

Articles and Sermons :: unless the Father who sent Me draws him?

unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by boG (), on: 2008/11/26 15:37

Quote:

-----Why did Jesus say it had to be granted to a man to even be able to come to him?

Could you please exegete this verse (John 6:65) for us?

John 6

25. When they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, "Rabbi, when did You get here?"
26. Jesus answered them and said, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled.
27. "Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you, for on Him the Father, God, has set His seal."
28. Therefore they said to Him, "What shall we do, so that we may work the works of God?"
29. Jesus answered and said to them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He has sent."
30. So they said to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, so that we may see, and believe You? What work do You perform?"
31. "Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, 'He gave them bread out of heaven to eat.' "
32. Jesus then said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread out of heaven, but it is My Father who gives you the true bread out of heaven.
33. "For the bread of God is that which comes down out of heaven, and gives life to the world."
34. Then they said to Him, "Lord, always give us this bread."
35. Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.
36. "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe.
37. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out.
38. "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.
39. "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day.
40. "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."
41. Therefore the Jews were grumbling about Him, because He said, "I am the bread that came down out of heaven."
42. They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How does He now say, 'I have come down out of heaven'?"
43. Jesus answered and said to them, "Do not grumble among yourselves.
44. "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day.
45. "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught of God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father, comes to Me.
46. "Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.
47. "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life.
48. "I am the bread of life.
49. "Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died.
50. "This is the bread which comes down out of heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.
51. "I am the living bread that came down out of heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread also which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh."
52. Then the Jews began to argue with one another, saying, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?"
53. So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.
54. "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.
55. "For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.
56. "He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.
57. "As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also will live because of Me.
58. "This is the bread which came down out of heaven; not as the fathers ate and died; he who eats this bread will live f

orever."

59. These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum.
60. Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this said, "This is a difficult statement; who can listen to it?"
61. But Jesus, conscious that His disciples grumbled at this, said to them, "Does this cause you to stumble?"
62. "What then if you see the Son of Man ascending to where He was before?"
63. "It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing; the words that I have spoken to you are spirit and are life.
64. "But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him.
65. And He was saying, "For this reason I have said to you, that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted him from the Father."
66. As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not walking with Him anymore.
67. So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?"
68. Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life.
69. "We have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God."
70. Jesus answered them, "Did I Myself not choose you, the twelve, and yet one of you is a devil?"
71. Now He meant Judas the son of Simon Iscariot, for he, one of the twelve, was going to betray Him.

You will notice a recurring theme throughout these passages. There is an emphasis here between God who draws men to Himself and those who believe. Yet, I do not believe this will clear up any disagreements; for this simple reason: no one here (I hope) disagrees that we are saved because God first loved us and sought to save us while we were yet sinners, that is, while we were enemies and contemners of God.

As I have said elsewhere concerning

Romans 9

16. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.

This verse may just as easily verify the understanding: If God had shown NO mercy whatsoever then we would very quickly conclude just how meaningless it would be to "will" and "run" (repent and believe). However, because God has shown mercy, He calls every man unto repentance through faith in Christ Jesus; so that none should perish and all might be reconciled unto Himself.

Which then came first: God drawing men unto Himself or man's belief?

Clearly God drawing men unto Himself. The distinction between us is that many here believe in "limited atonement" and others that God is seeking to save everyone.

The main difference I understand between these two positions is "limited atonement" implies that God was either unable or unwilling to save everyone -- hence the debate of arbitrariness in God's election & predestination. While, the latter, though it may be seen as if God were "ineffective" at bringing salvation to all men "if He indeed died for all men": you will also notice that every man's condemnation is without arbitraries. ie. "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world," and thus, we either despise the light of men, who is Jesus Christ, or come to the light. Personally, I believe that Christ's propitiation being a "full atonement" does not require everyone to be saved; here is why:

Luke 6

27. "But I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,
28. bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.
29. "Whoever hits you on the cheek, offer him the other also; and whoever takes away your coat, do not withhold your shirt from him either.
30. "Give to everyone who asks of you, and whoever takes away what is yours, do not demand it back.
31. "Treat others the same way you want them to treat you.
32. "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.
33. "If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.
34. "If you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners in order to receive back the same amount.
35. "But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High; for He Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men."

What shall we say then? is God the same as heathen men? Did the Father send His Son expecting in return? Did He expect the same amount back to Himself? Does He treat all ungrateful and evil men just as He desires Himself to be treated? -- sovereignly redeeming a few and then turning over and leaving the rest to their sealed fate of eternal damnation? Does God give to everyone who asks? -- do we believe that sinners never ask God for mercy and grace to be saved?

The question then is: what constrains a sinner to be saved, much less, to desire to be saved? Some will answer it is because of the sovereign grace of God. And that is true. Then we ask: what is sovereign grace?

I believe this is where the debate lies. Personally, it is my belief that God's sovereign grace is no more than what may be described as His "common grace." If Jesus says, "I say to you who hear, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you"; and again, Paul says, "Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

Is God then good to some and evil towards the rest? Of course not; that is why we teach "common grace". Is common grace an ineffective grace (not tending towards men's salvation)? That is to say, is common grace not a part of the love or goodness of God? **For we read**, "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life." **And again**, "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Likewise, this same love we are commanded to have towards all men; how much more then does God love all men than we do, even those who are perishing?

Is this not enough to condemn every man and is this not enough to save every man? and how much more through the revelation of Christ Jesus?

Do we honestly believe the love of God to be ineffective? Or, do we believe the love of God displayed in "common grace" as something less than and inferior to what we might call "effective grace," that is, "effective love"? If God is love then shall we say to those who are reserved unto judgment, "but He is an ineffective love for you," that is, God is something less than Himself towards those who are perishing. Either God is partial or God deals equally with all men. If we believe that God deals equally (impartially, **Matthew 22:16**) with all men then we shall say God has sovereignly and mercifully given and extended to every man: to choose life and be reconciled to God, wherein He has first loved us, by His grace through faith in Christ Jesus or remain in your sin wherefore you are already condemned because you have not believed in the Son of God and, thus, you shall not see eternal life and the wrath of God abides on you (**John 3:18, 36**).

Concerning the Sovereignty of God and the "free-will" of man (insofar as "free" can be applied to creatures, for only God is truly free), please allow me to quote these two great theologians:

In a sermon titled, "A Defense of Calvinism," Charles Spurgeon has said, "For instance, I read in one Book of the Bible, 'The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.' Yet I am taught, in another part of the same inspired Word, that 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.' I see, in one place, God in providence presiding over all, and yet I see, and I cannot help seeing, that man acts as he pleases, and that God has left his actions, in a great measure, to his own free-will. Now, if I were to declare that man was so free to act that there was no control of God over his actions, I should be driven very near to atheism; and if, on the other hand, I should declare that God so over-rules all things that man is not free enough to be responsible, I should be driven at once into Antinomianism or fatalism. That God predestines, and yet that man is responsible, are two facts that few can see clearly. They are believed to be inconsistent and contradictory to each other. If, then, I find taught in one part of the Bible that everything is foreordained, that is true; and if I find, in another Scripture, that man is responsible for all his actions, that is true; and it is only my folly that leads me to imagine that these two truths can ever contradict each other. I do not believe they can ever be welded into one upon any earthly anvil, but they certainly shall be one in eternity. They are two lines that are so nearly parallel, that the human mind which pursues them farthest will never discover that they converge, but they do converge, and they will meet somewhere in eternity, close to the throne of God, whence all truth doth spring."

A.W. Tozer similarly has said in his book "Knowledge of the Holy," in the 22nd chapter, titled, *The Sovereignty of God*, "Another real problem created by the doctrine of the divine sovereignty has to do with the will of man. If God rules His universe by His sovereign decrees, how is it possible for man to exercise free choice? And if he can not exercise freedom of choice, how can he be held responsible for his conduct? Is he not a mere puppet whose actions are determined by a behind-the-scenes God who pulls the strings as it pleases Him?"

The attempt to answer these questions has divided the Christian church neatly into two camps which have borne the names of two distinguished theologians, Jacobus Arminius and John Calvin. Most Christians are content to get into one camp or the other and deny either sovereignty to God or free will to man. It appears possible, however, to reconcile these two positions without doing violence to either, although the effort that follows may prove deficient to partisans of one camp or the other.

Here is my view: God sovereignly decreed that man should be free to exercise moral choice, and man from the beginning has fulfilled that decree by making his choice between good and evil. When he chooses to do evil, he does not thereby countervail the sovereign will of God but fulfills it, inasmuch as the eternal decree decided not which choice the man should make but that he should be free to make it. If in His absolute freedom God has willed to give man limited freedom, who is there to stay His hand or say,

'What doest thou?' Man's will is free because God is sovereign. A God less than sovereign could not bestow moral freedom upon His creatures. He would be afraid to do so."

And that is a powerful statement: only a truly Sovereign God can bestow moral freedom upon His creatures and yet still remain Perfectly Sovereign. Wow. I don't know, I hear my brother Calvinists say how awesome the sovereignty of God is because He sovereignly regenerates sinners, that is to say, He overrides (changes) their moral freedom from choosing sin to choosing righteousness. But how much more sovereign is a God who can soften the hardened hearts of wicked sinners so that they would freely choose regeneration? Again, as Jesus said in His sermon on the mount, "For God Himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men," and again, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Therefore, I believe God overcomes evil with good, that is, His "common grace" is sufficient grace; and this all the more in the Light of Christ, the Eternal Son -- everyone who would despise unto death His common grace & love shall be, without excuse, truly worthy of eternal condemnation in the lake of fire.

