

Antichrist 2012 – 025 and 026 Israel and the Church

*"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people, producing the fruit of it.
– Mt. 21:43 (NASB)*

Psalms 66:18 If I perceive sin in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.

Psalms 32:5 I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all other unrighteousness.

1 Cor 11:31 But if we judge ourselves rightly, we should not be judged.

Ephesians 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; 9 not as a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Rom. 11:6, *"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace."*

Gal. 2:21, *"I do not nullify the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the Law, then Christ died needlessly."*

Gal. 3:24, *"Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith."*

1 Corinthians 3:11 For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.'

John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life."

Antichrist 2012...

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived." - 2 Timothy 3:13, KJV

Grafted in to the Abrahamic Promise, but not the Mosaic Law

“Wherefore, my brethren, ye also were made dead to the law through the body of Christ; that ye should be joined to another, even to him who was raised from the dead, that we might bring forth fruit unto God. “

“Now we have been discharged from the law, having died to that wherein we were held; so that we serve in newness of the spirit, and not in oldness of the letter (law)”

(Rom. 7:4, 6 ASV).

One Lord, Not Law!

Within the believer the Holy Spirit applies *“the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”*; not the law of condemnation and death ([Rom. 8:2](#); [2 Cor. 3:6–9](#)).

The Spirit of Christ does not write any law upon the heart of any Christian - He ministers life, *“that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh”* ([2 Cor. 4:11](#)).

The kingdom law will be written on the heart of the redeemed Jew in the millennium, but now it is *“Christ in you”* ([Col. 1:27](#)).

“The Christian is not under law, -nor is he under promise; he has the effect of the accomplished promise - “for to me *to live is Christ*” *Phil. 1:21*).

The believer, dead to the law and alive to God in Christ risen, looks upon his Lord, not Israel’s law.

Christians, “with unveiled face beholding as in a mirror. the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord, “-not “even as by the law of the Lord” (*2 Cor. 3:18*).

Just as the Ten Commandments were the declaration of the mind of

God under the dispensation of the law; so now the Church is the engraving of Christ, “written, not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart,” to show forth the virtues of Him “who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.

Law demands everything, but gives and changes nothing - it is meant to condemn.

We may even turn the Lord Jesus into that letter of condemnation; we may take His life, for instance, and make it our law.

We may say, “He has loved me, and

done all this for me, and I ought to love Him, and do so much for Him, in return for His love, etc. “ Thus if we turn His love into our rule of life, it becomes the ministration of death; for the only thing a rule can do is condemn.

Christianity is a nature, not a regulation.

Law-Bound

The entire area of the believer's identification with the Lord Jesus in His death and ascension is not only misunderstood, but usually avoided by Calvinism.

Although Paul explicitly wrote that *“sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under law but under grace” (Rom. 6:14).*

Calvinism insists that the Spirit will enable the believer to live by the principle of law.

Paul pleads especially with these Calvinists: *“Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law), how that the law hath dominion*

over a man as long as he liveth?”
([Rom. 7:1](#)). They fail to understand the believer's death to the law. Beyond justification they lose their doctrinal footing and slip back to the ground of death (law), failing to move forward onto the ground of growth: Christ, our life.

Typical of all Covenant Theologians, Dr. John Stott wrote in his *Christian Counter-Culture*:

It is a new heart- righteousness which the prophets foresaw as one of the blessings of the Messianic age. “I will put my law within them, and I will write it upon their hearts,”

God promised through Jeremiah (31:33). How would He do it? He told Ezekiel: “I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes” (36:27).

Thus God’s promises to put his law within us and to put his Spirit within us coincide.

We must not imagine (as, some do today) that when we have the Spirit we can dispense with the law, for what the Spirit does in our hearts is, precisely, to write God’s law there.’

(p. 75)

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It was not only to Timothy that Paul wrote, “*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that*

needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15). Neither Jeremiah nor Ezekiel nor anyone else from Adam on down ever dreamed of such a thing as the Church, to say nothing of a Christian!

That wondrous truth was God’s hidden mystery, until Paul.

We share Merrill Unger’s thought: The Church is said to be a “mystery” (Eph. 3:3),

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“the mystery of Christ” (Eph. 3:4). It was foretold, but not explained, by the Saviour (Matt. 16:18).

