

**FREE - WILL?
OR,
NOT OF HIM THAT WILLETH?**

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*DOES MAN HAVE FREE MORAL AGENCY OR IS HE MORALLY DEAD
IN TRESPASSES AND SINS, NEEDING SOVEREIGN QUICKENING?*

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FREE-WILL? OR, NOT OF HIM THAT WILLETH?

So then [it is] not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shews mercy (Rom. 9:16).

According to his own will begat he us, through the word of truth (James 1:18).

Who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God (John 1:13) [1].

INTRODUCTION

That man should not have a free will, i.e., not be a free moral agent, and yet be held responsible by God to obey Him, is what the natural mind rejects. Rom. 8:7 tells us that "... the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be." I have not cited this because it sets aside the notion of the free moral agency of man, which it most certainly does, but to point out that it is the mind of the flesh which biases and controls the natural man morally. And this mind of the flesh is still found, along with a new nature, in the believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. This mind may well get in the way of receiving what God says concerning the state of man's will. J.N. Darby observed:

. . . the doctrine of free-will ministers to the pretension of the natural man not to be entirely lost, for that is just what it amounts to. All who have never been deeply convicted of sin, all those with whom this conviction is based on gross and outward sins, believe more or less in free-will. You know

1. My quotations of Scripture are taken from the translation of J.N. Darby. Documentation notation such as Letters 3:25 means vol. 3, p. 25.

that it is the dogma of Wesleyans, of all reasoners, of all philosophers; but it completely changes the whole idea of Christianity [2].

TWO ERRORS

There are groups of texts that might be cited. Some texts put man on his responsibility. These, one system of theology (Arminianism) presses, claiming they indicate ability to perform, at the expense of other texts. Some texts show that man has no free moral agency. Those, another system of theology (Calvinism) presses at the expense of denying man's responsibility. These systems of theology are respectively referred to in this discussion as Arminian and Calvinist based on the names of the men (Arminius and Calvin) who first formulated these systems (whatever antecedents there were).

Faith, which comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), believes both groups of texts --but is denounced by both Arminians and Calvinists as being illogical; denounced as setting up a contradiction. So each of these two systems solves the alleged contradiction in its own **rationalistic** way. In the words of another:

For, on the one hand, a certain school of divinity teaches, and rightly so, man's utter powerlessness -- that he will not, and cannot come if left to himself -- that it is only by the mighty power of the Holy Spirit that anyone ever does come -- that were it not for free sovereign grace, not a single soul would ever be saved -- that, if left to ourselves, we should only go wrong and never do right.

From all this it infers that a man is not responsible. Its teaching is right, but its inference is wrong. Another school of divinity teaches - - and rightly so -- that man is responsible -- that he will be punished with everlasting destruction for rejecting the Gospel -- that God commands men everywhere to repent -- that He beseeches sinners, all men, the world, to be reconciled to Him -- that He will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. From all this it infers that man has power to repent

and believe. Its teaching is right; its inference is wrong [3]

The fact is that the Word of God teaches both that man is not a free moral agent, i.e., he is powerless, having no free-will; and that man is responsible to obey His Word. By free moral agency we mean that the sinner has the moral capacity to make decisions and choices that direct his soul towards God in obedience to Him, these decisions being freely made by man's will.

MAN IS MORALLY DEAD

We agree with those of Arminian persuasion that the doctrine of eternal security and free moral agency are incompatible. If the Scripture teaches that man does not have a morally free will, then we will find that salvation is of the Lord -- and not of man and the Lord co-operating in it. Eternal security, which is taught in the Word, also follows from the fact that man has no free will; for the God Who (sovereignly) saves and gives faith (Eph. 2:8) keeps (1 Pet. 1:5). The Scripture states that man is dead in trespasses and sins (Eph. 2:1). Do Arminians really believe this? No. How is this circumvented? There are a number of ways. Take J. L. Stauffer as an example. Citing the fact that there are those who hold eternal security and that believe a dead man cannot repent, yet they preach to people to "believe" -- He says, "We would like to inquire as to how a dead man can believe?" [4]. This is pitting the Arminian, false inference of free moral agency against the express words of God. Such a question, asked by a supporter of Arminianism, is an infidel question, one that immediately alerts us that he wants to get around the explicit statement of God's Word. The question shows us that he is aware that a dead man cannot believe of his own will. But he does not believe what God has said. He does not believe man is **dead in sins**, else his notion of free moral agency is wrong. He will have to get rid of the fact of man's being dead. How, then does he do it?

He appeals to the fact that God's Word contains other descriptions of the sinner besides Eph. 2:1 and so he speaks of an enemy and of "a living man needing reconciliation." But one does not get rid of the

3. "Responsibility and Power," *Things New and Old* 17:57.

4. J.L. Stauffer, "The Eternal Security Teaching", *Christian Light Publications, Inc., Harrisonburg, VA, copyright 1976*

word **dead** that way. Eph. 2 says that those who were dead were quickened (made alive). Nothing can be made alive (quickened) which was not dead. We simply must take into account that "dead" is one of a number of the ways in which the sinner is viewed and we must have God's mind concerning the force of the fact that the other descriptions do not negate the fact that the sinner is indeed morally dead before God.

Romans views man as alive in sin but the slave of sin (the flesh) working in him, subject to the law of sin and death (Rom. 6 & 7). This shows the activity of man in sin. This shows the will totally hostile to God. **Romans shows the will is directed away from God and toward sin, not free, and with death as the result.** Ephesians views man as **dead in sins --hence in need of quickening; and this shows the will is dead as to movement toward God.** Both views (Romans and Ephesians) are true at the same time and show the irremediable ruin of man except God sovereignly step in. We dare not think of the "dead" in Eph. 2 as "living men" who are (merely) hostile. The fact abides: man is morally dead toward God and cannot believe.

