

## 8. The spread of Calvinism and “Reformed” Doctrine

### Introduction

Last week we looked at the life of John Calvin: his conversion, the City of Geneva which he sought to build upon the Word of God, and the grievous personal sufferings which Calvin had to endure and through which he teaches us what it means to trust in a good and sovereign God. This week we’re going to look at the spread of Calvinism beyond the City of Geneva and beyond the lifetime of Calvin himself.<sup>1</sup>

Let’s PRAY, using a simple prayer of John Calvin’s: *May the Lord grant That we may contemplate The mysteries of His heavenly wisdom With truly increasing devotion, To His glory And to our edification, Amen.*<sup>2</sup>

Listen to God’s word in Ephesians 1:11-12. *“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,<sup>12</sup> so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.”*

### 1. The spread of Calvinism

As the 1500s went on the Roman Catholic church had to deal with the problem of the Reformation. Central to their response was the 1546 Council of Trent. It produced the Tridentine Decrees which remain authoritative in the Roman Catholic church to this day. They are a denunciation of distinctive Reformation doctrine and piety.

As time went on it became clear that Calvin and Calvinism were becoming the BIG issue in Europe. Lutheranism as a movement became divided, suffered the effects of the horrific wars of religion, and was largely limited to Germany during this time. But Calvinism grew like a weed!

#### **(a) Where did Calvinism grow?**

**France:** In the mid-1500s there were relatively few Reformed churches in France. By 1561 a Reformed nobleman, Coligny, could offer the Queen the help of 2,150 congregations. There had been amazing growth, mainly among artisans and nobility – but not among the French peasantry.

From where did this growth come? Or rather, what human tools did the Lord God use to bring about the growth of French Calvinist (or Huguenot) churches?

At the heart of it all was John Calvin’s *Academy* in Geneva. It was a training institution for pastors and church planters. (By the way, it illustrates the importance of rigorous training for pastor-teachers). It was the tool behind an extraordinary evangelistic enterprise back in Calvin’s beloved France. More than half of Geneva were refugees in the mid-1500s. Calvin was able to train thousands of French pastors and send them back.

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<sup>1</sup> In this talk I’ve drawn on unpublished lectures by Garry Williams, and on Ros Clarke’s *Church under construction* (<http://www.castlechurch.org.uk/downloads/church%20under%20construction%20e%20book.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> This is the same prayer Calvin used before each of his exegetical lectures. From *The piety of John Calvin*, transl. and ed. by Ford Lewis Battles.

In Geneva there was also a huge printing industry producing and distributing Bibles and works of Reformed theology. Tiny Psalm books were especially popular in France, being used for personal and covert worship among the Protestants.

The Catholic establishment was terrified of growing Huguenot influence. Persecution culminated in the St Bartholomew's Day Massacre – on 23 August 1572. It was a day that would become infamous in Protestant history. Attacks were focused on Paris where large numbers of Huguenot pastors and leaders were gathered for a wedding. Estimates range from 6,000-30,000 murdered in the space of a few days.

War followed between Protestant and Catholic forces. In 1598 the Edict of Nantes granted toleration to the Huguenots. But it was revoked in 1685.

Persecution was extremely effective in driving the Reformed faith out of France. It would continue for centuries. Though in God's grace a Huguenot remnant remained. They were people like Marie Durand, who suffered for Christ in the mid-1700s. She was the sister of a young Reformed pastor and martyr. She was imprisoned in the Tower of Constance aged 18. Had she recanted the Reformed faith at any point she would have been released. She refused to turn to the Catholic faith and chose to be imprisoned for 38 years. She was eventually released and died 8 years later in 1776. Carved on the wall of her cell is the single word: "resiste."

**The Netherlands:** In the Low Countries Calvinism spread, especially among the lower nobility. The lower nobles – or "beggars" as they were known – formed a league in response to the Inquisition. There was conflict with the Catholic Church and authorities. Growth was slow, but long-lasting.

**England, the Puritans and the New World:** We're going to look at the English Reformation next week. But just note here that the English Reformers were squarely Calvinistic in their outlook. When Thomas Cranmer had the opportunity to appoint professors of theology at Oxford and Cambridge Universities he chose Calvinists: Martin Bucer and Peter Martyr Vermigli. In the fact the entire Church of England was Calvinistic up to the early 1600s when Arminian error became to creep in – the early Puritan party in the CofE was Calvinist, and so were the Puritans opponents.

