

the same destiny are all created, for, to some is allotted eternal life, to others eternal damnation. According as man is made for one end or for the other, we call him predestined to life, or to death" (Lib. 3, p. 337).

From this and many other passages of Calvin's writings it is evident that he taught absolute predestination and condemnation. His teaching concerning predestination may be summarized by this sentence, Do what you please God will send you to heaven or to hell, not in consequence of your actions, but simply because of His immutable decree. Calvinism removes the accountability for sin.

In harmony with his unchristian theory of fatal predestination, Calvin held that sanctifying grace is distinct and separate from the Sacrament of baptism, as a visible sign, and that this grace is only given to those who are predestined for heaven, and withheld from those whom Calvin by an imaginary eternal decree predestines for hell.

Besides baptism, Presbyterians also believe in the Lord's Supper. But in this as well as in the other Sacrament they separate sanctifying grace from the actual reception of the Sacrament. If a non-elect person receives the Lord's Supper, he receives bread and wine, but if the justified person receives the same species they receive Jesus Christ spiritually. Presbyterians do not believe in a bodily presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist.

Since no Presbyterian minister as such received a valid ordination, or the Sacrament of Holy Orders, none of them has the power

to consecrate, to change bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

Therefore when Presbyterians receive what they call the Lord's Supper, they actually receive nothing more than bread and wine. Like the Lutherans, Presbyterians is divided into many sects, each of them differing from the other. Even before Presbyterianism spread abroad from Scotland there were divisions in the larger Presbyterian family, some of which later rejoined only to separate again. In rueful self-reproach some Presbyterians refer to the divided Presbyterian churches as the "Split P's".

History conclusively proves that the Presbyterian denominations cannot lay claim to a divine origin. As a rule, Presbyterians labor under many prejudices against the Catholic Church, though many are friendly and fair minded toward Catholics. Sincere converts from Presbyterianism to Catholicism are becoming more numerous each year.

Pope John Paul II Society of Evangelists

14818 Ranchero Road
Hesperia, California, USA
Telephone: 760-220-6818
FAX: 760-948-7620

E-mail: pjpiisoe@earthlink.net
www.pjpiisoe.org

Pamphlet 150

Presbyterianism



John Calvin
(July 10, 1509 – May 27, 1564)

Presbyterianism is a form of Protestant Christianity, primarily in the Reformed branch of Christendom, as well as a particular form of church government. Its primary tenets include the Five solas: Scripture alone, faith alone, Christ alone, grace alone, glory to God alone. It is practised by many (although not all) of those Protestant churches which historically subscribed to the teachings of John Calvin (known as Reformed churches).

Presbyterianism traces its institutional roots back to the Scottish Reformation, especially as led by apostate priest John Knox. There are many separate Presbyterian Churches in different nations around the world. Besides national distinctions, Presbyterians also have divided from one another for doctrinal reasons, especially in the wake of the Enlightenment.

Theologically, Presbyterianism has a strong emphasis on the sovereignty of God in all things, including human salvation, a high regard for the authority of Scripture,

and an emphasis on the necessity of personal conversion by grace through faith in Christ Jesus alone.

Presbyterian government is based on Elders. Teaching and ruling elders are ordained and convene as a 'Kirk Session' (commonly referred to as simply 'session') responsible for the discipline, nurture, and mission of the local congregation. Usually, especially in larger congregations, the practicalities of buildings, finance, and temporal ministry to the needy in the congregation are delegated to a distinct group of officers (sometimes called deacons, which are ordained in some denominations). This group may variously be known as a 'Board', 'Diaconate', or 'Deacons' Court'. Teaching elders (ministers) have responsibility for teaching, worship, and performing sacraments. Ministers are called by individual congregations. A congregation issues a call for the minister's service, but this call must be ratified by the Presbytery.

Above the Kirk Sessions exist Presbyteries, which have area responsibilities. These are composed of ministers and elders from each of the constituent congregations. The Presbytery sends representatives to a broader regional assembly, generally known as the **General Assembly**, although an intermediate level of a **synod** sometimes exists. This congregation / presbytery / synod / general assembly schema is based on the historical structure of the larger Presbyterian churches, such as the Church of Scotland or the Presbyterian Church (USA) (PCUSA); some of the smaller bodies, such as the Presbyterian Church in America or the Presbyterian

Church in Ireland, skip one of the steps between congregation and General Assembly, and usually the step skipped is the Synod. The Church of Scotland has now abolished the Synod.

Knox was implicated in the assassination of Cardinal Beaton in 1546 and was chained to the galleys and served as a prisoner for a year and a half. When released he began to preach Calvinistic doctrines and thus established Presbyterianism in Scotland. He strongly agitated against the Catholic Church, the Sacrifice of the Mass, and all distinctly Catholic practices. In his fury against the Church, he roused the people by inflammatory harangues to a frenzied pitch and encouraged them to break into churches and destroy images of the saints and even those of Our Lord. He and the people of Perth sacked the churches and set fire to the monasteries. "The work of vandal destruction spread over a great part of the country. Among the historical edifices destroyed was the Carthusian monastery of Perth, the burial place of kings and queens, the magnificent cathedral at St. Andrew's, and the venerable abbey and palace of Scone, where the Scottish kings had been anointed and crowned for centuries. The lords of the congregation received an important accession in the persons of Lord James Stuart, the half-brother of Mary Stuart, and the Earl of Argyle, who became the heads of the revolutionary movement. Burning and destroying on their way, the lords marched on Edinburgh, sacked and demolished the city, robbed the royal treasury and took possession of the mint"

(Guggenberger, History of the Christian Era, Vol. 2, p. 216)

Today John Knox, the instigator of vandalism, bloodshed, and rebellion is the acknowledged champion of Presbyterianism. The enemies of the Catholic Church honor him as one of the greatest reformers that ever lived. But history shows a stubborn truth. "The evil that men do lives after them."

Presbyterianism became to Scotland what Episcopalianism was in England, the rallying point of the nation against the so called, ecclesiastical tyranny of Rome. In 1560 it became the church of the kingdom, hostile to Catholicism, which it made punishable by death and to Protestant dissenters.

The alleged ecclesiastical and political tyranny of Rome has its origins in the overheated brains of disgruntled, excommunicated public sinners and in the unbalanced minds of avowed bigots and persecutors of the Church.

Calvin's unfounded assertions are to a great extent the doctrines of the Presbyterian sects. He maintained that God had ordained the fall of man. As he says, "Man fell because the Providence of God ordained it so" (Institute, Lib. 3), while Scripture plainly teaches that Adam fell because of an abuse of his freedom; he voluntarily ate of the forbidden fruit. Calvin made God the author of that sin. To impute a sin to God is blasphemy. Calvin gives the following explanation of predestination, "We call predestination that eternal decree of God, whereby He has determined what the fate of every man should be. For not to