MAN IS RESPONSIBLE THOUGH MORALLY DEAD

Another attempt to circumvent the force of the fact that man is dead in trespasses and sins is to cite Scriptures that allegedly show that man is a free moral agent. For example, the same Arminian writer cites numerous texts as proof [5] which, however, do **not** prove that man is a free moral agent. Also, no person before the cross continued living, thus showing that the alleged free moral agency has not produced a positive result. Moreover, there is a body of texts that deny that man is a free moral agent.

First, then, observe that the cited Scripture texts do not tell us that man's will is morally free. Notice that the Arminian grants that man is responsible. From this fact he then infers capacity to perform. This is of paramount importance to notice. He cites texts that show man is responsible and then claims that he has shown from Scripture that man is a free moral agent. In reality, he has only shown that man is responsible. But the rest he reasons on, inferring

5. Isaiah 1:18; Isaiah 55:1; Matthew 11:28; Deuteronomy 30:19; Ezekiel 18:30; Matthew 11:21; John 3:18, 19; Romans 1:26, 28; Romans 14:12; Romans 2:6; Matthew 23:37; 1 Timothy 2:4; John 5:40; John 8:24; John 1:12.

contrary to other Scriptures which should put a check on the mind.

Second, while I do not intend to needlessly comment individually on all the Scriptures cited in footnote 5, I call attention to Deut. 30:19, which is cited. With Deut. 30:19, compare Ezekiel 3:21; 18:9,21, etc.; 20:11,21; 33:11; 2 Chron. 6:36; Psalm 130:3; Prov. 20:9.

In citing Deut. 30:19, did the Arminian writer think that by choosing life, eternal life was meant? The truth is that if one kept the law his natural life would continue -- he would not die, he would not earn the wages of sin which is death (Rom. 6:23). Choosing life was by keeping the law perfectly. That cannot give divine life, the new birth, to a soul. Listen: "For if a law had been given able to quicken, then indeed righteousness were on the principle of law" (Gal.3:21). "Quicken" means to make alive, the very action those dead in trespasses and sins need. Scripture tells us that the law does not quicken. So when God said choose life, He was speaking of continuance of natural life.

Observe well that God said "choose life." The position of the writer cited above is that man has free moral agency and can do what God says. God addressed the law to Israel to keep it. Does that mean, according to the writer, that it could be kept? What kind of a God would that be according to the Arminian system of reasoning and inferences, that would command men to do what they cannot do? Their position is that God does not do such a thing; nay, could not without violating man's free moral agency.

The patent fact is that no sinner ever chose life. No sinner ever kept the law. Proof? All have physically died. The trouble is not in the law (Rom. 7:10-12). The truth is that the sinner **cannot** choose life -- cannot keep the law. It is not merely that universal death testifies to the fact that man **cannot** keep the law; man's inability is expressly declared in Scripture: "Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be" (Rom. 8:7).

"Neither indeed can be" are words that express inability. So God gave the law, told Israel to keep it, while knowing this was impossible. There it is: proof that God does do such things; and proof that man cannot obey, yet is responsible.

The Jews were responsible to keep the law because God told them to keep it. They did not and could not. Moral responsibility does not necessarily imply ability to perform. But the idea that moral

responsibility does imply ability is an essential element of Arminianism and without this the system built on free moral agency collapses.

The trial of man, his inability to obey God, his inability to choose life, and related matters, as unfolded in the O.T. and in the rejection of Christ, are taken up in Appendix 3 in some detail.

I believe, then, that the point is established, namely, that God does, in fact, require from man what man is not able to perform. Yet His requirements put man in a responsible position. Inability to pay does not release from accountability. Man is responsible to obey, is guilty for not doing so, and is wickedly willful against God. Man is morally depraved, and has failed under every test to which God has put him. It is the lesson of the O.T. and Arminians have not learned it. And instead of subjecting their minds to God's Word, Arminians elevate man and lower God by asserting that 'God cannot violate man's free moral agency.' They mean by this that God cannot compel a sinner to be saved against his will (cp. Luke 14:23 and the Scriptures on pp. 8 and 9 below).

The disbelieving reasoning proceeds to question how a man can be held responsible for his sin if he is not a free moral agent. Well, the fact is that God does hold him responsible. If the Word of God teaches both truths, namely, that man is not a free moral agent and yet is responsible, it is our part to bow to those facts and not complain, as the writer cited above does, about manufacturing difficulties. We are, as Christians, to believe and receive what God says, even if our carnal minds rebel at it. However, people usually do not reason in this Arminian manner when it comes to their own pocketbook. Consider these citations.

But in the reasoning of Arminians there is a totally false principle, namely, that our responsibility depends on our power. If I have lent L 100,000 to any one, and he has squandered it all, certainly he is not able to pay, but has his responsibility come to an end with his ability? Certainly not. Responsibility depends on the right of the person who has lent it to him, not on the ability of the one who has wrongfully wasted the money [6].

A man has stolen a sheep, and he has no free will, no desire even to restore it; his will is to keep it, and eat it; or he has killed it and eaten one half, and means to eat and enjoy the other half. A policeman raps at the door. The man is eating a leg of the mutton, and half the sheep is in the cellar. The representative of the law is about to apprehend the man. "Oh, dear, no," says the man, "I admit I stole the sheep, and do you not see I have killed it, and eaten one half, and I have no will to give up what is left even; indeed plainly I have no desire to do so." Can you tell me of a policeman who would say, "Oh, I see, then as you have no will and no desire to restore the sheep, of course there is no responsibility?" [7]

The call of the gospel also puts the sinner on his responsibility. "For we are a sweet odour of Christ to God, in the saved and in those that perish: to the one an odour from death unto death, but to the others an odour from life unto life" (2 Cor. 2:16). The gospel is to be obeyed (2 Thess. 1:8) and the sinner who hears it and obeys not is the more guilty. To such it is an odour of death. The sinner, then, is dead in trespasses and sins, and though he is morally depraved and cannot believe, the call of the gospel addresses his responsibility and only brings out how death is working in him. See also Appendix 1.

