



The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator

“To testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Acts 20:24

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THE COMMONLY BELIEVED LIE CONCERNING THE ALLEGED FREE WILL OF MAN

By Wayne Camp

TEXT: Isaiah 28:15 *Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us: for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves.*

Micah 2:11 *If a man walking in the spirit and falsehood do lie, saying, I will prophesy unto thee of wine and of strong drink; he shall even be the prophet of this people.*

INTRODUCTION

What amazed me, when I began to study was the number of possible texts that were available. There is abundant evidence in the Bible and in history to show that men are much more prone to believe a lie than they are to believe the truth. God charges Israel with making lies their refuge and falsehood their hiding place. One of the evidences of total depravity is that men, by nature are liars. **Psalm 58:3** *The wicked are estranged from the womb: they go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies.* Men, by nature, are not only liars, they had rather believe a lie than the truth. I suppose that goes back to Eve believing the Devil's lie rather than believing God's truth.

In this message I want to discuss with you a **Commonly Believed Lie**. Before anyone gets the wrong idea, I am not going to deal with politics or politicians. I am going to deal with a lie that is commonly heard in pulpits and from others

discussing Bible doctrine. This lie is propagated by “Christian” people. Consider the following,

“God instituted free moral agency in the very beginning. Free moral agency has never been repealed by God, and it never will be. God would move heaven and earth before he would violate man's freedom of choice. Man's free will will never be tampered with by God . . . God has already done everything heaven can do for the salvation of mankind. He left nothing undone. When Jesus said from the cross, **“It is finished,”** he meant exactly that. There was nothing more that could be done. The plan of salvation was eternally finished. ***It was no longer up to God, it was now up to man***” (This emphasis mine, RWC, Editor) (Evangelist Jimmy Swaggert, *The Evangelist*, September, 1983).

Many of those who hold to the doctrine of the “free will” of man have simply never heard otherwise. Many apparently do not want to hear otherwise. Recently I published an article by Bro. Jarrel Huffman in which he dealt with some things along the line of this message and one person let me know in no uncertain terms that he wanted off our mailing list. He did not like to learn that the will of man is not truly free.

THE LIE: **MAN HAS A FREE-WILL**

Many, who claim to believe in total depravity, deny the depravity of the will, which is inconsistent with the doctrine of total depravity. If man is truly depraved totally, his will is depraved. The suggestion

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that one who is totally depraved has a will that can rise out of that depravity free of the shackles of it is ridiculous, to say the least.

Others deny total depravity altogether and argue consistently that the will of man is free. Some argue that the unregenerate sinner is as free to choose the right and reject the wrong as was Jesus. I have read after a prominent preacher in Memphis who wrote that Jesus simply exercised his free will and chose not to sin. He could have chosen to sin. We have the same choice and could choose to never sin. Of

course, the fallacy of this position is as evident as is the fallacy of the first.

THE TRUTH: THE BIBLE SHOWS BOTH OF THESE COMMONLY HELD POSITIONS TO BE COMMONLY BELIEVED LIES.

The heart is one of the faculties of men which controls the will. Contrary to what some think, the will does not act independently of itself. It is controlled by the heart and mind, both of which are depraved. Consider the state of the heart of an unsaved person. It is depraved. It is very deceitful and desperately wicked. *Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?*

The imaginations of the natural man's heart are evil. *Genesis 6:5 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.* This evil is a continual thing in the heart of the person whom God had not regenerated. And, I should point out, that this does not begin at 16 years of age or older. It begins very early in life. *Genesis 8:21 And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.*

All kinds of evil come out of the heart of the natural man. *Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.* I listen to people decrying the conditions of our country with all the murder, homosexuality, and other immorality. They ask, "What is wrong?" One liberal talk-show host was fond of asking, "What is happening to our babies?" All kinds of committees have been organized to try to find out what the problem is. The answer is simple. The problem is **heart trouble**. Men are born with evil hearts. *The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.* Discipline is gone from most homes. Our "justice" system is, for the most part, a joke. Therefore, the evil hearts of America's youth has no fear of God or man and so they murder, and plunder, and steal, and produce illegitimate children. The heart is the

problem.

There is no way that such a heart would cause a man to will to come to Christ. It's whole inclination is against God and against law and order. How could such a heart incline the will of an unregenerate person to come to Christ? Please tell me, how could such an evil heart cause one to be "suaded" toward God?