Re: unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by rbanks, on: 2008/11/26 19:01

Brother boG,

I have really enjoyed your posts and I agree with the way you have started this thread. I think you have given a good explanation of the scripture at hand.

I also agree with the bringing of the truths together. I believe that God created Adam as a free agent to make the choice to please God. We know that Adam was created from the breath of God. We know that all mankind after Adam came out of Him. We know that Eve is the mother of all living. Everyone after Adam & Eve were born from them after they sinned.

It seems that because man was in the beginning given a free will that this is the intent of God for all of his creation. The difference is that mankind is born into sin and the moment he starts to disobey by sinning that the more He/she sins the greater the bondage as a result of sinning. The bible even says where sin abounds grace does more abound. We know without the grace and mercy of God we would all die in our sins.

I agree with my Calvinist brethren concerning the fact that we are all in sin and can not save ourselves. Our free will is not what saves us. If we were left to our free will then we would go to hell. I whole heartily agree with this because if God had not showed mercy to us then we would all perish. God must regenerate us because we can't do this. God must draw us because we could not come on our own.

We also must believe all the scriptures concerning salvation and man's responsibility to hear and believe. I can't believe something that the bible does not imply concerning believing in a doctrine that takes away from man's responsibility to believe. When some say that God choose some to believe and the reason why others are going to hell is because God didn't choose them to believe then that places God being responsible for them going to hell for no reason when the bible is clear that God is Love.

I believe that the bible makes it clear that God chooses those who truly believe and not before they believe. I do not believe

even that foreknowledge of God should be interpreted to mean something that takes away from what God is saying to all sinners. Jesus died on the cross to save sinners who will believe in a merciful and gracious God who desires to draw the believer to Himself but also does not desire to draw the unbeliever to Himself.

Re: - posted by Abe_Juliot (), on: 2008/11/26 23:54

Quote:

-----What shall we say then? is God the same as heathen men? Did the Father send His Son expecting in return?

God does not expect man to make himself worthy of His free grace nor does He require man to make payments for it that it may be earned. In this sense Jesus does not expect a reward from man, when He compels sinners to come to Him.

However, He does expect accomplishments from His death. And these accomplishments are rewards that He himself gives. It is God who grants sinners a New heart of Faith and Repentance. These graces are not man's gift to God. We freely give our love and affection to Him. But, It is God who grants us the increase of Faith, hope, and Love, by the power of His Spirit through His Word. His reward is His own accomplishments and not our will or running causing His death to be efficacious.

But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Romans 5:8-10

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." -Hebrews 12:2

"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth. -Luke 15:10

"For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?" -2Th 2:19

The Father does expect a victorious redemption from Himself when He reconciled us to himself through the death and resurrection of His own Son.

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." -Isaiah 53:10-12

Matthew Henry said this,

"I. Whom he did not pray for (Joh_17:9): I pray not for the world. Note, There is a world of people that Jesus Christ did not pray for. It is not meant of the world of mankind general (he prays for that here, Joh_17:21, That the world may believe that thou hast sent me); nor is it meant of the Gentiles, in distinction from the Jews; but the world is here opposed to the elect, who are given to Christ out of the world. Take the world for a heap of unwinnowed corn in the floor, and God loves it, Christ prays for it, and dies for it, for a blessing is in it; but, the Lord perfectly knowing those that are his, he eyes particularly those that were given him out of the world, extracts them; and then take the world for the remaining heap of rejected, worthless chaff, and Christ neither prays for it, nor dies for it, but abandons it, and the wind drives it away. These are called the world, because they are governed by the spirit of this world, and have their portion in it; for these Christ does not pray; not but that there are some things which he intercedes with God for on their behalf, as the dresser for the ripening of the barren tree; but he does not pray for them in this prayer, that have not part nor lot in the blessings here prayed for. He does not say, I pray against the world, as Elias made intercession against Israel; but, I pray not for them, I pray

ss them by, and leave them to themselves; they are not written in the Lamb's book of life, and therefore not in the breast-plate of the great high-priest. And miserable is the condition of such, as it was of those whom the prophet was forbidden to pray for, and more so, Jer_7:16. We that know not who are chosen, and who are passed by, must pray for all men, 1Ti_2:1, 1Ti_2:4. While there is life, there is hope, and room for prayer. See 1Sa_12:23.

II. Whom he did pray for; not for angels, but for the children of men. 1. He prays for those that were given him, meaning primarily the disciples that had attended him in this regeneration; but it is doubtless to be extended further, to all who come under the same character, who receive and believe the words of Christ, Joh_17:6, Joh_17:8. 2. He prays for all that should believe on him (Joh_17:20), and it is not only the petitions that follow, but those also which went before, that must be construed to extend to all believers, in every place and every age; for he has a concern for them all, and calls things that are not as though they were."

Our Lord Jesus has taught us, " Â...that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (Jn 6:6 5) "And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day." (Jn 6:39) "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (Jn 6:37) "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (Jn 17:2) "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine." (Jn 17:9)

Quote:
-----Romans 9 16. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. This verse may just as easily verify the understanding: If God had shown NO mercy whatsoever then we would very quickly conclude just how meaningless it would be to "will" and "run" (repent and believe)

It does not verify multiple positions when you exposition the entire Chapter with Romans 8 and Romans 3 preceding it. God is not the author of confusion.

Romans 3 clearly verifies that no one is willing and no one is running. That is why in John's gospel the Holy Spirit says things like... "And what he hath seen and heard, that he testifieth; and no man receiveth his testimony." (Jn 3:32)

Quote:
-----do we believe that sinners never ask God for mercy and grace to be saved?

A sinner may desire to have mercy in the sense that the Rich man in Hell presently desires mercy. This cry does not please God, for it is selfish and not fixed on the cross of Christ. No unregenerate sinner desires Jesus from a heart of Faith.

I have written a short article on this matter. You may read it here:

(<http://abrahamjuliot.blogspot.com/2008/06/doctrines-of-you-are-unprofitable-and-i.html>) The Doctrines of "You are unprofitable" and "I must bring them"

Quote:
-----However, because God has shown mercy, He calls every man unto repentance through faith in Christ Jesus; so that none should perish and all might be reconciled unto Himself.

The outward call is not the act of mercy that the Holy Spirit is speaking of in Romans 8-9. Consider what God says in these passages concerning His mercy.

"In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer." (Isa 54:8)

Are you going to say that God has everlasting kindness on those in Hell. The Mercy that is in Romans 9 is the same mercy that is in Romans 8.

We do not make Christ's finished work effectual upon us. He makes it effectual upon whom He will. For the Holy Spirit says through the mouth of Paul, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." -Romans 8:29-34

Who is the Holy Spirit speaking of when He says, "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

The Holy Spirit tells us exactly who they are as He says, "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."

Furthermore, the Holy Spirit precedes this thought by saying, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified."

-Abraham

Edit: grammar check, spell check

Re: - posted by Abe_Juliot (), on: 2008/11/27 0:42

Quote:

-----I believe that the bible makes it clear that God chooses those who truly believe and not before they believe.

What saith the scriptures? It is a horrible tragedy when we exalt the thoughts in our brains and completely neglect to preach the word of God. We have been guilty of this in our former days. Let no man continue therein.

"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." (Eph 1:4)

"But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." (2Th 2:13)

"(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth...So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.)" (Rom 9:11,16)

"Who hath saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began," (2 Ti 1:9)

The following are some quotes from brother Spurgeon,

ELECTION -FORESEEN FAITH

“But,” say others, “God elected them on the foresight of their faith.” Now, God gives faith, therefore he could not have elected them on account of faith, which he foresaw. There shall be twenty beggars in the street, and I determine to give one of them a shilling; but will any one say that I determined to give that one a shilling, that I elected him to have the shilling, because I foresaw that he would have it? That would be talking nonsense. In like manner to say that God elected men because he foresaw they would have faith, which is salvation in the germ, would be too absurd for us to listen to for a moment. 41,42.317

There was nothing more in Abraham than in any one of us why God should have selected him, for whatever good was in

Abraham God put it there. Now, if God put it there, the motive for his putting it there could not be the fact of his putting it there. 303.135

If I were to plead that the rose bud were the author of the root, well! I might indeed, be laughed at. But were I to urge that any goodness in man is the ground of God's choice, I should be foolish indeed. 303.135

The love of God therefore existed before there was any good thing in man, and if you tell me that God loved men because of the foresight of some good thing in them, I again reply to that, that the same thing cannot be both cause and effect. Now it is quite certain that any virtue which there may be in any man is the result of God's grace. Now if it be the result of grace it cannot be the cause of grace. It is utterly impossible that an effect should have existed before a cause; but God's love existed before man's goodness, therefore that goodness cannot be a cause. 501.172

Some, who know no better, harp upon the foreknowledge of our repentance and faith, and say that, "Election is according to the foreknowledge of God;" a very scriptural statement, but they make a very unscriptural interpretation of it. Advancing by slow degrees, they next assert that God foreknew the faith and the good works of his people. Undoubtedly true, since he foreknew everything; but then comes their groundless inference, namely, that therefore the Lord chose his people because he foreknew them to be believers. It is undoubtedly true that foreknown excellencies are not the causes of election, since I have shown you that the Lord foreknew all our sin: and surely if there were enough virtue in our faith and goodness to constrain him to choose us, there would have been enough demerit in our bad works to have constrained him to reject us; so that if you make foreknowledge to operate in one way, you must also take it in the other, and you will soon perceive that it could not have been from anything good or bad in us that we were chosen, but according to the purpose of his own will, as it is written, "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." 779.621