The Puritan movement – to which we'll come in due course – was also largely Calvinistic. The settlers in the New World were diverse in the theologies that they brought with them. But a clear and robust tradition of Calvinist thought emerged in the United States, not least after the great ejection of 1662 when the Anglican church threw out 2,000 Puritan ministers.

**Where do we find Calvinism today – and where did it come from?** Here are a few people and institutions to note (all of them worthy of a talk in their own right) that have carried the Reformed faith down to us: C.H. Spurgeon, Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the *Banner of Truth Trust*, the American *Evangelism Explosion* project, the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), J.I. Packer, R.C. Sproul, John MacArthur, John Piper. The conservative evangelical wing of the Church of England is largely Calvinistic – as is reflected in its finest training institution, Oak Hill Theological College. There are new, small but faithful Presbyterian denominations springing up in the UK (the EPCEW and the IPC).<sup>3</sup>

But come back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Why did Calvinism grow in its earliest days?

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<sup>3</sup> See Mark Dever's fascinating article on the modern Reformed movement, *Where'd All These Calvinists Come From?* <https://www.9marks.org/article/whered-all-these-calvinists-come-from/>

## **(b) Why did Calvinism grow?**

There were many reasons – to do with politics and war, church strategy, and of course theology.

1. The movement of refugees to and from Geneva was incredibly significant. They included remarkable men like Francis Turretin who would in time lead the Academy himself. In one year, 1561, Geneva sent out 151 pastors. (Remember: Geneva at the time had a population of 13,000 people – less than Harold Wood where we used to live!).
2. It was a highly disciplined movement which bred pastors who were extremely tough. And it was a well-organised movement with a network of safe-houses located one day apart between Geneva and various French locations. (The Venerable Company of Pastors in Geneva sent pastors in secret up until 1557).
3. The Calvinistic church planting movement was designed to survive without political support. What grew up were flexible, self-governing networks of churches.
4. The revolutionary political theology of Theodore Beza (and others) allowed revolution in the name of the Gospel. (This would become a hugely thorny issue in England in the mid 1600s as civil war approached: can the godly ever rise up against a tyrannical ruler?).
5. Ironically, when the Genevan church subsequently weakened and was corrupted in the 1600s (under a son of Francis Turretin) it had the beneficial effect of shifting influence to other Calvinist centres.
6. Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* was a clear and well-written manual of Reformed theology. There was, for example, no such Lutheran equivalent.
7. Lastly, the distinctive Calvinist doctrines of *divine election* and the *remnant* encouraged boldness, perseverance under trial, and brought assurance of salvation.

And it's to Calvin's writings that we now turn.

## **2. John Calvin's writings**

### **(a) Getting the Bible out: Calvin's commentaries, exegetical sermons, and Genevan Psalter**

Central to John Calvin's own work was his study of the Bible. He was an exegete. His sermons and commentaries are rightly famous.

One other beautiful legacy left us by Calvin is his Genevan Psalter. When in Germany he discovered the practice of setting the Psalms to music with the lyrics slightly amended to make them "metrical." Calvin produced some of the metrical lyrics himself. Musicians like Loys Bourgeois produced the tunes. Bourgeois' tune for Psalm 134 is still sung to this day (we know it as Old Hundredth, and probably know it to the hymn words "All creatures that on earth do dwell").

*You faithful servants of the Lord,  
sing out his praise with one accord,  
while serving him with all your might  
and keeping vigil through the night.*

*Unto his house lift up your hand  
and to the Lord your praises send.  
May God who made the earth and sky  
bestow his blessings from on high.*

### **(b) A manual for doctrine: *The Institutes of the Christian Religion***

Calvin constantly revised the *Institutes*. Here's an outline of the 1559 edition. It's divided into four books entitled:

1. *Of the Knowledge of God the Creator*
2. *Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer*
3. *The Mode of Obtaining the Grace of Christ*
4. *Of the Holy Catholic Church*

Here's a short outline of each book:

#### *1. Of the Knowledge of God the Creator.*

We may know God both as Creator and Redeemer. Book 1 deals with God as creator. He has made humanity in his image, and yet this is obscured by sin such that we cannot know God and yet are without excuse.