Another faculty of man which controls his will is the mind. The mind of the unregenerate is enmity against God and would never cause him to will to come to Christ. **Romans 8:7 *The carnal mind is enmity against God.*** Men are by nature *alienated and enemies in their minds* (Col. 1:21). The mind of the unregenerate is bent toward sin and is against God. It causes him to always walk *in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind.* How could such a mind ever incline the will toward God? It is alienated from God. It is enmity against God. Yet, some are insistent that this alienated mind often inclines men to bow to Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour. I ask, "Why would such a mind ever motivate a person to come to Christ?"

The mind of the unregenerate is vain. Men by nature walk *in the vanity of their mind* (Eph. 4:17). Their mind is empty and vain when it comes to spiritual matters. The only way they can come to Christ is if God renews their minds as well as their hearts. The mind and conscience of man, by nature, is defiled. **Titus 1:15 *Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled.*** Can a defiled mind and conscience cause one to will to come to Christ? How could it? Why would it?

"The greatest judgment which God Himself can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free-will." Augustus Toplady.

We are forced to the conclusion: A will that is controlled by an evil heart and defiled, alienated mind will never cause a man to will to come to Christ. Augustus Toplady wrote, "The greatest judgment which God Himself can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free-will." Leave any man to his own depraved will and the words of Jesus will be always true. **John 5:40 *And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.***

Scripture further shows this doctrine that all men

have a free will to be a lie by showing that there are some things the natural man cannot do. Augustus Toplady also wrote, "A man's free-will cannot cure him even of the toothache or of a sore finger, and yet he madly thinks it is in his power to cure his soul." I awoke this morning with a sinus headache. I was unable to will it away. I finally took some sinus medicine and soon my headache was gone. I am a diabetic. If I could, I would will it to be gone so I did not have to take insulin or pills. But, will as I might, it is there. If I cannot cure a headache by the power and sovereignty of my presumed free will, how could I expect to change a stony heart into a heart to know God? How could I expect to will to come to Christ when every thing in my nature is against doing that. Thank God for his quickening, regenerating, calling power.

Man cannot, without some Divine help, ever come to Christ. This was made perfectly clear by Jesus in his address to the five thousand. They had come to him to make him king, not because they believed on him but because he had filled their bellies. But, they could not savingly come to him without God drawing them. **John 6:44 *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.*** The Greek word means more than a mere invitation. It means more than a mere desire for them to come. It means "to draw" as Peter drew his sword, or as the disciples drew nets to the shore filled with fish. It means to draw a boat into dock.

Another thing man cannot do is to will his own regeneration or new birth. The idea that a person can will themselves to be born again is as illogical as thinking a child can will itself to be conceived and then born. When one is born again it is **"not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God"** (John 1:13). That which is born of the flesh is flesh and the flesh cannot will the new birth. It is men who must be born again and the new birth cannot be willed by man. Only God can will the new birth. It is he who regenerates according to the good pleasure of his will. **John 5:21 *For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will.*** **Romans 9:16 *So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.***

Man by nature cannot comprehend the true meaning of the word of God and the purpose of

Christ coming into the world. **John 8:43** *Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.* Jesus set forth this inability of men to comprehend the things of God and of the kingdom of God in his discourse with Nicodemus. He informed Nicodemus that one must be regenerated if he is to see (comprehend) the kingdom of God. Paul shows this inability of the natural man in the second chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians.

Deceived hearts have turned men aside so that they cannot deliver their souls from the corruption of sin. **Isaiah 44:19-20** *And none considereth in his heart, neither is there knowledge nor understanding to say, I have burned part of it in the fire; yea, also I have baked bread upon the coals thereof; I have roasted flesh, and eaten it: and shall I make the residue thereof an abomination? shall I fall down to the stock of a tree? 20 He feedeth on ashes: a deceived heart hath turned him aside, that he cannot deliver his soul, nor say, Is there not a lie in my right hand?* All men have deceitful hearts by nature, as we have already noted. This deceitful heart so turns man aside that he cannot deliver himself and may not even realize that he is deceived for he cannot say, *“Is there not a lie in my right hand?”*

This unregenerate person who is supposed to have a will that is free cannot subject himself to the law of God and cannot please God. **Romans 8:7-8** *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. 8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.* Paul does not specifically have the Law of Moses in mind. He has any command of God in mind. All men are commanded to repent but the unregenerate cannot obey that command. God has commanded men to believe on his Son. **1 John 3:23** *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.* One who has not been regenerated cannot believe. As most Baptist confessions of faith set forth, repentance and faith are inseparable graces wrought in the soul in regeneration. Look at the confession of faith your church adopted when organized and see if that is not set forth in the article on repentance and faith and possibly in the article on regeneration. Since the unregenerate cannot be subject to God's law he cannot repent and believe unless he is granted repentance and faith. This inability renders him

incapable of pleasing God for without faith it is impossible to please him.