It was a truth unknown and unrevealed to anyone in Old

Testament times ([Eph. 3:5](#)), indeed a revelation and purpose “hid in God” throughout the ages ([Eph. 3:9](#)), first realized *historically* at Pentecost, and first revealed *doctrinally* to the Apostle Paul ([Eph. 3:3–7](#)). (*The Baptizing Work of the Holy Spirit*, p. 29)

Actually, God said through Jeremiah,; *“This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people”* (Jer. 31:33). And through Ezekiel He said to His nation, Israel, *“Ye shall dwell in the, land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I shall be your God”* (Ezek. 36:28).

Not only was the Church a hidden mystery throughout the Old Testament, but also in much of the New Testament.

The Lord Jesus said very little about it while ministering here on earth. He waited to give that *heavenly*, Christian revelation through Paul, “*for he is a chosen vessel unto me*” (*Acts 9*). Dr. Chafer’s delineation is clear-cut:

There is a dangerous and entirely baseless sentiment abroad which assumes that every teaching of Jesus must be binding during this age simply because He said it.

The fact is forgotten that the Lord Jesus, while living under, keeping, and applying the Law of Moses, also taught the principles of His future

kingdom, and, *at the end* of His ministry and in relation to His Cross, He also anticipated the teachings of grace.

If this threefold division of the teachings of Christ is not recognized, there can be nothing but confusion of mind and consequent contradiction of truth. The teachings of the kingdom (as centered in the Sermon on the Mount) have not yet been applied to any man.

Since they anticipate the binding of Satan, a purified earth, the restoration of Israel, and the personal reign of the King, they

cannot be applied until God's appointed time when these accompanying conditions on the earth have been brought to pass. The kingdom laws will be addressed to Israel and, beyond them, to all nations which will enter the kingdom.

It will be the first and only universal reign of righteousness and peace in the history of the world.

One *nation* was in view when the Law of Moses was in force on the earth; the *individual* is in view during this age of grace.

The whole *social order* of mankind will be in view when the kingdom is

set up on earth.

The teachings of *grace* are perfect and sufficient in themselves.

They provide for the instruction of the child of God in every situation which may arise.

There is no need that they be supplemented, or augmented, by the addition of precepts from either the Law of Moses or the teachings of the kingdom.

Law cannot give life, nor have, therefore, any control over it.

(*Systematic Theology*, Vol. IV, p. 207)

Since it might be said that the maxim of Calvinism is, “The just

shall live by law,” it is somewhat understandable that it seeks to rule the Church by law.

But it is inexcusable for the Dallas Seminary theologian, Dr. Dwight Pentecost, to present similar teaching in his

Multnomah Press book, *The Sermon on the Mount - Contemporary Insights for a Christian Lifestyle*.

Even more doctrinally loose is the book by the Talbot Seminary grad, John MacArthur, Jr. He also fastens kingdom law upon the believer via his *Kingdom Living Here and Now*--published and highly touted by

Moody Press!

MacArthur is billed as “one of the most biblically sound writers of our day. “ While admirably resisting the tongues error, advocates “one- naturism”: “the old man is gone... removed.”

Granted that Pentecost and Mac Arthur are in impressive company, since all of the nearly fifty Covenant theologians listed above present the law to the believer in the same manner. The best of Calvinists notwithstanding, if the Christian is to grow in grace, he must wait upon Paul and his doctrine of the ascended “*Christ, who is our life*”

(Col. 3:3).

God's mystery of the Church, the Body of Christ, will never become clear and fruitful to the members of that Body via the exegesis of such Calvinists!

We are not seeking to take away, nor negate any of the blessed Word of God. *“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, or correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Tim. 3.16).

It is simply that the law as a rule of life for the believer hinders the realization of identification with, and liberty in, the risen Lord Jesus

Christ.

John Darby was clear on the all-important differentiation: “I learn in the law that God abhorred stealing, but it is not because under the law that I do not steal. All the Word of God is mine, and written for my instruction; yet for all that I am not under law, but a Christian who has died with Christ on the Cross, and am not in the flesh, to which the law applied.

I have died to the law by the body of Christ ([Rom. 7:4](#)).

The Mystery Man

Christian, God never breathed a

word in all of the Old Testament concerning you and your relationship as a member of the Body of the ascended Lord Jesus Christ!

