

PREPARATION

Time for a recap:

Title of Ch 1: By the fall and revolt of Adam the whole human race was delivered to the curse, and degenerated from its original condition; The doctrine of original sin.

Title of Ch 2: Man has been deprived of freedom of choice and bound over to miserable servitude.

Title of Ch 3: Only damnable things come forth from man's corrupt nature.

Title of Ch 4: How God works in men's hearts.

Ch 4 divides into two parts:

Secs 1 – 5: Man under Satan's control: but scripture shows God making use of Satan in hardening the heart of the reprobate.

Secs 6 – 8: God's providence overrules men's wills in external matters.

EXPLORATORY

1. Calvin starts by reminding us of something he has 'proved' and something he has 'posited'. What are these two things? (309, 5ff)

- a. Man, held captive by sin, *can neither aspire to good through resolve nor struggle after it through effort.*
- b. *...man, while he sins of necessity, no less sins voluntarily.*

Two questions/areas of investigation remain. What are they? (309, 12ff)

- a. Determining, *the part of the devil and the part of man in the action.*
- b. Establishing, *whether we ought to ascribe to God any part of the evil works in which scripture signifies some action of his intervenes.*

The fact that, without regeneration, Satan is our rider does not mean – what? (310, 3ff)

- a. We are not willingly obedient to him.

Why is obedience to Satan the path we choose, rather than obedience to God? (310, 17)

- a. Because we want to sin.

2. This section seems to me to be easy enough to follow. Let us notice one thing: What was God's good purpose in the calamities that Job experienced? (310, 30f)

- a. *...to exercise the patience (ie endurance) of his servant by calamity.*

What is the purpose of exercise?

- a. To build up strength.

3. Calvin identifies two ways in which God produces hardness in men's hearts. What are they? (312, 2ff & 10ff)

- a. Removing his light;
- b. *God destines men's purpose... arouses their wills & strengthens their (ungodly) endeavours.*

4. This section requires no comment from me.

5. How do we know that the, *Spirit off/from the Lord*, referred to in the passages cited from 1 Samuel is not a reference to the Holy Spirit? (313, 18ff)

- a. It is an, *evil*, spirit.

If it is an, *evil spirit*, how can it be referred to as a spirit of/from the Lord? (313, 22ff)

- a. *...because it responds to his will and power, and acts rather as God's instrument than by itself as the author.*

Why is it appropriate for God to increase certain people's exposure to lies? (313, 26f)

- a. Because they have not obeyed the truth.

6. What kinds of decisions is Calvin dealing with in this section? (314, 2f)

- a. *...actions that are of themselves neither righteous nor corrupt and look toward the physical rather than the spiritual life.*

How important is this issue in Calvin's estimation? (314, 8ff)

- a. Not as important as justification but important enough not to neglect.

Are any of the Biblical examples Calvin goes on to give in this section examples of *actions that are of themselves neither righteous nor corrupt*? (314f)

- a. No

What should we conclude from this?

- a. That it is impossible for us to estimate, at the time the action takes place, what its spiritual ramifications might be.

7. What example teaches us, according to Calvin, that all of our thought processes are under God's control? (315, 24ff)

- a. Mental inconsistency. We often resolve important and seemingly complex issues quite easily in our minds whereas we sometimes do not know how to proceed in much simpler situations.

Proverbs 20:12, what are sight and hearing?

- a. Senses

What does Proverbs 20:12 teach us about our senses? (315, 30ff)

- a. That even the operation of our senses is controlled by God.

Proverbs 21:1, why, according to Calvin, does God mention the king's heart in this verse? (315, 35ff)

- a. *Solomon...comprehends the whole genus under a single species...if the king's will is bent by God's hand, our wills are not exempt from that condition.*

8. One fact commonly asserted in order to establish that man's will is not free is human inability to accomplish all that we will. Does Calvin view this line of reasoning as valid? (316, 9ff)

- a. No

What are the two questions we need to answer in order to determine whether men have free wills? (316, 18f)

- a. *...whether he has...choice of judgment and inclination of will that are free.*

What does the comparison between a prisoner experiencing the most extreme form of confinement and an emperor demonstrate?

- b. Judged by the above criteria, each has as much free will as the other.

FOR REFLECTION