

Five Points of Calvinism

February 12, 1987

The Son of Man was Jesus favorite designation of Himself. Eighty times in the Gospels we find Him calling Himself the Son of Man, a term that never in the Gospels is applied to anyone else. Nor does anyone else use it except Jesus of Himself. I'm sure many people being aware of this might be shocked to hear this whole group here yelling in unison: "Put not your trust in the son of man." I think it's a good illustration of the fact that we have to study the Scripture in context. We have to examine what the terms mean and the way they are used, and not put our stress on words but on ideas which we find expressed in words.

This morning I would like to read a few verses from the 3rd chapter of Ephesians--I mean the 2nd chapter. (Reading text, Eph. 2:1-9). Then in Romans 8:28-29 (reading text).

I attended for three years what was perhaps the leading Calvinistic institution in the world, Princeton Theological Seminary before it was taken over by unbelief and modernism. During those 3 years I don't remember ever hearing the phrase "the five points of Calvinism." I don't remember ever having heard it. We went through Charles Hodges' Theology reading his 3 great volumes of Calvinistic theology in the course of those 3 years. I have no recollection of ever hearing the term. But since that time I have often seen little tracts called "The Five Points of Calvinism." I heard of a student who was considered for a call to a church. As he was examined by the leaders of the church he turned to them and said, I want you to know I am a five point Calvinist." That church immediately lost interest in him, and it made me wonder whether he had much idea of what Calvinism is or whether the church had any idea of what Calvinism is!

You might call this the Growth of a Fable, the Development of a Myth as if you could put Calvinism into five points! Charles Hodge's 3 volume book of theology is, has been for many years one of the leading text books of Calvinistic theology. You look in the index for Five Points of Calvinism and you do not find it. But you do find Five Points of Arminianism! That's where the term started. I looked in Berkhof's Systematic Theology, one of the most widely used books of Calvinistic theology today. I found no reference there to Five Points of Theology (Calvinism).

People who use the term will tell you if they know anything about it goes back to the Synod of Dort which met in Holland in 1619 with representatives from various countries, from the Calvinistic churches of these various countries. They met to consider five declarations that had been made by a group that called themselves the Remonstrants. These five statements of the Remonstrants they decided were false. If you look in Encyclopedias, look up Remonstrants, look up Arminianism, or any such term you are apt to find a list of the Five Points of Arminianism, but the lists don't agree because they--= the statements in these statements by the followers of Arminias are