



John Calvin's *Institutes in the Christian Religion* (1541)

A PPA Seminar: Fall 2017

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Study 4: Chapter Two, Pt. 2: Knowledge of Man and Free will

Read pgs. 53-108

"...As it is written, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him"- these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit. For the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God." (1 Cor. 2:9-10)

Scripture Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:9-16; John 1:4-5; Romans 2:14-15; 3:10-23; 7:14-25; Acts 17:24-33

"Things of Earth and Things of Heaven"

1. What distinctions does Calvin make between the spheres of heaven and earth? What is included in the first sphere? The second sphere? What is Calvin's reason is making this important distinction? [pgs. 53-57].
2. How does the Holy Spirit specifically work properly and graciously in both of these spheres? What does this teach you? [pgs. 54-56]
3. Why if the Spirit works in both spheres are the heavenly things incomprehensible to man? What does this have to do with the teaching on free will? [pgs. 56-58]
4. Though man is reasonable, why cannot reason alone bring a man to saving understanding of the things of God? [pgs. 57-59]
5. How does Calvin define natural law? What is its purpose? Why is man incapable of understanding God's law? [pgs. 59-63]

"Why Do You Call Me Good?! ... What is Good?"

6. Can man ever desire the good? How is the good defined by God? [pgs. 63-65]
7. Write down as many scriptures as possible that define man's corruption. Does the Bible teach that man is free to do the good that God desire (requires)? Why, or why not? [pgs. 65-67]

8. Is man as completely evil as he could be? Though man is fallen, can he do good? If yes, what kind of good can man do? [pgs. 67-71]

“Beauty and Power of Grace”

9. What does God promise to give fallen man in redemption? Does man cooperate with God in order to receive this grace, or is this *all of God alone*? Explain your answer. Was this just the teaching of the reformation, or also of the early Christian church? [pgs. 71-79]
10. Distinguish in redemption between sin’s dominion being broken, and sin remaining in the believer? Is there any room for perfectionism? Has any, will any Christian ever attain to perfection this side of heaven? [pgs. 79-84]
11. Is God sovereign over all things? How is Satan God’s “agent”? Explain this complex, but reasonable explanation [pgs. 85-94]
12. What are some of Calvin’s scriptural evidence for and against free will? How might these six arguments help you better understand the fallen condition of man [pgs. 94-104]:
1. Law and Its Commands:
 2. Command to Repent and Turn to God:
 3. God’s Promises:
 4. God’s Reproofs:
 5. God’s Punishments:
 6. God’s Works Also Said to be Ours:
13. What is the powerful and gracious work of God’s Spirit in us? How can this lead us to humbly celebrate God’s good grace, and to walk in the freedom of His love and power? [pgs. 104-108]

“Let us hold fast, then, to this belief which nothing can shake: the mind of man is so wholly estranged from God’s righteousness that it can imagine, devise, and embrace only wickedness, iniquity, and corruption; likewise man’s heart is so poisoned by sin that it can only bring forth defilement. Should anything seemingly good come from it, the mind nevertheless remains wrapped in hypocrisy and vanity, and the heart addicted to every form of evil” [Institutes, pg. 108]

Terms/Implications/Applications

- Duplex Cognito
- Two Covenantal Circles
- Divinitatis Sensum/ Sensus Divinitatis
- Semen Religionis
- Metaphysical Commonality, Epistemological Antithesis
- Theater of God’s Glory
- Spectacles
- Re-Enchantment
- Fideism
- Presuppositionalism
- Evidentialism
- *Fides Quaerens Intellectum*
- Original Sin
- Free will
- Total/Radical Depravity
- Common/Special Grace