That wonder of God's highest calling in the risen Lord Jesus was barely mentioned, and totally unexplained in the three synoptic Gospels.

Although touched upon, it was not even explained in the Gospel of John.

There was not a single born-again Christian in all the world until the day of Pentecost.

Even then, none of the believers themselves understood what a

Christian really was.

That revelation had to wait until the ascended Lord Jesus Christ personally commissioned the Apostle Paul for his ministry.

In [Colossians 1:26](#) Paul wrote, *“Of which I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfill (complete) the word of God, even the ministry which hath been hidden for ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints, to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which*

is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”
And yet, throughout Paul’s ministry of this mystery of the Christian’s life hid with Christ in God, believers were bent upon considering themselves half Jew and half Christian - born again by grace, but seeking to live by law. Galatians was written by Paul to correct that error, and his Letter is needed more now than it was even in his day. Peter was a Calvinist when at Antioch he attempted to have the best of two diametrically opposed worlds - law and grace. Hence Paul’s scriptural confrontation: *“For I through the law died unto the law,*

that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me” (Gal. 2:19, 20 ASV).

Arminianism has yet to shed its baby flesh; Calvinism has yet to relinquish its childish legalism - if they are ever to grow up into Christ. Paul patiently continues to wait. Luther, Calvin, Zwingli (of blessed memory), the Body is not subject to *reformation* by law - the Scripture via Paul calls for *conformation* by

grace (2 Corinthians 3:18)!

Think of the Calvinist scholar, Dr. J.I.Packer, making such a statement as this: “Keep the law and in thus serving God you find freedom and delight because human nature is programmed for fulfillment through obedience.”

Statement

Calvinism emerged from the dark ages, but is still in the twilight - half in the shadow of the law, half in the light of the Saviour.

It has a fleshly affinity for fetters, hence it is the life of the hang-dog heart, the wretchedness of Romans Seven.

The Apostle Paul

Finally, we come to the one who is least influential in the realm of doctrine among Christians today.

There are three prominent reasons for this sad fact the first two are negative, the third is positive.

First - Due to its humanistic base, Arminianism is suited to the carnal, Adam- dominated Christian.

As Kenneth Good states, “Man is by nature Arminian. The basically human philosophical foundation of Arminianism is quite compatible with man’s inherent rationalism.

Arminianism succeeds (and exceeds) because it appeals to the

natural mind of man.

It seems so reasonable!

Unregenerate man approves it.

It is eminently naturalistic,
comfortably human.

In this day of unprecedented
emphasis upon the sufficiency of
man, the doctrine must inevitably be
successful among those who will not
be regulated by divine revelation.

Arminianism is a *subjective* religion,
swayed by human emotions rather
than living by the Word of God.

From start to finish it is man-
centered, instead of God-centered.

Man is really the object of it, not
God.

Second - Because of its *objective*, legalistic base, Calvinism is also compatible with the carnal, Adam-dominated Christian.

As a rule, Calvinism emphasizes the external law, which hampers internal growth.

Typical of the Calvinistic emphasis, the late Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones insisted, “The Christian must never say farewell to the law. Thank

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God, we are no longer under it as a way of salvation; but we are to keep it, we are to honor it, we are to practice it in our daily life. “

(*Romans*, Chapter 7, p. 27)

In *The Saturday Evening Post* (May-June 1981), a popular Presbyterian Calvinist, Dr. D. James Kennedy, stated, “There is an old saying, ‘You can’t legislate morality,’ I ask: ‘What else can you legislate? The nation that endeavors to live according to His law is the nation that will be most free, the nation where people will enjoy the most happiness.’”

Third - Because of Paul’s near-exclusive teaching of the death-dealing Cross in the life of the believer, and the risen Lord Jesus Christ as his life, the Apostle’s ministry is in complete opposition to all that is of the first Adam.

This includes the law and the world, to say nothing of the principle of sin as expressed by the old nature.

Paul Is All, For Growth

Both the foundation and superstructure for the Christian's growth are given through Paul.

It is from these truths that we can consider what the other inspired writers and the rest of the Bible may have for us, but the revelation given to Paul must be central and foundational.

Remove Paul's Epistles from the Word of God and there is little or nothing left for the believer.

He would shrivel and dry on the vine and never know why.