Recollect also that God himself did not foresee that there would be any love to him in us arising out of ourselves, for there never has been any, and there never will be; he only foresaw that we should believe because he gave us faith, he foresaw that we should repent because his Spirit would work repentance in us, he foresaw that we should love, because he wrought that love within us; and is there anything in the foresight that he means to give us such things that can account for his giving us such things? The case is self-evident—his foresight of what he means to do cannot be his reason for doing it. 1299.341

You are obliged to confess that it is of grace then, and cast away the thoughts, that it was of your foreseen faith, or of your foreseen good works, that the Lord chose you. 3332.592

ELECTION -STUMBLING OVER

But there are some who say, "It is hard for God to choose some and leave others." Now, I will ask you one question. Is there any of you here this morning who wishes to be holy, who wishes to be regenerate, to leave off sin and walk in holiness? "Yes, there is," says some one, "I do." Then God has elected you. But another says, "No; I don't want to be holy; I don't want to give up my lusts and my vices." Why should you grumble, then, that God has not elected you to it? For if you were elected you would not like it, according to your own confession. 42.316

You cannot diminish, you cannot increase the number, why preach the gospel? Now, I thought my friend Mr. Bloomfield anticipated this difficulty well enough. There must be a harvest,—why sow, why plough? Simply because the harvest is ordained to save some. 387.312

I wish that any sinner who is troubled about election, for instance, would wait till God tells him he is not elected, or, if he has any misgiving about whether he may come to Christ, he would wait till he finds a passage which tells him that he may not come. 1123.417

Man is made out to be a poor, weak creature, victimised by a law too rigid for his frailty. It is represented that he has a right to mercy, and a great uproar is made if we deny him any such right; and much anger is felt if we declare that mercy is the sovereign prerogative of God, and may be exercised at his own absolute discretion. Rebellion against divine election is often founded on the idea that the sinner has a sort of right to be saved, and this is to deny the full desert of sin. 1416.301

The other day when we preached the electing love of God, you grumbled and muttered that God was unjust to choose one rather than another. What did this mean? Did it not mean that you felt you had some claim upon God? 2012.136

-Abraham

Re: - posted by boG (), on: 2008/11/27 16:52

Brother Abe, please forgive me if I set aside your statements and lay down some specific questions for you and everyone (not trying to pick just on you :-P).

Romans 3 proves nothing against what I have written. It merely confirms the obvious that neither did man first love God nor first seek God nor even, as **Romans 8** testifies, that man would have ever desired to do so if God had not first manifested Himself to us in Christ the Savior. Wherefore as I said previously concerning **Romans 9:16** that our repenting and believing are dependant upon God first having mercy; and this as opposed to saying God's mercy **is** our repentance and faith. That is, our repentance and faith are because of God's mercy rather than is God's mercy. Or again, that repentance and faith are the fruits of hearing the gospel of the mercy of God -- the word of reconciliation -- and not the mercy itself. (I hope that was a clear distinction ...)

I say this because I agree completely with Spurgeon when he says, "The love of God therefore existed before there was any good thing in man, and if you tell me that God loved men because of the foresight of some good thing in them, I again reply to that, that the same thing cannot be both cause and effect. Now it is quite certain that any virtue which there may be in any man is the result of God's grace. Now if it be the result of grace it cannot be the cause of grace. It is utterly impossible that an effect should have existed before a cause; but God's love existed before man's goodness, therefore that goodness cannot be a cause."

It is not my attempt to bypass this truth, so please, do not answer as though I were without specific criticism for the evidence. You will notice that at no time in my post did I say man did something of himself to bring God's salvation. Rather I implied that God through His sovereign grace first wrought in sinful man a heart willing to be put to death, such as prepared for regeneration, whereby God then applied the blood of His salvation. It is not my interest, at any time, to separate any good thing in man from our Lord's sovereign grace. However, even in this same regard there must remain place in our doctrine for the resisting of the Holy Spirit.

For if we declare God to be impartial, dealing equally with all men, then how shall we understand Jesus saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" And again, "Isaiah is very bold and says, 'I was found by those who did not seek Me, I became manifest to those who did not ask for Me.' But as for Israel He says, 'All the day long I have stretched out My hands to a disobedient and obstinate people.' " And again as Stephen declared, "You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."

How shall men resist the Holy Spirit of God? What then is the difference between the Father who draws men unto Himself through Christ Jesus and who has "stretched out His hands" to us and who "would have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings"? Does this not stand as a testimony that God has sought the salvation of the non-elect? For how could the pharisees have opportunity to resist the Holy Spirit if He was not pursuing their conversion? That is, if the testimony of the Holy Spirit were not true; for He bears witness that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them."

John 3

21. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are **wrought** in God.

My descriptions are for clarifying this for which God has wrought in man that man should freely come to the light. However, this without being regenerated (born-again) first. As you shall notice, the emphasis even in this verse, the man's deeds are not made manifest as being wrought in God until after he comes to the light. (It is also of interest to consider man's deeds as having been "wrought in God" or "wrought by God" or "wrought with God". I would dare say all three translations of the greek word "*en*", Strong's #1722, are valid in this phrase.) That is to say, the Light was shining in the darkness (unregenerate sinner) and those in the darkness responded in some manner as to either draw near to Him through Christ Jesus by faith or to remain in the darkness resisting the Holy Ghost.

So, if Spurgeon rightly explains (and he does) that the goodness of man cannot be the cause of God's grace if God's grace is the cause of man's goodness (circular logic) then please allow me to ask the following questions:

Mark 16

16. He that believeth and is baptized **shall be saved**; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Acts 16

31. And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou **shalt be saved**, and thy house.

Romans 10

9. That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou **shalt be saved**.

Take notice that "thou shalt be saved" is future tense, that is, saved after repenting and believing and being baptized (personally, I do not associate this with ceremonial washing but in first denying of self according to our Lord's commandment -- the true heart of repentance -- and thereby partaking by faith in the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection unto newness of life, that is, regeneration).

Quote:
-----The other day when we preached the electing love of God, you grumbled and muttered that God was unjust to choose one rather than another. What did this mean? Did it not mean that you felt you had some claim upon God?

No, it is not that we have felt some claim upon God. Rather, I would argue according to the reverse statement, being, "Did it not mean that God felt He had some claim upon man (the elect)?"

While this statement does not appear, at first, to be of any difficulty; you will notice that if we follow the context of Spurgeon's question, as concerning man's salvation, we draw the following thesis: "if God has a claim upon man to regenerate and redeem the elect then God is indebted to do so." Thus, I may argue that such in fact gives man (the elect) a claim upon God instead of proving God's free gift of grace. Again, this leads me back to questioning "is God the same as heathen men? Did the Father send His Son expecting in return?" Therefore, if you are going to claim that God sent His Son with the expectation of receiving a people to call His own then explain to me how our God should do so without contradicting our Lord's instruction (**Luke 6:35**)? I have no concern of doubt that there is no contradiction in this but I do not believe we have settled upon a reasonable explanation, as of yet.

Here are a few verses for comparison:

Ezekiel 16

21. "But if the wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed and observes all My statutes and practices justice and righteousness, he shall surely live; he shall not die.
22. "All his transgressions which he has committed will not be remembered against him; because of his righteousness which he has practiced, he will live.
23. "Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live?"
24. "But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die.
25. "Yet you say, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Hear now, O house of Israel! Is My way not right? Is it not your ways that are not right?"
26. "When a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and dies because of it, for his iniquity which he has committed he will die.
27. "Again, when a wicked man turns away from his wickedness which he has committed and practices justice and righteousness, he will save his life.
28. "Because he considered and turned away from all his transgressions which he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die.
29. "But the house of Israel says, 'The way of the Lord is not right.' Are My ways not right, O house of Israel? Is it not your ways that are not right?"
30. "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, each according to his conduct," declares the Lord GOD. "Repent and turn away from all your transgressions, so that iniquity may not become a stumbling block to you.
31. "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel?"
32. "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

Ezekiel 36

20. "When they came to the nations where they went, they profaned My holy name, because it was said of them, 'These are the people of the LORD; yet they have come out of His land.'
21. "But I had concern for My holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations where they went.
22. "Therefore say to the house of Israel, 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for My holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you went.
23. "I will vindicate the holiness of My great name which has been profaned among the nations, which you have profaned in their midst. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD," declares the Lord GOD, "when I prove Myself among you in their sight.
24. "For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land.
25. "Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.
26. "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.
27. "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.
28. "You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.
29. "Moreover, I will save you from all your uncleanness; and I will call for the grain and multiply it, and I will not bring a famine on you.
30. "I will multiply the fruit of the tree and the produce of the field, so that you will not receive again the disgrace of famine among the nations.
31. "Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and your abominations.
32. "I am not doing this for your sake," declares the Lord GOD, "let it be known to you. Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel!"
33. 'Thus says the Lord GOD, "On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places will be rebuilt.

Read again:

Ezekiel 16:31, 32 "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

Ezekiel 36:26, 27 "Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances."

John 7

36. What manner of saying is this that he said, Ye shall seek me, and shall not find me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come?
37. In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.
38. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.
39. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)

Consider this last verse particularly as compared to:

Titus 3

5. Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

How then did they believe (**John 7:39**) before the Holy Spirit had been given to properly regenerate them unto faith? If we know therefore that regeneration is the work of salvation in a born-again believer then how shall it precede faith in an unregenerate sinner? That is, how shall salvation precede faith in Christ Jesus? Can regeneration be the cause of man's faith if man's faith precedes regeneration by the Holy Ghost?

Again, am I implying that man's faith is some good thing from himself? NO! But I am led to believe it is not from regeneration, but rather, as I previously have written it is from the common grace of God working upon the sinner's heart leading him unto repentance by faith.

