

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Prayer of the Arminian****The Prayer of the Arminian, on: 2007/9/5 18:37**

Excerpt from Spurgeon's Sermon: Free Will- A Slave
The Prayer of the Arminian

...Any one who believes that man's will is entirely free, and that he can be saved by it, does not believe the fall...

But I tell you what will be the best proof of that; it is the great fact that you never did meet a Christian in your life who ever said he came to Christ without Christ coming to him. You have heard a great many Arminian sermons, I dare say; but you never heard an Arminian prayer - for the saints in prayer appear as one in word, and deed and mind. An Arminian on his knees would pray desperately like a Calvinist. He cannot pray about free-will: there is no room for it. Fancy him praying,

"Lord, I thank thee I am not like those poor presumptuous Calvinists Lord, I was born with a glorious free-will; I was born with power by which I can turn to thee of myself; I have improved my grace. If everybody had done the same with their grace that I have, they might all have been saved. Lord, I know thou dost not make us willing if we are not willing ourselves. Thou givest grace to everybody; some do not improve it, but I do. There are many that will go to hell as much bought with the blood of Christ as I was; they had as much of the Holy Ghost given to them; they had as good a chance, and were as much blessed as I am. It was not thy grace that made us to differ; I know it did a great deal, still I turned the point; I made use of what was given me, and others did not-that is the difference between me and them."

That is a prayer for the devil, for nobody else would offer such a prayer as that. Ah! when they are preaching and talking very slowly, there may be wrong doctrine; but when they come to pray, the true thing slips out; they cannot help it. If a man talks very slowly, he may speak in a fine manner; but when he comes to talk fast, the old brogue of his country, where he was born, slips out. I ask you again, did you ever meet a Christian man who said, "I came to Christ without the power of the Spirit?" If you ever did meet such a man, you need have no hesitation in saying, "My dear sir, I quite believe it and I believe you went away again without the power of the Spirit, and that you know nothing about the matter, and are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity." Do I hear one Christian man saying, "I sought Jesus before he sought me; I went to the Spirit, and the Spirit did not come to me"? No, beloved; we are obliged, each one of us, to put our hands to our hearts and say-

"Grace taught my soul to pray,
And made my eyes to o'erflow;
'Twas grace that kept me to this day,
And will not let me go."

From Spurgeon's Sermon, Free Will - A Slave

Comment from:
<http://monergism.com/> :

Consider the following prayer which is a summary of Spurgeon's "prayer of the synergist" above:

"Thank you Lord that I am not like other men who don't have faith. I made better use of your grace than did others. Some did not improve on it, BUT I DID "

This is the boastful prayer of the Pharisee, but its theology is consistent with what many of us believe. If evangelicals simply believe we can reach out and accept grace or reject it, without being first transformed/quickenened by grace, then it reveals that there is still self-righteousness left in many of us. What is the cure? The belief in the sovereignty of God in our salvation. That alone keeps grace as grace. It is only the grace of God alone which makes us to differ from others. God not treating us as our sins deserve.

Related Reading

Revival Year Sermons by C.H. Spurgeon

Edit: italics added for quote clarification

Re: The Prayer of the Calvinist - posted by Logic, on: 2007/9/5 20:52

"Lord, I thank thee that you made me not like those poor confused Calvinists. Lord, I was born without a free-will; I was born with no power by which I can turn to thee; You forced my to. If only You had only done the same for everyone, then the whole world would be saved, but knowing the tyrant that you are... they might all have been saved.

Lord, I know thou dost make us willing if we are not willing ourselves. You do not give grace to everybody; some do not come to you because you created them only for hell while calling that your good pleasure.

There are many that You will ordain to hell, they never had as good a chance as I, and were never as much blessed as I am.

It was not thy grace that made us to differ; it was by your sovereignty that ordained everything

I was never given anything to choose you of my own volition, I wouldn't have come to you just because you are so awesome, lovely and great, You had to force me to change because I wouldn't.

Re:, on: 2007/9/5 21:09

Quote:

.....but knowing the tyrant that you are... they might all have been saved.
.....