It is through Paul alone that we learn of the Church, the Body of

Christ, the Bride, and that we are members of that Body - in union with the risen Christ Himself - *“hid with Christ in God”* (Col. 3:3). Furthermore, apart from Paul we can know nothing of the exact meaning of most of the vital doctrines, such as Propitiation, Reconciliation, Justification, Identification, Sanctification, the Church, and the Rapture. Remove Paul, or fail to build upon Pauline truth for growth, and there is comparatively little left but the laws of Moses and of the Millennial Kingdom!
There is nothing in the entire New

Testament concerning the believer's growth that Paul did not set forth.

Life, Not Law!

While the Lord Jesus was on earth He ministered mainly to the nation of Israel, and to His Jewish disciples.

His message had primarily to do with Himself as Messiah and King, and with the coming Kingdom.

Since Pentecost He ministers exclusively to the members of His Body, not now by law, but by "*the law of the Spirit of life*" - via the Epistles of Paul, for the most part.

And the life of the risen Lord Jesus in the Christian is manifested as the fruit of the Spirit, which is *“love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, . self-control; against such there is no law.”*

“For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision (law) availeth anything, nor uncircumcision (lawlessness), but a new creature (life).

“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation... “ (Gal. 5:22, 23; 6:15; 2 Cor. 5:17).

Life From Death

Paul's focal points are the believer's

crucifixion with the Lord Jesus Christ, and His risen life in the believer. *“For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh”* (2 Cor. 4:11).

The death of the Cross and the life of Christ are ministered to the believer by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

He does not administer the law of Moses, nor the law of the King, but rather the life of the Lord. *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8:2).

TO THE ROMANS, Paul ministered death to sin and the law: “Knowing this, that our old man is (was) crucified with him, that the body of sin might be *destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*” “*Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God*” (*Rom. 6:6; 7:4*).

TO THE GALATIANS, Paul ministered death to the law: *“For I through the law died unto the law, that I might live unto God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me”* (Gal. 2:19, 20 ASV).

TO THE EPHESIANS, Paul ministered the believer's position in Christ ascended: *“And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”* (Eph. 2:6).

TO THE COLOSSIANS, Paul focused upon Christ ascended: *“If (since) ye, then, be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God”* (Col. 3:1–3).

TO THE PHILIPPIANS, Paul ministered the principles of the Christian life: *“That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death”* (Phil. 3:10). The Object of the growing believer is Christ, his life.

Brief Comparison

“But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we, by him” (1 Cor. 8:6).

ARMINIANISM is horizontal.
It cannot rise above man and his

“free will,” which binds the Arminian to himself. “I feel.... It ““God told me....” “Jesus, help me, and heal me....

CALVINISM also is horizontal. It struggles under the unbearable burden of the law, heading either back to Edenic Adam, or, on to Israel’s earthly kingdom.

CHRISTIANITY is vertical, resting above.

It descends from There to the responsibilities and needs of a sin-bound world.

The Christian life *begins* in and

comes from heaven, to be manifested here as the light of life. *“Jerusalem which is above is free”* (Gal. 4:26).

ARMINIANISM seeks to feel life. Coming mainly from man, it has little or no defense against Adamic humanism - the world, the flesh, and the devil.

CALVINISM seeks to legislate life. Coming mainly from man, it has little or no defense against the power of sin and self-righteousness, both of which are by the law.

CHRISTIANITY, coming from the

Lord Jesus Christ above, mainly via Paul, is by the Cross freed from both humanistic Adam and death-dealing law. *“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death”* (Rom. 8:2). There is no rest nor peace in Adamic sin, Mosaic law, nor Satan’s world.

The risen Lord Jesus Christ is alone our rest and peace, our All.

Whatever our privileges in union with our risen Lord, it is all-important for the believer to live- in the fear and faith of God, according to “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. “ It is not man’s responsibility

without law or under law; it is all over with us on either ground. It is the responsibility of the new life of faith, which is that of a pilgrim and a stranger here - a life come down from heaven - a life which man lives as passing through this world, yet wholly out of it in spirit - a life of faith which finds in God's presence fullness of joy. --J.B. Stoney

Final Statement

The Church never has escaped from the law, the problem of Galatianism, to this day. During the early centuries,

Romanism saw to that.
The Reformation rescued the Church from the law as a way of justification, but not from the law as a means of sanctification (growth).
The crippling problem in the Body of Christ today is not the aberration of Arminianism, but the “righteousness” of Calvinism - the self-righteousness of the law.
That has ever been the issue, the answer to which was given to us through the Apostle Paul.
“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is LIBERTY” (2 Cor. 3:17)

Why Heretical Teaching?

