



Let's Read *The Institutes* of the Christian Religion, Class 5

Book 2: Of the Knowledge of God the Redeemer
Chapters 1-5



The Fall and the Consequences

Your view of sin is directly connected to your view of salvation.

- Adam's sin condemns the entire human race.
 - Knowledge of ourselves is, therefore, 2-fold:
 - As fearfully and wonderfully created – which should yield gratitude on our part
 - As catastrophically and irreparably fallen – which should yield humility on our part
 - Nature of the fall
 - Augustine: pride
 - Calvin: pride, disobedience, unfaithfulness (root) – yielding ingratitude
 - Capability/Culpability of the fall
 - Man created with free will
 - Man's ruin credited to him alone

Why did God allow it? not prevent it?

- The dilemma of free will
 - Calvin – God cannot intervene (in stopping the fall) without over-ruling free will
 - Pelagius – God cannot intervene (in fallen man choosing God) without over-ruling free will
- The limitation of our curiosity
 - Calvin will curb mere curiosity at several points
 - Calvin alludes to predestination but does not deal with that here.

How is “original sin” transmitted?

- “Original sin”
 - A term in theological use since the Church Fathers
 - Calvin prefers the term “inherited sin” and “corruption”
- Transmission
 - Is not by carnal (biological) means (a.k.a. “nature”)
 - having to do with Calvin’s understanding that each soul is uniquely created)
 - Is not by imitation (a.k.a. “nurture”) (rf. Pelagius)
- Spiritual inheritance
 - Adam is the “root” of human nature
 - Adam is the “head” of the human race

Therefore, we are born guilty and depraved

- Guilt – the entire human race perished in the sin of Adam (1 Cor. 15)
- Depravity
 - Positive - not only an emptiness of good but having a fertility of evil
 - RCs: the fall removed part of the image of God leaving man more an animal
 - Calvin: more than reduction; this is perversion
 - Radical - effecting all of mankind
 - RCs: the fall effects the carnal nature, primarily, leaving will/mind unhindered
 - Calvin:
 - a comprehensive invasion at all stages of life
 - A total but not exhaustive – neither consistent nor fully manifested
God restrains the sinfulness of sinful people.

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- Depravity
 - Positive - not only an emptiness of good but having a fertility of evil
 - Radical - effecting all of mankind
 - Unalterable – bound over to a miserable servitude
 - He has lost faith/trust/devotion to God and a zeal for holiness
 - Natural faculties – reason/will – are impaired/corrupted
 - Mind (Noetic effects)
 - Earthly things – still able to learn/apply/advance (fruits are still gifts of God)
 - Heavenly things – mental failure – inklings/tastings but not anything lasting/substantial
 - “Philosophers manage to sprinkle their books with droplets of truth
but they miss the sum of things.”

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 - Unalterable – bound over to a miserable servitude
 - Man has forfeited his free will – it is now in bondage (Bondage of the Will, Luther)
 - You can do what you want to do. But what is that? To sin and act wickedly.
 - His will can only beget evil yielding only damnable things (bad tree/bad fruit)
 - Not all wicked traits appear in every person
(God's grace restrains where it does not cleanse.)
 - You cannot choose good. "There is an internal necessity to sin willingly."



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