GOD SOVEREIGNLY QUICKENS

Since the sinner is morally dead, God must sovereignly step in and "quicken" the man (Eph. 2:5; cp. John 5:21; 6:63). Quickening means to make alive. This is not man's free moral agency cooperating with God; rather it is God initiating and acting of "His own will" (James 1:18, etc.). God puts faith into a person as a gift (Eph. 2:8). Why, dear friend, God has expressly stated of the believer: "who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God" (John 1:13). What must He say to you before you will believe His Word and abandon the notion of the free moral agency of man? Do not allow yourself to be frightened out of holding the truth because there are those who abuse the scriptural teaching of eternal security in their conduct and words. What truth of God is not abused? And, be truthful with yourself; are there not Arminians who

redefine sin so as to shift the 'line' between being the Lord's and being lost again so as to stay on the safe side of the 'line' separating the lost and the saints? (Abuse is not all one-sided.) Thus, God sovereignly calls the dead in sins to life, giving them to believe, through the Word (Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8). We are His workmanship (Eph. 2:10), not His and ours co-operating in it. This unbelief in what God says elevates wretched self and thus dishonors and lowers God.

The Lord Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus come forth" (John 11:43). It was a loud voice, but not because Lazarus would hear better, for he was dead; it was for the crowd's benefit. How did Lazarus hear, since he was dead? How could Lazarus obey? Did our Lord's command imply ability in Lazarus to come forth? Did Lazarus' will co-operate somehow with our Lord? Obviously not. Christ spoke the word of power and gave Lazarus life. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life." And as He commands the physically dead, so He commands the spiritually dead (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 2:1-8).

John 5:29 speaks of physical resurrection but John 5:25 speaks of the present time during which the Son of God speaks life into the spiritually dead, in agreement with Eph. 2:1-12. He is both the resurrection and the life. Oh, thank God, my soul, for I was dead in trespasses and sins and He put life and faith into me through His Word, else I had eternally perished.

There are Scriptures which expressly exclude man's will, and assert that it is God's will that causes the new birth.

. . . who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, nor of man's will, but of God (John 1:13).

A man **can receive nothing** unless it be given him out of heaven (John 3:27).

No one can come to me except the Father who has sent me draw him . . . (John 6:44).

Therefore said I unto you, that **no one can come** to me unless it be given to Him from the Father (John 6:65; see 17:2).

Why do ye not know my speech? Because **ye cannot** hear my word (John 8:43).

. . . the Spirit of truth, whom the world **cannot** receive (John 14:17).

Because the mind of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; for neither indeed can it be (Rom. 8:7).

They that are in the flesh **cannot** please God (Rom. 8:8).

And Jehovah saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and every imagination of the thought of his heart only evil continually (Gen. 6:5; see 8:21; Eccl. 9:3).

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

". . . for we being still without strength, in [the] due time Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6).

And you, being dead in offenses and sins . . . (Eph. 2:1).

. . . The whole world lies in the wicked [one] (1 John 5:19).

Read Rom. 3:10-20 and Psalm 14:2,3.

". . . men have loved darkness rather than light; for their works are evil (John 3:19).

And all began, without exception, to excuse themselves . . . Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring here...

COMPEL to come in, that my house may be filled (Luke 14:18-23).

So then [it is] **not of him that wills**, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy (Rom. 9:16).

. . . who have been born, not of blood, nor of flesh's will, **nor of man's will**, but of God (John 1:13).

According to his own will begat he us by the word of truth . . . (James 1:18).

For ye are saved by grace, through faith: **and this not of yourselves**; it is God's gift; not on the principle of works, that no one might boast. For we are his workmanship, having been created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God has

before prepared that we should walk in them (Eph. 2:8-10).

It is clear, then, that Scripture denies that man has a morally free will and it asserts that a man is born again by a sovereign act of God's will planting within him a new nature and faith, giving life where there had been death.

Another wrote:

You may say, But is it not also true, that when a sinner is converted to God, he does will? Yes, he does then will and desire to be saved, and to serve God. If it is not his own free choice as a lost sinner, how is it? This is the scriptural answer: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13). This, you notice, is the very explanation how those that are saved and sanctified in Christ are to work out their own salvation. It is God that works in them to will. He gives them a new will, and works in them by the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Compare Romans 8:2

It may be asked, How then is this new will, or new nature, imparted? It is the direct operation of the Spirit of God. How? "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit"

Now would it not be absurd to say that the new nature was begotten by the free will of our old evil nature? But what saith the scripture: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures" (James 1:18). Do you see the difference? Then again, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3). "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (Ver. 23) [8].

CONCLUSION

Another summed up thus:

Will any still object and say they cannot reconcile the two things -- man's powerlessness and man's responsibility? Let them bear in mind that it is none of our business to reconcile them. God has done that for us by placing them side by side in His own eternal word. It is ours to submit and believe, not to reason. If we listen to the conclusions and deductions of our own minds, or the dogmas of the conflicting schools of divinity, we shall ever be in a muddle and a jumble, and perplexed and confused. But if we simply bow to Scripture, we shall know the truth. Men may reason and rebel but the question is whether man is to judge God or God to judge man. Is God sovereign or is He not? If man is to sit in judgment on God, then God is no longer God. "O man who art thou that repliest against God?" This is the great question. Can we answer it? The plain fact is that this question of power and responsibility is all a complete mistake, arising from ignorance of our own true condition and our want of absolute submission to God. Every soul in a right moral condition will freely own his responsibility, his guilt, his utter powerlessness, his exposure to the just judgment of God and that if it were not for the Sovereign grace of God in Christ he should inevitably be damned. Anyone who does not own this, from the very depths of his soul, is ignorant of himself, and virtually sitting in judgment upon God [9].