Some will say, since I referred to confessions of faith, “But, Bro. Camp, confessions of faith are not rules of faith and practice. We don't go by the confession of faith. We go by the Bible.” That all sounds good and noble on the surface. But, I ask you, “Why would a church adopt a confession of faith which they did not believe? Why will Southern Baptist Churches adopt confessions of faith which they do not believe? Why will BMA Churches adopt confessions of faith which they do not believe? Why will ABA Churches adopt confessions of faith which they do not believe? Why will ABA messengers adopt a doctrinal statement which stands in direct contradiction to their adopted confession of faith?” Again, I say, “Check the confession of faith adopted by your church. See if it does not say that repentance and faith are “inseparable graces wrought in the soul in regeneration” or something to that effect. See if it does not say that regeneration produces repentance and faith, rather than repentance and faith producing regeneration. Are you in agreement with or in opposition to your church's confession?”

There are many other things which this person, who is supposed to be so free to act, cannot do, but these will suffice to show that his will is truly not free; it is in bondage to his depraved heart and defiled mind.

There are also some positive declarations which show the doctrine of free will to be a lie. The declaration of a positive is usually an inference of a negative.

Only in the day of God's power will a person be willing. **Psalm 110:3** *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power, in the beauties of holiness from the womb of the morning: thou hast the dew of thy youth.* This clearly reveals that no man, in and of himself, is capable of doing the will of God. He cannot will to come to Christ unless God enables him to by his regenerating power. When God does enable him by his regenerating power he will be willing and he will come to Christ—*“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”* The inferred negative is, they will not be willing until God brings his power to bear upon them. No one will be willing until the day of God's power. *Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts.* One cannot come to Christ of his own might and power, or his own

alleged free will, but he will come when the power of the Spirit of God enables him. ***“Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power.”*** Then, and only then, will a person be willing to come to Christ.

God must work in a person if he is to will and to do of his good pleasure. ***Philippians 2:13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*** Now, I would remind the reader this verse was addressed to saved people. The people of the church at Philippi were dedicated Christians. That church shined as a bright light in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. But, they were not to take credit for doing it of themselves. They could not say, “I served God of my own determination and my own motivation; my very own free and sovereign will.” Even we who are saved must depend on God to work in us ***“both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”*** How much more must a sinner have God to work in him to will and to do of his good pleasure. He cannot act out of his own alleged free will and thereby come to Christ. God must work in him if he is ever to will and to do of God’s good pleasure and come to the Lord Jesus Christ.

I said a little earlier that man’s heart is turned to evil. It is wicked, desperately so. If that heart is ever to be inclined toward God, God must incline it to himself. ***1 Kings 8:57-58 The LORD our God be with us, as he was with our fathers: let him not leave us, nor forsake us: 58 That he may incline our hearts unto him, to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, which he commanded our fathers.***

**THE TESTS: THE POWER AND
SOVEREIGNTY OF MAN’S WILL TESTED BY
THREE BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES**

THE SKIN AND SPOT PRINCIPLE

One test that will determine if you truly have a free will is the ***skin and spot principle***. This principle is set forth by the prophet Jeremiah. ***Jeremiah 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.***

Can an Ethiopian, by willing it so, change the color of his skin? Can a leopard, by willing it so, change his spots? If the Ethiopian can, of his own free will, change his skin, and if the leopard can, of

his own free will, change his spots, then you just might have a case for free will. It would be easier for an Ethiopian to will a change in the color of his skin than for you to will the new birth and salvation for yourself. It would be easier for a leopard to will a change in his spots, than for you to will a change in your heart.

A few days ago I took a drive through the dairy state, Wisconsin. There I saw many dairy herds. One herd of Holstein cattle had an interesting cow in it. All the other cows were spotted normally, a mixture of black and white, the usual pattern for Holsteins. One cow, for some reason, had very little black on her, just two or three small spots. That cow appeared to be just a pure a Holstein as did the others. She was built just like the others. She probably gave as much milk as the others. But, she did not have the typical coloring of the others. Even if she were purebred Holstein as she and the others appeared to be, she did not have the typical coloring. Now, suppose she decided she wanted the coloring the others had. Could she, of her own free will, change her spots? No! She will remain the same color as long as she lives. Her owner could not change her color by willing it so. So, she will continue to stand out like a sore thumb as long as she lives. Others, as I did, will drive by, and wonder at that one weird looking cow in that herd. In all the herds of Holstein dairy cows I observed, I saw none other like her.

