

**WHAT IS CALVINISM? OR THE  
CONFESSION OF FAITH, IN HARMONY  
WITH THE BIBLE AND COMMON  
SENSE, IN A SERIES OF DIALOGUES  
BETWEEN A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER  
AND A YOUNG CONVERT**

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What is Calvinism? Or the confession of faith, in harmony with the Bible and common sense, in a series of dialogues between a Presbyterian minister and a young convert by William D. Smith

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**WILLIAM D. SMITH**

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DIALOGUES BETWEEN A PRESBYTERIAN MINISTER  
AND A YOUNG CONVERT.

BY THE ✓

REV. WILLIAM D. SMITH, D.D.

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## INTRODUCTION.

There are two causes which exert a powerful influence in rendering unpopular those doctrines usually styled Calvinistic. One of them is radical, and not to be removed by reason or argument. Its seat is in the heart. It consists in a distaste for doctrines which are so humiliating, and therefore repugnant to our depraved nature. The only effectual remedy is the grace of God. When, by the renewal of our minds, we are brought fully and cordially to acquiesce in the Divine government, and to rejoice that the "Lord God Omnipotent reigneth," the *essential elements* of these doctrines will not only form a part of our creed, but become the nourishment of our souls and the source of our purest and most elevated enjoyment.

The other cause alluded to is a misapprehension of what these doctrines really are, as understood by those who believe them. They are often rejected on this ground even by pious men, who, relying upon the representations of uncandid and prejudiced writers or speakers, are made to believe that they are dishonourable to God, and therefore not only to be repudiated, but abhorred. There are not a few, whose religious knowledge is small, that will scarcely listen with patience to Calvinistic preachers, because of the erroneous impression made upon their minds by false and slanderous statements concerning their system of faith. And when they do hear them, and find that no such odious doctrines are preached, they sometimes charge them with hypocrisy in concealing

their real sentiments. To remove these prejudices and to enlighten the minds of such, is an important object; and hence a work which states with candor and correctness what these doctrines are, as held by their advocates, which explains, proves, and illustrates them in a kind, lucid, and convincing manner, and thus commends itself to the attention and confidence of its readers, is of great and permanent value. The present volume we regard as such a book; and we most cordially and earnestly recommend it to all candid and sincere inquirers after truth. Upon plain and unsophisticated minds, it can scarcely fail to make a favourable impression. We commend it, also, to the doubting, and even to the prejudiced (if any such are willing to read it), believing that a careful perusal of its contents will produce a beneficial result.

Dr. Smith had served the church as a pastor, as a missionary among the Indians, as an editor of a religious paper, and as a teacher of youth. For two or three years previous to his decease, which occurred in the autumn of 1848, he was a professor in "Anderson's Collegiate Institute" at New Albany, Indiana, where his services were highly appreciated. Only a few days before his death, the honorary degree of D. D. was conferred upon him by the trustees of his *Alma Mater*, Washington College, Pa. As a preacher, he was eminently scriptural. His manners were plain and unaffected; his temper sweet and equable; his conversation agreeable and edifying. He was, in short, "an Israelite, indeed, in whom was no guile." His departure from the world was peaceful and happy. Many tears were shed over his grave, and his memory will be long embalmed in the affections of his numerous friends. Our prayer is that this volume may perpetuate his name and his usefulness to many generations. It is worthy of a place in every Christian family.

JAMES WOOD.



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# WHAT IS CALVINISM?

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## DIALOGUE I.

### INTRODUCTION.

*Convert.*—I have called this evening to converse with you on a subject, which has of late occupied my mind very much. I have recently, as you are aware, through divine grace, had my mind very seriously exercised on the subject of religion, and now have hopes that I have experienced a gracious change, and have become a child of God—consequently, I have felt desirous of connecting myself with some religious society. As it was through the instrumentality of Presbyterian ministers I was first led to see my lost condition, and ultimately to cast myself on Christ for salvation, I had a preference for that church. But, I have been told, you believe such dreadful doctrines, that I have been led to doubt what would be duty.