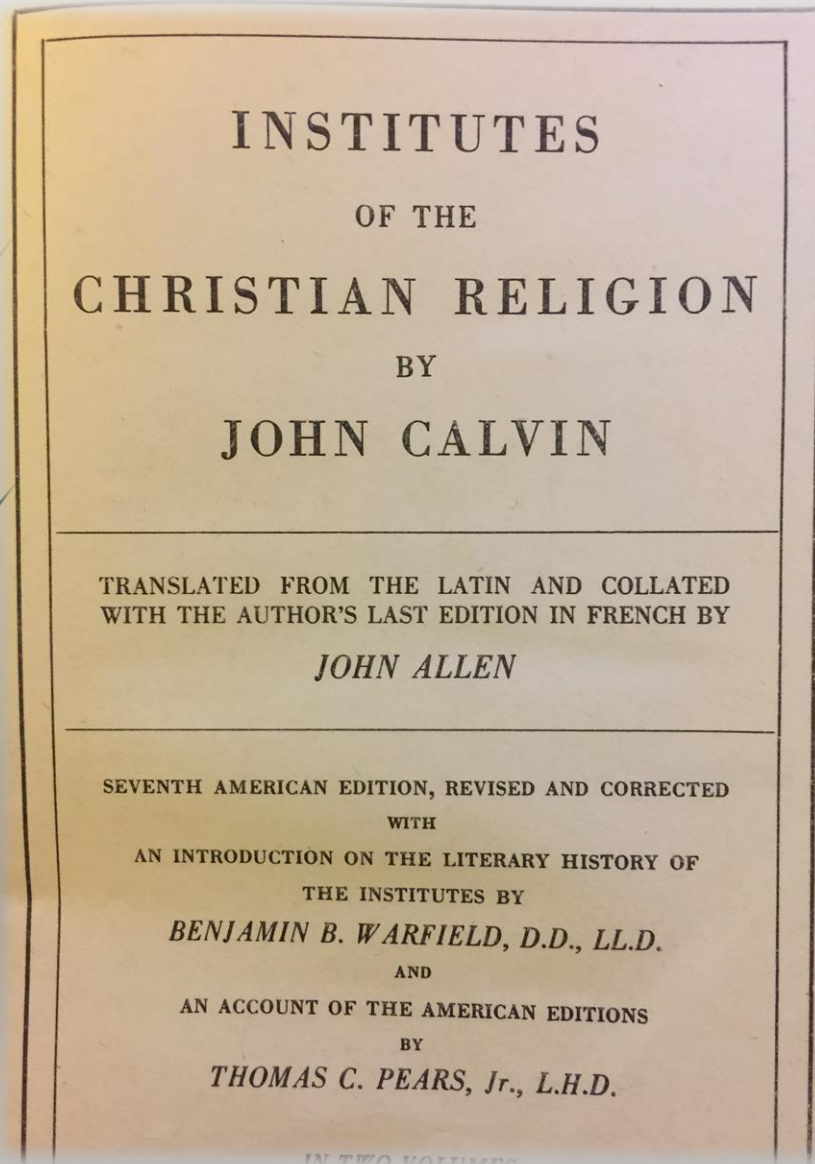


JOHN CALVIN: HIS DOCTRINE OF PROVIDENCE

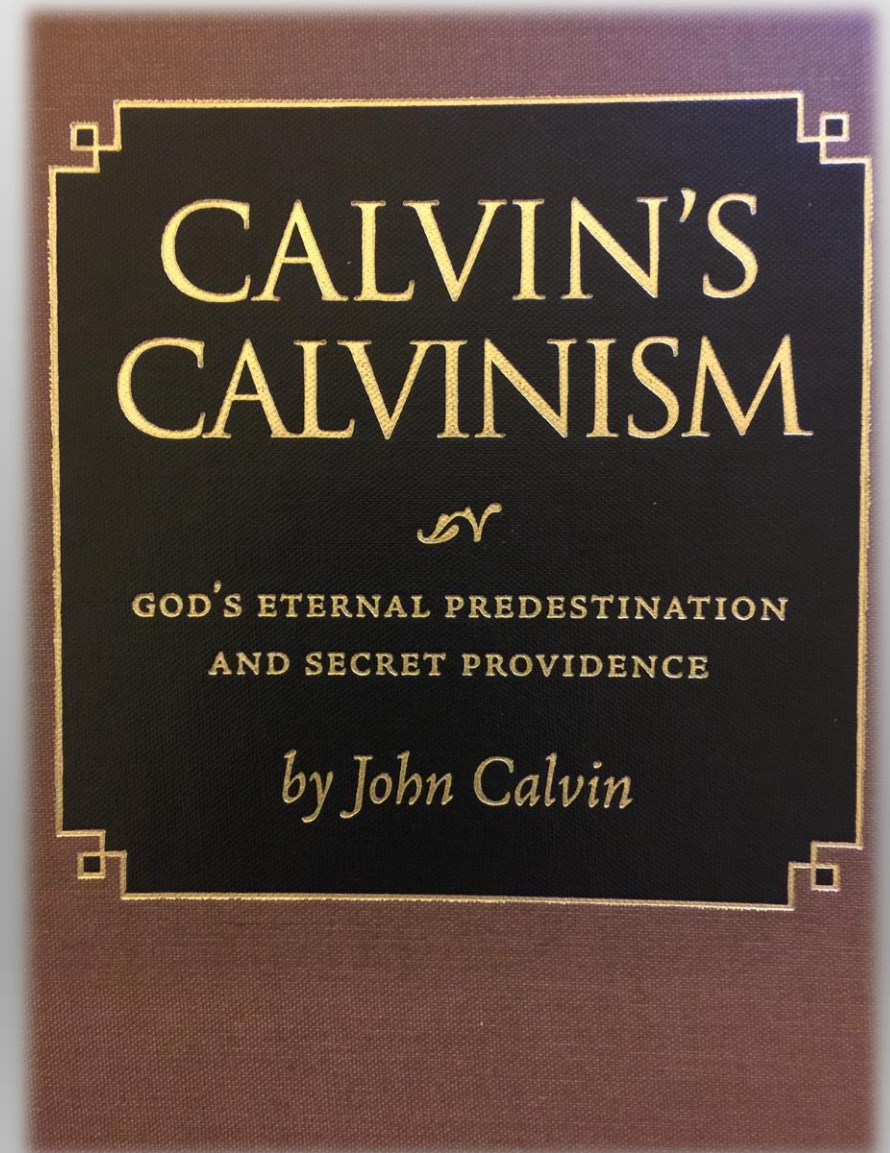


*"...GOD AT LAST
TURNED MY COURSE IN
ANOTHER DIRECTION
BY THE SECRET REIN
OF HIS PROVIDENCE..."*

**INSTITUTES BOOK I
CHAPTERS 16-18**



**CALVIN'S CALVINISM
PAGES 171-203**



I. THE IDEA OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD ACCORDING TO CALVIN

PROVIDENCE FOLLOWS CREATION

“WHEN [FAITH] HAS LEARNED THAT [GOD] IS THE CREATOR OF ALL THINGS, IT SHOULD IMMEDIATELY CONCLUDE THAT HE IS ALSO THEIR PERPETUAL GOVERNOR AND PRESERVER; AND THAT NOT ONLY BY A CERTAIN UNIVERSAL MOTION, ACTUATING THE WHOLE MACHINE OF THE WORLD, AND ALL ITS RESPECTIVE PARTS, BUT BY A PARTICULAR PROVIDENCE SUSTAINING, NOURISHING, AND PROVIDING FOR EVERYTHING WHICH HE HAS MADE.”

I. THE IDEA OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD ACCORDING TO CALVIN

PROVIDENCE, NOT CHANCE!

