

Calvinism's Surprising Catholic Connection – By Dave Hunt



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THERE IS NO QUESTION that Calvin imposed upon the Bible certain erroneous interpretations from his Roman [Catholic](#) background. Many leading Calvinists agree that the writings of Augustine were the actual source of most of what is known as [Calvinism](#) today. Calvinists David Steele and Curtis Thomas point out that "The basic doctrines of the Calvinistic position had been vigorously defended by Augustine against Pelagius during the fifth century."¹

In his eye-opening book, *The Other Side of [Calvinism](#)*, Laurence M. Vance thoroughly documents that "John Calvin did not originate the doctrines that bear his name...."² Vance quotes numerous well-known Calvinists to this effect. For example, Kenneth G. Talbot and W. Gary Crampton write, "The system of doctrine which bears the name of John Calvin was in no way originated by him...."³ B. B. Warfield declared, "The system of doctrine taught by Calvin is just the Augustinianism common to the whole body of the Reformers."⁴ Thus the debt that the creeds coming out of the Reformation owe to Augustine is also acknowledged. This is not surprising in view of the fact that most of the Reformers had been part of the Roman [Catholic](#) Church, of which Augustine was one of the most highly regarded "saints." John Piper acknowledges that Augustine was the major influence upon both Calvin and Luther, who continued to revere him and his doctrines even after they broke away from Roman [Catholicism](#).⁵

C. H. Spurgeon admitted that "perhaps Calvin himself derived it [[Calvinism](#)] mainly from the writings of Augustine."⁶ Alvin L. Baker wrote, "There is hardly a doctrine of Calvin that does not bear the marks of Augustine's influence."⁷ For example, the following from Augustine sounds like an echo reverberating through the writings of Calvin:

Even as he has appointed them to be regenerated...whom he predestinated to everlasting life, as the most merciful bestower of grace, whilst to those whom he has predestinated to eternal death, he is also the most righteous awarder of punishment.⁸

C. Gregg Singer said, "The main features of Calvin's theology are found in the writings of St. Augustine to such an extent that many theologians regard

[Calvinism](#) as a more fully developed form of Augustinianism.”⁹ Such statements are staggering declarations in view of the undisputed fact that, as Vance points out, the Roman [Catholic](#) Church itself has a better claim on Augustine than do the Calvinists.¹⁰ Calvin himself said:

Augustine is so wholly with me, that if I wished to write a confession of my faith, I could do so with all fulness and satisfaction to myself out of his writings.¹¹

Augustine and the Use of Force

The fourth century Donatists believed that the church should be a pure communion of true believers who demonstrated the truth of the gospel in their lives. They abhorred the [apostasy](#) that had come into the church when Constantine wedded Christianity to paganism in order to unify the empire. Compromising clergy were “evil priests working hand in glove with the kings of the earth, who show that they have no king but Caesar.” To the Donatists, the church was a “small body of saved surrounded by the unregenerate mass.”¹² This is, of course, the biblical view.

Augustine, on the other hand, saw the church of his day as a mixture of believers and unbelievers, in which purity and evil should be allowed to exist side by side for the sake of unity. He used the power of the state to compel church attendance (as Calvin also would 1,200 years later): “Whoever was not found within the Church was not asked the reason, but was to be corrected and converted...”¹³ Calvin followed his mentor Augustine in enforcing church attendance and participation in the sacraments by threats (and worse) against the citizens of Geneva. Augustine “identified the Donatists as heretics...who could be subjected to imperial legislation [and force] in exactly the same way as other criminals and misbelievers, including poisoners and pagans.”¹⁴ Frend says of Augustine, “The questing, sensitive youth had become the father of the inquisition.”¹⁵

Though he preferred persuasion if possible, Augustine supported military force against those who were rebaptized as believers after conversion to Christ and for other alleged heretics. In his controversy with the Donatists, using a distorted and un-Christian interpretation of Luke:14:23, ¹⁶ Augustine declared:

Why therefore should not the Church use force in compelling her lost sons to return?... The Lord Himself said, “Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in...” Wherefore is the power which the Church has received...through the religious character and faith of kings...the instrument by which those who are found in the highways and hedges—that is, in heresies and schisms—are compelled to come in, and let them not find fault with being compelled.¹⁷

Sadly, Calvin put into effect in Geneva the very principles of punishment, coercion, and death that Augustine advocated and that the Roman [Catholic](#) Church followed consistently for centuries. Henry H. Milman writes: “Augustinianism was worked up into a still more rigid and uncompromising system by the severe intellect of Calvin.”¹⁸ And he justified himself by

Augustine's erroneous interpretation of Luke:14:23

. How could any who today hail Calvin as a great exegete accept such abuse of this passage?