The AMP version of Romans 9:18-29

Romans 9:18-29

18So then He has mercy on whomever He wills (chooses) and He hardens (makes stubborn and unyielding the heart of) whomever He wills.

19You will say to me, Why then does He still find fault and blame us ? For who can resist and withstand His will?

20But who are you, a mere man, to criticize and contradict and answer back to God? Will what is formed say to him that formed it, Why have you made me thus?(H)

21Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same mass (lump) one vessel for beauty and distinction and honorable use, and another for menial or ignoble and dishonorable use?

22What if God, although fully intending to show His wrath and to make known His power and authority, has tolerated with much patience the vessels (objects) of anger which are ripe for destruction?(I)

23And He thus purposes to make known and show the wealth of His glory in the vessels (objects) of His mercy which He has prepared beforehand for glory,

24Even including ourselves whom He has called, not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles (heathen)?

25Just as He says in Hosea, Those who were not My people I will call My people, and her who was not beloved My beloved.(J)

26And it shall be that in the very place where it was said to them, You are not My people, they shall be called sons of the living God.(K)

27And Isaiah calls out (solemnly cries aloud) over Israel: Though the number of the sons of Israel be like the sand of the sea, only the remnant (a small part of them) will be saved **from perdition, condemnation, judgment!**

28For the Lord will execute His sentence upon the earth , rigorously cutting it short in His justice.(L)

29It is as Isaiah predicted, If the Lord of hosts had not left us a seed , we would have fared like Sodom and have been made like Gomorrah.(M)

Re:, on: 2007/9/5 21:16

Another quote from Spurgeon

"I believe that very much of current Arminianism is simply ignorance of gospel doctrine; and if people began to study their Bibles, and to take the Word of God as they find it, they must inevitably, if believers, rise up to rejoice in the doctrines of grace."

And again Spurgeon said this,

"We notice that if we talk about the election of men and the non-election of fallen angels, there is not a cavil for a moment. Every man approves of Calvinism till he feels that he is a loser by it; but when it begins to touch his own bone and his own flesh then he kicks against it."

To me, Calvinism means the placing of the eternal God at the head of all things. AM337

The doctrines of original sin, election, effectual calling, final perseverance, and all those great truths which are called Calvinism—though Calvin was not the author of them, but simply an able writer and preacher upon the subject—are, I believe, the essential doctrines of the Gospel that is in Jesus Christ. Now, I do not ask you whether you believe all this—it is possible you may not; but I believe you will before you enter heaven. I am persuaded, that as God may have washed your hearts, he will wash your brains before you enter heaven. 12.92

Speaking of Arminians, Whitfield said, "We are all born Arminians." It is grace that turns us into Calvinists, grace that makes Christians of us, grace that makes us free, and makes us know our standing in Christ Jesus. 69.124

That doctrine which is called "Calvinism" did not spring from Calvin; we believe that it sprang from the great founder of all truth. 385.298

Now, there are certain doctrines commonly called Calvinistic (but which ought never to have been called by such a name, for they are simply Christian doctrines) which I think commend themselves to the minds of all thoughtful persons, for their reason mainly, that they do ascribe to God everything. 572.308

I am not a Calvinist by choice, but because I cannot help it. 1085.692

I believe nothing merely because Calvin taught it, but because I have found his teaching in the Word of God. 2584.402

Some seem to believe in a kind of free agency which virtually dethrones God, while others run to the opposite extreme by believing in a sort of fatalism which practically exonerates man from all blame. Both of these views are utterly false, and I scarcely know which of the two is the more to be deprecated. We are bound to believe both sides of the truth revealed in the Scriptures, so I admit that, when a Calvinist says that all things happen according to the predestination of God, he speaks the truth, and I am willing to be called a Calvinist; but when an Arminian says that, when a man sins, the sin is his own, and that, if he continues in sin, and perishes, his eternal damnation will lie entirely at his own door, I believe that he also speaks the truth, although I am not willing to be called an Arminian. The fact is, there is some truth in both these systems of theology. 2862.602

Have you ever noticed, in the great summary of doctrines, that, as surely as you believe one, you must believe the rest? One doctrine so leans upon the others that, if you deny one, you must deny the rest. Some think that they can believe four out of the five points, and reject the last. It is impossible; God's truths are all joined together like links in a chain. 3093.247

They are all Calvinists there, every soul of them. They may have been Arminians on earth; thousands and millions of the

m were; but they are not after they get there, for here is their song, "Salvation unto our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." 3403.202

God bless you! -Abraham

Edit: Line structure

Re: The Prayer of the Arminian - posted by rookie (), on: 2007/9/6 1:03

Quote:

.....Any one who believes that man's will is entirely free, and that he can be saved by it, does not believe the fall...