“IF ANY ONE FALLS INTO THE HANDS OF ROBBERS, OR MEETS WITH WILD BEASTS; IF BY A SUDDEN STORM HE IS SHIPWRECKED ON THE OCEAN; IF HE IS KILLED BY THE FALL OF A HOUSE OR A TREE...CARNAL REASON WILL ASCRIBE ALL THESE OCCURRENCES, BOTH PROSPEROUS AND ADVERSE, TO FORTUNE. BUT WHOEVER HAS BEEN TAUGHT FROM THE MOUTH OF CHRIST, THAT THE HAIRS OF HIS HEAD ARE ALL NUMBERED, WILL SEEK FURTHER FOR A CAUSE, AND CONCLUDE THAT ALL EVENTS ARE GOVERNED BY THE SECRET COUNSEL OF GOD.”

“IT WAS TRULY OBSERVED BY BASIL THE GREAT, THAT *FORTUNE* AND *CHANCE* ARE WORDS OF THE HEATHEN.”

“NOT THAT WE SUPPOSE FORTUNE HOLDS ANY DOMINION OVER THE WORLD AND MANKIND, AND WHIRLS ABOUT ALL THINGS AT RANDOM... BUT BECAUSE THE ORDER, REASON, END, AND NECESSITY OF EVENTS ARE CHIEFLY CONCEALED IN THE PURPOSE OF GOD, AND NOT COMPREHENDED BY THE MIND OF MAN.”

I. THE IDEA OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD ACCORDING TO CALVIN

PROVIDENCE, NOT FATE!

“WE DO NOT, WITH THE STOICS, IMAGINE A NECESSITY ARISING FROM A PERPETUAL CONCATENATION AND INTRICATE SERIES OF CAUSES, CONTAINED IN NATURE...”

“...BUT WE MAKE GOD THE ARBITER AND GOVERNOR OF ALL THINGS, WHO, IN HIS OWN WISDOM, HAS, FROM THE REMOTEST ETERNITY, DECREED WHAT HE WOULD DO, AND NOW, BY HIS OWN POWER, EXECUTES WHAT HE HAS DECREED.”

I. THE IDEA OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD ACCORDING TO CALVIN

PROVIDENCE, NOT MERE FORESIGHT!

“HE IS ACCOUNTED OMNIPOTENT, NOT BECAUSE HE IS ABLE TO ACT, YET SITS DOWN IN IDLENESS... BUT BECAUSE HE GOVERNS HEAVEN AND EARTH BY HIS PROVIDENCE, AND REGULATES ALL THINGS IN SUCH A MANNER THAT NOTHING HAPPENS BUT ACCORDING TO HIS COUNSEL.”

“...WHAT IS CALLED PROVIDENCE DESCRIBES GOD, NOT AS IDLY BEHOLDING FROM HEAVEN THE TRANSACTIONS WHICH HAPPEN IN THE WORLD, BUT AS HOLDING THE HELM OF THE UNIVERSE...”

“PROVIDENCE CONSISTS IN ACTION; FOR IT IS IGNORANT TRIFLING TO TALK OF MERE PRESCIENCE.”

I. THE IDEA OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD ACCORDING TO CALVIN

THE GIFTS OF PROVIDENCE AND THE FAVOR OF GOD

GOD “FREQUENTLY DECLARES, THAT WHENEVER HE MOISTENS THE EARTH WITH DEW OR WITH RAIN, HE AFFORDS A TESTIMONY OF HIS FAVOUR.”

