

## **Examining Calvinism: Total Depravity**

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • July 31, In the year of our Lord Christ, 2022

Scripture Reader and Reading: Paul Hannan – Philippians 2.12–13

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Larry Amberg or Phil Joseph – Songs on Salvation

### **Prelude:**

#### **I. Troy Cummings emphasized two things:**

A. Know all the word of God and

B. balance.

1. The second one comes from the first one.

2. He believed this would avoid all kinds of problems,

a) including misinterpretation of Scripture and

b) the rejection of denominational doctrine.

C. He emphasized two passages in particular:

**160 The entirety of Your word is truth,  
And every one of Your righteous judgments endures forever.**

**– Psalm 119.160**

**26 “Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. 27 For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”**

**– Acts 20.26–27**

#### **II. Most doctrinal error comes from**

A. overemphasizing one thing over another, or

B. the neglect of other passages on the issue.

#### **III. You will see how important this is when**

A. I review TULIP by Duane Edward Spencer.

B. This booklet is about the five points of Calvinism:

1. Total Depravity

2. Unconditional Election
3. Limited Atonement
4. Irresistible Grace
5. Perseverance of the Saints

C. What surprises me about this author is

1. that he ignores passages which refute what he teaches.
2. He does not even attempt to explain away those passages.
  - a) He just acts as though they do not exist,
  - b) although I am sure that if I met him in person,
    - (1) he would have something to say, but
    - (2) as it is, he left off saying anything in his booklet.
      - (a) I believe that has led to a lopsided view of salvation,
        - i) which is that man has absolutely nothing to do
        - ii) with his salvation, because
          - (1) they claim that it is all of God.
          - (2) And the reason some are lost
            - (a) is because that is the way God desires it.
            - (b) Such a doctrine makes you question
            - (c) evangelism, teaching, et al.

#### IV. What is Total Depravity?

##### **Persuasion:**

##### **I. Beyond Self-Help Because Man Is Born Dead in Sin**

**“It meant that man was beyond all self-help because, as Paul puts it, he is born into this world ‘dead in trespasses and sins...’”**

– Page 24

A. He used this passage:

**2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, 3 among whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.**

– Ephesians 2.2–3

B. He said the following as further commentary on Ephesians 2:

**“Man’s depravity, or *Total Inability* to deliver himself from bondage to sin, is grounded in the fact that his human *spirit* is dead from birth.”**

– Page 24

C. Ephesians 2 does not teach

1. that we are born dead in trespasses and sins.
2. Paul taught
  - a) that we walked,
  - b) conducted ourselves, and
  - c) fulfilled our desires.
    - (1) That is something that we engaged in actively.
    - (2) That made us children of wrath.
      - (a) We made ourselves people worthy of wrath.
      - (b) Nothing is said about birth in this passage.

## II. Incapable of Discerning Truth

**“*Total Depravity* means that the natural man is completely incapable of discerning Truth.”**

– Page 26

A. He used First Corinthians 2.14

**14 But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.**

– 1 Corinthians 2.14

B. As long as a person continues functioning according to his fleshly nature,

1. he is not receptive to the Spirit of God.
2. Yet, some people do open their hearts.
  - a) They hear the truth and
  - b) it changes them, because
    - (1) they begin to agree with it.
    - (2) He sees the wisdom of it.

**III. Cannot See Spiritually Until Regenerated by the Holy Spirit**

**“Man cannot see or know the things which relate to the kingdom of God, without being regenerated first by the Holy Spirit.”**

– Page 26

A. He used John 3.3

**3 Jesus answered and said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”**

– John 3.3

B. However, Jesus said again:

**5 Jesus answered, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.”**

– **John 3.5**

C. Jesus spoke of seeing the kingdom of God

1. in the sense of entering the kingdom of God.
2. You cannot see what is in it,
  - a) until you enter it, and
  - b) you cannot enter it
    - (1) until you are born again.
    - (2) Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, because
      - (a) it was something that the Pharisee needed to know
      - (b) that he might know what to do.

**IV. Incapable of Pleasing God**

**“They are totally depraved, wholly incapable of thinking, perceiving, or doing anything pleasing to God, until God sees fit to give them Life and understanding.”**

– **Page 27**

A. He used several passages, but I want to note this one:

**13 for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

– **Philippians 2.13**

B. This is the danger of the versification of the Bible.

1. Verse 13 is not a complete sentence.
2. It is part of a sentence.
  - a) Every major translation begins with the word, “for,” and
  - b) every translation does not capitalize the “f.”

- (1) Therefore, when I put it on the screen or
- (2) when he quotes it in his book,
  - (a) it should look like this
  - (b) with the ellipsis at the beginning,
    - i) indicating that part of the sentence is missing:

**13 ...for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

**– Philippians 2.13**

C. Verse 13 explains verse 12:

**12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.**

**– Philippians 2.12–13**

1. They needed to understand
2. that God was at work in their lives.
  - a) Therefore, they needed to work out their own salvation and
  - b) to do so with fear and trembling.

### **Conclusion:**

#### **I. The Bible does not picture salvation**

- A. only of God or
- B. only of man.
  1. It shows God working with man and
  2. man working with God.

#### **II. For example, think of a well-known passage: Acts 2.**

A. Peter convicted the Jews of sin.

B. They responded:

**37 Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”**

**– Acts 2.37**

1. They wanted to know what they had to do.
2. Notice in Peter’s response what he did and did not say.

C. He said the following:

**38 Then Peter said to them, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”**

**– Acts 2.38**

1. What they had to do was repent and be baptized.
2. Jesus would then remit or forgive their sins.
  - a) See how the Lord and man worked together?
  - b) Salvation was coming by grace through faith.

D. However, Peter was not done:

**39 “For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.” 40 And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, “Be saved from this perverse generation.” 41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.**

**– Acts 2.39–41**

1. The Lord our God was making the promise.
2. He was doing the calling.
  - a) In answer to the Lord’s call,

b) listen to what Peter said:

**“Be saved from this perverse generation.”**

**– verse 40**