Scripture is like a pair of divinely provided spectacles which pull all into focus. The Bible is self-authenticating (it needs no other authority to validate it) and it produces faith in itself *by itself*, even in deeply idolatrous creatures like ourselves.

#### *2. Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer, in Christ, as first manifested to the fathers, under the law, and thereafter to us under the Gospel.*

God ordained original sin and we are bound in it. Yet, though our will is bound we nonetheless sin freely (non-believers can do what they want to do – namely, sin).

God's law condemns us and restrains us. And yet it also shows the Christian how to live.

The person of Christ is revealed in three offices: as prophet, as priest and as king.

#### *3. The Mode of Obtaining the Grace of Christ, the benefits it confers, & the effects resulting from it.*

We are justified by faith (here Calvin teaches the same doctrine of justification as did Martin Luther). Calvin gives considerable attention to predestination, though it is *not* the centre of the *Institutes*. God chooses people for eternal life *not* because he foreknows their choice of him; his election is based upon nothing within the elect. He chooses purely because of his own good pleasure. God's election is "double," that is, he predestines both to salvation *and* damnation. There is no distinction between God's permission and God's will (even with Adam in Eden): if God permits something to happen he has willed it to happen. The Fall of man is a clear example.

#### *4. Of the Holy Catholic Church.*

Here Calvin considers the external means of grace – those "tools" which the Lord likes to use to bring people to saving faith and then to maturity in him.

The Church is both Visible and Invisible (it is a mixture of believers and non-believers). A faithful church has two distinguishing marks: Word and Sacraments. A third mark, discipline, is also necessary.

Baptism is one of two (and only two) dominical sacraments (i.e. special signs instituted by the Lord Jesus). It is for infants, and is paralleled to circumcision. The promise of the Gospel is for believers and for their infant children, because we are in the same covenant as Abraham.

The Lord's Supper is not just a memorial, but nor is it transubstantiation. It is a spiritual participation whereby we are taken up to Christ (not Christ brought down to us).

Civil government cannot be resisted, except by lower magistrates (who had a clear responsibility to rule for the good of the people even if it meant disobeying a more senior ruler. This would prove crucial in the French Wars of Religion).

## **3. The development of "Reformed theology": Calvin and his legacy**

### **(a) What does it mean to be "Reformed"?**

#### **• "Reformation" or "Reformed"?**

Firstly, we need to draw a distinction between "Reformation" and "Reformed." The word "Reformation" describes the whole Protestant project that emerged in the 16<sup>th</sup> century in response to the errors of Roman Catholicism. "Reformation" churches and theologies includes Radicals (like the Anabaptists and the Zwickau Prophets), and it included Lutherans, and it included the followers of John Calvin.

Sometimes the word “Reformed” is used in this same very *broad* way to describe something which is so common to what we might call the Reformation project. However, the word “Reformed” is also used (in church history and in historical theology) to denote something much narrower and tighter: namely, the theology and worldview that flowed specifically from John Calvin and his successors.

- **“Reformed” = “Calvinist”**

The terminology can all be a bit confusing. But for our purposes it will be helpful for us to see that the words “Reformed” and “Calvinist” mean basically the same thing.

- **Was Calvin a Calvinist?**

This then raises a question: is there a difference between what Calvin taught and what later Calvinism taught? And if so does it matter? A huge amount of ink has been spilt on this question – some of it profitable. Critics of the Puritans and of the later Reformed churches have tried very hard to say that the good stuff in Calvin was lost or diluted over the years. It’s a complex question. It can’t be simply or easily answered. But overall I *don’t* find that a persuasive objection. But what does it mean to be “Reformed” or “Calvinist”? We still haven’t answered that question. It *isn’t* primarily an obsession with predestination and election. It *isn’t* primarily about the so-called Five Points of Calvinism (though they do come into it).

- **Defining Calvinism or the Reformed worldview**

How do we actually define Calvinism – or what you might call the Reformed way of life? Here is Benjamin Warfield’s great definition. It is:

*“that sight of the majesty of God that pervades all of life and all of experience.”*

It is a deeply God-centred understanding of the world, the Bible, sin, salvation, everything. Its chief concern is to get God and us in our right places: he must be exalted, we must be humbled.

