

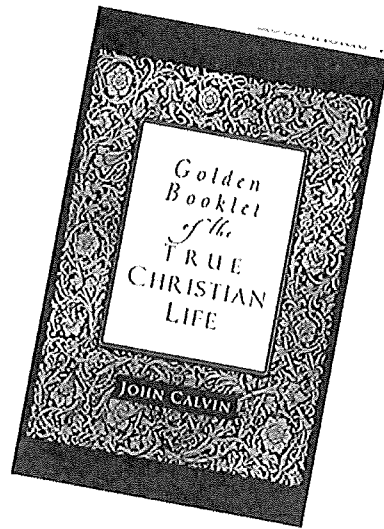
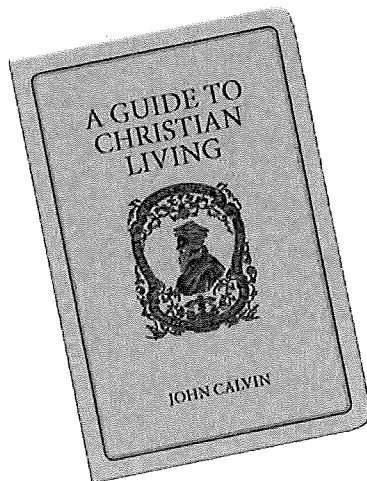


Let's Read *The Institutes of the Christian Religion, Class 10*

**Book 3: Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer
Chapters 6-10, 20**



Calvin's Institutes, Book 3, Chapters 6-10



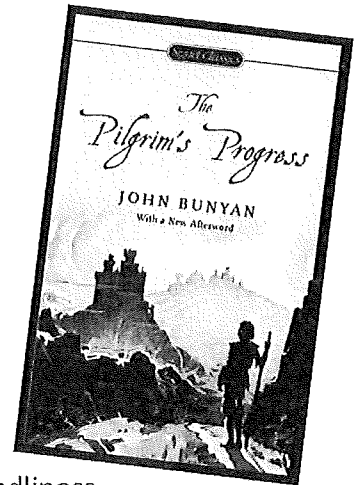
The whole of the Christian life is faith and repentance.

- Motivations
 1. The Holy Spirit fills our hearts with a love for holiness.
 2. The Law of God guides us in the path of holiness.
 3. A distinguishing between self-satisfaction and our need for growth.

- The Sum of the Christian Life
 1. Self-denial
 2. Devotion towards the life to come
 3. Steps to take in this life

Self-Denial

- Not self-loathing or denigration –
 - we are to be grateful for what God has given us
 - and not treat it poorly or destructively.
- Called to live as “living sacrifices” (Rom. 12:1-2)
- “Service” – convinced and committed in mind and heart.
- Remove the obstacles of ungodliness and worldly lusts.
- Replacing those things with soberness, righteousness, and godliness.



*We must “journey as pilgrims in this world
that our celestial heritage may not perish or pass away.”*

Various diseases repeatedly trouble us: now plague rages, now we are cruelly beset by the calamities of war; now ice and hail, consuming the year's expectation, lead to barrenness, which reduces us to poverty; wife, parents, children, neighbors, are snatched away by death; our house is burned by fire. It is on account of these occurrences that men curse their life, loathe the day of their birth, abominate heaven and the light of day, rail against God, and as they are eloquent in blasphemy, accuse him of injustice and cruelty.

But in these matters the believer must also look to God's kindness and truly father indulgence ... Whatever happens, because he will know it ordained of God, he will undergo it with a peaceful and grateful mind so as not obstinately to resist the command of him into whose power he once for all surrendered himself and his every possession.

Self-Denial

- Towards our neighbor
 - With humility of heart rather than self-pride
 - Towards our neighbor's benefit
 - Honoring the image of God in him
- Towards God chiefly
 - Resigning ourselves and our property to the Lord's will
 - Accepting the trials of life

Self-Denial

- Bearing the cross – perhaps not always suffering but continually bearing the cross
 - Be taught and reminded always toward humility
 - Exercise continually a patience and obedience
 - Submit and welcome the correction/reproof of God
 - Depend more and more on God in the face of affliction
- Not the same as suffering common to man
 - The choice to bear the witness of the gospel => affliction/persecution
 - Enduring consequences
 - Not only of abstaining/participating that attracts attention
 - but also suffering loss as a result of submission/obedience to Christ
 - We gain the spiritual fruit that comes from patience/dependency on God

Thinking of our crown raises our eyes to heaven.