Compel? Isn't that God's job through Unconditional Election and Irresistible Grace? *Compel* those for whom Christ didn't die and whom God has predestined to eternal torment? This verse refutes [Calvinism](#) no matter how it is interpreted!

Augustine's Dominant Influence

There is no question as to the important role Augustine played in molding Calvin's thinking, theology, and actions. This is particularly true concerning the key foundations of [Calvinism](#). Warfield refers to Calvin and Augustine as "two extraordinarily gifted men [who] tower like pyramids over the scene of history."¹⁹ Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* make repeated favorable references to Augustine, frequently citing his writings as authoritative and using the expression, "Confirmed by the authority of Augustine."²⁰ Calvin often credits Augustine with having formulated key concepts, which he then expounds in his *Institutes*. The following are but a very small sampling of such references:

- "We have come into the way of faith," says Augustine: "Let us constantly adhere to it...."²¹
- The truth of God is too powerful, both here and everywhere, to dread the slanders of the ungodly, as Augustine powerfully maintains.... Augustine disguises not that...he was often charged with preaching the doctrine of predestination too freely, but...he abundantly refutes the charge.... For it has been shrewdly observed by Augustine (De Genesi ad litteram, Lib V) that we can safely follow Scripture....²²
- For Augustine, rightly expounding this passage, says....²³
- I say with Augustine, that the Lord has created those who, as he certainly foreknew, were to go to destruction, and he did so because he so willed.²⁴
- If your mind is troubled, decline not to embrace the counsel of Augustine....²⁵
- I will not hesitate, therefore, simply to confess with Augustine that...those things will certainly happen which he [God] has foreseen [and] that the destruction [of the non-elect] consequent upon predestination is also most just.²⁶
- Augustine, in two passages in particular, gives a [favorable] portraiture of the form of ancient monasticism. [Calvin then proceeds to quote Augustine's commendation of the early monks.]²⁷
- Here the words of Augustine most admirably apply....²⁸
- This is a faithful saying from Augustine; but because his words will

perhaps have more authority than mine, let us adduce the following passage from his treatise....²⁹

- Wherefore, Augustine not undeservedly orders such, as senseless teachers or sinister and ill-omened prophets, to retire from the Church.³⁰

We could multiply many times over the above examples of Augustine's influence upon Calvin from the scores of times Calvin quotes extensively from Augustine's writings. Leading Calvinists admit that Calvin's basic beliefs were already formed while he was still a devout Roman [Catholic](#), through the writings of Augustine—an influence that remained with him throughout his life.

Augustinian teachings that Calvin presented in his *Institutes* included the sovereignty that made God the cause of all (including sin), the predestination of some to [salvation](#) and of others to damnation, election and reprobation, faith as an irresistible gift from God—in fact, the key concepts at the heart of [Calvinism](#).

We search in vain for evidence that Calvin ever disapproved of any of Augustine's heresies. Calvinist Richard A. Muller admits, "John Calvin was part of a long line of thinkers who based their doctrine of predestination on the Augustinian interpretation of St. Paul."³¹ In each expanded edition of his *Institutes*, Calvin quotes and relies upon Augustine more than ever.

Is [Calvinism](#) Really a Protestant Belief?