In other words, it’s just the truths of the Bible taught with a proper Biblical emphasis on the centrality of God and on the Gospel of Jesus. Here’s how the great 19<sup>th</sup> century Baptist minister C.H. Spurgeon put it: “I love to proclaim those strong old doctrines that are nicknamed *Calvinism*, but which are surely and verily the revealed truth of God as it is in Christ Jesus.”

We’re going to turn to some essentials of Reformed theology. We’ll look at a few points very briefly before turning to look at the Doctrines of Grace. If you want to see a great exposition of Reformed doctrine you’d do well to look at the *Westminster Confession of Faith* of 1646.

- (b) Reformed / Calvinist doctrine**

**Scripture** is the inerrant, authoritative and sufficient word of God. In addition we note...

The **threefold use of the law**: God’s law – as, for example, summarised in the 10 commandments has three functions. It shows us our sin, points us to Christ, *and* shows us how to live as Christians. That third use of the Law is distinctively Reformed. It’s not a Lutheran distinctive, for example.

**Covenant theology**: this is the Biblical idea that God saves people by making covenant with them, that Christ is the covenant head of his people, and thus we receive the blessings of the gospel by virtue of our union with Christ.

**Regulative principle of worship:** this is the idea that everything done in corporate worship and in the government of the church must be explicitly commanded in Scripture. You only do what the Bible positively commands. This contrasts with the so-called Normative Principle which holds that you may do whatever Scripture does not forbid. This has been in operation in Lutheranism and in the Church of England. (So here is a point where, from the earliest times, Anglican deviated from the Reformed tradition – much to the grief of the Puritans).

**Liberty of Conscience:** Where Scripture is silent on a matter of faith or worship the Reformed said your conscience is free and should not be bound by the traditions of men. Here's another key difference with the Anglican tradition which held that church authorities could rule on such matters.

**The Sacraments:** baptism and the Lord's Supper are effective means of God's grace. The Lord's Supper is not merely a memorial of the Cross (contra Zwingli). Nor is it the case that the substance of Christ's body is present together with the substance of the bread (contra Luther's idea of "consubstantiation"). Rather, in eating physically we also feed on Christ spiritually. (This was reflected clearly in the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*).

### **(c) The doctrines of grace (a.k.a. The Five Points of Calvinism)**

To understand the God-centredness of Reformed theology we're going to study a theological war! Between the followers of Calvin and the followers of Arminius.

#### **• Calvin vs. Arminius (1560-1609)**

Arminius was born in 1560, and he died in 1609. Fifty years younger than Calvin, he studied in Geneva under Calvin's successor at the Academy, the great Theodore Beza. But Arminius did not like Calvin's teaching one little bit. Studying Romans 7, he came to the conclusion that the struggle with sin described there was *not* the struggle of a Christian. He came to believe that we have a greater ability to fight sin than we see in that chapter. Calvin, on the other hand, had a deep and dark and thoroughly biblical account of sin in the life of a believer.

A year after his death, Arminius' followers published the Remonstrance of 1610 – remonstrating (having a go at) Calvin's followers. The Remonstrance had five points. They went roughly like this:

- Man is sinful. But we are not helpless in our sin. We are able to choose Christ.
- God predestines people. But those people he chooses are those who choose him.
- Jesus died intending to save all people – potentially. His death meant that God *could* pardon sinners, but only on the condition that they believed.
- The Spirit's work in regeneration can be resisted.
- Real Christians can fall away and be lost eternally.

Arminian teaching has NEVER gone away. NEVER. It's found throughout evangelical denominations all over the world. Which is a big, big shame.

It began troubling the church in Europe quickly. In the Netherlands its teachings were tested at the Synod of Dort in 1619. The Canons of Dort affirmed the truth of Calvin's teaching. And they formulated what we know today as the Five Points of Calvinism in order to refute Arminian error.

We've already seen that there is much, much MORE to Reformed theology than just the Five Points (or the "Doctrines of Grace" as they are sometimes known). But there certainly isn't LESS.