Even if the leopard could change his spots, and even if the Ethiopian could change his skin, that does not mean you absolutely could change your sinful nature into a new nature.

THE HAIR-COLOR PRINCIPLE

Another test by which you can test the power and sovereignty of your supposed free will is the ***hair-color principle***. This principle is set forth by Jesus Christ. ***Matthew 5:36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.***

Can you change the color of your hair by simply willing it so? In watching the NBA playoff games I was continually amused at Dennis Rodman. He has bleached his hair and looked absolutely weird. But, he must continue to bleach it (and he may dye it also) if he continues to have it that color. It will always grow back in its normal color. If he had the power of

free will that many claim for man, he could just will it to be the color he wants and that would be its color.

Can man will a change in the color of his hair? No! Absolutely not. If you could do that, there might be a slight possibility that you could will yourself a new heart. But, Jesus declared the impossibility of your changing the color of your hair.

THE HEIGHT-CHANGE PRINCIPLE

A third test to see if you have a will that is truly free and sovereign is the *height-change principle*. This principle is established by Jesus Christ. *Matthew 6:27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? Luke 12:25-26 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?*

Can you add a few inches to your height simply by willing it so? If you can will yourself taller, there might be a glimmer of possibility that you can will yourself spiritually alive. Jesus indicates it is impossible for you to add to your height by the power and sovereignty of your alleged free will.

I heard recently of a young man in Mississippi who is apparently going to be pretty tall. If the size of his foot is any indication, he will be seven feet or more tall. At the age of fourteen years, his feet suddenly started growing and grew five sizes in just a few months. He now wears, at fourteen, a size 20 shoe. I thought my feet were big, and I wear only size 12. Oops! Don't tell O. J.'s defense team or they might try to place me at the crime scene to raise reasonable doubt.

THE BLASTING: THE MYTH OF FREE WILL BLASTED BY THE ACCOUNT OF THE RICH FOOL

There is a Scriptural account of a man who learned the absurdity of the asserted sovereignty and power of man's alleged free will. *Luke 12:16-20 And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years;*

take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

Consider this man's foolish declaration: *And he said, This will I do*. What a dangerous declaration. "I will do this" or "I will do that." This man believed in the sovereignty and power of his very own free will! But, what a lesson he was to learn, and how quickly he was to learn it.

He said, *"I will pull down my barns"* but, in fact, he never removed the first piece of roofing. Not the first nail did he remove. Not one board did he remove. His plans were blasted before he was able to take the first step in fulfilling what he had purposed out of his very own free will.

He said, *"I will build greater barns"* but, in fact, he never laid the first foundation stone on the first barn. He did not dig the first spade of dirt. He did not nail a single board.

He said, *"I will bestow all my fruits and goods"* but, in fact, he never gathered the first kernel of grain or the first piece of fruit. That was his last day to ever look on those luscious fruits. That was his last day to observe his bountiful crop of grain.

He said, *"I will say to my soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry."* He never said this to his soul. He never laid up any goods. He never had any rest but has cried out from the torments of hell ever since.

God's response to this man's assertion of his assumed free will was quick, sharp and to the point. *Luke 12:20 But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?* Ah, the utter foolishness of the doctrine of "free will." This man learned too late how utterly *unfree, unsovereign, and unpowerful* his will was. How God did blast his notion of his free and sovereign will.

I remember another group of people who willed to do a certain thing but learned the folly of the presumed sovereignty and power of free-will. *Genesis 11:1-4 And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. And it came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them throughly. And they had brick*

for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

Consider their foolish plan. *“Let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven.”* Look at their foolish purpose. *“Let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.”*

Now, behold with wonder how God made an open show of the foolishness of the assumed power of their will. *Genesis 11:7-9 Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the LORD scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the LORD did there confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth.* As I write this I find myself shaking my head in wonder at the pretentious notion of man's free will. How God does blast these pompous assertions of man of what he can do of his *very own free will!*

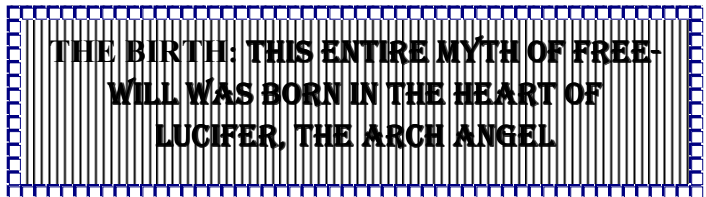
Many other cases could be set before you that would show the follow of the myth of free-will. I think of Saul who would keep David from being king and willed to kill him but never could. He could throw a dagger and God would guide it so that it missed David. He could plot to capture him and kill him but his own son would help David escape him. He could take an army and pursue David but, by night, David would slip into his camp, slip into his tent, and cut of the tail of robe and hold it up in his sight the next day. Saul's will never gave him the power to rid himself of David.