R. A. Huebner

APPENDIX ONE:

WHY PREACH THE GOSPEL IF THERE IS NO FREEWILL?

A local preacher says: "If I thought that man had not a free will and power to accept, I never could preach again. I could not say, 'Whosoever will, let him come.' What's the use of doing so?"

As this is a very common objection let us look at it carefully. We have seen that the Lord and His apostles held distinctly, that it was not of him that willeth but of God that sheweth mercy, that they that are born again are born of water and of the Spirit; not of man's will in the least. And they were not discouraged. They did not say, if it is not of man's free will but of God, we can never preach again. Now, if you say so, you miss good company. But you ask, "What is the use of preaching?" Well, just read through the Acts of the Apostles and you will see the truth of that word, "It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21). And again, "How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" & etc. (Rom. 10:14). "For by grace [the free favour of God] are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). God gives you a high privilege of proclaiming free forgiveness of sins, and justification from all things, through Jesus. And He gives faith by the Spirit using the water, that is the word, He gives by you. It is by the word of Him who said, "Let there be light," that light and life is given -- this new creation power. What a privilege to be an instrument in His hands [10].

And what do those who so object do with an evangelist such as George Whitfield, who did not believe in free-will? The objection has not the slightest foundation. The Apostle Paul preached the grace of God and also said, "I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they may obtain the salvation of God" (2 Tim.2:10).

10. "Freewill," *Things New and Old* 33:35.

APPENDIX TWO

REPROBATION, SOVEREIGNTY, HARDENING AND RESPONSIBILITY

It does not follow from what we have been considering that besides electing certain persons, that there is a decree of reprobation against others (i.e., there is a decree of God predestination some to eternal punishment). The way Scripture deals with the unrepentant is as much a contrast to Calvinistic inference as what Scripture says about man's will is a contrast to Arminian inference.

Is there anything on God's part to hinder man's free choice of salvation? The word of God is quite plain and clear as to that: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved" (Acts 2:21.) "Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed" (Rom. 10:11). "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (ver. 13). See also 2 Corinthians 5:19-21. What then is the will of God in this matter? "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting life" (John 6:40). "Who will have all men to be saved and come unto the knowledge of the truth," "Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time" (1 Tim. 2:4-6). "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely" (Rev. 21:6). "AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME; AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY."

These and many other scriptures prove that there is nothing on God's part, to hinder or prevent all men coming to Christ if they will. Let us not seek to explain away a single text. Surely there is no need to do so, if we only desire to know the truth [11]

The following article, which appeared in *The Bible Treasury*, vol. 9, p. 345ff, addresses the subjects of God's sovereignty, man's responsibility, hardening and reprobation.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN

Pharaoh's Case.

THE BIBLE TREASURY.							
PHARAOH'S CASE.							
NO.	TEXT.	HEBREW WORD.	HEBREW TENSE AND CONJUGATION	AUTHORIZED VERSION.	YOUNG'S TRANSLATION.	VULGATE.	REMARKS.
1	Exodus iv. 21.	אֶחָזֵק	1st person singular future. Piel.	I will harden his heart.	I strengthen his heart and he doth not send the people away.	Ego indurabo cor ejus.	To bind fast.
2	vii. 8.	אֶקְשֶׁה	1st pers. sing. future. Kal.	I will harden Pharaoh's heart.	But I harden the heart of Pharaoh.	Do.	To be hard.
3	vii. 13.	וַיֶּחֱזַק	3rd pers. sing. fut., with cop. Kal.	And he hardened Pharaoh's heart.	And the heart of Pharaoh is strong.	Induratumque est cor P.	Arias Montanus Et roboravit se cor P.
4	vii. 14.	קָבַד	Adjective, Masculine.	Pharaoh's heart is hardened.	The heart of Pharaoh hath been hard.	Ingravatum est cor P.	Grave cor P. Arias Montanus To become heavy.
5	vii. 22.	וַיֶּחֱזַק	Same as No. 3.	Pharaoh's heart was hardened.	And the heart of Pharaoh is strong.	Same as No. 3.	To become heavy.
6	viii. 15, ver. 11, Hebrew.	וַיִּחְבֹּד	Infinitive with copulative. Hiphil.	He [Pharaoh] hardened his heart.	And he [Pharaoh] hath hardened his heart.	Ingravavit (P.) cor suum.	
7	viii. 32, ver. 27, Hebrew.	וַיִּחְבֹּד	3rd pers. sing. fut., with cop. Hiphil.	And Pharaoh hardened his heart.	And Pharaoh hardened his heart also at this time.	Same as No. 4.	
8	ix. 7.	וַיִּחְבֹּד	3rd pers. sing. fut., with cop. Kal.	And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.	And the heart of Pharaoh is hard.	Do.	
9	ix. 12.	וַיֶּחֱזַק	3rd pers. sing. fut. with cop. Piel.	And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh	And the Lord strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh.	Induravitque Dominus cor P.	
10	ix. 34.	וַיִּחְבֹּד	Same as No. 7.	[Pharaoh] hardened his heart, he and his serv.	And [Pharaoh] hardeneth his heart, he and his servants.	Auxit peccatum, et ingravatum est cor ejus, et servorum illius, et induratum nimis.	Two verses in one.
11	ix. 35.	וַיֶּחֱזַק	Same as Nos. 3 & 5.	And the heart of Pharaoh was hardened.	And the heart of Pharaoh is strong.		
12	x. 1.	הִקְבַדְתִּי	1st pers. sing. preterite. Hiphil.	I have hardened his heart.	I have declared hard the heart of Pharaoh.	Ego enim induravi cor ejus.	
13	x. 20.	וַיֶּחֱזַק	Same as No. 9.	But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart.	And the Lord strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh.	Same as No. 9.	
14	x. 27.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Induravit autem Dominus cor P.	
15	xi. 10.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Do.	Same as No. 9.	
16	xiii. 15.	דִּקְשָׁה	3rd pers. sing. preterite. Hiphil.	When Pharaoh would hardly let us go.	When Pharaoh hath been pained to send us away.	Nam cum induratus esset P.	Englishman's Heb. Concordance "hardened to let us go."
17	xiv. 4.	וַיִּחְזַקְתִּי	1st pers. sing. preterite. Piel.	And I will harden Pharaoh's heart.	Then I have strengthened the heart of Pharaoh.	Same as No. 1.	
18	xiv. 8.	וַיֶּחֱזַק	Same as No. 9.	And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh	And the Lord strengtheneth the heart of Pharaoh.	Same as No. 9.	
19	xiv. 17.	מִחֶזְקִי	Part sing. Piel.	I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians.	And I, lo I strengthen on the heart of the Egyptians.	Ego autem indurabo cor Egyptiorum.	