- **TULIP: a summary...**

The godly men at Dordt wrote their stuff in Latin – that was the international language of theology back then. But when you translate their 5 points into English they form a memorable acronym: TULIP. In God’s providence that’s rather fitting, since what is Holland now known for? Tulips!

We’re NOT interested in whether Calvin taught TULIP or not. More important is whether the Bible teaches it. We’re not called to be Calvinists for the sake of it. We submit to the teaching of the Scriptures. And if the Reformed have got it right then we’ll cheerfully stand with them.

What does TULIP stand for?(1) Total Depravity, (2) Unconditional Election, (3) Limited Atonement, (4) Irresistible Grace, (5) Perseverance of the saints.

Let’s summarise each point briefly. For each we’ll give a *definition*, a *Bible text*, an *explanation*, and an *implication*.

### **1. Total depravity**

This doesn’t mean that we are as bad we could be; rather, every part of us is infected by sin. That’s what Romans 7:18 means: “I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature.”

The apostle Paul says that if you search inside the human soul (be it a Christian or a non-believer), you will find nothing wholly good. It means we cannot save ourselves. We are totally depraved, and therefore totally *unable*. (Total depravity entails total inability). Arminianism falsely claimed that we can freely choose Christ. The Reformed faith and the Bible deny that we have that kind of free will.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, when God chooses to save a person it is His act of “unconditional election.”

### **2. Unconditional election**

The words “election” and “predestination” mean “CHOOSING,” just like in a general election we choose a government. But on what basis does God choose? “Before the foundation of the world God chose to save a fixed number of individuals. He chose them purely for his own glory, because of his loving mercy, and not because of their foreknown faith, good works, or perseverance.”<sup>5</sup>

This is what Paul means in Ephesians 1:4 when he explains that “he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.” (See also Acts 13:48).

God chooses, and He is praised for choosing (not the human person). Note, too, how God’s choice *leads to holiness*, and is NOT based upon our holiness. God’s choice is free and sovereign, it is not constrained by anyone or anything. Of course, if we are totally depraved it must follow that God’s choice is free and sovereign; apart from God’s work we would never choose to follow Christ.

It is humbling to be told that God is like a potter and we are like clay, created to His ends and purposes. But it is also deeply assuring to know that we are in the hands of a good and sovereign God.

How, though, will God’s chosen people be saved?

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<sup>4</sup> Whilst we do have liberty of spontaneity, we do not possess liberty of indifference. That is, we always choose to do what we *want*, but the non-believer is only ever able to choose the path of sin.

<sup>5</sup> This is a slightly modified version of Dr. Garry Williams’ definition.

### 3. Limited atonement

Arminians (and Amyraldians) teach that when Christ died on the Cross he won a *potential* salvation for *every single person*, and that his work does not actually save anyone until a man “decides for” Christ and is saved.

The Reformed faith argues that this is significantly wrong. Whilst God loves every person he has made, Jesus’ death was intended by God only to save those who he would join in union with Christ – namely, the elect. It does NOT mean that Christ’s death is of limited worth or limited effectiveness. It means that Christ’s death achieves precisely what it set out to do. Christ’s death actually pays for the sins of those *particular* people who will be saved by it. (“Definite”, “Effective” or “Particular” redemption would be a more helpful term than “Limited.”)

Jesus, for example, explained that he would die for “my sheep” – and that his death was not on behalf of those who were outside of “my flock”:

*John 10:14-15, 26, “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me--<sup>15</sup> just as the Father knows me and I know the Father-- and I lay down my life for the sheep...<sup>26</sup> but you do not believe because you are not part of my flock.”*

Similarly, the apostle Paul implies that Jesus’ death for “the church” (and by implication *not* for those outside of the people of God):

*Acts 20:28, “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”*

The key point to grasp is that *if* Christ died for you *then* you WILL be saved: the Bible is clear that the Cross does not merely render people *potentially saveable*. On the Arminian reading (or the related Amyraldian understanding) the Cross of Christ was in large measure a failure, since numbers of people for whom Christ died will not be saved. Further, God’s justice is called into question since he will end up punishing men’s sins twice, once in the person of Christ and in hell in the person of the unrepentant sinner.