That many prominent evangelicals today are still under the spell of Augustine is evident—and astonishing, considering his numerous heresies. Norm Geisler has said, "St. Augustine was one of the greatest Christian thinkers of all time."³² Yet Augustine said, "I should not believe the gospel unless I were moved to do so by the authority of the [[Catholic](#)] Church."³³ That statement was quoted with great satisfaction by Pope John Paul II in his 1986 celebration of the 1600th anniversary of Augustine's conversion. The Pope went on to say:

Augustine's legacy...is the theological methods to which he remained absolutely faithful...full adherence to the authority of the faith...revealed through Scripture, Tradition and the Church.... Likewise the profound sense of mystery—"for it is better," he exclaims, "to have a faithful ignorance than a presumptuous knowledge...." I express once again my fervent desire...that the authoritative teaching of such a great doctor and pastor may flourish ever more happily in the Church....³⁴

In my debate with him, James White claims that "Calvin refuted this very passage in *Institutes*, and any fair reading of Augustine's own writings disproves this misrepresentation by Hunt."³⁵ In fact, Calvin acknowledged the authenticity of the statement and attempted to defend it as legitimate reasoning for those who had not the assurance of faith by the Holy Spirit.³⁶

Vance provides numerous astonishing quotations from Calvinists praising Augustine: "One of the greatest theological and philosophical minds that God

has ever so seen fit to give to His church.”³⁷ “The greatest Christian since New Testament times...greatest man that ever wrote Latin.”³⁸ “[His] labors and writings, more than those of any other man in the age in which he lived, contributed to the promotion of sound doctrine and the revival of true religion.”³⁹

Warfield adds, “Augustine determined for all time the doctrine of grace.”⁴⁰ Yet he [Augustine] believed that grace came through the Roman [Catholic](#) sacraments. That Calvinists shower such praise upon Augustine makes it easier to comprehend why they heap the same praise on Calvin.

As for the formation of Roman [Catholicism](#)’s doctrines and practices, Augustine’s influence was the greatest in history. Vance reminds us that Augustine was “one of [Catholicism](#)’s original four ‘Doctors of the Church’ [with] a feast day [dedicated to him] in the [Catholic](#) Church on August 28, the day of his death.”⁴¹ Pope John Paul II has called Augustine “the common father of our Christian civilization.”⁴² William P. Grady, on the other hand, writes, “The deluded Augustine (354–430) went so far as to announce (through his book, *The City of God*?) that Rome had been privileged to usher in the millennial kingdom (otherwise known as the ‘Dark Ages’).”⁴³

Drawing from a Polluted Stream

Sir Robert Anderson reminds us that “the Roman [[Catholic](#)] Church was molded by Augustine into the form it has ever since maintained. Of all the errors that later centuries developed in the teachings of the church, scarcely one cannot be found in embryo in his writings.”⁴⁴ Those errors include infant baptism for regeneration (infants who die unbaptized are damned), the necessity of baptism for the remission of sins (martyrdom, as in [Islam](#), does the same), purgatory, [salvation](#) in the Church alone through its sacraments, and persecution of those who reject [Catholic](#) dogmas. Augustine also fathered acceptance of the Apocrypha (which he admitted even the Jews rejected), allegorical interpretation of the Bible (thus the creation account, the six days, and other details in Genesis are not necessarily literal), and rejection of the literal personal reign of Christ on earth for a thousand years (we are now supposedly in the millennial reign of Christ with the Church reigning and the devil presently bound).

Augustine insists that Satan is now “bound” on the basis that “even now men are, and doubtless to the end of the world shall be, converted to the faith from the unbelief in which he [Satan] held them.” That he views the promised binding of Satan in the “bottomless pit” (Revelation:20:1–3) allegorically is clear. Amazingly, Satan “is bound in each instance in which he is spoiled of one of his goods [i.e., someone believes in Christ].” And even more amazing, “the abyss in which he is shut up” is somehow construed by Augustine to be “in the depths” of Christ-rejecters’ “blind hearts.” It is thus that Satan is continually shut up as in an abyss.⁴⁵

Augustine doesn’t attempt to explain how he arrived at such an astonishing idea, much less how one abyss could exist in millions of hearts or how, being “bound” there, Satan would still be free to blind those within whose “hearts” he is supposedly bound (2 Corinthians:4:4