The accompanying table was drawn up in order to resolve the difficulties of a person who insisted that if by the decree or sovereignty of God a certain number of men only were to be saved, by a natural conclusion, the rest by a similar decree were lost, it mattered not what their opinions or ways were.

Assuredly, if we draw our deductions according to man's ideas, this would be the case. But faith does not rest upon deductions, whilst drawing them: we often meet with plain texts which contradict men. There are many things in nature which we see and believe, but do not understand, and cannot reason upon. If our minds are formed by and according to the word of God, we shall find that man is always held for a responsible being, and is judged and condemned for his own sins, and not by any pre-determined decree of God.

Before proceeding farther, it may be well to examine the table itself, which exhibits in a marked way the purposes of God, and the responsibilities of man. Of the nineteen passages in Exodus presented to our view, all the authorities agree, that nine of them, namely, numbers 1, 2, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18, attribute the hardening of Pharaoh to the will of Jehovah. Number 19 says nothing of Pharaoh himself, but only of the Egyptians in general. Of the rest, numbers 6, 7, 10, attribute the hardening to the king himself. To these last however we must add number 16, which, whether by the rendering of Mr. Young,* or that of the Englishman's Hebrew Concordance, is clearly the act of Pharaoh. For the rest, numbers 4, 5, 8, 11, mention the hardening as a matter of fact without determining the agency. Eighteen of our numbers are thus accounted for. The only one that remains, number 3, is exactly of the same form in Hebrew as 5 and 11, and should be added to those numbers, and are so translated accordingly by Mr. Young, the Vulgate, and Arias Montanus.* Thus to sum up the hardening of Pharaoh is in nine instances attributed to the Lord; with one more number 19, of the Egyptians in general; four to Pharaoh himself; and five with the agency not stated.

The Lord ever acts for His own glory or name. "For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in thee, and that my name might be

** Mr. Young's translation, which obtains favor more especially in Scotland, is made upon a rigid adherence to certain views of the Hebrew tenses, with which the reader need not here be troubled. His translation is inserted as original, and to arrest attention.*

declared throughout the earth" (Rom. 9:17). Yet the king of Egypt was responsible, even his own people and the surrounding nations being witnesses. First we have Exodus 8:19; "Then the magicians said unto Pharaoh, This is the finger of God." Secondly, (chap. 9:20), "He that feared the Lord among the servants of Pharaoh made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses." Thirdly (chap. 10:7), "Pharaoh's servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go, that they may serve the Lord their God." Fourthly (chap. 11:3), "Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people."

Sufficient evidence this, that these judgments were telling upon the people of all classes, increased and deepened eventually by the judgment on the firstborn, and more terribly still by the overthrow in the Red Sea, when the Lord said (chap. 14:4), "I will be honoured upon Pharaoh; that the Egyptians may know that I am the Lord;" and again when the people said (chap. 14:25), "let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians." Did not this great deliverance for Israel form the never ending theme of praise from Exodus 15 to the end of their history? See Psalms 78, 105, 106, etc.

What now did the nations of the earth think of this deliverance, whether as to spreading the name of the Lord, or as to Pharaoh himself? Did they look upon him as a stock or a stone, without responsibilities, in short like a beast without any conscience? Let scripture testify. First, there are the bolts and bars on the gates of Jericho and the witness of Rahab, "I know that the Lord hath given you the land, and that your terror is fallen upon us ... for we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea before you, when ye came up out of Egypt ... And as soon as we had heard these things, our hearts did melt... for the Lord even God, he is God in heaven above, and in the earth beneath;" a rebuke indeed to the Israelites for not having gone up in the first instance, as if God, when He gives a command, does not put things in train for its fulfillment. This woman mentions the passage of the Red Sea, which had happened forty years before, as filling the Canaanitish nations with terror, so that from the first the way was open in the land.

**If the Authorized Version be the right translation, the antecedent to "hardened" would be found as far back as verse 10.*

The Philistines afford us another striking witness against Pharaoh. The ark of God was with them, and it was a question how to get quit of it, and of an offering to the Lord (1 Sam. 6:6). The priests and diviners are called for. They recommend the people to "give glory unto the God of Israel . . . Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go and they departed?" Here is not only a witness three hundred and fifty years after, of the fact of the Exodus, but it is an acknowledgment from the priests of a foreign nation of the perverse conduct of Pharaoh. It is a conclusion drawn by the natural enemies of Israel, whatever the secret purposes of the Lord might be as known to Moses, that the king was righteously judged, as having hardened his heart against the God of Israel. An oppressor before the Lord interfered judicially on behalf of His people; when this interference took place, Pharaoh still refused to own the hand of One mightier than he, in spite of the testimony of the magicians and of his nobles, and of the devastation and misery which his obstinacy was causing. His feeling still was, "Who is the Lord, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go" (Ex. 4).