Proverbs 1

23. "Turn to my reproof, behold, I will pour out my spirit on you; I will make my words known to you."

How then do we understand man to turn at the rebuke of God and live? With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible. Notice, God first reproofed and rebuked in order for man to wake up from his slumber and turn and live. And I give no credence to any assumption that man did this of his own strength or initiative but only that God should compel him through His divine providence and common grace, heaping burning coals upon his head, that man should see himself in the Light of who God is in Christ and despair.

Re: - posted by Abe_Juliot (), on: 2008/11/28 4:10

Dear friend and brother,

You are in my prayer's and my heart's desire for you is that you might ascribe to God the full glory due unto His name. I'm not frustrated at you and neither is God. He is able to manifest His glory unto you and irresistibly cause you to heartily confess as Nebuchadnezzar confessed, "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?...Now I Nebuchadnezzar praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, all whose works are truth, and his ways judgment: and those that walk in pride he is able to abase." (Dan 4:35,37)

Quote:
-----...only a truly Sovereign God can bestow moral freedom upon His creatures (insofar as "free" can be applied to creatures, for only God is truly free) and yet still remaining Perfectly Sovereign. Wow. I don't know, I hear calvinists say how awesome the Sovereignty of God is because He sovereignly regenerates sinners, that is to say, He overrides (changes) their moral freedom from choosing sin to choosing righteousness. But how much more Sovereign is a God who can soften the hardened hearts of wicked sinners so that they would freely choose regeneration?...

Regeneration before faith ... that is what you are saying, correct? This is definitely something I have considered and I don't agree with it...

If I am not mistaken the concept of regeneration preceding faith is to sustain the supposition that we must love God before we will "freely" believe in Him and repent of our evil deeds. However, I do not find such a requirement in Scripture, unless you can point it out to me.

Edit addition end

On the topic of Regeneration

The act of Faith must have love from the heart towards God. The heart with Faith is not neutral towards God. You also must have joy in God. The act of Faith is not bitter towards God.

The heart of Faith must love God with the heart, soul, strength, and mind. Every act of Faith is not contrary to the fruit of the spirit.

Your view of regeneration is like saying, "Faith causes God to Regenerate you." Rather than Faith is an evidence that God has regenerated you.

Do you believe that an unregenerate evil heart can bring forth the fruit of the spirit.

Specifically:

1. love to God
2. joy in God
3. Faith in God.

None of these can be separated.

Maranatha." (1Co 16:22)

"For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." (Gal 5:6)

Faith without joy is dead and we must repent from this dead faith.

"Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost." (Rom 15:13)

"And having this confidence, I know that I shall abide and continue with you all for your furtherance and joy of faith." (Ph p 1:25)

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Php 3:3)

"Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." (Php 4:4)

Joy, Love and Faith are all fruits of the Spirit.

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," (Gal 5:22)

Do you believe that the unregenerate man can produce the fruits of the Spirit with their evil hearts? "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." (Jer 13:23)

Common grace does not work in us the fruits of the spirit. You can further study this here:
(http://www.lgmarshall.org/Reformed/edwards_treatisegrace.html) Treatise on Grace by Jonathan Edwards

Furthermore, you are using Calvinistic language to describe Wesleyan doctrines. This brings confusion. This article may clear up some of the misunderstanding.

(<http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/prevenient.html>) A Short Response to the Arminian Doctrine of Prevenient Grace by John Hendryx

End Edit addition

If Faith precedes Regeneration (newness of life in the new creature), so also must joy in God and love to God. For Faith without these fruits is dead works that you must repent from. A faith that is void of love to God and joy in God... is a faith that is as filthy rags before a holy God.

Your view of regeneration makes salvation out to be a second chance to save yourself by your own will and running with God's help of course. You must have a hard time witnessing to Mormons and J.W.'s, for they would shout a hearty "amen Brother!" to your view of Christ's work of redemption (and His limitations to save whom He wills), your view of The Holy Spirit's work of regeneration (and His limitations to save whom He wills), and your view of the Father's work of election (in that you both would affirm that it is based on an act of God foreseeing your will bringing forth something pleasing to God). Did you know that Mormons confess also that they are saved by Faith? But, they do not believe that their Faith is a gift of God. Moreover, their Faith is dead and does not trust in the power or promises of God. Rather they trust that their will and running shall bring about their salvation, with God's help of course. They merely believe God is helping them in their process of justification. That is exactly what the Arminian view of justification is... a process that stands or falls by the will and running of man. Oh, what horrible thoughts to entertain. That Salvation and final justification is primarily dependent on the will and running of man. Let us vomit this out of our hearts. Let us trust in the promises of God, that He is the Author and Finisher of our Faith through His finished work of redemption that was accomplished at the cross. His right hand and His holy arm hath gotten Him the victory. Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah!

(<http://www.apuritansmind.com/PuritanWorship/McMahonHeresyMiddleKnowledge.htm>) Here

Edit addition ended

"Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom 8:37)

"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of his knowledge by us in every place." (2 Co 2:14)

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." (Rev 17:14)

As George Whitefield wrote to John Wesley, so also I write to you.

"Dear Sir, for Jesus Christ's sake, consider how you dishonour God by denying election. You plainly make salvation depend not on God's free grace, but on man's free-will. And if thus, it is more than probable, Jesus Christ would not have had the satisfaction of seeing the fruit of his death in the eternal salvation of one soul. Our preaching would then be vain, and all invitations for people to believe in him would also be in vain." -Whitefield

"I would hint further, that you unjustly charge the doctrine of reprobation with blasphemy, whereas the doctrine of universal redemption, as you set it forth, is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God, and the merit of his blood. Consider whether it be not rather blasphemy to say as you do, "Christ not only died for those that are saved, but also for those that perish." -Whitefield

Source: (<http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/wesley.htm>) Click Here

Lastly, I leave you with these resources with the same intentions that Whitefield had when he wrote to Wesley, "I purposely omit answering your texts myself so that you may be brought to read such treatises, which, under God, would show you your error."

(<http://abrahamjuliot.blogspot.com/2008/11/foundations-of-grace-long-line-of-godly.html>) Foundations of Grace: A Long Line of Godly Men by Steven Lawson

(<http://lampforddarktimes.blogspot.com/2008/09/cause-of-god-and-truth-john-gill.html>) The Cause of God and Truth by John Gill

In the preface John Gill writes, "In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light."

I highly recommend John Gill's book in answer to all of your objections that you have given me.

(http://www.the-highway.com/objections1_Boettner.html) OBJECTIONS: ANSWERED by Loraine Boettner

(http://www.albatrus.org/english/theology/reformed/arminianism_exposed_from_owen.htm) Arminianism exposed from: "A Display of Arminianism" by John Owen

(http://www.lgmarshall.org/Owen/owen_arminianism00.html) A Display of Arminianism by John Owen (the entire book)

(http://www.albatrus.org/english/universalistic/universalistic_passages/index_universalistic_passages.htm) Universalistic Verses

Blessings to the glory of God! -Abraham

Re: - posted by Abe_Juliot (), on: 2008/11/28 4:59

Quote:
----- But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Luke 6:35

In everything we do, we are to desire God to receive glory. This is a reward unto us, Namely, that God receives the glory due unto His name. "May the Lamb that was slain receive the reward of His suffering." "Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward." (Heb 11:26)

In Isaiah 53, God clarifies the victory of Christ's death on those for whom He died.

"Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." -Isaiah 53:10-12

Notice the words many. It does not say everyone universally were justified through His work on the cross.

My friend, I know it is your desire for the world to be saved. You must understand that God is saving the world. He is saving a people out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. (Read Rev 5:9) And if I might add to that statement, No one is going to stop God or frustrate His purposes. For the Holy Spirit says, "the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand." ...and again He says, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities."

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;" -Revelation 5:9

Your idea of the death of Christ does not guarantee the Salvation of a people out of every kindred, tongue, people, and nation. You make God out to be like you. You merely desire Everyone Universally to Be saved. But, you have no Sovereign power to decree Mercy upon whom you will. "...Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thyself." (Psa 50:21) "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exo 15:11) "For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else." (Isa 45:18)

The God of the bible is a miracle working God. He can accomplish that which is impossible for man to do. Let this be encouraging to you when you pray for souls. For I desire your edification. God is able to save the worst of sinners. Pray with confidence in the power and grace of God. Weep over their sin, but do not feel frustrated as though God is not able save that sinner.

-Abraham

edit: grammar check

Re: - posted by Abe_Juliot (), on: 2008/11/28 22:34

I should not have said this about you... "and your view of the Father's work of election (in that you both would affirm that it is based on an act of God foreseeing your will bringing forth something pleasing to God).

This is the case for Arminians, Wesleyans, and Pelagians. Rather, you are leaning towards Molinism which is the heresy that teaches "God cannot know the future free acts of men in the same way He knows other things absolutely... God, in His "omniscience", waits for men to act and then will choose them to be saved based on their choice to be saved... The Molinian logician will argue that an action must first occur before it can be true. God, then, cannot know anything in this manner as true and absolute unless it has first occurred. God, then, becomes dependent upon the acts

of men instead of on His own eternal decrees. And since the actions of men are contingent, the knowledge of such acts would be contingent as well. The Molinian logicians will also argue this in the manner of something being true. The free acts of men cannot be true acts until they are actually acted. Thus, God cannot know something as true until men, in time, act out their free choices. Then God's knowledge becomes true. "

Source: (<http://www.apuritansmind.com/PuritanWorship/McMahonHeresyMiddleKnowledge.htm>) Here

Do you believe this?