I think of Adonijah who determined, “I will be king” even though God had purposed to bring Solomon to the throne. Try as he would he never managed it.

I think of Absalom who did seize the throne for a time. Yet, I see him, with *his own free and sovereign will*, hanging by his beautiful long hair in a tree somewhere. He and his *free will* with all its presumptions and plans died out there in that tree.

How many times God has blasted this myth of free will with its presumed power and sovereignty. He who causes the wrath of man to praise him and

restrains any wrath of man that will not bring him glory, must surely sit in the heavens and laugh at the presumptions of men who put so much stock in the lie of man's free will.



Let us consider the foolish assertions and presumptions of Lucifer concerning the power and sovereignty of his will. *Isaiah 14:13-14 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.* Permit me to point out that this is no mere man; this is a mighty archangel. This is a powerful archangel. He could have zapped an army and totally incinerated them. And, he had a will, but was it free?

His first foolish and free-willed determination. *“I will ascend into heaven.”* There was more involved in this declaration than simply going up into heaven for as an arch angel, he certainly had access to heaven. His will was to rule from heaven, to assume the preeminence accorded only to the Godhead.

His second foolish and free-willed determination: *“I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.”* He determined to seize control and command of all the angels and have them worship and revere him rather than their worshipping and serving the Trinity. He would subdue them to his own self-willed purposes.

His third foolish and free-willed determination: *“I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north.”* This may have reference to Mt. Zion, which God had chosen for himself as a special place. This is the place from which Christ will rule the earth during the millennium. Lucifer desired the preeminence given to Christ in the Divine scheme of things and he must have Mt. Zion for himself if that would come to pass.

Lucifer's fourth foolish and free-willed determination: *“I will ascend above the heights of the clouds.”* Again Lucifer determines foolishly to exalt himself by the power and sovereignty of his assumed free-will.

God's has some very strong words for those, be they men or angels, who would seek to so exercise their assumed free will. ***Obadiah 4 Though thou exalt thyself as the eagle, and though thou set thy nest among the stars, thence will I bring thee down, saith the LORD.***

Lucifer's fifth and final foolish and free-willed determination: ***"I will be like the most High."*** Again, I suggest that he is seeking the position of the second Person of the Trinity, the Lord Jesus Christ, who was equal with God. ***Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*** This was the final assault of Lucifer's assumed free will.

The Divine answer to Lucifer's assumed power and sovereignty of his presumed free will is as pungent and severe as were the Lord's word to the rich and *free willed* fool.

"Thou art fallen from heaven, O Lucifer."

"Thou art cut down to the ground with such force that it shook the earth on its very foundations so that it became a desolation and a waste."

"Thou shalt be brought down to hell."

Hell was prepared for Lucifer and his fallen angels. ***Matthew 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*** He will one day be cast there to suffer forever; he is reserved for that awful destiny. ***Jude 6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.***

In the verses that follow in Isaiah 14, the complete humiliation of Lucifer is described. So much for the power and sovereignty of his assumed free will.

**THE EXCEPTION: GOD ALONE HAS A
WILL THAT IS TRULY FREE**

He does all that he pleases to do. ***Psalm 115:3 But our God is in the heavens: he hath done whatsoever he hath pleased.*** Do you believe that? Do you believe that God has done, has always done, and continues to do whatsoever he pleases? The Holy Spirit, through David, declares he does.

There is no place where God cannot do as he pleases to do. Nor is there any place where he does

not do as he pleases. He does all he wills to do in all places. ***Psalm 135:6 Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places.***

He does as he pleases in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. ***Daniel 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?*** Most people have no problem with God doing as he pleases in the armies of heaven. Yes, he can rule in the armies of heaven. The angels obey his will perfectly.

But, does God do as he wills among the inhabitants of the earth? Does he ever fail to do as he wills among the inhabitants of the earth? Ask a man who has just graduated from the Seminary of Insanity and see what he has to say on the matter. ***"he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth."*** "But," someone objects, "Can man not control God? Can not man thwart his will?" I have heard learned, college and seminary educated, Baptist preachers say in Baptist pulpits, "I can control God, I can make him do what I want him to do."