A few words more will suffice on the subject of God's purpose of sovereignty and man's responsibility, which quotation from Romans 9 gives occasion for, as shewing that whilst the elect are vessels afore prepared unto glory, it is not so with the wicked, as to being afore prepared to destruction, but they are judged for their conduct. "What if God willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath (margin made up, {Greek word}) to (or, for) destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory?" (Chap. 9:22,23).

In the case of the wicked, so far from being elected to eternal misery, we find that God endures them -- vessels of wrath -- with much longsuffering, fitted not by Him but by their own deeds for destruction. The word {Greek word} means to correct, repair, mend; then in its participial form fitted, prepared. The word does not suppose a decree of God, but a work of man. So that whilst it be true that Christians are "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4), and are "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (ver. 6); and whilst also it is true that during their lives they receive the call ("Whom he did predestinate them he also called," Rom. 8:30), again "Us whom he

hath called, not of the Jews only but also of the Gentiles" (chap. 9:24), yet it would never be right to say, that lost sinners were in a parallel way elected to reprobation. No. Putting aside for the present the case of the heathen, we can say at all events as to Christendom, "For this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be damned that believeth not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Thess. 2:11, 12). It is evident that the condemned ones are so dealt with because they believe not the truth, not that they were elect for condemnation. This leads on to one point further concerning the wicked. It is clear that there is a judicial hardening after much longsuffering on the part of God. It was so of Pharaoh. It was so of the Jewish nation when Christ was in the land. "For this people's heart is waxed gross lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Is. 11). This prophecy of their blinding, written more than seven hundred years before, took effect at last by the mouth of Christ; and Paul, in pursuing them into distant countries, used it again of them in Rome, "Well, spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias, the prophet, unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear and not understand," etc. (Acts 28:25-28).

And is it not a very solemn fact, that this will be the last condition of Christendom, as we quoted but now from 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12? A judicial blindness and hardening, after much longsuffering on God's part, yea, for centuries. Will there be a single person amongst those who have lived in the midst of gospel privileges -- who will blame God Himself for this condemnation? No, every mouth will be stopped -- men will depart into a place originally prepared, not for the wicked and impenitent, but for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

Let us observe, whilst we believe both statements, namely, of divine sovereignty and human responsibility, we are not pretending in a logical way to reconcile them. Perhaps it is never intended as finite beings that we should in this world. There are abundance of paradoxes within the sphere of our own existence which we believe but do not reconcile. If this be the case in the affairs of the lower world, shall there be nothing for us to believe without reconciling in the regions of the upper? No; let us yield unhesitating obedience to, and have unshaken confidence in, the word of the living God -- believe what we find there, and leave to our blessed Lord to explain to us the apparent discrepancies therein further or not as He will. Difficulties there will be, and "things hard to be understood;" but it

is only the unlearned and unstable who wrest them unto their own destruction (2 Pet. 3:16).

Finally, it may be held as certain that those who are saved are saved by grace, through the electing love of God, and that those who, in the very precincts where that grace is operating are lost, are lost by their own fault.

APPENDIX THREE:
 NO MAN BECOMES A CHILD OF GOD
 BY AN ACT OF HIS OWN WILL
 (Abridged)

. . . it seemed to me that, ere commencing, it was almost indispensable to devote a little attention to the previous inquiry, of HOW A MAN BECOMES A CHILD OF GOD. If it be, as so many suppose, by an act of our own will, choosing to turn to God and believe in Christ, that we become Christians, then it is a doctrine feasible enough, that by another act, or by other acts, of our own will, we should finally cease to be such. But if the sentiment placed at the head of this page be the truth of God, and can be proved to be such, then it will be manifest, that in order to the utter and final defection of a Christian, it requires not only a change in his will (which is indeed fickle and unsteady as the wind), but a change in the will of Him by whose will and power it is that he has become a Christian - a child of God. The Lord grant us true simplicity and subjection to His word, in looking into these matters!

Two passages would of themselves be sufficient to settle our souls as to the subject before us, if we really read them with unquestioning simplicity of faith: --

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13);
 and

"Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).

In the former of these, the new birth is expressly declared to be, "not of blood," or natural descent; "not of the will of the flesh," or the natural will or choice of the person who is born again; "nor of the will of man," any agency which other men may choose, or will, to pretend to exercise upon him. In both passages, it is expressly declared to be "of the will of God."

Here I might leave this subject; but, knowing how the thought haunts the minds, - "Well, but are not life and death set before us in Scripture? And are we not called on to choose life that we may live?" - I would not thus summarily dismiss the inquiry. There are passages such as these in the Old Testament; and there are some of a somewhat similar character in the New; and every word of God is sacred, and true acquaintance with its meaning important. But it does now appear to me that they who use such passages as those just referred to, to show that the new birth is dependent upon an act of the human will, in the reception of Christ or of the gospel that sets Him forth, have entirely mistaken the scope and meaning of those passages, and betray their ignorance of the scope and design of a great part of the Word of God.

... I need hardly say that all doubtless who have been saved in all ages have been saved by grace through faith; but there is a wide difference between the testimony and dealings of God before the crucifixion of Christ, and since that event. Until that event took place, God's dealings with mankind were one continued trial, so to speak, of whether there be in man anything whereby he can, under any circumstances, retrieve or save himself. Not that such trial was needed for God; He knew from the beginning, yea, from before the foundation of the world, what man's course would be, and how it would demonstrate the utter hopelessness of his condition, if left to his own will, with every possible inducement to act aright. But this was to be demonstrated to man himself; and hence the trial. I would not at present dwell upon man's trial in Eden. He was then tried as to whether he could maintain his innocence, by withstanding temptation from without. There was then no tendency to evil within. But when man had fallen - when the great deceiver had succeeded in poisoning all the springs of moral action in man's nature - God neither summarily cut off the offender, nor at once sent the Saviour. Wrapping up a promise of the Saviour in the curse pronounced upon the enemy, he left man, now driven out of Eden, to multiply and fill the earth, and make manifest, without the restraint of an express law such as Adam had been under, what the bent of his will was, the promise all the while affording a resting-place for faith, wherever there was a heart, such as Abel's, Enoch's or Noah's, opened to receive it.

