

simply the study of the biblical teaching, and the gathering together of biblical facts and standing as Calvin sought to do on whatever he found in Scripture and not taking a stand on that for which you do not have Scriptural basis.

Calvin, like Luther, was tremendously impressed with the greatness of God. We think of Calvin's statements about predestination, which of course is clearly taught by the Apostle Paul, particularly in Romans and Ephesians. And we tend to think of Calvin as putting most of his stress on that. But actually Luther put more stress on predestination than Calvin did, but Luther went to some extremes in relation to it that I don't believe Calvin ever would have gone to.

Calvinism is a term which should stand for the attempt to gather facts from Scripture and to stand on what is taught there and to put great emphasis on the great scriptural teaching of the greatness of God and the fact that God has predestinated all things that occur.

There are some people who have the impression that the idea that God has predestinated things means it does not matter what we do. That, of course, is utterly contrary to the teaching of Calvin or to the teaching of the Bible. Our decisions are real decisions. Much depends on what we do and what we think. This is brought out very clearly in the Westminster Confession of Faith in which ch. 3 of God's Eternal Decree says: "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass." (There is a strong clear statement clearly taught in the Bible--God's predestination of all that comes to pass. But the statement continues) "yet as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creature." In other words you will is important. Your decisions are important. Your decisions can have eternal results.

God has predestined everything but we are not like characters in a movie picture that go before you and they all excited, pleased and happy and yet it's all determined what they are going to do and there is absolutely nothing they can do about it. God has predestined all things but violence is not offered to the will of the creature, nor is the contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established." True Calvinism is not fatalism.

I was told the first time I went to Palestine that if we get one of these Arab drivers he will go around a corner and pay no attention to what may be coming and dash around there because after all it's all established beforehand; God has determined all things and if I'm going to die I'll die! I can't help myself! Well, I'd rather not be in a car driven by that man! (Laughter) God has predestined all things. God controls all things. But what we decide is important and results follow from second causes and we are responsible before God for our decisions and for our deeds. God has given us the Gospel in earthen vessels, in us poor creatures yet God has chosen us to use us as His instruments to lead others