

One of Calvin's Most Blighting Beliefs

This doctrine of Predestination, so terrible in its logical issues and in the practical result of making men reject or abandon Christianity, is commonly associated with the teaching of Calvin. When people talk of Calvinism, they generally mean, or specially include, Predestination. And yet it is quite certain that Calvin did not originate it, but adopted it from Zwingli and Luther.¹

Nevertheless, history has been just in attaching this doctrine specially to the name of Calvin. More than any other teacher, he has caused this doctrine to be, until the present generation, a dominating influence among Protestants. We may reasonably conjecture that, if there had been no Calvin, one of the most blighting beliefs that has ever been supposed to be part of the Christian faith, would have either fallen out of men's minds altogether or would have been confined to very few.

Luther does not place it in the foreground of his teaching; and if it had been left where Zwingli left it, it would never have attained such general and lasting approval among Protestants. It was Calvin who secured this for it.

(The Continental Reformation in Germany, France and Switzerland: From the Birth of Luther to the Death of Calvin by Alfred Plummer, London: Robert Scott Roxburgh House, MCMXII, 150-151, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)

¹ It is remarkable that the denial of man's freedom to will and to act should have been held so firmly by leaders whose wills were so masterful, and whose actions were so vigorous, as in the case of all three, and especially of Luther and Calvin.