But, can man control God? Can the creature control the Creator? Can the clay control the potter? Let a man who learned the truth the hard way tell us. ***"None can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?"*** (Dan. 4:35).

God does anything he pleases for he is God and there is none else who can claim such free will. ***Isaiah 46:9-11 Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure: Calling a ravenous bird from the east, the man that executeth my counsel from a far country: yea, I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it.***

There is just no other like God in the exercise of his will. Compare him to all the false god's and you will find there is no comparison. Compare him to the archangel Lucifer and there is no comparison; he must be contrasted, not compared. Compare him to a rich and powerful man and there is no comparison.

Lucifer wills to do several things and none of them are accomplished. A rich and powerful man willed to do several things and never lived to do one of them. Yet, God continues to do every thing he has purposed to do. ***“My counsel shall stand,”*** says our incomparable God, ***“and I will do all my pleasure.”*** ***“I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass,”*** says our invincible God. ***“I have purposed it, I will also do it,”*** declares our insuperable God. Folk, that is free will. That is powerful will. That is sovereign will. That is irresistible will.

He who has a perfect and irrepressible will works all things after the counsel of his own will. ***Ephesians 1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.”***

When he blessed us in the heavenlies in Christ, when he chose us to salvation in Christ, when he predestinated us to the adoption of children by Christ, it was all done according to the good pleasure of his will. ***Ephesians 1:3-5 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him 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 children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.***

God asks and accepts no counsel outside himself when he wills a thing. He operates according to the good pleasure of his own will. He does only and all which he has purposed within himself. ***Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:***

The upright man Job declared that His will and purpose is invincible; none can withstand it, add to it, or take from it. ***Job 12:13-25 With him is wisdom and strength, he hath counsel and understanding. Behold, he breaketh down, and it cannot be built again: he shutteth up a man, and there can be no opening. Behold, he withholdeth the waters, and they dry up: also he sendeth them out, and they overturn the earth. With him is strength and wisdom: the deceived and the deceiver are his. He leadeth counsellors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. He looseth the bond of kings, and***

girdeth their loins with a girdle. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He removeth away the speech of the trusty, and taketh away the understanding of the aged. He poureth contempt upon princes, and weakeneth the strength of the mighty. He discovereth deep things out of darkness, and bringeth out to light the shadow of death. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them: he enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again. He taketh away the heart of the chief of the people of the earth, and causeth them to wander in a wilderness where there is no way. They grope in the dark without light, and he maketh them to stagger like a drunken man.

Isaiah assures us that whatever God wills to do in his counsel, he works out in his time. ***Isaiah 28:29 This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.*** I am sure there are none who would deny that the Lord is wonderful in counsel. However, those who believe he has willed to do a lot of things, and is trying to do those things, but is being thwarted in that effort, must question whether or not God is excellent in working. They would agree, whether admittedly or not, with Noel Smith who wrote, “What is hell? . . . I tell you, and I say it with great reverence, hell is a ghastly monument to the ***failure*** of the triune God to save the multitudes who are there. I say it reverently, I say it with every nerve in my body tense; sinners go to hell because God Almighty Himself could not save them! He did all He could. **HE FAILED.**”

This reminds me again of what Jimmy Swaggert wrote. “God instituted free moral agency in the very beginning. Free moral agency has never been repealed by God, and it never will be. God would move heaven and earth before he would violate man’s freedom of choice. Man’s free will will never be tampered with by God . . . God has already done everything heaven can do for the salvation of mankind. He left nothing undone. When Jesus said from the cross, ***‘It is finished,’*** he meant exactly that. There was nothing more that could be done. The plan of salvation was eternally finished. ***It was no longer up to God, it was now up to man***” (This emphasis mine, RWC, Editor) (Evangelist Jimmy Swaggert, *The Evangelist*, September, 1983).

In substance, every preacher and teacher and person who advocates the free-will doctrine which we have been discussing in this article agrees with

what Noel Smith and Jimmy Swaggert wrote. In substance, every preacher who believes in a universal atonement agrees with what Smith and Swaggert penned.

One ABA preacher wrote a few years ago, "God's greatest disappointment came when they crucified his Son. God's expectations were shattered when they crucified his Son." In essence, he was saying, "God's will is not free and sovereign. God's counsel may be wonderful but his working out of that counsel is not excellent." But, the Bible reveals that even when men wickedly and of their own depraved wills crucified the Lord Jesus Christ, they were hedged in by the sovereign and free will of God. *Acts 2:23 Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Acts 4:27-28 For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.*

Let us join Paul in praising God for his wonderful, completely free will which is formed and purposed without any counsel from any one anywhere. *Romans 11:33-36 O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? 36 For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*

CONCLUSION

The free will of man is a commonly believe lie. Don't assume you can or will do anything, anytime, anywhere, of your own free will for your will is not free. In short, don't be deceived into believing this lie of man's free-will. It was born in the heart of the arch deceiver Satan.