Quote:
-----How then did they believe (John 7:39) before the Holy Spirit had been given to properly regenerate them unto faith? If we know therefore that regeneration is the work of salvation in a born-again believer then how shall it precede faith in an unregenerate sinner? That is, how shall salvation precede faith in Christ Jesus?

This passage is not speaking about regeneration. People who teach that it is, also believe that the prophets and saints of old were not born again yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified. It is ridiculous and absurd to say that the prophets were not born of God.

I encourage you to read this article on the matter:

(<http://www.monergism.com/thethreshold/articles/onsite/OTregeneration.html>) Regeneration in the Old Testament by John Hendryx

-Abraham

Edit: punctuation, grammar, sentence clarification

Re: - posted by int3grity (), on: 2008/11/29 2:40

It says in Romans 8:29- For WHOM (not events and happenings in the future but WHOM, objects of the verb) God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Every instance in the new testament where GOD is foreknowing and the word "foreknew" is used is a reference to an object and NOT events or happenings. look at Amos 3:2. That is the sense in which the verb "foreknew" is meant. It has to do with special love, not mere knowledge of events. Don't ignore the context.

The doctrine of foreknowledge as an attempt to exalt man's autonomy and subject the Potter to the whims of the clay is false and is made up out of thin air as a vain means of ignoring clear Scriptures that people simply don't like.

Re: unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by boG (), on: 2008/11/29 3:02

Quote:
-----Every instance in the new testament where GOD is foreknowing and the word "foreknew" is used is a reference to an object and NOT events or happenings. look at Amos 3:2. That is the sense in which the verb "foreknew" is meant. It has to do with special love, not mere knowledge of events. Don't ignore the context.

And do not ignore that God has both foreknowledge in His omniscience and He is eternally-present in His omnipresence. So we may very well say God has a "mere knowledge of events" concerning the objects of His love and is simultaneously participating in the event with the objects of His love in agreement with His foreknowledge. I shall come back to this further on.

Quote:
-----How then did they believe (John 7:39) before the Holy Spirit had been given to properly regenerate them unto faith? If we know therefore that regeneration is the work of salvation in a born-again believer then how shall it precede faith in an unregenerate sinner? That is, how shall salvation precede faith in Christ Jesus?

This passage is not speaking about regeneration. People who teach that it is, also believe that the prophets and saints of old were not born again yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified. It is ridiculous and absurd to say that the prophets were not born of God.

And that was the purpose of the question. Well said brother Abe :-) But this still not touch the the entire answer I was trying to draw out.

Salvation is by grace through faith and I should dare say that the faith which looked forward to the days of Christ, the Eternal Son, are just as effective as our days which look back to the death & resurrection. However, there is still a particular note of difference between Pentecost and the previous generations -- in this regard I agree dispensationally that the Lord God "effected a new covenant" (**Hebrews 8**) according to the inauguration of His own shedblood, such that He should say, **John 14:17**, "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

Is the Holy Spirit then dwelling with us, as in the OT days, a sufficient cause to lead us unto repentance and faith into the new covenant wherein the Holy Spirit shall then abide in us? (Distinction "with" and "in".) That is to say, is it then possible that God does not need to first infuse His Spirit in man through a prevenient grace of regeneration to effect his soul unto salvation? Or, were the prophets and saints of old fellow-partakers of Pentecost by faith; that is, were they living according to the new covenant during the days of the old covenant?

My focus on this is because when we speak of regeneration we nearly always speak of the Holy Spirit coming to dwell in man. So then here I ask, did the Holy Spirit abide in the prophets and saints of old as at the day of Pentecost? If the saints of old were not filled with the Holy Spirit, as was initiated by the new covenant, how were they born of God (not trying to say they were not)? The only place I read of any OT saint being "filled" with the Holy Ghost is John the Baptist; and I should wonder if this is to remark that he was a foretaste of the great things he proclaimed as a preparation for our Lord's ministry or if this is indeed a fair description that the Holy Spirit not only "came upon" or "moved upon" the prophets and saints of old but indeed "filled" them.

Quote:
-----The Molinian logicians will also argue this in the manner of something being true. The free acts of men cannot be true acts until they are actually acted. Thus, God cannot know something as true until men, in time, act out their free choices. Then God's knowledge becomes true.

Something becomes true in time as it concerns man. However, I would argue that God does not "become": He is. He is the Eternal God who has declared the end from the beginning; He is not bound by restrictions of the space-time He has created. Therefore, He is not only omniscient, knowing all events, but He is also omnipresent, simultaneously present at every event. Thus, God both knows and participates eternally, without interruption. For this reason God's knowledge **is** always true and neither does it diminish the responsibility of man's response to his Creator. For how can man be responsible if he does not respond of his own will? And if we say our response was only by the sovereign determination of God then it ceases to be man's responsibility. And, likewise, if we say this response is only caused by the liberalism of man's will then we claim that man is become responsible for his own salvation. (Note the usage of "only".) Hence, I am "leaning towards" (not standing upon) Molinism, insofar as I have understood its basic concepts, because it appears to be an attempt at balancing determinism and liberalism in Christian theology; to search out whether it perhaps takes that so-called "middle road" between Calvinism and Arminianism.

Quote:
-----God, in His "omniscience", waits for men to act and then will choose them to be saved based on their choice to be saved...

If I may please ask, would it be possible to have a Calvinist response to the following question:

"You men who are stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears are always resisting the Holy Spirit; you are doing just as your fathers did."

How shall men resist the Holy Spirit of God?

We read, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?"

So then, is there a difference between resisting His will and resisting God the Holy Spirit? As I have mentioned before on another thread, how can we resist a "passive force"? To resist the Holy Spirit first implies that the Holy Spirit is actively testifying against the wickedness of man's heart in the Light of Christ Jesus; and dare we say the Holy Spirit does this without the intention that none should perish or has the Holy Spirit come to condemn the world? Again, I ask this question in regards to whether or not we believe that God is impartial, dealing equally with all men: so then, how does this help distinguish the active testimony of the Holy Spirit upon those who are elect and those who resist Him unto death? I shouldn't wonder that this is a mystery we shall never put our finger on. Either way, however vague or unclear this witness may be to a darkened heart it matters not. The Light is shining in the darkness, that is why it satisfies as the condemnation all sinners have received -- just as the witness of the heavenly stars in the expanse of the deepest emptiness of space: though the tiniest of lights appear to the human eye a minute affair may yet upon closer inspection prove to be 100, if not a 1000, times greater than even the fierce sun under which we burn.

(I am aware the following contextually applies to worldly authority but there likewise appears to be a parable here as well.)

Romans 13

1. Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.
2. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

Quote:

-----I should not have said this about you... "and your view of the Father's work of election (in that you both would affirm that it is based on an act of God foreseeing your will bringing forth something pleasing to God).

Is it not possible that God is the One who formed the will in wicked man to bring forth something pleasing to Himself? I would possibly call this a form of regeneration but, obviously, not the proper regeneration we speak of as being "born-again". This is the point I have been focusing on. Speaking of which, what is required of a wicked man in regards to true repentance? We may easily find guilt, shame, despair, hopelessness, fear, spiritual poverty, hatred of one's own life, etc. Are these not common symptoms of man? Are not depression and suicide familiar occurrences among the ungodly? So then, why would proud, hard-hearted, stiff-necked, stubborn, unrepentant, blind, man-fearing, God-hating, self-loving, unregenerate sinners suffer such numerous maladies as these? Surely it is as James, the bond-servant of God, wrote, "when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death."

Jesus said, **Luke 9:23**, "And He was saying to them all, 'If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.'" I have heard it several times now that faith without love is void. I see this as true concerning all Christians but what verse tells us that sinners must likewise love God before they can have faith in Him? Is it reasonable to consider that man's despair of his life (the fruit of sin -- not a good thing) should be an effective means of his salvation? Did not our Lord say He came to heal the sick and bind up the brokenhearted? Does He not pursue the outcast and the downtrodden and the wickedly depraved? Shall we not conclude that the worst offenders of God are also the candidates of His election? Or perhaps I should specify those who are most aware that they are indeed the worst offenders against God. So then how does a blind sinner become aware of the wrath of God that abides upon him because of his enmity with a Holy God?

Does not Paul condemn us all under the law when he writes,

Romans 9

7. What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? May it never be! On the contrary, I would not have come to know sin except through the Law; for I would not have known about coveting if the Law had not said, "YOU SHALL NOT COVET."
8. But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead.
9. I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive and I died;
10. and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me;
11. for sin, taking an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me.
12. So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good.
13. Therefore did that which is good become a cause of death for me? May it never be! Rather it was sin, in order that it might be shown to be sin by effecting my death through that which is good, so that through the commandment sin would become utterly sinful.

14. For we know that the Law is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin.

Therefore it is evident that the law of God has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. For this is the evidence that the commandment has come upon all men: seeing that they too produce coveting of every kind unto the increase of their own shame -- their consciences likewise condemn them. Wherefore we see the end of their way by the fruits of their toil in the maladies they presently suffer.

I hope this is an easy flow of thoughts for all of you reading these posts to follow. As I have just brought in the law as a means for shutting up man under the condemnation of the curse of sin & death. Is this not the way we are instructed to lead sinners unto repentance?

We praise the sovereignty of God and we also accept the fact that God uses means. Why then shall we be against God using man as a means to his own salvation? Is this something separate from the work of the Holy Spirit? I should say no.