The results of the fall are defined in Scripture in this way...

Gen. 3:10 So he said, "I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself."

Gen. 3:22 Then the LORD God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil.

What does it mean to be naked according to Scripture?

What does it mean to a man who now is given both the knowledge of good and the knowledge of evil?

According to Scripture who dispenses the knowledge of good to man?

According to Scripture who dispenses the knowledge of evil to man?

Finally, according to Scripture, what does God require of man?

In Christ

Jeff

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/9/6 2:13

What a Sovereign God Cannot Do

Hunt, Dave

February 1, 2001

One of the most common expressions one hears in Christian circles, especially for reassurance when things aren't going well, is that "God is in control, He's still on the throne." Christians comfort themselves with these words—but what do they mean? Was God not "in control" when Satan rebelled and when Adam and Eve disobeyed, but now He is? Does God's being in control mean that all the rape, murder, war and multiplied evil is exactly what He planned and desires?

Christ asks us to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven" (Mt. 6:10). Why that prayer if we are already in God's kingdom with Satan bound, as John Calvin taught and Reconstructionists claim today? Could a world of rampant evil really be what God wills? Surely not!

"Wait a minute!" someone counters. "Are you suggesting that our omnipotent God is unable to effect His will upon earth? What heresy is this! Paul clearly says that God 'worketh all things after the counsel of his own will' (Eph 1:11)."

Yes. But the Bible itself contains many examples of men defying God's will and disobeying Him. God laments, "I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me" (Is 1:2). The sacrifices they offer Him and their evil lives are obviously not according to His will. We are told that "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God" (Lk 7:30). Christ's statement in Matthew 7:21 shows clearly that everyone doesn't always do God's will. That is implied also in Isaiah 65:12, 1 Thessalonians 5:17-19, Hebrews 10:36, 1 Peter 2:15, 1 John 2:17 and many other scriptures. In fact, Ephesians 1:11 doesn't say that everything that happens is according to God's will, but according to "t

he counsel" of His will. Clearly the counsel of God's will has given man freedom to disobey Him. There is no other explanation for sin.

Yet in his zeal to protect God's sovereignty from any challenge, A. W. Pink argues earnestly, "God fore-ordains everything which comes to pass....God initiates all things, regulates all things...." 1 Edwin H. Palmer agrees: "God is in back of everything. He decides and causes all things to happen that do happen....He has foreordained everything 'after the counsel of his will' (Eph 1:11): the moving of a finger...the mistake of a typist—*even sin.*" 2

Right here we confront a vital distinction. It is one thing for God, in His sovereignty and without diminishing that sovereignty, to give man the power to rebel against Him. This would open the door for sin as solely man's responsibility by a free choice. It is something entirely different for God to control everything to such an extent that He must effectively cause man to sin.

It is a fallacy to imagine that for God to be in control of His universe He must therefore foreordain and initiate everything. Thus He causes sin, then punishes the sinner. To justify this view, it is argued that "God is under no obligation to extend His grace to those whom He predestines to eternal judgment." In fact, however, obligation has no relationship to grace.

It actually diminishes God's sovereignty to suggest that He cannot use to His own purposes what He doesn't foreordain and originate. There is neither logical nor biblical reason why a sovereign God by His own sovereign design could not allow creatures made in His image the freedom of genuine moral choice. And there are compelling reasons why He would do so.

Many an atheist (or sincere seeker who is troubled by evil and suffering) throws in our faces, "You claim your God is all-powerful. Then why doesn't He stop evil and suffering? If He could and doesn't, He's a monster; if He can't, then He isn't all-powerful!" The atheist thinks he has us cornered.