DAVID ENGELSMA: “THERE CAN BE SOME QUESTION HOW CALVIN UNDERSTOOD THIS FATHERLY CARE OF CREATION. THERE ARE EXPRESSIONS IN CALVIN THAT LEAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE IS A CERTAIN FAVORABLE CARE OF GOD FOR EVERY CREATURE, INCLUDING REPROBATE MEN, SO THAT THE GOOD GIFTS OF PROVIDENCE ARE BLESSINGS FOR REPROBATE MEN” (*THE REFORMED FAITH OF JOHN CALVIN: THE INSTITUTES IN SUMMARY*, p. 110)

DAVID ENGELSMA: “THE FAVOR OF GOD IS UPON THE CREATION ORGANICALLY, NOT UPON EACH CREATURE INDIVIDUALLY (CERTAINLY SATAN IS EXCLUDED). AND THE DIVINE BLESSING OF PROVIDENCE IS *IN CHRIST* AND, THEREFORE, UPON THE ELECT ONLY WHO ARE IN CHRIST. THE CURSE AND JUDGMENT OF PROVIDENCE, WHICH CALVIN ALSO RECOGNIZES, ARE FOR ALL THOSE OUTSIDE OF CHRIST” (p. 111)

II. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AND EVIL ACCORDING TO CALVIN

SOVEREIGN OVER SIN, BUT NOT THE AUTHOR OF SIN

“A QUESTION OF GREATER DIFFICULTY ARISES FROM OTHER PASSAGES, WHERE GOD IS SAID TO INCLINE OR DRAW, ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PLEASURE, SATAN HIMSELF AND ALL THE REPROBATE. FOR THE CARNAL UNDERSTANDING SCARCELY COMPREHENDS HOW HE, ACTING BY THEIR MEANS, CONTRACTS NO DEFILEMENT FROM THEIR CRIMINALITY, AND, EVEN IN OPERATIONS COMMON TO HIMSELF AND THEM, IS FREE FROM EVERY FAULT, AND YET RIGHTEOUSLY CONDEMNS THOSE WHOSE MINISTRY HE USES.”

IT IS ABSURD “INSTEAD OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD, TO SUBSTITUTE A BARE PERMISSION; AS THOUGH GOD WERE SITTING IN A WATCHTOWER, EXPECTING FORTUITOUS EVENTS, AND SO HIS DECISIONS WERE DEPENDENT ON THE WILL OF MEN.”

“AND WHENCE, I ASK, PROCEEDS THE FETID SMELL OF A CARCASS, WHICH HAS BEEN PUTREFIED AND DISCLOSED BY THE HEAT OF THE SUN? IT IS VISIBLE TO ALL THAT IT IS EXCITED BY THE SOLAR RAYS; YET NO PERSON ON THIS ACCOUNT ATTRIBUTES TO THOSE RAYS AN OFFENSIVE SMELL. SO, WHEN THE MATTER AND GUILT OF EVIL RESIDES IN A BAD MAN, WHY SHOULD GOD BE SUPPOSED TO CONTRACT ANY DEFILEMENT, IF HE USES HIS SERVICE ACCORDING TO HIS OWN PLEASURE? LET US DISMISS THIS PETULANCE, THEREFORE, WHICH MAY RAIL AGAINST THE JUSTICE OF GOD FROM A DISTANCE, BUT CAN NEVER REACH THAT DIVINE ATTRIBUTE”

II. THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD AND EVIL ACCORDING TO CALVIN

SOVEREIGN OVER ALL EVILS, OUR GREAT COMFORT!

“HUMAN LIFE IS BESET BY INNUMERABLE EVILS, AND THREATENED WITH A THOUSAND DEATHS. NOT TO GO BEYOND OURSELVES – SINCE OUR BODY IS THE RECEPTACLE OF A THOUSAND DISEASES, AND EVEN CONTAINS AND FOSTERS THE CAUSES OF DISEASES, A MAN MUST UNAVOIDABLY CARRY ABOUT WITH HIM DESTRUCTION IN UNNUMBERED FORMS, AND PROTRACT A LIFE WHICH IS, AS IT WERE, INVOLVED IN DEATH...NOW, WITHERSOEVER YOU TURN, ALL THE OBJECTS AROUND YOU ARE NOT ONLY UNWORTHY OF YOUR CONFIDENCE, BUT ALMOST OPENLY MENACE YOU, AND SEEM TO THREATEN IMMEDIATE DEATH”