What was the result of this trial? "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5). "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (vers. 11,12). The evil rose to such a height that God could no longer tolerate its existence; so the flood was sent to destroy man from off the face of the earth.

Noah had found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and was, with his family, preserved to re-people the earth. Man was thus put on trial once more. After the flood a new element was introduced, to restrain the violence which had before filled the earth. The ordinance, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," made man a check and a restraint upon the violence of his fellow-man. But how does man acquit himself under this new principle of human government, thus in its essence introduced? Alas! Noah, the one in whom the authority was naturally invested, debases himself with wine; and when thus degraded his own offspring take advantage of his state to degrade him further still! Babel too, and the cities of the plain; Egypt, with its idolatries and oppressions; and the cities of the Amorites (see Deut. 18:9-12), all form specimens of what man proved himself to be in the interim between the flood and the giving of the law. Rom. 1:21-32 presents us with a gloomy picture of what man at this period proved the desires of his heart and the bent of his will to be; as well as of the consequences to which God gave up the Gentile world. But when He did thus give up the Gentiles, He made choice of Israel, that in His dealings with that nation, brought outwardly nigh to Himself and favoured with every possible advantage, further trial might be made, within a narrower sphere, of what the heart and will of man would produce. It was to this people that the law was given. And Moses, in recapitulating the dealings of God with this people in the wilderness, states that the object was "to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep his commandments or no" (Deut. 8:2).

It was to Israel that the words so often quoted to prove that life or death is at our own choice, were spoken: "See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil; in that I command thee this day to love the Lord thy God, to walk

in his ways, and to keep his commandments, and his statutes, and his judgments, that thou mayest live and multiply," etc. (Deut. 30:15,16). Again, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live" (v. 19).

Was it then that any were saved by thus choosing life that they might live? This would be to affirm that life could come by keeping the law; and Paul says plainly, "If there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law" (Gal. 3:21). But then he also says, "If righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain" (Gal. 2:21). This would be a terrible conclusion to come to, indeed. And if you should enquire, as some did in the Apostle's days, "Wherefore then the law?" let the Apostle answer: "It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19). And if you should still say, Why added because of transgressions? take for answer the same Apostle's words in another place, "For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20). And again, "Moreover, the law entered that the offence might abound" (Rom. 5:20). And again, "I had not known sin, but by the law" (Rom. 7:7). And again, "But sin, that it might appear sin, working death in me by that which is good; that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful" (ver.13). Yet once more, "The law worketh wrath" (Rom. 4:15). Now it seems to me a serious thing, in the face of all these inspired declarations of what ends the law was designed to answer, to affirm that any were saved by "choosing life" according to the tenor of the words of Moses, which have been quoted. Life was then offered them on condition of obedience to the law; and the Holy Ghost solemnly assures us that "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 2:16,21; 3:11); that is, in other words, THEY COULD NOT HAVE LIFE ON THE TERMS PROPOSED BY MOSES.

Of this Moses himself was quite aware. In the very next chapter to that from which his words are quoted, we find that the Lord appeared and said unto him, "Behold, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers; and this people will rise up and go a whoring after the gods of the strangers of the land, whither they go to be among them, and will forsake me, and break my covenant which I have made with them" (Deut. 31:16). They had already broken one covenant of works, . . . (see Ex. 32:19). With an

unchanged nature, and placed under a similar covenant of works, what could be expected now? What but the results which the Lord assures Moses, and Moses assures the people, would actually ensue? "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swear unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed; FOR I KNOW THEIR IMAGINATION WHICH THEY GO ABOUT, EVEN NOW, BEFORE I HAVE BROUGHT THEM INTO THE LAND WHICH I SWARE" (Deut. 31:19-21). Can anything be more solemn or decisive than these last words? God declared to Moses that instead of choosing life that they might live, the people would turn to other gods, provoke Him, and break His covenant; and He speaks of these future acts of evil as only the display of what He knew to be AT THE THEN PRESENT TIME working in their hearts. "I know their imagination," etc. Hence, Moses says to them, "Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the Ark of the covenant of the Lord your God." Why? That they might choose life, and live by keeping it? Nay, but "That it may be there for a witness against thee." "For I know thy rebellion," he proceeds, "and thy stiff neck; behold, whilst I am yet alive with you this day, ye have been rebellious against the Lord; and how much more after my death" (ver. 26,27)? . . . Surely we need no further answer to those who use Moses' words to prove that salvation depends on human will. If it did, who could be saved?

Joshua's words are sometimes quoted for this purpose, as well as those of Moses; and with as little reason or force. After reminding Israel of the condition in which their fathers were, serving other gods, when the Lord took Abraham from the other side of the flood; after rehearsing to them the wonders which God had wrought, and many of which their eyes had beheld; he exhorts them to fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away other gods, and then he adds, "And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose you this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served, that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the

Amorites in whose land ye dwell; but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). The fact is, he does not call upon them to choose between the Lord and idols. He says, "IF IT SEEM EVIL UNTO YOU TO SERVE THE LORD, choose ye," whether ye will serve this class of idols or that. He through grace, as we know, was resolved on serving the Lord. But when the people, with good intentions perhaps, but in a spirit of self-sufficiency, declare that they too will serve the Lord . . . Joshua says to them, "Ye are witnesses against yourselves, that ye have chosen you the Lord, to serve him. And they said, We are witnesses" (ver. 21,22). Ah, yes; to have our words witness against us is the only result that can flow from our declaring that we choose the Lord and His service. And as though to show in what a poor condition they were for taking such vows upon them, Joshua immediately exhorts them: "Now therefore, put away the strange gods which are among you, and incline your heart unto the Lord God of Israel" (ver.23). There were, then, strange gods among them! Their hearts too needed inclining to serve the Lord! Plain proof that they were, as we know the human heart ever is, averse to His service.