HERESY is error which often results from an aspect of truth being taken out of its context, or its dispensational setting, and either restricted, or pressed too far.

“For there must be also heresies among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you” (1 Cor. 11:19).

Heresy is a work of the flesh:

“Idolatry, sorcery, hatred, strife, jealousy, wrath, factions, seditions, heresies” (Gal. 5:20).

Peter had to warn the Church from the very beginning. *“But there are false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false*

teachers among you, who secretly shall bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them” (2 Peter 2:1).

Paul had to do the same.

“For I know this, that after my departing (death) shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them” (Acts 20:29, 30).

John also explained concerning error. *“They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt*

have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us” (1 John 2:19).

Heresies cause us to be like the Bereans, who “*were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so”* (Acts 17:11).

Heretics cause us to learn how to handle error correctly, and how to share the truth.

Christian character is formed, and God is glorified. “*The servant of the*

Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose them” (2 Tim. 2:24, 25).

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15).

Dr. H.A. Ironside made this comment regarding error:

It is a definite mercy that in His wisdom God allowed every possible form of error to arise in the apostolic era of the church’s history, in order that all might be exposed, and the truth declared through inspired men, that thus the faith in its simplicity

might be preserved for the generations to come.

As a result of this, Satan has nothing new to offer.

Old heresies are re-dressed and brought forward as new conceptions of truth from age to, age, but in this respect, “there is nothing new under the sun.

Old errors are being presented in new terms.

That old warrior, Martin Luther, wrote, “We little know how good and necessary it is for us to have adversaries, and for heretics to hold up their heads against us.”

“And now, brethren, I commend you

to God, and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up...” (Acts 20:32).

Does Man Have Free Will?

The very first exercise of free will by a created being brought sin into the universe.

Lucifer, the chief of the angels, set his will against that of his Creator by saying, *“I will be like the Most High”* (Isa. 14:14).

The very first exercise of free will by an unfallen man brought sin into the human race, and into the world. Adam freely responded to fallen Satan’s suggestion to *“be as*

God” (*Gen. 3:5*).

The sovereignty of God expressed in His divine will was to be the circumference of both Lucifer’s and Adam’s lives. Complete liberty in thinking, loving, and willing was given to them - but they must think, love, and will within the perimeter of their Creator’s will.

When they prostituted their God-given liberty by willing against “*that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God,*” they sinned and fell.

“Sin is everything in the disposition and purpose and conduct of God’s moral creatures that is contrary to His- express will.” “*To him that*

knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin” (James 4:17).

Sin is rebellion against God; it is *lawlessness*.

Hence, Satan and the angels who rebelled with him, and Adam and the human race that rebelled in him (the federal head), forever lost the privilege and possibility of free will. They became the slaves of sin.

“Know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey, whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Rom. 6:16).

Enslaved by sin, both Satan and

Adam are by *nature* at enmity with their Creator. *“The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed, can be”* (Rom. 8:7).

Dr. L.S. Chafer said, “The human will never acts alone.

For the *Christian*, ‘*It is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*’ (Phil. 2:13).

For the *unsaved* it is, ‘*Ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience*’ (Eph. 2:2).”

For Satan, who first exercised free

will, there is no hope. *“The Lord God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed”*

([Gen. 3:14](#)). For

Adam, victimized in his innocence by Satan, the Redeemer (the Seed) was promised ([Gen. 3:15](#)).

But Adam’s race, enslaved to sin by self-will, neither would nor could freely exercise its will to choose the Redeemer. *“The god of this age hath blinded the minds of them who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them”* ([2 Cor. 4:4](#)).

Nevertheless, God justly holds fallen

man responsible for his own blindness and rebellion; therefore he should not try to place the blame upon Satan or Adam.

For example, if you owe a sum of money and cannot repay it, it is no use blaming Satan or anyone else - you are responsible for your own self- incurred debts,

F.W. Grant wrote, "It is not simply that Satan obscures the light to the lost, but that it is their own unbelief which brings them under the power of Satan, and so hinders the radiance of the Gospel shining forth to them. God never permits Satan to have this power apart from man's

consent.

