

LIVING  
*for*  
GOD'S  
GLORY

AN INTRODUCTION TO CALVINISM

JOEL R. BEEKE

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**ABBREVIATIONS**

<i>CO</i>	<i>Opera quae supersunt omnia</i> (Calvin’s writings)
<i>Commentary</i>	Calvin’s Commentaries
Inst.	Calvin’s <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> (Battles’ edition)
Inst. (Bev.)	Calvin’s <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> (Beveridge’s edition)

## FOREWORD

With all of my heart, I believe that the Reformed faith, or “Calvinism,” is biblical Christianity—or the closest thing to it in the history of the church. This conviction rises out of thirty-four years of reading the Scriptures and church history.

It is not the conviction I had when I began my pilgrimage as a Christian. From February 1974, when I was converted as a philosophy student at the University of Toronto, through the next seven years, I was deeply involved in the charismatic movement. I was also enamored with the vision of the Christian life expressed by some of the church fathers and John Wesley, their eighteenth-century student. Wesley was definitely not a Calvinist, though at some points in his life, by his own admission, he was within an inch or two of it.

I suspect it was Augustine who helped change my theological outlook. Augustine’s stress on the sovereignty of God’s grace in salvation, described in his *Confessions*, won me when I first read the book in the mid-1970s. But I was still ignorant of some important issues. When I applied for a teaching position in 1981, I was asked what I thought about the five points of Calvinism. Though I had a doctorate in church history, I could not say what those points were. However, within a year of being asked that question, I was on my way to embracing a Calvinistic worldview. Arnold Dallimore’s two-volume life of George Whitefield; the first volume of Iain Murray’s life of “the Doctor,” Martyn Lloyd-Jones; John Owen’s study of the mortification of sin in believers; and some students helped open my eyes to Calvinism as the best expression of biblical Christianity. By 1985, I was committed to the five points of Calvinism.

As time went on, however, I came to see that Calvinism cannot be limited to soteriology but affects all church issues, especially worship and spirituality. Indeed, as does Christianity itself, Calvinism applies to all of life, including politics and economics, art and architecture. As Abraham Kuyper said, there is not one square inch of this universe that does not belong to Jesus Christ. In stating that, Kuyper reflected the New Testament, which affirms that Christ upholds and sustains all things by the word of His power (Heb. 1:3; Col. 1:17). Calvinism is a worldview that shapes and informs one’s approach to all of life.

The chapters in this volume examine the main areas of Christian thought and life from the vantage point of Calvinism, showing how it makes sense of the Scriptures and Christian experience. The chapters in Part Five look at some of the broader aspects of society through the lens of Calvinism. Other areas of human life could have been examined through this lens with satisfying results. But the areas discussed are sufficient to show how Calvinism speaks to all spheres.

Such universality is what one should expect. Calvinism resonates deeply with biblical truth; it speaks to every area of human life and thought. If you, the reader, are not convinced of this, let me encourage you to read what others have found in Calvinism. If you are already convinced, may the chapters that follow help edify and mature you in thought and experience as you explore Calvinism.

—*Michael A. G. Haykin*  
Dundas, Ontario  
January 2008