Of this we have still further evidence in that part of their history which immediately succeeds. The Book of Judges is but the history of their sins, and of the calamities which these brought upon them, with the Lord's merciful interpositions for their deliverance. Into this I do not now enter. Nor shall I pursue the thread of their history throughout. It would lead me too far. One point, however, must not be omitted; I refer to the ministry of the prophets. It differed materially from the law simply considered. The law left no room for repentance. It demanded obedience, but failing to obtain that, it had nothing to pronounce or bestow but condemnation and the curse. It was obedience, uniform, unvarying obedience, which the law required; not repentance and a return to obedience. But the prophets were sent to propose, as it were, new terms. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the Lord" (Jer. 3:1). "Go, and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you; for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever, O house of Israel. Is not my way equal? Are not your ways

unequal? When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them - for his iniquity that he hath done he shall die. Again, when the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his soul alive. Because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions that he hath committed, he shall surely live - he shall not die" (Ezek. 18:25-28). Such was the ministry of the prophets. But was this to prove, any more than Moses' or Joshua's language respecting the law, that it was possible for man, of his own will, so to turn from his wickedness and do that which is lawful and right, as to live thereby? Surely not. It was a further test - a milder one - to prove whether it was in the heart or will of man to turn to God, and serve and obey Him. It was as though God said, I will not rigorously enforce the claims of my law. It claims uninterrupted and universal obedience. THAT you have utterly failed to render, and the law knows nothing of repentance. But now I give you an opportunity to begin again. "If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done, he shall live." It was a fair offer to blot out all the past, and begin over again; and this offer was made, be it remembered, TO THOSE WHO WERE COMPLAINING THAT THEIR DESTINIES WERE NOT IN THEIR OWN HANDS. Could a fairer offer have been made? But need I ask you, my brother, whether it were possible for any fallen man to be saved thus? What! by keeping all God's statutes, and doing for the time to come that which is lawful and right! Surely this would have been for the doer of these things to live by them, which Paul declares to be the righteousness which is of the law.

Will you turn . . . to Matt. 21:33 - 22:14, where you will find the summing up of all we have now been considering together, and that from the lips of our blessed Lord Himself. You know the two parables which constitute this passage. A certain householder plants a vineyard, and lets it out to husbandmen. When the time of the fruit draws near, he sends his servants to the husbandmen that they may receive it. The husbandmen take the servants, beat one, kill another, and stone another. Again he sends other servants more than the first, and they do to them likewise. Last of all, he sends his son, saying, "They

will reverence my son." So that one object for which the Son of God was sent was to seek fruit of those to whom the vineyard had been entrusted. How was He received? "But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him." The meaning of this cannot be mistaken. The Jewish nation were the husbandmen. All the privileges God had bestowed upon them were the vineyard. The obedience He required was the fruit, which they ought to have rendered. The law demanded it, but in vain. Prophet after prophet came seeking it; but maltreatment or death was all that they received. Last of all came Jesus, the Heir. Him also they put to death. What can be done more? What further test of man's heart and will can be applied? There is a further test; and the application of this, with the result, is illustrated in the next parable, at the beginning of chapter 22.

Jesus came, not only as the last of those whom God sent, seeking fruit from man - He came as the messenger and minister of God's grace to man. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; AND THEY WOULD NOT COME." Here it is not the lord of the vineyard seeking fruit - God requiring of man the service, the obedience due to Him. No; it is a king inviting to a wedding feast - God in His grace providing everything for man and inviting him to partake. But he is no more inclined to receive God's bounty than to satisfy God's claims. THEY WOULD NOT COME. But this is not all; the first refusal is not received as final. "Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." Christ, as seeking fruit, is rejected and slain. He is equally rejected as inviting Israel, by means of His disciples, to partake of the feast which God had provided. But when they have thus rejected Him, grace still lingers over them, and His very death is made the occasion of renewed invitations. "All things are ready" (this could hardly have been said before); "come unto the marriage." "But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants and entreated them spitefully and slew them." Such is the reception with which all God's overtures, as well as His claims, are met on the part of man.

He claims obedience, seeks fruit - man will not render it. He publishes grace, providing a wedding feast, and inviting guests - "they would not come." He repeats His invitations, descanting on the plenteousness of the provision and declaring that all things are ready. It is all to no purpose. Some light-heartedly despise His bounty, preferring their merchandise or their farm; others, more cruel in their rejection of grace, spitefully entreat and slay the servants who are sent to invite them. Such is man, and such man's will, with every possible advantage, short of that Almighty grace which subdues his opposition and makes him willing to receive Christ and the salvation He has brought. Such grace it is, and such grace alone, by which any become the children of God.

The marriage was made by the king for his son. The feast was provided to grace this marriage. Is the king's son to be despoiled of his marriage feast because of the perversity and obstinacy of those first invited as guests? These, or many of them, perish for their contempt of God's grace; but other messengers are sent out - not now to those who might have expected to be invited, but into the highways, to bid as many as they find. "So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all, as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests." In Luke 14 where we have a similar parable, the servants are told, "Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and BRING IN hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind." They were to BRING THEM IN. It is not an appeal to their will, as to whether they will come; they are to be brought in. When this is done, the servant says, "Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and COMPEL them to come in, that my house may be filled." If we are really guests at Christ's table, it is not that we have of ourselves chosen to come when invited, nor even when urged; but because we have been BROUGHT IN, or COMPELLED TO COME. That is, the opposition of our natural will has been overcome by that Almighty grace which, in thus overcoming our opposition, has made us willing and brought us in.

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