For those who are lost, I pray that God may make you willing to come to Christ. I pray that he may draw you and enable you so that you can come to Christ. I pray that he may enable you so that you will come to Christ. I pray that he will draw you so that

you will run after him. I pray that he will conquer you by love and make you willing and able to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ by his power. I pray that he does not leave you to your own free will for it will take you down to hell. I pray that he may work in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Oh, how helpless you are to do anything of yourself. You cannot heal a toothache by willing it so; please don't depend on your assumed free will for your salvation. Fall down before God and cry out to him saying, "Draw me, so that I can run after you. Conquer my depraved will by your sovereign free will. Make me willing by your mighty power. Turn me and I shall be turned. Apprehend me as you did Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus. Quicken me O God. If you will, I can be clean, but without you I can do nothing. With you, by you, through you, I can and will be saved if you will it so, but if you leave me to my own depraved will I will be forever lost. Draw me, draw me, draw me so that I can run after you. Conquer me by love and bring me to your banqueting house so that I may feast upon your salvation.

Bouquets & Brickbats

TEXAS: I read Jarrel Huffman's article on "Charitableness" a few days ago and found it to be distasteful and appalling because it seemed to be his "plea" for compromise (although he stated it was not such) and had only one Scripture reference to back up his "petition." I do want readers to know I am not an ordained minister but was raised in a sovereign grace church. I know many sovereign grace preachers around the Southern United States and I would not sit under some of their pastorates because of their "beliefs" on many Bible doctrines. I have some very dear minister friends who do not believe the scriptures exactly as I on the points listed in the article and can rightfully say the fellowship with them is not as prominent as with the ministers who have the same beliefs. There is a very distinguishable line between benevolence and fellowship. Amos 3:3 says, "can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

I commend a pastor who is conscientious of the speakers allowed in his pulpit. For example, if a sovereign grace pastor—who believes the doctrine of grace, the local church, no head covering, wine, pre-trib, and pre-mill—allows a man to speak at his church who believes grace and the local church but differs otherwise, then the pastor is opening the door of confusion to his flock. Plus his Convention Baptist friend down the street should also be free to speak because he believes pre-trib and

pre-mill the same as the pastor, but differs otherwise. And then, why not invite the Pope to speak because he believes wine, but differs otherwise. Any way you cook it, it still burns. One misstatement by a visiting minister could sever (I believe the writer meant *divide* rather than *sever*. RWC) a church.

My Bible says in 2 Corinthians 6:17, "*Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.*" Dear brethren, read your Bible and believe what it says *literally*. Do not stray to man's false doctrines! Colossians 2:8 says, "*Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after CHRIST.*"

I stand behind my pastor and other minister friends for being particular with their pulpits. Are we not supposed to be particular Baptists???? 2 Corinthians 10:12 says, "*For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.*"

. . . . Bro. Camp, I heard you preach a sermon several years ago entitled "What the Bible Says." In the sermon you said to be sure to know what the Bible says before you tell anyone what it says. I would like to see you print that sermon in your paper in the near future for I feel it would be beneficial to many brethren at this time.

WEST VIRGINIA: God forbid that I wax argumentative or contentious (I fear that sometimes I "contend" more for the sake of contention than for any defense of the truth) but I do wish to add my comments concerning Bro. Huffman's "*Plea For Charitableness.*" And my approach is more in keeping with the views of the gentleman from Mississippi.

While the charitable and magnanimous attitude toward "gainsaying" brethren has the aura of sweet communion there also exists a sincere question as how far one should proceed in (*church*) fellowship with that one who obviously entertains views and convictions that appear alien to the word of truth, rightly divided. One glaring facet of such a matter is that there be "free will" Baptist who by lip service and exemplary Christian lifestyle do give adequate testimony to having been "accepted in the Beloved", yet being unable to grasp the truth of absolute sovereignty, in regards God's sole and total choice of who he will choose and who he will pass over. Personally, I am full persuaded to love such a one in the Lord, to wish him well and treat him even better, *albeit outside of and apart from the assembly*. And Beloved, there be some "freewills" who by their walk and their talk do exude a Christian spirit that puts some ardent Landmarkers to shame.

The good Bro. Huffman may well have been too inclusive in regards just who we of the sovereign grace mindset can fellowship with—and to what extent.