). Nor does he explain how or why, in spite of Satan's being bound,

- Christ commissioned Paul to turn Jew and Gentile "from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts:26:18)
-)
- Paul could deliver the Corinthian fornicator to Satan (1 Corinthians:5:5)
-)
- Satan can transform himself "into an angel of light" (2 Corinthians:11:14)
-)
- Paul would warn the Ephesian believers not to "give place to the devil" (Ephesians:4:27)
-) and urge them and us today to "stand against the wiles of the devil" (6:11)
- Satan could still be going about "like a roaring lion...seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter:5:8)
-)
- Satan could still be able to continually accuse Christians before God and, with his angels, yet wage war in heaven against "Michael and his angels" and at last be cast out of heaven to earth (Revelation:12:7-10)

Augustine was one of the first to place the authority of tradition on a level with the Bible, and to incorporate much philosophy, especially Platonism, into his theology. Exposing the folly of those who praise Augustine, Vance writes:

He believed in apostolic succession from Peter as one of the marks of the true church, taught that Mary was sinless and promoted her worship. He was the first who defined the so-called sacraments as a visible sign of invisible grace... The memorial of the Lord's supper became that of the spiritual presence of Christ's body and blood. To Augustine the only true church was the [Catholic](#) Church. Writing against the Donatists, he asserted: "The [Catholic](#) Church alone is the body of Christ... Outside this body the Holy Spirit giveth life to no one...[and] he is not a partaker of divine love who is the enemy of unity. Therefore they have not the Holy Ghost who are outside the Church."⁴⁶

And this is the man whom Geisler calls "one of the greatest Christian thinkers of all time." On the contrary, Calvin drew from a badly polluted stream when he embraced the teachings of Augustine! How could one dip into such contaminating heresy without becoming confused and infected? Yet this bewildering muddle of speculation and formative Roman [Catholicism](#) is acknowledged to be the source of [Calvinism](#)—and is praised by leading evangelicals. One comes away dumbfounded at the acclaim heaped upon both Calvin and Augustine by otherwise sound Christian leaders.

An Amazing Contradiction

Calvin's almost complete agreement with and repeated praise of Augustine cannot be denied. Calvin called himself "an Augustinian theologian."⁴⁷ Of Augustine he said, "whom we quote frequently, as being the best and most faithful witness of all antiquity."⁴⁸

Calvinists themselves insist upon the connection between Calvin and Augustine. McGrath writes, "Above all, Calvin regarded his thought as a faithful exposition of the leading ideas of Augustine of Hippo."⁴⁹ Wendel concedes, "Upon points of doctrine he borrows from St. Augustine with both hands."⁵⁰ Vance writes:

Howbeit, to prove conclusively that Calvin was a disciple of Augustine, we need look no further than Calvin himself. One can't read five pages in Calvin's *Institutes* without seeing the name of Augustine. Calvin quotes Augustine over four hundred times in the *Institutes* alone. He called Augustine by such titles as "holy man" and "holy father."⁵¹

As Vance further points out, "Calvinists admit that Calvin was heavily influenced by Augustine in forming his doctrine of predestination."⁵² How could one of the leaders of the Reformation embrace so fully the doctrines of one who has been called the "principal theological creator of the Latin-[Catholic](#) system as distinct from...Evangelical Protestantism..."?⁵³

Calvin's admiration of Augustine and his embracing of much of his teaching is only one of several major contradictions in his life, which will be fully documented in this book. The situation is contradictory on the Roman [Catholic](#) side as well. Their dogmas reject some of the most important doctrines held by the most famous of their saints—the very Augustinian doctrines that Calvin embraced.

Here we confront a strange anomaly. Warfield declares that "it is Augustine who gave us the Reformation"⁵⁴—yet at the same time, he also acknowledges that Augustine was "in a true sense the founder of Roman [Catholicism](#)"⁵⁵ and "the creator of the Holy Roman Empire."⁵⁶

Strangely, Calvin apparently failed to recognize that Augustine never understood [salvation](#) by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Philip F. Congdon writes, "Another curious parallel is evident between Classical Calvinist theology and Roman [Catholic](#) theology. The two share an inclusion of works in the gospel message, and an impossibility of assurance of [salvation](#).... Both hold to the primacy of God's grace; both include the necessity of our works."⁵⁷ Augustine's heresies, especially his Romanist view of faith in Christ being supplemented by good works and the sacraments, were not lost on Luther, who wrote: "In the beginning, I devoured Augustine, but when...I knew what justification by faith really was, then it was out with him."⁵⁸

