document prior to the Assembly had adopted it.

Neither in his Genesis commentary nor in the Institutes does Calvin describe the condition of Adam before the fall as covenantal, still less as a covenant of works. Peter Lillback argues that all the ingredients for such a view are present in Calvin, and that he has an inchoate (just begun) covenant of works, but I prefer the word incipient (about to begin), since, while the elements for such a covenant are present, the formulation itself is not.¹⁰ (Robert Letham, *The Westminster Assembly*, p. 227).

Notes

6. Fenner, *Sacra theologia*.

7. A. Lang, ed., *Der Heidelberger Katechismus und vier verwandte Katechismen* (Leipzig: Deichert, 1967), 153, 156.

8. Caspar Olevian, *De substantia foederis gratuiti inter Deum et electos* (Geneva, 1585), 12-13, 48, 62-63, 90, 251-55, 270; Amandas Polanus, *Partitiones theologiae* (Basel, 1607), 152-53; Junius, *Opera theologica*, 1:1659-62.

In chapter 12, we shall see that Thomas Gataker and Richard Vines indicated their opposition to it.

9. P.A. Lillback, *The Binding of God: Calvin's Role in the Development of Covenant Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2001), 276-304.

[2] A possible objection to the hypothetical nature of this Christ-denying covenant of works might be:

“et suppositio nil ponit in esse” (i.e., a supposition puts nothing in being).

The objector here implying that since this supposition puts nothing into being it cannot legitimately put Paul's Galatians 1:8-9 anathema into being. This so-called “covenant of works” is salvation by works; it is salvation by the work of creature-man; it is of antichrist. It supposes “salvation” or “deliverance” by the works and efforts of man from a “hypothetical fall.” What IS “put in being” in this hypothetical attempt to erase Jesus Christ from Redemptive History is mans’ “god-like” potential. A bit more:

While God-hater Charles Hodge's supposition that it was possible for

Jesus Christ to sin did not put Christ's "actual sinning" into being, it did "put in being" what kind of Being Hodge believed Christ to be (e.g., a peccable being; an idol of Hodge's own Christ-hating imagination). Similarly, a "covenant of works" supposition DOES "put in being" what kind of Being one thinks the Triune God to be and also what kind of being one thinks man to be.

Further observations of one of the more aquiline-eyed unbelievers that I am aware of.

“...we immediately fly off to carnal dreams and depraved fictions, and so by our vanity corrupt heavenly truth. This far, indeed, we differ from each other, in that every one appropriates to himself some peculiar error; but we are all alike in this, that we substitute monstrous fictions for the one living and true God — a disease not confined to obtuse and vulgar minds, but affecting the noblest, and those who, in other respects, are singularly acute. How lavishly in this respect have the whole body of philosophers betrayed their stupidity and want of sense? To say nothing of the others whose absurdities are of a still grosser description, how completely does Plato, the soberest and most religious of them all, lose himself in his round globe?[8] What must be the case with the rest, when the leaders, who ought to have set them an example, commit such blunders, and labour under such hallucinations? In like manner, while the government of the world places the doctrine of providence beyond dispute, the practical result is the same as if it were believed that all things were carried hither and thither at the caprice of chance; so prone are we to vanity and error. I am still referring to the most distinguished of the philosophers, and not to the common herd, whose madness in profaning the truth of God exceeds all bounds” (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.5.11).

[8] Plato in *Timaeos*. See also [Cicero] *De Nat. Deorum*. lib.i; [Plutarch] *De Philos Placitis*, lib. i.

John Calvin on the writings of certain philosophers.

“I deny not, indeed, that in the writings of philosophers we meet occasionally with shrewd and apposite remarks on the nature of God, though they invariably savour somewhat of giddy imagination. As observed above, the Lord has bestowed on them some slight perception of his Godhead that they might not plead ignorance as an excuse for their impiety, and has, at times, instigated them to deliver some truths, the confession of which should be their own condemnation. Still, though seeing, they saw not. Their discernment was not such as to direct them to the truth, far less to enable them to attain it, but resembled that of the bewildered traveller, who sees the flash of lightning glance far and wide for a moment, and then vanish into the darkness of the night, before he can advance a single step. So far is such assistance from enabling him to find the right path. Besides, how many monstrous falsehoods intermingle with those minute particles of truth scattered up and down in their writings as if by chance” (John Calvin, Institutes, 2.2.18).

John Calvin's writings (e.g., Bible commentaries, Institutes) are loaded with many shrewd, apposite, astute, and perspicacious remarks. Calvin's writings also contain monstrous falsehoods intermingled. Here is one such falsehood:

"In this upright state, man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life. It were here unseasonable to introduce the question concerning the secret predestination of God, because we are not considering what might or might not happen, but what the nature of man truly was. Adam, therefore, might have stood if he chose, since it was only by his own will that he fell; but it was because his will was pliable in either directions and he had not received constancy to persevere, that he so easily fell. Still he had a free choice of good and evil; and not only so, but in the mind and will there was the highest rectitude, and all the organic parts were duly framed to obedience, until man corrupted its good properties, and destroyed himself" (John Calvin, Institutes, 1.15.8).

Here are some insidious implications for Calvin's statement that "man possessed freedom of will, by which, if he chose, he was able to obtain eternal life."