In so doing he seemingly loses sight of the supporting truisms, in that it is "*The little foxes that spoil the vine*" and "*A little lump that leaveneth the whole.*" (Song of Solomon 2:15 and I Cor. 5:6, with added validity in Gal. 5:9.) Then too it is generally accepted that the "certain (who) came from James" (Gal. 2:12) were indeed neophyte Christian believers, albeit as yet thoroughly steeped in the manner of the orthodox

Jew . . . but hear Paul as he pronounces a veritable anathema upon such, and equally as irate against both Peter and Barnabas for re-observing that ritualism.

In fact, instead of all the charitable, forgiving tolerance he, Paul was to make a clean break from his fellow minister, that dissembling Barnabas (Acts 15:39).

OKLAHOMA: Keep up the good articles. I appreciate the series on the humanity, deity, etc. of Christ.

NEW YORK: Greetings in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Thank you for sending me your monthly paper which I have enjoyed reading. I started to read the main article on page 1, "*Knowing the Absolute Necessity of the Humanity of Christ.*" Noticing the Scripture that was being used I realized that it was the same place where I am teaching from in our adult Sunday School and I would no doubt be able to use some of the information from the article.

However, when instructed to turn to page 6, I soon found out there was no page 6. In its place I found an additional second sheet consisting of pages 3,4, & 9, 10.

Realizing these things happen from time to time I am not complaining only asking, if it is possible, to receive the third sheet which would be pages 5,6,7 and 8 as I am sure it would be for my edification as well as those I teach.

I surely hope that this mistake did not happen in many issues and that God would continue to use your efforts in sending out *The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* for the blessing of **HIS** people and for **HIS** glory.

Thank you for your consideration and may **God** bless you and yours.

OKLAHOMA: I just got your paper yesterday, and thought I would send you a note concerning it. I really liked your article on being a "Barnabas." How often we spend our time criticizing and tearing down the brethren, instead of trying to build them up! I ashamed to admit how many times I have erred in this regard. I think you ought to make the article into a tract—it ought to be read by every member of every church. Where would any of us be if God had not (and did not continuously) deal with us gently unto strengthening and edification?

I also took note of your mention of Brother Earl Smith. I don't know him very well, but every time I have had any dealings with him, he has been very kind, helpful, encouraging, and in general a "gentleman and a scholar." And he's a very good preacher - I first heard him speak at Brother Jimmie Davis' church in Fulton, MS a number of years ago, and he really impressed me. The power of his conviction and faith is remarkable.

I also liked the Spurgeon article. I also have heard a number of brethren say that Spurgeon was an amill. I think the article is clear enough, however. I don't think we can take Spurgeon for a model on everything he did or said, but when men so evidently used of God as he was believe something, it is well worth our while to take notice and consider.

Well, keep up the good work.

ARKANSAS: I am writing to you about your paper and the great articles you print in the *Proclamator and Promulgator*. I

really love and agree with them and the article on the Inspired word of God in the last issue is really good also. I enjoy the paper very much and may the Lord bless you and your writings.

ILLINOIS: I enjoyed your editorial "*Lord, Let Me Be a Barnabas.*" I remember Bro. _____ always telling us to be a Barnabas.

Please write more editorials of a similar nature.

GEORGIA: I have just received a copy of *The Grace Proclamator and Promulgator* and noticed your reprint of Spurgeon's sermon on Lk. 12:37, 38. You have correctly pointed out that Spurgeon was a premillennial believer and was so until he died. Who would argue the point with any degree of integrity and state otherwise. I wanted to commend you for accurately showing not only what Spurgeon believed but also his attitude toward some of the more gray areas of eschatology. In the last several years I have read where Baptist preachers who are editors of Baptist papers have printed articles forging

Spurgeon's name on them and then offer these as proof that Spurgeon believed in their interpretation of premillennialism. Then these same men castigate the many brethren who leave their brand of premillennial interpretation for a more historic and most of all more biblical and honest exposition of prophecy.

When a friend told Spurgeon that he should like to ask him a lot of questions about the future, he said, "I cannot answer you for I dare say I know no more about it than you do." Spurgeon emphasized what the Scripture emphasizes; i. e., watchfulness and being ready. For surely we who believe the WORD of God know that this world is marked for death, destruction, and judgment. He who ascended shall come again in like manner. Eternal judgment and everlasting hell awaits all rebels.

Thank you Bro. Camp for your candidness and academic honesty especially allowing Spurgeon to speak for himself. Other editors could sure learn a great deal about ethics and moral accountability from you. Let us all be faithful as we await his final return.

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