Re: - posted by int3grity (), on: 2008/11/29 3:23

Quote:
-----And do not ignore that God has both foreknowledge in His omniscience and He is eternally-present in His omnipresence. So we may very well say God has a "mere knowledge of events" concerning the objects of His love and is simultaneously participating in the event with the objects of His love in agreement with His foreknowledge

My point was to show that the proof texts used for the doctrine of foreknowledge have nothing to do with foreknowledge of events and happenings but it means "Loved before time".

The thing is that people use philosophical and emotion arresting arguments to avoid the clear teaching of Scripture, namely, that salvation is not dependent upon our autonomy but rather it rests entirely in GOD's mercy apart from ANYTHING we do (including decisional regeneration by our own perceived good sense).

In the above quote you mixed philosophy and hypothetical possibility in addition to the clear teaching of the text and still came up with an interpretation that has nothing to do with the text but lines up with your tradition.

The Scriptures are clear on this issue of election and we ought to just submit to the Truth of it instead of proudly retorting, "Why then does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"

WHO ARE YOU O MAN TO TALK BACK TO GOD?

Re: - posted by Abe_Juliot (), on: 2008/11/29 3:42

There's a lot of questions that have been asked. The resources that I gave above (specifically Gill and Lawson) may help. As for now, it's getting late... and I want to spend time with my wife. Sorry to end the discussion so abruptly. I don't use the internet that much these days.

I will end with this grace gem of the gospel for your comfort. I was brought to tears when I first read this.

Pardon!

From Spurgeon's sermon, "HIS NAME -- WONDERFUL!"

Once upon a time, there came one to my house of a black and terrible aspect. He smote the door; I tried to bolt it- to hold it fast. He smote again and again, till at last he entered, and with a rough voice he summoned me before him; and he said, "I have a message from God for you-- you are condemned on account of your sins."

I looked at him with astonishment; I asked him his name.

He said, "My name is the Law." and I fell at his feet as one that was dead. "I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died."

As I lay there, he smote me.

He smote me till every rib seemed as if it must break, and the bowels be poured forth.

My heart was melted like wax within me;
I seemed to be stretched upon a rack-
to be pinched with hot irons-
to be beaten with whips of burning wire.

A misery extreme dwelt and reigned in my heart.

I dared not lift up mine eyes, but I thought within myself, "There may be hope, there may be mercy for me. Perhaps the God whom I have offended may accept my tears and my promises of amendment, and I may live."

But when that thought crossed my mind, heavier were the blows and more poignant my sufferings than before, till hope entirely failed me, and I had nothing wherein to trust.

Darkness black and dense gathered round me.

I heard a voice as it were, of rushing to and fro, and of wailing and gnashing of teeth. I said within my soul, "I am cast out from his sight, I am utterly abhorred of God- he has trampled me in the mire of the streets in his anger."

And there came one by, of sorrowful but of loving aspect, and he stooped over me, and he said, "Awake you that sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light."

I arose in astonishment, and he took me, and he led me to a place where stood a cross, and he seemed to vanish from my sight.

But he appeared again hanging there.

I looked upon him as he bled upon that tree.

His eyes darted a glance of love unutterable into my spirit, and in a moment, looking at him, the bruises that my soul had suffered were healed; the gaping wounds were cured; the broken bones rejoiced; the rags that had covered me were all removed; my spirit was white as the spotless snows of the far-off north; I had melody within my spirit, for I was saved, washed, cleansed, forgiven, through him that did hang upon the tree!

Oh, how I wondered that I should be pardoned!

It was not the pardon that I wondered at so much; the wonder was that it should come to ME.

I wondered that he should be able to pardon such sins as mine; such crimes, so numerous and so black, and that after such an accusing conscience he should have power to still every wave within my spirit, and make my soul like the surface of a river, undisturbed, quiet, and at ease.

Grace and peace unto you through Jesus Christ our Lord.

-Abraham

Re: unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by boG (), on: 2008/11/30 3:02

Quote:
-----The thing is that people use philosophical and emotion arresting arguments to avoid the clear teaching of Scripture, namely, that salvation is not dependent upon our autonomy but rather it rests entirely in GOD's mercy apart from ANYTHING we do (including decisional regeneration by our own perceived good sense).

I have already stated my position on this. First, that apart from the mercy of God, who loved us first, man is dead and without hope in the world. And secondly, the autonomy (self-governing, becoming like god unto himself) of man is the bitter root of his sin. You will notice that my inquiry has been confined to the work of the Holy Spirit upon and within the heart of man to take for Himself Lordship over man's soul unto reconciliation -- for with man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Quote:
-----Every instance in the new testament where GOD is foreknowing and the word "foreknew" is used is a reference to an object and NOT events or happenings. Look at **Amos 3:2**. That is the sense in which the verb "foreknew" is meant. It has to do with special love, not mere knowledge of events. Don't ignore the context.

Amos 3

2. You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities.

...My point was to show that the proof texts used for the doctrine of foreknowledge have nothing to do with foreknowledge of events and happenings but it means "Loved before time".

Are you saying God doesn't have foreknowledge of events and happenings? Why would you make a point of this? If God has a "special love" does He likewise have a not-so-special or un-special love, or perhaps a special hatred, for those He did not foreknow?

Decisional Regeneration

I took the following from another website. It is a sermon (or article) on "Decisional Regeneration" by Dr. James E. Adams .

...
J. H. Merle d'Aubigne (1794-1872) in his The History of the Reformation in England states that
"To believe in the power of man in the work of regeneration is the great heresy of Rome, and from that error has come the ruin of the Church. Conversion proceeds from the grace of God alone, and the system which ascribes it partly to man and partly to God is worse than Pelagianism."
...

One of the greatest American theologians, Charles Hodge (1797-1878), also points out the danger of this teaching:
"No more soul-destroying doctrine could well be devised than the doctrine that sinners can regenerate themselves, and repent and believe just when they please . . . As it is a truth both of Scripture and of experience that the unregenerated man can do nothing of himself to secure his salvation, it is essential that he should be brought to a practical conviction of that truth. When thus convicted, and not before, he seeks help from the only source whence it can be obtained."
...

"Decisional Regeneration" does not bring men to Christ any more than does Baptismal Regeneration. It is true that some are converted under such preaching, but this is in spite of the false methods used, not because of them. The Bible is clear in its declaration that only by the Spirit of God can men be born again. True repentance and saving faith come as the result of the new birth and are never the cause of the great change. Repentance and faith are the acts of regenerated men, not of men dead in sins (Eph. 2:1, 5). However, God does not act for us; He does not believe for us; and He surely cannot repent for us—He has no sin for which to repent. We must personally, knowingly and willingly trust in Christ for salvation. Nor are we saying that preachers should not urge, yea, plead with men to repent and believe. Any preaching which merely rehearses the facts of the gospel without calling men to repentance and faith in Christ as a merciful and mighty Saviour of sinners is not biblical preaching.

The apostles taught that God saves His elect through the foolishness of preaching. All new methods devised by man can only fall far short of this ordained means of converting the sinner. The Church must forsake its carnal inventions and once again be guided by the teaching of Scripture if it is to expect God to bless its efforts and multiply its harvest. The Scriptural means of evangelizing is to "preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Cor. 1: 23-24).

...

Listen to Charles H. Spurgeon invite men to Jesus Christ, taken from Iain H. Murray's *The Forgotten Spurgeon*:
"Before you leave this place breathe an earnest prayer to God, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner. Lord, I need to be saved. Save me. I call upon Thy name....Lord, I am guilty, I deserve Thy wrath. Lord, I cannot save myself. Lord, I would have a new heart and a right spirit, but what can I do? Lord, I can do nothing, come and work in me to do of Thy good pleasure.'

Thou alone hast power, I know
To save a wretch like me;
To whom, or whither should I go
If I should run from Thee?

But I now do from my very soul call upon Thy name. Trembling, yet believing, I cast myself wholly upon Thee, O Lord. I trust the blood and righteousness of Thy dear Son.... Lord, save me tonight, for Jesus' sake.' "Go home alone trusting in Jesus. 'I should like to go into the enquiry-room.' I dare say you would, but we are not willing to pander to popular superstition. We fear that in those rooms men are warmed into a fictitious confidence. Very few of the supposed converts of enquiry-rooms turn out well. Go to your God at once, even where you now are. Cast yourself on Christ, at once, ere you stir an inch!"

...

Please, allow me to ask a pointed question. Is not Spurgeon pleading here with men to make a decision? Indeed he is. Yet, neither Spurgeon nor these men are preaching "Decisional Regeneration"; but they are preaching to compel their hearers to make a decision. And it is not my desire to preach or teach otherwise than they on this critical instruction. By referring to "decisional regeneration" you are giving implications that I am trying to uphold man as the savior and sustainer of his own soul while neglecting the fact that decision making is indeed necessary and expected for repentance and faith. Namely, to decide that "I now do from my very soul call upon Thy name. Trembling, yet believing, I cast myself wholly upon Thee, O Lord. I trust the blood and righteousness of Thy dear Son.... Lord, save me tonight, for Jesus' sake." And as sung by the wonderful hymn, "I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name."

My concern on the doctrine of regeneration focuses primarily here: "Repentance and faith are the acts of regenerated men, not of men dead in sins (Eph. 2:1, 5). However, God does not act for us; He does not believe for us; and He surely cannot repent for us—He has no sin for which to repent. We must personally, knowingly and willingly trust in Christ for salvation."

