

8. Free will and God's powerful call

WCF chapters 9-10 *Modern Language version – 1993 – OPC*

9.1. God has endowed the will of man with such natural liberty that it is neither forced nor—by any absolute necessity of nature—determined to good or evil.

2. Man, in his state of innocence, had freedom and ability to will and to do what was good and well-pleasing to God, and yet not unalterably, so that he might fall from it.

3. Man, by his fall into a state of sin, has completely lost all ability to choose any spiritual good that accompanies salvation. Therefore, an unregenerate man, because he is opposed to that good and is dead in sin, is unable by his own strength to convert himself or to prepare himself to be converted.

4. When God converts a sinner and brings him into the state of grace, he frees him from his natural bondage to sin, and by his grace alone he enables him freely to will and to do what is spiritually good. Yet, because of his remaining corruption, he does not perfectly nor only will what is good, but also wills what is evil.

5. The will of man is made perfectly and unchangeably free to do good alone, only in the state of glory.

We have freedom to do what we want... always!

Scripture: they “did to him whatever they pleased”, Matt 17:12

Our own experience: choosing steak... avoiding brussels sprouts

Powerful forces... but we choose... and are therefore responsible... as created, as fallen and as redeemed

Thus, “choose life”, Deut. 30:19

The human will: created... and fallen

Created free to choose good... and able to choose it, Eccles. 7:29

But able to change... and they chose their own way, Gen. 3:6

→ Dead: unable to help themselves spiritually, Romans 5:6, 8:7, John 6:44, 65

Conversion: freed to will what is good

Delivered... made free! Col 1:13, Jn 8:34,36

Enabled to choose Christ... & willingly to become His slaves! Phil. 2:13, Rom. 6:18,22

Corruption remains, Romans 7

Glory: “made perfect”, Heb. 12:23, 1 Jn. 3:2

10.1. All those—and only those—whom God has predestined to life, he is pleased to call effectually in his appointed and accepted time, by his Word and Spirit. He calls them from the state of sin and death—in which they are by nature—to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ. In this calling, God enlightens their minds spiritually and savingly, so that they understand the things of God. He takes away their hearts of stone and gives them hearts of flesh, renews their wills, and by his almighty power turns them to what is good and effectually draws them to Jesus Christ. Yet he does this in such a way that they come most freely, being made willing by his grace.

2. This effectual call is from God's free and special grace alone, and not from anything at all that God foresees in man, who is entirely passive in it, until—being made alive and renewed by the Holy Spirit—he is enabled to answer the call and embrace the grace offered and conveyed in it.

3. Elect infants who die in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when, where, and how he pleases. So also are all other elect persons who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the Word.

4. Although other persons who are not elected may be called by the ministry of the Word and may experience some common operations of the Spirit, yet they never really come to Christ and therefore cannot be saved. Much less can men not professing to be Christians be saved in any other way, no matter how carefully they may order their lives by the light of nature and by the laws of whatever religion they profess. To assert and maintain that they may be saved in some other way is very pernicious and is to be detested.

God's powerful call to salvation

God chooses, Eph. 1:3...

Those whom he chooses he will "call" to new life, Romans 8:30

Distinguish:

External/verbal call (Matt. 22:14)

Internal call of God (1 Cor. 1:9)

In his time... by Word & Spirit, 2 Thess 2:13-14, Isa. 55:1-11

He does it:

- from sin and death...

- new mind... new heart... new will...

He makes us come most freely! We want to!
Jn. 6:44-45

(Pray for someone today!)

God's grace and our helplessness

God... His grace... nothing foreseen (Eph. 1:4, 2:4,5,8,9)

Entirely passive: can do nothing... until made alive

A very real pastoral problem... and the comfort of a Sovereign God

God helps those who cannot lift a finger to help themselves: IT IS ALL OF GRACE

Who? How? Why

- Elect infants and elect handicapped

- By Christ, Acts 4:12... by the Spirit who works how he pleases, Jn 3:8

- Not because they are infants... but because of God's mercy

The non-elect

Some hear... profess repentance and faith, Matt 13:20-21, 22:14... have a "taste" of the Spirit, Heb. 6:4-5

... But are not called: false faith – Jn 8:31... 59
Hard... but real.

No other name, Acts 4:12

Personal response: for what should we give thanks... confess... pray?