If man turns away from God, he turns to Satan.

The very light of God only darkens the shadow he himself casts upon his path.”

Fallen man has neither the freedom of will, nor the inclination of mind, to turn to God.

Why, that would mean turning from himself, which is unthinkable!

Hence, *“There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God”* (Rom. 3:11).

The Lord Jesus carried out all that was required for fallen man to return to God, and He ever pleads in love,

“Come; for all things are now ready”
(Luke 14.17).

But, *“Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life”* (John 5:40). And, *“No man can come to me, except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him”* (John 6:44).

When a lost sinner does turn to the Lord Jesus and receives Him as his Saviour, as far as he is concerned he does so by means of his own free will, without coercion or restraint of any kind. And that is as it should be.

But that is not the way it actually is! Apart from the individual's own awareness, God the Holy Spirit has

prepared and enabled him to believe and exercise his will toward God.

In reality, he was willing God's will!
“So, then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy. “That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared unto glory” (Rom. 9:16, 23).

By the mercy and grace of God, and according to the will of God, the sinner was responding to his election. *“According as he (God) hath chosen us in him (Christ) before the foundation of the world,*

that we should be holy and without blame before him, in love having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will” (Eph. 1:4, 5). The elect one was

“predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:11).

God’s free will, not man’s!

All whom the sovereign God elects respond to His will, and are saved.

“Whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he

justified, them he also glorified”
(Rom. 8:30).

As C.A. Coates wrote, “People may quarrel with the sovereignty of God, but I love it; because I know enough about my natural bent and will to be sure that if left to myself I should have gone straight to perdition.

Some believers talk about man’s free will when they are on their feet, but all are firm believers in God’s sovereignty when they get on their knees. “

Once he is born again, it isn’t long before the Christian acknowledges that it was by the grace of God that he was enabled to will to believe.

“As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on his name; who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:12, 13).

Later on he begins to understand something of the awful truth of Romans Seven - that even as a believer he does not have free will. When he actually does will to do good, evil is present with him. *“The good that I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do.... I see another law in my members, warring against*

the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members” (Rom. 7:19, 23).

Through his captivity to the law of the indwelling sin nature, the growing believer learns the truths of his identification with the Lord Jesus in His death unto sin and His ascension into Glory.

As he reckons himself to have died unto sin, and to be alive unto God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 6:11), he begins to experience something of deliverance from the power of sin. He comes to realize that over and above the indwelling law of death, there is the law of life within him:

“For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2).

He begins to learn to *“stand fast, therefore, in the liberty with which Christ hath made us free” (Gal. 5:1).* In the Lord Jesus Christ the believer lives in the freedom of his Father’s will, not his own. Consider the Source of his new life, the Lord Jesus, who came to live in the freedom of His Father’s blessed will. *“Lo, I come to do thy will, O God” (Heb. 10:9).* *“I do nothing of myself, but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things” (John 8:28).* *“I*

have not spoken of myself; but the Father, who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak” (John 12:49).

What unutterable tragedy it *would be for God to allow fallen man free will!*

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

One might think that man had the freedom of will to crucify the Lord of Glory; but no - he thought he was free, but he was not.

Luke wrote, *“The kings of the earth*

stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child, Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the nations, and, the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done” (Acts 4:26–28).

Paul declared, “We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the ages unto our glory; which none of the princes of this age knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the

Lord of glory” (1 Cor. 2:7, 8).

What a comfort it is for the growing Christian, as he learns more of that old nature within him, to know *and count* upon the fact that he is a new creation in the Lord *Jesus*, and that he now has His nature! *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”* *“Not my will, but thine be done”* (Phil. 2:5; Luke 22:42).

How strengthening it is for the believer to know and count upon the fact that *“it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure”* (Phil. 2:13)!

My freedom is in the realization of

the fact that my Father is working His blessed will through my will - it is *“the perfect law of liberty”* (James 1:25).

Could I be in better hands as he carries out His good pleasure on my behalf, in His love, and for His glory.¹

¹Miles J. Stanford. (2002; 2002). Complete Works of Miles J. Stanford. Galaxie Software.

Illustrations

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