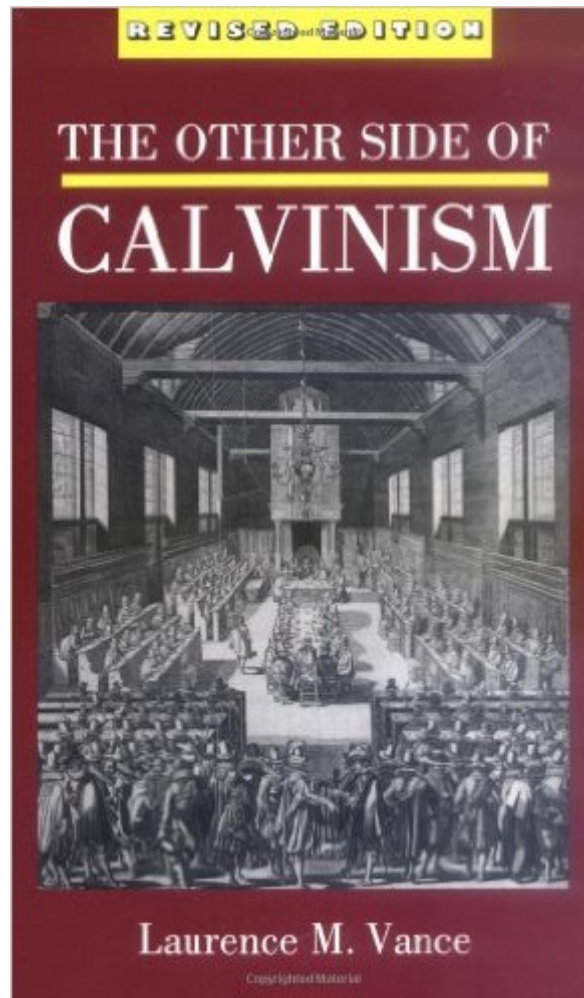


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The Other Side Of Calvinism



Synopsis

The definitive treatment of the subject, this book provides a detailed historical examination and critical biblical analysis of the philosophical speculations and theological implications of Calvinism. Extensively documented from Calvinistic authorities, this book presents the other side to the over 400-year-old debate over the doctrines of Calvinism. The book contains ten chapters, along with a preface, seven appendixes, footnotes, and bibliography. It is further enhanced by subject, name, and Scripture indexes.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Vance's book is a thorough refutation of the doctrinal system called Calvinism. If your authority is Scripture, not some one's man-made system, this book will show you without a doubt that the doctrines of limited atonement, irresistible grace, and total inability are simply incompatible with the Bible and turn Jesus Christ into a disingenuous speaker of Clintonian proportions. The protestations by Calvinists that Vance and other authors "misrepresent Calvinism" are simply laughable. One of the reasons that Vance's book is such a massive tome is because he spends so much paper letting the Calvinists speak for themselves. That we have enough different Calvinist apologetics books to create a new continent in the Pacific is evidence enough that something seriously lacks in the "logic box" of John Calvin's mind. Vance does an admirable job distilling Calvinist positions down to a readable quantity without distorting their positions. And I should know -- I was once a hard-line Calvinist. Complaints that all refutations of Calvinism inherently distort Calvinism ring just as hollow

as the same exact arguments by evolutionists who complain that anyone denying evolution doesn't understand it. Don't let the negative reviews persuade you to ignore this book. Read it.

Laurence M. Vance is a director of the Francis Wayland Institute, as well as a prolific author of books such as *Christianity and War* and *Other Essays Against the Warfare State*, *King James, His Bible, and Its Translators*, etc. He wrote in the Preface to this revised 1999 edition, "The doctrines of Calvinism... are detrimental to evangelism, personal soul winning, prayer, preaching, and practical Christianity in general..." After commending the Calvinist for his insistence on the complete ruin of man in the Fall, and salvation by grace as the only hope for a depraved sinner, Vance adds, "What we reject is the other side of Calvinism: the philosophical speculations of Total Depravity and theological implications of Total Inability." (Pg. 239) He suggests that "this arbitrary division of men into either Calvinists or Arminians is the strength of the Calvinistic system." (Pg. 9) He notes that since even Calvinistic Baptists agree that Augustine, Luther, Calvin, and Edwards were wrong about infant baptism, "Does it not stand to reason that they could correspondingly be wrong on predestination as well?" (Pg. 15) Later, he asks, "if there exists even the slightest possibility that a man could believe, the doctrine of Total Depravity falls by the wayside." (Pg. 238) He calls the confounding of election and predestination with salvation the "basic error of Calvinism" (pg. 245), and charges that by "arbitrary capriciousness," the Calvinist God condemns men to eternal punishment "for no other reason than his sovereign good pleasure." (Pg. 258) In contrast, even though election is supposed to be sovereign and unconditional, "Calvinists as a rule would insist that all children who die in infancy are part of the 'elect.'" (Pg. 397) He asserts that Calvinists "talk out of both sides of their mouth when they try to uphold Calvinism and the importance of preaching the Gospel." (Pg. 541) He suggests that the more consistently a man practices Calvinism, "the less evangelistic he becomes." (Pg. 550) This strong critique---which heavily quotes Calvinist sources---is essential reading for anyone wanting to learn more about the counter-arguments to Calvinism.

Laurence M. Vance has gone to considerable lengths to present a historically accurate, well documented account of the sustainers and retractors of Calvinism, the events that led up to its being accepted as the 'standard' it has become over the centuries, and his own understanding as to how this all plays out in the light of Scripture. Unlike most other works of its kind, in 'The Other Side of Calvinism' Dr. Vance quotes a vast number of supporters of Calvinism - including John Calvin himself - and utilizes their own words to bolster and enforce his counter-points. To this end Dr. Vance also succeeds in conveying to the reader that there exists much confusion among the

Calvinist rank and file. As noted within the book, this fact is not without its import. A down-to-earth writing style, exhaustive endnotes, Scriptural references, and large appendices do much to secure the reader and encourages one to recognize that this is a work that expects personal conclusions to be based upon a process of reasoning and Biblical validation, not general presumption. Dr. Vance takes nothing for granted in presenting the comparison of his views to those of Calvinism and its supporters. Whether one upholds the system or not, 'The Other Side of Calvinism' will undoubtedly leave the majority of its readers challenged and well informed.

I had some questions about predestination and got some books by RC Sproul from our church library. After reading them, I was fairly convinced of the rightness of Reformed theology when a Baptist friend loaned me this book by Dr. Vance. There is simply no way I can express my thanks to Dr. Vance. I know now for certain that Calvinism is a man made doctrine. Dr. Vance not only analyzes Calvinism from a Biblical perspective, but also from a historic perspective. It comes up short in both areas. Another reviewer said that Dr. Vance doesn't know theology. I don't know about that, but he sure knows the Bible! This book is saturated with Biblical references. Every argument is supported by scripture upon scripture. I often thought Sproul took some leaps in logic when he discussed scripture such as "whosoever will" and the like. Dr. Vance, on the other hand, seems content to "let God be true, and every man a liar." I have a Ph.D. in history and I was pleased to find Dr. Vance so careful and meticulous in his references. I only wish he could have taken the time to provide an annotated bibliography rather than just a cursory list of references which goes on for page after page.

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