Yet leading Calvinists suggest that I side with Roman [Catholicism](#) by rejecting [Calvinism](#), even though it comes largely from the ultimate Roman [Catholic](#), Augustine. Here is how one writer expressed it to me:

And given that the position you espouse is, in fact, utterly opposed to the

very heart of the message of the Reformers, and is instead in line with Rome's view of man's will and the nature of grace, I find it *tremendously* inconsistent on your part. You speak often of opposing the traditions of men, yet, in this case, you embrace the very traditions that lie at the heart of Rome's "gospel."⁵⁹

On the contrary, the Reformers and their creeds are infected with ideas that came from the greatest Roman [Catholic](#), Augustine himself. Furthermore, a rejection of Election, Predestination, and the Preservation of the Saints as defined by Calvinists is hardly embracing "the heart of Rome's 'gospel.'" The real heart of Rome's gospel is good works and sacraments. Certainly Calvin's retention of sacramentalism, baptismal regeneration for infants, and honoring the Roman [Catholic](#) priesthood as valid is a more serious embrace of [Catholicism](#)'s false gospel. The rejection of [Calvinism](#) requires no agreement with Rome whatsoever on any part of its heretical doctrines of [salvation](#).

It seems incomprehensible that the predominant influence upon Reformed theology and creeds could be so closely related to the very Roman [Catholicism](#) against which the Reformers rebelled. Yet those who fail to bow to these creeds are allegedly "in error." How the Protestant creeds came to be dominated by Calvinistic doctrine is an interesting story.

The Role of the Latin Vulgate

Along with the writings of Augustine, the Latin Vulgate also molded Calvin's thoughts as expressed in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Fluent in Latin, Calvin had long used that corrupted translation of the Bible, which, since its composition by Jerome at the beginning of the fifth century, was the official Bible of Roman Catholics. It was again so declared by the Council of Trent in 1546, when Calvin was 37 years of age. More than that, its influence reached into the Protestant movement: "For one thousand years the Vulgate was practically the only Bible known and read in Western Europe. All commentaries were based upon the Vulgate text... Preachers based their sermons on it."⁶⁰

The Vulgate was permeated with Augustinian views on predestination and the rejection of free will. According to Philip Schaff, "The Vulgate can be charged, indeed, with innumerable faults, inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and arbitrary dealing in particulars."⁶¹ Others have expressed the same opinion. Samuel Fisk quotes Samuel Berger, who in the *Cambridge History of the English Bible*, Vol. 3 (S. L. Greenslade, ed., Cambridge, England: University Press, 1963, 414), called the Vulgate "the most vulgarized and bastardized text imaginable."⁶² Grady says, "Damasus commissioned Jerome to revive the archaic Old Latin Bible in A.D. 382...the completed monstrosity became known as the Latin 'Vulgate'...and was used of the devil to usher in the Dark Ages."⁶³ Fisk reminds us:

Well-known examples of far-reaching errors include the whole system of [Catholic](#) "penance," drawn from the Vulgate's "do penance"...when the Latin should have followed the Greek—*repent*.

Likewise the word "sacrament" was a mis-reading from the Vulgate of the

original word for *mystery*. Even more significant, perhaps, was the rendering of the word *presbyter* (elder) as “priest.”⁶⁴

Augustine described the problem that led to the production of the Vulgate: “In the earliest days of the faith, when a Greek manuscript came into anyone’s hands, and he thought he possessed a little facility in both languages, he ventured to make a translation [into Latin].”⁶⁵ As a consequence of such individual endeavor, Bruce says, “The time came, however, when the multiplicity of [Latin] texts [of Scripture] became too inconvenient to be tolerated any longer, and Pope Damasus...commissioned his secretary, Jerome, to undertake the work” of revision to produce one authorized Latin version.