"... if he chose, [man] was able to" usurp the throne of Christ and crown himself king by meriting eternal life and blessedness for himself and his posterity.

"... if he chose, [man] was able to" to receive power and riches and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and blessing (cf. Revelation 5:12).

"... if he chose, [man] was able to" obtain the SAME GLORY as Jesus Christ and thus profane and cheapen the absolute uniqueness and exclusivity of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ for His people.

John Calvin (considered by many to be a “theologian par excellence”) puts forth a curious view of “preservation.” By Calvin’s blinkered lights there are vestiges of the true church under the rubble of the Roman Catholic Whore.

“Still, as in ancient times, there remained among the Jews certain special privileges of a Church, so in the present day we deny not to the Papists those vestiges of a Church which the Lord has allowed to remain among them amid the dissipation. When the Lord had once made his covenant with the Jews, it was preserved not so much by them as by its own strength, supported by which it withstood their impiety. Such, then, is the certainty and constancy of the divine goodness, that the covenant of the Lord continued there, and his faith could not be obliterated by their perfidy; nor could circumcision be so profaned by their impure hands as not still to be a true sign and sacrament of his covenant. Hence the children who were born to them the Lord called his own, (Ezek. 16: 20,) though, unless by special blessing, they in no respect belonged to him. So having deposited his covenant in Gaul, Italy, Germany, Spain, and England, when these countries were oppressed by the tyranny of Antichrist, He, in order that his covenant might remain inviolable, first preserved baptism there as an evidence of the covenant; – baptism, which, consecrated by his lips, retains its power in spite of human depravity; secondly, He provided by his providence that there should be other remains also to prevent the Church from utterly perishing. But as in pulling down buildings the foundations and ruins are often permitted to remain, so he did not suffer Antichrist either to subvert his Church from its foundation, or to level it with the ground, (though, to punish the ingratitude of men who had despised his word, he allowed a fearful shaking and dismembering to take place,) but was pleased that amid the devastation the edifice should remain, though half in ruins” (Institutes, 4.2.11).

So God has preserved his church within Rome, even under the tyranny of the Antichrist? That’s Calvin’s idea of preservation? For Calvin baptism is the foundation and edifice that remains in the Romish church “though half in ruins.” Calvin’s metaphor vividly describes the “shaking and dismembering” of the Romish Whore. Now where did all the pieces go? They ran off to form smaller Synagogues. The Romish church is the Mother of harlots and her schismatic daughters have run away.

Also, I was thinking of the strong language that Calvin uses to describe the Mass:

“Their principal bond of communion is undoubtedly in the Mass, which we abominate as the greatest sacrilege” (Institutes, 4.2.9.).

Calvin (who believed that the precious, propitiatory blood of Christ was shed for those in hell) has the hypocritical audacity to call the Roman Catholic Mass the “greatest sacrilege”? Calvin did not believe that his damnable view of the atonement should be abominated as the greatest sacrilege. The Romish Mass and John Calvin’s version of universal atonement were both a Christ-dishonoring, propitiatory blood-despising sacrilege. More from Calvin:

“The sound elements do not make the corrupted church a true church. Therefore while we are unwilling simply to concede the name of Church to the Papists we do not deny that there are churches among them. The question we raise only relates to the true and legitimate constitution of the Church, implying communion in sacred rites, which are the signs of profession, and especially in doctrine. Daniel and Paul foretold that Antichrist would sit in the temple of God, (Dan. 9: 27; 2 Thess. 2: 4;) we regard the Roman Pontiff as the leader and standard-bearer of that wicked and abominable kingdom. By placing his seat in the temple of God, it is intimated that his kingdom would not be such as to destroy the name either of Christ or of his Church. Hence, then, it is obvious, that we do not at all deny that churches remain under his tyranny; churches, however, which by sacrilegious impiety he has profaned, by cruel domination has oppressed, by evil and deadly doctrines like poisoned potions has corrupted and almost slain; churches where Christ lies half-buried, the gospel is suppressed, piety is put to flight, and the worship of God almost abolished; [note the word “almost.”—CD] where, in short, all things are in such disorder as to present the appearance of Babylon rather than the holy city of God. In one word, I call them churches, inasmuch as the Lord there wondrously preserves some remains of his people, though miserably torn and scattered, and inasmuch as some

symbols [namely baptism–CD] of the Church still remain – symbols especially whose efficacy neither the craft of the devil nor human depravity can destroy. But as, on the other hand, those marks to which we ought especially to have respect in this discussion are effaced, I say that the whole body, as well as every single assembly, want the form of a legitimate Church (Institutes, 4.2.12).

Here we see that Calvin was confusing the Great Whore with the Virgin Bride of Christ, the Synagogues of Satan with the True Church. The god of this age has blinded Calvin's mind so that the brightness of the gospel of the glory of Christ should not dawn on him (2 Corinthians 4:4). It was due to this blindness that he was not able to discern the Virgin Spouse of Jesus Christ from the Mother of Confusion. This is why he imprudently embraced the harlot instead of the chaste spouse. Put another way, he was embracing the children of Satan as his spiritual brethren instead of the children of God. John Calvin was indeed a Reformer. The Whore was to be REFORMED. Calvin tried to reform her rather than to come out of her (2 Corinthians 6:14-18; Revelation 18:1-5).