

Lecture 17-Predestination (I)**Prayer**

Grant, Almighty God, that as Thou hast been pleased to adopt us once for all as Thy people to this end, that we might be engrafted as it were into the body of Thy Son and so be made conformable to our Head; O, grant, that through our whole life we may strive to seal in our hearts the faith of our election that we may be the more stimulated to render Thee true obedience, and that Thy glory may also be made known through us. And those others also whom thou hast chosen together with us, may we labor to bring with us that we may with one accord celebrate Thee as the author of our salvation and so ascribe to Thee the glory of Thy goodness and having cast away and renounced all confidence in our own virtue, we may be led to Christ as the only fountain of Thy election, in whom also is set before us the certainty of our salvation through Thy Gospel until we shall at length be gathered with Him into that eternal glory which He has procured for us by His own blood. Amen.

Predestination (I)

I. History of the Doctrine

- A. Not original with Calvin: other Reformers
- B. Augustine
- C. Biblical teaching
- D. In the *Institutes*

II. Location in *Institutes*

- A. Book 3, 21-24
- B. 1559 edition: Calvin separated providence and predestination (*See diagram of various editions of the Institutes*).

III. Function:

“...predestination is a long way from being the centre of Calvinism; much rather it is the last consequence of faith in the grace of Christ in the presence of the enigmas of experience” (Wernle, quoted by Wendel, p. 265).

A. Completes salvation

- 1. Salvation is completely of God (“When you teach free grace, absolutely free grace, and mean it, you are a predestinarian” [Warfield])
- 2. Predestination is understood by faith (“Election precedes faith as to its divine order, but is understood by faith...” [*On the Eternal Predestination of God*, p. 133])
- 3. Answers the question: “Where did my faith come from?”

B. Explains experience

IV. Description

A. Definitions (3, 21, 5-7): absolute, particular, double.

1. Election

- a. God is the author
- b. Eternal decree
- c. Focuses on the individual
- d. Double election (3, 21, 6)

1) General election of the people of Israel

- a) “A kind of middle way...” (3, 21, 7)
 - b) “...to those with whom God makes a covenant, he does not at once (Latin: *protinus*) give the spirit of regeneration that would enable them to persevere in the covenant to the very end” (3, 21, 7)
- (1) Battles: “at once”

(2) Hoekema: "invariably" (Anthony A. Hoekema, "The Covenant of Grace in Calvin's Teaching," *Calvin Theological Journal*, Nov. 1967)

2) Secret election

- a) "A second, more limited degree of election" (3, 21, 5)
- b) God was "continually gathering his church from Abraham's children rather than from profane nations" (3, 21, 7)
- c) Now that Christ has come, "the adoption has been extended to all nations" (*Commentary on Luke 1:55*)

2. Reprobation

- a. God is the author
- b. Eternal decree
- c. Individual