

Workshop 4

The Triumph of the Gospel in Geneva: John Calvin

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Introduction

Emphasis in *Genevan Catechism* — glory of God. The chief end of man and the main purpose of the gospel.

The Providential Context: Preparation for the Gospel's Triumph in Geneva

1. Contribution of Luther: set the Reformation on a solid theological course.
2. Geneva's preparation for Calvin: a series of significant providential events.
3. Calvin's Preparation for Geneva and beyond: legal and theological preparation.

Preparation in France: legal and theological.
 The remarkable "detour."
 Program of reform in Geneva.
 Preparation in Strasbourg: pastoral and academic.

The Theological Context: Contributing to the Gospel's Triumph in Geneva

1. Program of reform centered around *Coram Deo* — before the face of God.
2. Doctrinal Emphases of Calvin's Pastoral Ministry.

The supremacy of God as the fundamental reality of existence.

The absolutely authoritative Bible from which Christian doctrine is derived.

The utter sinfulness of man.

Christ alone is the propitiation for our sins.

The exclusivity of justification by faith for salvation.

Complete dependence on the Holy Spirit to accomplish God's purpose for the gospel.

3. Practical applications of Calvin's theology.

For the gospel to have free course idolatry must be destroyed.

Christ cannot be robbed of His glory in the gospel of reconciliation.

We may glory in the divine provisions God grants us in this life.

God's glory will be manifested in the last day with the resurrection of believers.

Conclusion

We need to recapture the vision of the those valiant Protestants who have gone before us —for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian Faith!

Recommended Reading List

- Calvin, John. *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Translated by Henry Beveridge. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2008. There are several editions available of this theological masterpiece. My preference is Beveridge, but the John T. McNeill (editor) and Ford Lewis Battles (translator) version is also highly recommended.
- George, Timothy. *Theology of the Reformers*. Revised edition. Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2013. This revision of the earlier work by George adds only slightly to its excellent quality. Best doctrinal compendium available.
- McGrath, Alister E. *A Life of John Calvin: A Study in the Shaping of Western Culture*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1990. This is a thoroughly researched intellectual treatment by a renowned British evangelical scholar.
- Manetsch, Scott M. *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536–1609*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. In depth edifying treatment of the pastoral theology of Calvin and his fellow pastors by a Reformation scholar. Must read for pastors.
- Wendel, François. *Calvin: The Origins and Development of His Religious Thought*. Translated by Philip Mairet. New York: Harper & Row, 1950. For years one of the most popular and insightful works on Calvin's life and thought.
- Zachman, Randall C. *John Calvin as Teacher, Pastor, and Theologian: The Shape of His Writings and Thought*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006. This brief work reveals the integration of theology and pastoral ministry in Calvin.