

Hunt's further attack on Calvin

Dave Hunt, a well-known Dispensationalist author and speaker, has written many condemnations of Calvin, which have been baseless. In his recent book, '*Calvin's Tyrannical Kingdom*', he continues to misrepresent the historical truth with special reference to Augustine.

John Brentnall, in the 2013:2 edition of *Peace and Truth*, has written a simple critique of some parts of Hunt's book. For the benefit of readers unaware of this magazine, I will adapt and abbreviate his arguments here.

Hunts errors summarised

In a manner typical of modern Calvin bashers, Hunt uses very emotive and unbalanced language. He misunderstands quotations, uses unproven assumptions and arrives at erroneous conclusions. In short, he paints a travesty of Calvin's ministry in Geneva and his relation to Augustine.

Examples of Hunt's shocking assertions

- Augustine is the source of most modern Calvinism, hence the infiltration of Romanist ideas.
- Augustine was a loyal Roman Catholic.
- Augustine supported military force against early baptists (i.e. those who rebaptised after conversion).
- Calvin copied Augustine's methods of military force, capital punishment and coercion in Geneva.
- Calvin often cited Augustine's writings as authoritative.
- Calvin never disagreed with Augustine.
- Augustine was a heretic:
 - Augustine taught that grace came through Roman Catholic sacraments.
 - Augustine believed in apostolic succession from Peter.
 - Augustine taught that Mary was sinless and promoted her worship.
- Calvin's theology had much in common with Roman Catholic theology, including teaching meritorious works and the impossibility of assurance.

The essence of all this is a pack of lies.

Answer to these assertions

- Calvin repeatedly asserted that the source of his theology was Scripture, not Augustine.
- Augustine invoked the law only against the Circumcellions. This separatist group went about in gangs beating up believers in the church.
- Augustine's support of the Biblical view of 'compelling people to come in' has nothing to do with the Roman practice of burning heretics.
- Augustine asserted the independence of the African churches from Rome and never appealed to the pope for a verdict in controversy with heretics.
- Augustine was not a heretic and did not believe that grace came through the sacraments.
- Calvin hated the whole system of Roman Catholicism. [This is evidenced in many works, but see especially his remarks on his own conversion, his reply to Cardinal Sadoleto or his arguments against relics.]

- Calvin did not accept the papal claim of apostolic succession from Peter.
- Calvin did not believe that Mary was sinless or a mediatrix to be worshipped.
- Calvin denied the need for meritorious works in salvation.
- Calvin did not deny assurance.
- Calvin did not coerce people into faith or burn heretics in Geneva. Calvin did not rule Geneva, which was run by a city council. Indeed, the council sometimes acted against Calvin and blocked his reforms. The council was responsible for town discipline. In the matter of the burning of Servetus, the whole of Europe supported this; indeed Geneva would have been at risk if it had not done this since the King of France and the Emperor had demanded it. Burning was the common universal punishment for blasphemy (supported by Calvin and everyone else). In fact Calvin acted kindly towards Servetus, assisted his defence, prayed for his repentance and visited him in prison.
- Regarding the connection between Calvin and Augustine, Calvin accepted the doctrines of grace taught by Augustine but rejected his doctrine of the hierarchical church (which was not at that time Romanist or papal).

The Peace and Truth article is followed by a paper showing the actual relationship between Calvin and Augustine. One should also consult BB Warfield's book on the matter.

Conclusion

Dave Hunt is a respected writer who has written some useful works, such as his condemnation of Charismatic Dominionism and occult practices. However, if Hunt is the researcher that he is reckoned to be, then he must know the truth regarding Calvin since it is well documented in many trustworthy historical works. The only conclusion one can come to is that, either Hunt is thoroughly deceived and thus blinded in this area, or he has deliberately lied to people to push his anti-Calvinist rhetoric.

Since books like this are published for reading by Christians, through respected publishers, one can see the danger that believers are subjected to in this age of apostasy. Christians must check and prove all things and trust nothing but Scripture. They should also have a working knowledge of genuine history.

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