“THE NECESSARY CONSEQUENCES OF THIS KNOWLEDGE [OF GOD’S PROVIDENCE] ARE, GRATITUDE IN PROSPERITY, PATIENCE IN ADVERSITY, AND A WONDERFUL SECURITY RESPECTING THE FUTURE”

“FINALLY, TO DWELL NO LONGER ON THIS PART OF THE SUBJECT, YOU WILL EASILY PERCEIVE, ON EXAMINATION, THAT IGNORANCE OF PROVIDENCE IS THE GREATEST OF MISERIES, BUT THAT THE KNOWLEDGE OF IT IS ATTENDED WITH THE HIGHEST FELICITY”

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

CALVIN STOOD FIRMLY ON THE WORD OF GOD.

CALVIN STOOD FIRMLY ON THE TRUTH THAT GOD SOVEREIGNLY RULES ALL THINGS, EVEN THE EVILS OF LIFE AND THE SINS OF MEN.

CALVIN STOOD FIRMLY ON THE TRUTH THAT DELIVERS FROM WORRY AND FEAR AND GIVES PEACE OF MIND THAT GOD OUR FATHER IS IN CONTROL.

CALVIN STOOD FIRMLY ON THE TRUTH THAT GIVES ALL GLORY TO GOD.

THE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCHES IN AMERICA AND IN THE PHILIPPINES STAND WITH CALVIN.

WHERE DO YOU STAND?!



“BUT AS FOR YOU, YE THOUGHT EVIL AGAINST ME; BUT GOD MEANT IT UNTO GOOD, TO BRING TO PASS, AS IT IS THIS DAY, TO SAVE MUCH PEOPLE ALIVE” (GENESIS 50:20).

“AND THE LORD SAID UNTO MOSES, WHEN THOU GOEST TO RETURN INTO EGYPT, SEE THAT THOU DO ALL THOSE WONDERS BEFORE PHARAOH, WHICH I HAVE PUT IN THINE HAND: BUT I WILL HARDEN HIS HEART, THAT HE SHALL NOT LET THE PEOPLE GO” (EXODUS 4:21).

“THE LORD GAVE, AND THE LORD HATH TAKEN AWAY; BLESSED BE THE NAME OF THE LORD!” (JOB 1:21).

AND AGAIN THE ANGER OF THE LORD WAS KINDLED AGAINST ISRAEL, AND HE MOVED DAVID AGAINST THEM TO SAY, GO, NUMBER ISRAEL AND JUDAH” (II SAMUEL 24:1).

“THESE ALL WAIT UPON THEE; THAT THOU MAYEST GIVE THEM THEIR MEAT IN DUE SEASON. THAT THOU GIVEST THEM THEY GATHER: THOU OPENEST THINE HAND, THEY ARE FILLED WITH GOOD” (PSALM 104:27-28).

“I FORM THE LIGHT, AND CREATE DARKNESS: I MAKE PEACE, AND CREATE EVIL: I THE LORD DO ALL THESE THINGS” (ISAIAH 45:7).

“ARE NOT TWO SPARROWS SOLD FOR A FARTHING? AND ONE OF THEM SHALL NOT FALL ON THE GROUND WITHOUT YOUR FATHER. BUT THE VERY HAIRS OF YOUR HEAD ARE ALL NUMBERED. FEAR YE NOT THEREFORE, YE ARE OF MORE VALUE THAN MANY SPARROWS” (MATTHEW 10:29-31).

“FOR OF A TRUTH AGAINST THY HOLY CHILD JESUS, WHOM THOU HAST ANOINTED, BOTH HEROD, AND PONTIUS PILATE, WITH THE GENTILES, AND THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, WERE GATHERED TOGETHER, FOR TO DO WHATSOEVER THY HAND AND THY COUNSEL DETERMINED BEFORE TO BE DONE” (ACTS 4:27-28).