Bruce continues: “He [Jerome] was told to be cautious for the sake of ‘weaker brethren’ who did not like to see their favorite texts tampered with, even in the interests of greater accuracy. Even so, he went much too far for the taste of many, while he himself knew that he was not going far enough.”⁶⁶ *Unger’s Bible Dictionary* comments:

For many centuries it [Vulgate] was the only Bible generally used... In the age of the Reformation the Vulgate [influenced] popular versions. That of Luther (N. T. in 1523) was the most important and in this the Vulgate had great weight. From Luther the influence of the Latin passed to our own Authorized Version [KJV]...⁶⁷

The Geneva and King James Bibles and Protestant Creeds

Of no small importance to our study is the fact that this corrupt translation had an influence upon the Protestant churches in Europe, England, and America. That influence carried over into the Geneva Bible (which has further problems; see below) as well as into other early versions of the English Bible, and even into the King James Bible of today.

As the Vulgate was filled with Augustinianisms, the Geneva Bible was filled with [Calvinism](#), in the text as well as in voluminous notes. H. S. Miller’s *General Biblical Introduction* says, “It was a revision of Tyndale’s, with an Introduction by Calvin...the work of English reformers, assisted by Beza, Calvin, and possibly others.” J. R. Dore, in *Old Bibles: An Account of the Early Versions of the English Bible*, 2nd edition, adds that “almost every chapter [of the Geneva Bible] has voluminous notes full of Calvinistic doctrine.” Andrew Edgar, in *The Bibles of England*, declares, “At the time the Geneva Bible was first published, Calvin was the ruling spirit in Geneva. All the features of his theological, ecclesiastical, political, and social system are accordingly reflected in the marginal annotations... The doctrine of predestination is proclaimed to be the head cornerstone of the gospel.”⁶⁸

W. Hoare says in *The Evolution of the English Bible*, “Considered as a literary whole it [the Geneva Bible] has about it the character of a Calvinist manifesto...a book with a special purpose.” F. F. Bruce adds,

The notes of the Geneva Bible...are, to be sure, unashamedly Calvinistic in doctrine... The people of England and Scotland...learned much of their biblical

exegesis from these notes.... The Geneva Bible immediately won, and retained, widespread popularity. It became the household Bible of English-speaking Protestants.... This became the authorized Bible in Scotland and was brought to America where it had a strong influence.⁶⁹

Butterworth points out: "In the lineage of the King James Bible this [Geneva Bible] is by all means the most important single volume.... The Geneva Bible...had a very great influence in the shaping of the King James Bible."⁷⁰ Robinson is even more emphatic:

A large part of its [Geneva Bible] innovations are included in the Authorized Version [KJV].... Sometimes the Geneva text and the Geneva margin are taken over intact, sometimes the text becomes the margin and the margin the text. Sometimes the margin becomes the text and no alternative is offered. Very often the Genevan margin becomes the Authorized Version text with or without verbal change.⁷¹

Further documentation could be given, but this should be sufficient to trace briefly the influence from that ultimate Roman [Catholic](#), Augustine, through the Latin Vulgate and his writings, upon Calvin—and through Calvin, into the Geneva Bible and on into the King James Bible. And thus into the pulpits and homes of Protestants throughout Europe, England, and America. It is small wonder, then, that those who, like Arminius, dared to question [Calvinism](#), were overwhelmed with opposition. Of course, various synods and assemblies were held to formulate accepted creeds and to punish the dissenters, but the decks were stacked in favor of [Calvinism](#), and no influence to mitigate this error was allowed. This will be documented in the next chapter. [For additional detail, see *T.U.L.I.P. and the Bible: Comparing the Works of Calvin to the Word of God*, and *What Love Is This? Calvinism's Misrepresentation of God*.]

The New Geneva Study Bible and Reformation Truth

Today's *New Geneva Study Bible* (recently reprinted as *The Reformation Study Bible*) is being widely distributed in an effort to indoctrinate the readers into [Calvinism](#). Its New King James translation is appealing. As with the original Geneva Bible, however, the notes are Calvinistic treatises. In his foreword, R. C. Sproul writes,

The *New Geneva Study Bible* is so called because it stands in the tradition of the original Geneva Bible.... The light of the Reformation was the light of the Bible.... The Geneva Bible was published in 1560...[and] dominated the English-speaking world for a hundred years.... Pilgrims and Puritans carried the Geneva Bible to the shores of the New World. American colonists were reared on the Geneva Bible.... The *New Geneva Study Bible* contains a modern restatement of Reformation truth in its comments and theological notes. Its purpose is to present the light of the Reformation afresh.