I do not find in Scripture where it says "only the regenerated, born-again, man is able or willing to repent and believe." As far as I can tell this is putting the cart before the horse when we consider the transition between sinner to saint by faith in the atonement of Christ Jesus. Does that mean I call it heresy or throw it out all together? No; this means I search it out to see whether it be true or to learn from it because there is certainly truth in this statement but I do not presently agree with that conclusion. As far as my conscience permits me I have taken no liberty to give credence to man's "autonomous decisionism," must less, that man should consider himself liable of obtaining mercy apart from the One and Only True

Mediator. Honestly, I find it vulgar to think that man should consider himself worthy or acceptable before God by his own self. But just as faith without works is dead, so I wonder if there are not, in the same manner, works that lead men unto repentance and faith. Before you misunderstand my inquiry (probably too late) -- I am sure we are all well convinced that works do not create faith but rather are beneficial for the perfecting of it. That is, a reformed life proves outwardly that a genuine conversion has already been established inwardly and the continuance of those "fruits" in keeping with repentance, labors of love, are profitable unto godliness and unto a mature man in Christ. This is the parable of the branch being engrafted into the True Vine and pruned. So likewise, in this same manner, are there not works (or means) of some sort which God uses to mollify a sinner's soul in preparation for the receiving of the word of truth, as Hosea says, "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." And as John the Baptist declared, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Isaiah." Which gives reason for why I brought up the consideration for the use of humiliation in a sinner's heart, in regards that it is evident that the law of God has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness. Shall we consider a man to be born-again unto holiness who considers it a triviality or does not partake in mortification of the flesh? Then is this "breaking of your fallow ground" (a hardened depraved heart) the work the Holy Spirit as imputing faith or as a preparation for faith?

Romans 10

13. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

14. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?

15. And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

Why else should we be commissioned to preach to sinners? For indeed faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Yet there are those who hear the word but it profits them nothing; not being united by faith within them. Some will say that is because God must first regenerate them to have that faith so they may unite it with the word of God. But I ask then, how did they have faith before they could hear? If faith comes by hearing then how did they receive faith before hearing the word of God? This leads me to question what compels a sinner to hear, hearken unto, give attention, consider, or to give ear to the preaching of the gospel. That is, being able to hear the word of God is logically prior to faith that comes by hearing. Therefore, shall we say regeneration is the work of grace that enables a sinner to hear the word of God so that he may receive faith through the hearing? Or, is it not taught that regeneration is the work of grace that effectively infuses a depraved soul with the saving faith? Or, is this whole process contained within the doctrine of regeneration? I am just trying to ask a few questions to get a scope on this because there are several definitions for what regeneration entails.

Hebrews 2

6. Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience,

7. He again fixes a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

... 11. Therefore let us be diligent to enter that rest, so that no one will fall, through following the same example of disobedience.

12. For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

2 Corinthians 2

14. But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.

15. For we are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing;

16. to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life. And who is adequate for these things?

17. For we are not like many, peddling the word of God, but as from sincerity, but as from God, we speak in Christ in the sight of God.

"to the one an aroma from death to death"

And I ask again, if we are agreed that God has not granted salvation to man because of any good thing in man; is it reasonable to consider that man's despair of his life (the fruit of sin taking opportunity through the law -- not a good thing) should be an effective means of his salvation?

Re: unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by boG (), on: 2008/12/1 2:02

The following excerpts are quotations from the book I am presently reading by Iain H. Murray titled (http://www.banneroftruth.org/pages/bookreview/old_evangelicalism.php) *The Old Evangelicalism: Old Truths For A New Awakening*

What Preparation Is Not And What It Is

John Brown of Wamphray, c. 1610-79:

abbreviated from John Brown, *A Mirror or Looking Glass for Saint and Sinner: The Important Doctrines of the Law and Gospel Opened* (Glasgow: M'Arthur, 1793), pp. 154-64.

In some sense, I do not allow of preparatory works, and, in some sense, they are to be admitted. Negatively, I say,

1. There are no such natural abilities in unregenerate persons, which a man can improve, and which, rightly used and improved will certainly prove effectual to the attaining of grace . . .

2. There are no such preparations as have any actual influences to produce the work of grace and conversion in the soul . . .

3. There are no preparatory works that can properly be said to please God . . .

4. Nor do we allow of such preparations as take off any part of the guilt that is lying on the sinner . . .

5. Nor do we grant any such preparations as are any part of the work of conversion, as if such were the beginnings of grace, though they be *gradus ad rem*, steps to the business, yet they are not *gradus in re*, or any beginnings of the work; the digging of the ground is no part of the building, though it prepare for it.

6. Nor do we acknowledge any such so prepared by the law, and humbled in the sense of their sin and guilt, did merit grace at God's hands . . .

(7. omitted by editor)

8. Nor grant we any such preparatory works as have a promise of grace made unto them, for there is no such promise . . .

9. Nor are there any such preparatory works, as have a certain connection with faith and conversion, as if such, and all such as are so and so preparatorily wrought upon, shall certainly be converted.

. . . It is true if we speak of such of whom the Lord is about to bring home in this way, there is a secret unseen connection; but that is not because the preparatory work is of that nature that grace must necessarily follow it.

But yet, on the other hand, we say, speaking of the Lord's bringing home of his chosen ones who are come to age (for as to his children we are strangers thereunto, and cannot understand that) that,

1. A man in nature is not only indisposed, but unwilling to receive Christ and his righteousness. . . .

2. That therefore the Lord must prepare them, and bring them off their quiet rest and sleep in a state of sin and unworthiness, to accept of the gospel way of salvation, by discovering their lost condition by nature. . . .

3. And so we say, that this is God's usual method of bringing home his own, rationally working upon them, causing them to see their own misery, that they may cry for mercy . . .

Objection 1. But cannot God do this without these preparations? I answer, What God may do is needless for us to enquire; it is enough for us to know that thus he doth ordinarily with adult persons . . .

Objection 2. Are not sinners, as sinners, called to accept and lay hold on Christ in the gospel? It is true that Christ is offered to sinners as such. But though the dearest sinner, the proudest Pharisee, the greatest justiciary, or self-righteous legalist, is under obligation to accept of Christ, yet remaining such, will not accept of Christ and his righteousness, but must first be brought off the false selfish ground they now stand upon, and quit grips of their own righteousness.

Objections 3. Can a soul come too soon to Christ? Answer: a soul can never too soon come to Christ, if you speak of time; but a soul can too soon think that they are allowed to lay hold of the comforts of Christ, and so deceive themselves. We can give no allowances to hold back any from coming to Christ that are willing; but only hereby shew what is the Lord's ordinary method, and what must precede a soul's closing with Christ, according to the terms of the gospel . . .

(Objection 4. omitted by editor)

Objection 5. It would seem that one is warranted to believe, because he is so and so humbled and convinced, not before he hath such preparatory works in himself. I answer, to speak properly, seeing necessity giveth not a warrant, but hath the force of a strong motive, to exert and press the soul to seek help and relief.

Question. Doth the Lord take this course with all whom he takes by the heart this way? I answer, we dare not set limits to the Holy One of Israel: for,

1. Some are wrought upon when young, in whom this work cannot much be observed . . .

2. Some of riper age may be brought in without feeling much of the terrors of the law; the Lord thinketh good to deal with them in a sweeter, milder way, overpowering their heart with love, and quickly persuading them.

3. Yet all are, in some competent measure, brought to a conviction of their sin and misery, that they see Christ must help them or they are gone irrecoverably . . . I grant that this work be greater in some than in others; but as to those whom the Lord intendeth to save, whatever method or way he follow, the effect and result is the same: a conviction of the imposs

ibility of life by the law, and a fixed quitting and renouncing of it, and a rational and resolute fleeing unto Christ, and resting in him for life and salvation.

D.M. Lloyd-Jones, 1899-1981: The Law

D.M. Lloyd-Jones, *Exposition of Romans, Chapters 7:1-8:4, The Law: Its Functions and Limits* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1973), p. 114.

'It is the law of God alone that really gives us a right conception of the true character and nature of sin. This is a tremendous proposition. The real trouble with the unregenerate is that they do not know and understand the truth about sin. They have their moral code, they believe that certain things are right and certain things are wrong; but that is not to understand sin. The moment a man understands the true nature and character of sin he becomes troubled about his soul and seeks for a Saviour. It is the peculiar function of the law to bring such an understanding to a man's mind and conscience. That is why great evangelical preachers three hundred years ago in the time of the Puritans, and two hundred years ago in the time of Whitefield and others, always engaged in what they called a preliminary "law work". In their preaching of the Gospel they generally started with a presentation of the Law. They knew that a man would not understand salvation unless he understood the nature of sin.'

An illustration in the life of Benjamin Morgan Palmer

T.C. Johnson, *Life and Letters of B.M. Palmer* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1987), pp. 83-4.

It happened that a young man was staying in Palmer's home in Savannah during a time of revival. Many services were being held and the young man's host let him know that he could please himself whether he attended or not. Having nothing else to do, he did attend and soon by his irritation revealed that he did not like what he was hearing. The crisis came on a Monday when, entering Palmer's study, the visitor protested, 'You preachers are the most contradictory men in the world; you say, and you unsay, just as it pleases you, without the least pretension to consistency.' Palmer, who was working at his desk, has recorded what followed:

Somehow I was not surprised at this outbreak; for though no sign of religious feeling had been evinced, there was a restlessness in his manner which satisfied me that he was secretly fighting against the truth. I thought it best to treat the case in an off-hand sort of way, and with seeming indifference so as to cut him off from all opportunity to coquette with the Gospel. Without arresting my pen, I simply, answered, 'Well, what now?'

'Why, yesterday you said in your sermon that sinners are perfectly helpless in themselves -- utterly unable to repent or believe and then turned square round and said that they would all be damned if they did not.'

'Well, my dear E--, There is no use in our quarrelling over this matter; either you can or you cannot. If you can, all I have to say is that I hope you will just go and do it.'

