

TULIP: T (Total Depravity)

“Rotten Fruit”

Connie Meyer

A large wooden bowl filled with assorted fruits decorated the kitchen table. Shiny red apples and fresh-smelling oranges were mounded in the center of the bowl, while bright green grapes spilled over the edges. It was a beautiful arrangement. “May I eat one of the fruits?” Ellisa asked her mother. Mother shook her head. “There’s more in the fridge to eat, but these are for decoration. I want them to last into next week if possible. Company’s coming, and a bowl of fruit looks very inviting, don’t you think?” Ellisa nodded. It looked so inviting, it made her mouth water. She couldn’t help touching one of the grapes. She felt its firm, translucent roundness. Ellisa kept an eye on the fruit bowl. More than a week had passed, and the apples weren’t so glossy anymore. One of the oranges had a spot of mold. “I guess the fruit has had its day,” Ellisa’s mother said. “We can use the apples for sauce, but the rest will have to go.” “That seems such a shame,” said Ellisa. “Isn’t there anything that can make the rotten fruit to be fresh again?” “No, Ellisa. When something is rotten, it’s rotten. Nothing will make it better.” Ellisa nodded as she inspected some of the fruits. She quickly dropped a grape that began to ooze and squish between her fingers. “Ee-ew.” “Our sinful natures are like that, you know,” Mother went on. “Our old man of sin never improves. By nature we can never do any good. We’re dead in sin. That’s why it’s such a miracle that God changes our hearts and makes us spiritually alive. We still have the old nature of sin, but our inmost hearts are made new.” Ellisa helped her mother put the apples into another bowl. She thought on how her day had gone so far. She still felt sorry about some things she had said and done. “Yes, we still have the old man,” she said sadly. “Yes,” said Mother, “that old man is rotten as ever. But in the new man we don’t want to sin. That’s Christ in us.” Ellisa helped gather the rest of the fruit into a plastic bag. “And Christ has the victory,” Mother added as she left to peel and core the apples. Ellisa pondered these things as she took the bag of rotten fruit away. She still felt bad about her sins that day. Was there really victory over the old man? But yes, sorrow over sin was evidence of it. That was Christ in her. She truly did not want to sin, and hated it. She dropped the rotten fruit into the trash.

* * * * *

Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature, nor to dispose themselves to reformation. (Canons III/IV, Article 3)