



The Five Points of Calvinism 2

Total Depravity (Eph. 2:1-10)

- o Fallen man's sinful nature affects every part of his being.

1. Man's nature is totality depraved.

- It is morally and spiritually corrupt, making man perverse, sinful, twisted in his entire being.
 - : The "total" is that of extent, not of degree. No part spared from pollution of sin.
 - : In degree, meaning that he is capable of being more sinful than what he is.
- This arose from Adam's fall, and is transmitted down his descendants (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 2:1-3; Psalm 51:5; 58:3). Sin is passed down by propagation, not by imitation.
 - : We are guilty in the sin of Adam as he was the representative head of the human race.
 - : We are also guilty because of the sins we have committed - in thoughts, words & deeds.
- Due to total depravity, man is not willing nor able to return to God.
 - : He has no ability to make himself better, nor make up for the sins he has committed against God.
 - : Neither the light of nature nor the law of God can save him (Rom. 1:18-21; 3:20).

2. The bondage of the will (an expression used by Martin Luther).

- Since the human will is part of his nature, the human will is also sinful.
 - : The human will is "free" only in the sense that a person is capable of making a decision and acting without external compulsion.
- In reality, all the person's decisions and actions are affected by sin because his will is sinful.
 - : This does not mean that the person is incapable of doing any good. He is not as bad as he could be, and he is not as good as he should be (Rom. 3:10; James 2:10).
- Why is man still able to do some good?
 - : (i) God's common grace is at work in the world, to man's good (Matt. 5:45).
 - : (ii) God's image in man was not totally erased by the Fall (Gen. 9:6; Rom. 2:14-15; 13:5).
 - : (iii) God restrains evil by providence (Prov. 21:1), by conscience (Rom. 14-16), and by governments (Rom. 13:4).

3. The need for God's grace.

- Man is not righteous (Rom. 3:10) in two basic sense: (i) he has not kept God's law perfectly; (ii) he has a sinful nature which he has not power to change.
 - : His sins must be atoned for, which Christ came to do (Heb. 9:22, 27-28).
 - : He needs perfect righteousness to stand before God, which Christ came to give (2 Cor 5:21).
- Double imputation is a teaching of the Bible.

- : This was the truth that liberated Martin Luther from his struggle for righteousness.
- : Conviction of sin often precedes conversion (repentance & faith), e.g. John Bunyan.
- Salvation has to come from God, who provides righteousness in Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:15-17).
- : If saved, it is by the grace of God. When saved, all glory belongs to God.

4. The means of salvation.

- Man is “dead in trespasses and sins” (Eph. 1-3).
- : A dead man cannot rise by his own power, for he has none. God must regenerate him by the power of the Holy Spirit (John 3:3, 5; 11:43-44; 1 Pet. 1:23).
- God has ordained the means of hearing the word to save (Rom. 10:17).
- : Christians have a responsibility to preach the gospel (Rom. 10:14-15; Matt. 28:18-20).
- : Hearers have a responsibility to repent and believe (Ezek. 3:18-19).
- Repentance (Acts 11:18; 2 Tim. 2:25), and faith (Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 1:29) are gifts of God.
- : Salvation is by grace, through faith, in Christ alone.

= We are guilty before God. We have no righteousness of our own. We need Christ’s righteousness.

= Sinners must hear the gospel. Preach the gospel, with dependence upon God to save.

Review Questions

1. In what sense is man “depraved” in nature?
2. In what sense is his depravity “total”?
3. What is the effect of total depravity upon man in relation to God?
4. In what sense is the human will “free”?
5. Why is man still able to do some good?
6. In what sense is man not righteous?
7. What is “double imputation” when a person comes to faith in Christ?
8. How may a spiritually dead person be made alive?
9. What is the means used by God to save?
10. How should we look upon repentance and faith in salvation?

Assignment/Discussion

If we preach “the need to repent and believe” and “the inability of man to repent and believe” at one and the same time, would we not be contradicting ourselves? How should we understand the cry of the hearers, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37) and “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30)?