As I did not raise my eyes from my writing, which was continued as I spoke, I had no means of marking the effect of these words, until after a moment's silence, with a choking utterance, the reply came back: 'I have been trying my best for three whole days, and cannot.' 'Ah,' said I, laying down my pen: 'that puts a different face upon it; we will go then and tell the difficulty straight out to God.'

We knelt together and I prayed as though this was the first time in human history that this trouble had ever arisen; that there was a soul in the most desperate extremity, which must believe or perish, and hopelessly unable of itself, to do it; that, consequently it was just the case of calling for Divine interposition; and pleading most earnestly for the fulfillment of the Divine promise. Upon rising I offered not a single word of comfort or advice . . . So I left my friend in his powerlessness in the hands of God, as the only helper. In short time he came through the struggle, rejoicing in the hope of eternal life.

Re: unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by boG (), on: 2008/12/1 2:08

Conviction and Regeneration

Iain H. Murray, *The Old Evangelicalism: Old Truths For A New Awakening*.

To return then to the question raised above, how is conviction of sin related to regeneration? The answer has to be that there is no *direct* connection. Conviction has to do with the application of truth to the conscience of the unregenerate. Such 'legal conviction' does not in itself dispose men to believe in Christ, still less does it qualify them to receive mercy. I have said that an attempted obedience is in no way to be understood as a half-way stage to salvation. Men can have such experience and yet never be saved. 'Remember,' Robert M. McCheyne told his hearers, 'you are not saved because you have a sight of your sins. It is not the awakened sinner that is a saved man.' . . .

If this is so, may it not be argued that any insistence on conviction is wholly needless? No, because in the words of W.G.

T. Shedd, 'The Holy Spirit does not ordinarily regenerate a man until he is a *convicted* man.' Convictions do not save, but it is not going beyond the New Testament to say that salvation does not occur without them. No one was converted without knowing that he needed to be. Regeneration normally occurs when individuals are under conviction, and the presentation of the gospel therefore needs to be in accordance with this fact. The preacher knows that while God may at any time savingly intervene in regeneration, it is when an individual is in conscious need that grace generally interposes. (For helpful treatment of this subject, see Archibald Alexander, *Thoughts on Religious Experience*, pp. 15-20. Before regeneration all repentance and humiliation are only 'legal'; after regeneration they are evangelical, i.e., a response to the believer's union with Christ.)

To know that the turning point in conversion is God's work of regeneration does not mean that there has to be any holding back of gospel truth. (Those who think it must have this result usually overlook the fact that *responsibility* to believe the truth does not depend on *ability* to do so. Inability is the result of the sinfulness for which man himself is responsible. 'The gospel of grace addresses itself to our responsibility in the demand of repentance and faith. . . . The rule for us in every case is the revealed will presented to our consciousness, not his mysterious operations below the level of our consciousness.' John Murray, *Collected Writing*, vol. 2, p. 199.)

...
Preaching for conversion, far from being a simple matter, is the most demanding of all responsibilities. While the gospel minister knows that it is God's work to change hearts, his is the responsibility to present truths of the greatest magnitude. To fail to do so accurately and appropriately may have eternal consequences. The conversion of sinners should therefore be the subject for study. It can never be understood sufficiently. In the words of Thomas Hooker, 'The almighty power of God in the conversion of a sinner is the most mysterious of all the works of God, it shakes the hearts of the ablest divines upon earth.'

Re: - posted by int3grity (), on: 2008/12/1 3:12

The greek word for "Draws" in John 6:44 literally means "DRAGS". JESUS literally said , "None CAN come to me unless the Father who sent me DRAGS him, and I WILL RAISE HIM UP AT THE LAST DAY. (all whom HE "draws" HE also raises up at the last day so ALL who are "drawn" ARE saved).

It is the same word used in the Bible for using a measure of force and NOT to coax or compel to response by appealing persuasion. That is not to say it is in the sense of being against the will of the regenerate man but rather in line with the NEW will which monergistic regeneration grants which is contrary to the unregenerate will prior to sovereign electing grace from GOD being shown to the spiritually dead sinner.

look at the other use of that greek word which is marked with *___* at the english word used to translate it:

John 18:10 Simon Peter then, having a sword, *DREW* it and struck the high priest's slave, and cut off his right ear; and the slave's name was Malchus.

John 21:6 And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right-hand side of the boat and you will find a catch." So they cast, and then they were not able to *HAUL* it in because of the great number of fish.

John 21:11 Simon Peter went up and *DREW* the net to land, full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not torn.

Acts 16:19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and *DRAGGED* them into the market place before the authorities

Acts 21:30 Then all the city was provoked, and the people rushed together, and taking hold of Paul they *DRAGGED* him out of the temple, and immediately the doors were shut.

James 2:6 But you have dishonored the poor man. Is it not the rich who oppress you and personally *DRAG* you into court?

John 6:44 "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me *DRAWS* him;...

...And in case you don't see that this "drawing" is ONLY of the elect and not all men everywhere...

...and I WILL raise him up on the last day.

John 6:39 This is the will of Him (the One who *DRAGS*) who sent Me, that of ALL that He HAS given Me I lose NOTHING, but RAISE IT UP ON THE LAST DAY.

Re: - posted by int3grity (), on: 2008/12/1 3:29

Quote:
----- Are you saying God doesn't have foreknowledge of events and happenings? Why would you make a point of this? If God has a "special love" does He likewise have a not-so-special or un-special love, or perhaps a special hatred, for those He did not foreknow?

OF COURSE I AM NOT SAYING GOD DOES NOT FORKNOW THE FUTURE! you are twisting the whole issue. I just said that the proof-text used for the false man-made doctrine of foreknowledge of future faith as the basis upon which GOD predestines people to conformity to the image of CHRIST (Rom 8:29) is a twisting of the plain reading of the text. It is a vain attempt to skirt around the text of Scripture which plainly says that GOD sovereignly elects individuals to salvation on no basis whatsoever except HIS own good pleasure as Ephesians 1:5-6 show.

And your last sentence about a not so special love but rather a hatred for those he did not foreknow is ONCE AGAIN a dishonest emotional appeal and setting up of a straw man argument.

I have never heard anyone who denies the doctrines of grace answer the clear texts of Scripture without using emotional accusations about GOD and fallacious straw-man arguments.

Re: unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by boG (), on: 2008/12/1 16:57

Quote:
-----And your last sentence about a not so special love but rather a hatred for those he did not foreknow is ONCE AGAIN a dishonest emotional appeal and setting up of a straw man argument.

I have never heard anyone who denies the doctrines of grace answer the clear texts of Scripture without using emotional accusations about GOD and fallacious straw-man arguments.

You seem to be getting emotional I think. :-P
Please, allow me to ask, is "special love" an emotional accusation about God and a fallacious straw-man argument? If God does not have a "special love" for the non-elect what does He have for them?

Quote:
-----...And in case you don't see that this "drawing" is ONLY of the elect and not all men everywhere...

How can one resist the Holy Spirit unless the Holy Spirit is drawing him or, at the very least, actively pursuing him? That is why I asked the question, is there a difference between resisting His will (for who can resist His will?) and resisting God the Holy Spirit? How can we say it is impossible to resist the will of God and at the same time we may resist God Himself all the days of our life?

Matthew 23

37. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling (you would not have it)!"

And by the by, I do not disagree with monergistic regeneration. However, I do question this, if we are agreed that

". . . how is conviction of sin related to regeneration? The answer has to be that there is no *direct* connection. Conviction has to do with the application of truth to the conscience of the unregenerate. Such 'legal conviction' does not in itself dispose men to believe in Christ, still less does it qualify them to receive mercy."

And that, "Convictions do not save, but it is not going beyond the New Testament to say that salvation does not occur without them. No one was converted without knowing that he needed to be."

Does this not say it is necessary for man to know he needs a Savior (man's decision) but that this still does not guarantee or require God to be merciful towards him? Is this not a balanced view between God's sovereignty and man's will?

Re: unless the Father who sent Me draws him? - posted by boG (), on: 2008/12/8 0:19

(the following quotation and excerpt are taken from *The Old Evangelicalism* by Iain H. Murray)

Review of Annals of the American Pulpit (Methodist), in the British and Foreign Evangelical Review, vol. xi (London: Nisbet, 1862), pp. 301-2.

"They call themselves Arminians; but it is perfectly obvious that their theology differs widely from that of Limborch, and Whitby, and Warburton, and all the recognized Arminian divines of Holland and England. . . .

They differ widely and radically in principles and in results; whereas when we hear the gospel preached by a Methodist, we feel that it is the very same to which we love to listen, and are accustomed to hear as Presbyterians. . . . Man's ruin by the fall, his native depravity and alienation from God, his absolute need of a Saviour, and utter inability to save himself, the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, justification, not by works, but by faith alone in the blood and righteousness of Jesus, the free offer of the gospel to every human being without money and without price, the necessity of holiness, not to merit heaven, but to become meet for it -- these articles constituted the very burden of their preaching."

The label 'Calvinism' is equally open to more than one meaning. There is some excuse for Wesley being confused over what is the authentic thing, for true Calvinism is not the narrow thing to be found in parts of the eighteenth-century Dissent. The latter was not Whitefield's Calvinism. 'God is loving to every man,' said Whitefield. Calvin himself preached, 'Jesus Christ offers himself generally to all men without exception to be their redeemer.' . . .

Wesley was surely right in believing that if there is no love of God to be proclaimed to all men then there is no real gospel for all men. John Knox once wrote:

'By what means Satan first drew mankind from the obedience of God, the Scripture doth witness: To wit, by pouring into their hearts that poison, that God did not love them.'