- This life is one of pilgrimage, of exile.
 - Calvin is not “world-denying” or mystical.
We are to be active, obedient, and involved in the world (not withdrawn).
 - We must not hate this life or be ungrateful to God
but use this life to the glory of God.
- This life is one of responsibility.
 - We are sentries on duty – in service until relieved/recalled.
 - We do not have the privilege of rejecting the world.
 - We must prove ourselves faithful (Calvin’s sense of calling in all vocations).

Thinking of our crown raises our eyes to heaven.

- Principles for this life:
 1. Use God’s gifts for what he has created for us to do.
 2. Recognize God as the source of all good things & give him thanks (worship).
 3. Learn how to go without things patiently.
 4. Remember that one day we will give account.
 5. Be faithful to the calling God gives to you.
 6. Remember the dignity and importance of work.

Prayer – the chief exercise of faith

Religion on earth finds its highest expression in the act of prayer, but Calvinism in the Christian church is simply that tendency which makes a person assume the same attitude toward God in his profession and life which he exhibits in prayer.

There is no Christian, be he Lutheran or Baptist, Methodist or Greek, whose prayer is not thoroughly Calvinistic. No child of God, to whatever church organization he may belong, but in his prayer he gives glory to God above and renders thanks to his Father in heaven for all that grace is working in him and acknowledges that the eternal love of God alone has, in the face of his resistance, drawn him out of darkness into light.

On his knees before God everyone that has been saved will recognize the sole efficiency of the Holy Spirit in every good work performed and will acknowledge that, without the atoning grace of Him who is rich in mercies, he would not exist for a moment but would sink away in guilt and sin.

Prayer – the chief exercise of faith

In a word, whoever truly prays ascribes nothing to his own will or power except the sin that condemns him before God and knows of nothing that could endure the judgment of God except it be wrought in him by divine love.

While all other tendencies in the church preserve this attitude as long as the prayer lasts will lose themselves in radically different perceptions as soon as the amen has been pronounced, the Calvinist adheres to the truth in his prayer, in his confession, in his theology, in his life. The amen that has closed his petition reechoes the depth of his consciousness and throughout the whole of his existence.

(Abraham Kuyper)

Prayer – the chief exercise of faith

- Importance of Prayer
 - It is a treasure.
 - It is the picture of God as the Father.
- Why do we pray if God already knows everything and has already determined what He's going to do?
 - Prayer is not for His sake, but for ours.
 - We are never so close to God as when we earnestly pray to him.
- What about when he doesn't seem to hear?
 - He trains us to patience.
 - He stirs us from idleness/laziness.

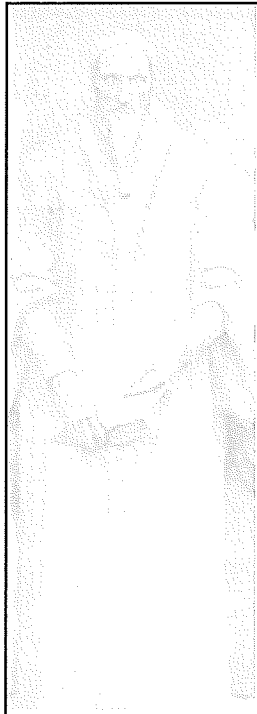
Prayer – the chief exercise of faith

- Description of Prayer
 - Pray!
 - Pray often! (lengthy analysis of the Lord's Prayer)
 - Pray properly!
 - With reverence
 - With concentration
 - With humility
 - With repentance
 - With confidence
 - God can answer our prayers ("Calvinism is the only creed that will bear translation into prayer" – Reed)
 - God will answer our prayers
 - With perseverance

Prayer – the chief exercise of faith

- Public Prayer

- Time - “indifferent to God”
- Place - church
- Manner - speaking and singing
 - Early Calvin close to Zwingli calling for the elimination of singing in public worship. (W. Farel was of the same mind in this.)
 - Later Calvin (probably under Bucer’s influence), Calvin includes singing in worship.
 - He was persuaded singing the Psalms was the practice of the apostles.
 - But he understood the need to avoid the corruption in singing that had developed in the medieval church: in Latin with convoluted and complicated music).
 - Singing is a form of prayer and that it arouses the heart.
 - Advocated singing only the Psalms (whether in worship or not!)
 - Calvin wanted new music for the congregation to sing by (Luther incorporated familiar tunes).



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