### 4. Irresistible grace

If men cannot save themselves... if God freely chooses those who he’ll save... and if Christ has accomplished the work of salvation for those people... *then* it follows that God must actually apply the benefits of Christ’s salvation to them.<sup>6</sup> Salvation is the sole work of God. It is monergistic.

“Irresistible grace” means that through the Spirit, God the Father irresistibly summons – ordinarily through the proclamation of the gospel – the elect sinner into fellowship with his Son Jesus. It is an *effectual* call – that is, it actually “works.” Christian, you did not first choose Christ! He called you!

We are talking here not of the outward, general and external call which a preacher gives to all people to repent and believe. We mean the special, limited, internal call from death to life that the Lord issues to his elect. It is the powerful “call” of new birth and regeneration by which he makes us new, frees our bound wills, and moves us to repent and believe. This is the “call” that Paul speaks of in the so-called “golden chain” of salvation:

*Romans 8:30, “Those he predestined, he also called, those he called, he also justified, those he justified, he also glorified.”*

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<sup>6</sup> It is helpful to distinguish between salvation accomplished and salvation applied – between what Christ obtained (through his life, death, resurrection, ascension and heavenly rule) and how the Spirit of God makes that effective in the life of a particular person.

## 5. Perseverance of the saints

All those whom God has joined to His Son and for whom Christ died will most certainly persevere as Christians. They will keep going, because God will preserve his children. This point is most beautifully expounded in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.<sup>7</sup> It is the implication of Jesus' deeply assuring words in John 6:39:

*John 6:39, "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day."*

There is an internal "logic" to the Gospel (and to the Doctrines of Grace) which is deeply humbling, but also deeply encouraging: we cannot save ourselves... the Lord freely chooses to save wretchedly sinful people... Christ powerfully dies for God's chosen ones... at the time of God's choosing the Spirit irresistibly draws a person to Christ... and despite inevitable ups and downs the real Christian will persevere because God preserves them in union with his Son.<sup>8</sup>

### Conclusion:

There is so much more we could say!

Spurgeon was right when he said that "there is no such thing as preaching Christ and him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism... It is a nickname to call it Calvinism. Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else."<sup>9</sup>

But the Reformed faith – with its happy obsession with the majesty of God – is not just *true* (and we note that when a church abandons Calvinism it is usually on a trajectory towards liberalism). It is also deeply *satisfying*, since it encourages us to de-throne man and live life in communion with our glorious God.

*Soli Deo Gloria.*

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<sup>7</sup> *Westminster Confession of Faith*, (17.1-2): "They, whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called, and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace, but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved. This perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own free will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election, flowing from the free and unchangeable love of God the Father; upon the efficacy of the merit and intercession of Jesus Christ, the abiding of the Spirit, and of the seed of God within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace: from all which ariseth also the certainty and infallibility thereof."

<sup>8</sup> The eighteenth century Anglican Calvinist pastor and hymn writer Augustus Toplady expresses the joy of the "perseverance of the saints" in his hymn "A debtor to mercy alone." In one stanza he writes:

Eternity cannot erase my name from the palms of his hands  
In marks of indelible grace engraved in his side it remains  
Yes, I to the end shall endure, as sure as the promise is given.  
More happy – but not more secure – are the glorified spirits in heaven.

<sup>9</sup> Here is Spurgeon's remark in context, from his sermon on 1 Corinthians 1:23-24. "I have my own private opinion, that there is no such thing as preaching Christ and him crucified, unless you preach what now-a-days is called Calvinism. I have my own ideas, and those I always state boldly. It is a nickname to call it Calvinism. Calvinism is the gospel, and nothing else. I do not believe we can preach the gospel, if we do not preach justification by faith without works; not unless we preach the sovereignty of God in his dispensation of grace; nor unless we exalt the electing, unchangeable, eternal, immutable, conquering love of Jehovah; nor, I think, can we preach the gospel, unless we base it upon the peculiar redemption which Christ made for his elect and chosen people; nor can I comprehend a gospel which lets saints fall away after they are called, and suffers the children of God to be burned in the fires of damnation, after having believed. Such a gospel I abhor. The gospel of the Bible is not such a gospel as that. We preach Christ and him crucified in a different fashion, and to all gainsayers we reply, 'We have not so learned Christ.'"