In fact, its purpose is to indoctrinate the reader into [Calvinism](#), which inaccurately is marketed as "Reformation truth"—as though [Calvinism](#) and Protestantism are identical. There was, in fact, much more to the Reformation than [Calvinism](#), Calvinists' claims notwithstanding.

The Necessity to Clarify Confusion

[Calvinism](#) is experiencing resurgence today. Yet there is widespread ignorance of what both Augustine and Calvin really taught and practiced. Has the truth been suppressed to further a particular theology? Consider Boettner's declaration that "Calvin and Augustine easily rank as the two outstanding systematic expounders of the Christian system since Saint Paul."⁷² Spurgeon, also declared: "Augustine obtained his views, without doubt, through the Spirit of God, from the diligent study of the writings of Paul, and Paul received them of the Holy Ghost, from Jesus Christ".⁷³

One cannot but view such statements with astonishment. How incredible that Loraine Boettner, one of the foremost apologists opposing the Roman [Catholic](#) Church, praised Augustine, who gave the Roman [Catholic](#) Church so many of its basic doctrines that he is among the most highly honored of its "saints" to this day.

As for Spurgeon, would he have considered that Augustine's teaching of [salvation](#) by the Roman [Catholic](#) Church, through its sacraments alone, beginning with regeneration by infant baptism; the use of force even to the death against "heretics"; acceptance of the Apocrypha; allegorical interpretation of creation and the prophecies concerning [Israel](#); a rejection of the literal reign of Christ on David's throne; and so much other false doctrine, had also all been received from the Holy Spirit? How could Augustine—and Calvin, who embraced and passed on many of his major errors—be so wrong on so much and yet be biblically sound as regards predestination, election, sovereignty, etc.? Is there not ample cause to examine carefully these foundational teachings of [Calvinism](#)?

One can only respond in the affirmative. For that reason, the key Calvinist doctrines will be presented in the following pages and compared carefully with God's Word.

Endnotes

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5. John Piper, *The Legacy of Sovereign Joy: God's Triumphant Grace in the Lives of Augustine, Luther, and Calvin* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), 24-25.
6. Charles Haddon Spurgeon, ed., *Exposition of the Doctrine of Grace* (Pasadena, CA: Pilgrim Publications, n. d.), 298.
7. Alvin L. Baker, *Berkouwer's Doctrine of Election: Balance or Imbalance?* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1981), 25.
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9. C. Gregg Singer, *John Calvin: His Roots and Fruits* (Abingdon Press,

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10. Vance, *Other Side*, 40.
 11. John Calvin, "A Treatise on the Eternal Predestination of God," in John Calvin, *Calvin's Calvinism*, trans. Henry Cole (Grandville, MI: Reformed Free Publishing Association, 1987), 38; cited in Vance, *Other Side*, 38.
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 14. Frend, *Rise*, 671.
 15. *Ibid.*, 672.
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 19. Warfield, *Calvin*, v.
 20. John Calvin, contents page of *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1998 ed.), III: xxiii, IV: xvii, etc.
 21. Calvin, *Institutes*, III: xxi, 2.
 22. *Ibid.*, xxi, 4.
 23. *Ibid.*, xxiii, 1.
 24. *Ibid.*, 5.
 25. *Ibid.*
 26. *Ibid.*, 8.
 27. *Ibid.*, IV: xiii, 9.
 28. *Ibid.*, III: xxiii, 11.
 29. *Ibid.*, 13.
 30. *Ibid.*, 14.
 31. Richard A. Muller, *Christ and the Decree* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1988), 22.
 32. Norman L. Geisler, *What Augustine Says* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1982), 9.
 33. Aug. Cont. Epist. Fundament c.v.
 34. John Paul II, Sovereign Pontiff, *Augustineum Hyponensem* (Apostolic Letter, August 28, 1986. Available at: www.cin.org/jp2.ency/augustin.html).
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