The answer involves certain things which God cannot do.

But God is infinite in power, so there must be nothing He can't do! Really? The very fact that He is infinite in power means He cannot fail. There is much else which finite beings do all the time but which the infinite, absolutely sovereign God cannot do because He is God: lie, cheat, steal, sin, be mistaken, etc. In fact, much else that God cannot do is vital for us to understand in meeting challenges from skeptics.

Tragically, there are many sincere questions which most Christians can't answer. Few parents have taken the time to think through the many intellectual and theological challenges their children increasingly face, challenges for which today's youth find no answers from so many pulpits and Sunday-school lessons. As a result, growing numbers of those raised in evangelical homes and churches are abandoning the "faith" they never adequately understood.

Is sovereignty and power the cure-all? Many Christians superficially think so. Yet there is much for which sovereignty and power are irrelevant. God acts not only sovereignly, but in love, grace, mercy, kindness, justice and truth. His sovereignty is exercised only in perfect harmony with all of His other attributes.

There is much that God cannot do, not in spite of who He is, but because of who He is. Even Augustine, described as the first of the early so-called Church Fathers who "taught the absolute sovereignty of God," 3 declared, "Wherefore, He cannot do some things for the very reason that He is omnipotent." 4

Because of His absolute holiness, it is impossible for God to do evil, to cause others to do evil or even to entice anyone into evil: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted, neither tempteth he any man..." (Jas 1:13-14). But what about the many places in Scripture where it says God tempted someone or was tempted? For example, "God did tempt Abraham" (Gn 22:1). The Hebrew word there and throughout the Old Testament is *nacah*, which means to test or prove, as in assaying the purity of a metal. It has nothing to do with tempting to sin. God was testing Abraham's faith and obedience.

If God cannot be tempted, why is Israel warned, "Ye shall not tempt the LORD your God" (Dt 6:16)? We are even told that at Massah, in demanding water, "they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the LORD among us or not?" (Ex 17:7). Later they "tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust... they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? Yea...they provoked the most high" (Ps 78:18, 56, 41).

God was not being tempted to do evil, He was being provoked, thus His patience was being tested. Instead of waiting upon Him obediently to meet their needs, His people were demanding that He use His power to give them what they wanted to satisfy their lusts. Their "temptation" of God was a blasphemous challenge forcing Him either to give in to their desire or to punish them for rebellion.

When Jesus was "tempted of the devil" to cast himself from the pinnacle of the temple to prove the promise that angels would bear Him up in their hands, He quoted, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Mt 4:1-11). In other words, to put ourselves deliberately in a place where God must act to protect us is tempting Him.

James goes on to say, "but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed." Temptation to evil does not come from without but from within. The man who could not possibly be "tempted" to be dishonest in business may succumb to the temptation to commit adultery and thus be dishonest with his wife. It is said that "every man has his price."

God was not tempting Adam and Eve to sin when He told them not to eat of a particular tree. Eve was tempted by her own lust and selfish desire. Even in innocence man could be selfish and disobedient. We see this in young infants who as yet presumably don't know the difference between right and wrong.

Additionally, there are a number of other things which God cannot do. God cannot deny Himself or contradict Himself. He cannot change. He cannot go back on His Word. Specifically in relationship to mankind, there are some things God cannot do which are very important to understand and to explain to others. One of the most fundamental concepts (and least understood by "religious" people) is this: He cannot forgive sin without the penalty being paid and accepted by man.

Are we saying that in spite of His sovereignty and infinite power God cannot forgive whomever He wills, He cannot simply wipe their slate clean in the heavenly record? Exactly: He cannot, because He is also perfectly just. "So are you suggesting," some complain, "that God wants to save all mankind but lacks the power to do so? It is a denial of God's omnipotence and sovereignty if there is anything He desires but can't accomplish." In fact, omnipotence and sovereignty are irrelevant with regard to forgiveness.

Christ in the Garden the night before the cross cried out, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me..." (Mt 26:39). Surely if it had been possible to provide salvation any other way, the Father would have allowed Christ to escape the excruciating physical sufferings of the cross and the infinite spiritual agony of enduring the penalty His perfect justice had pronounced upon sin. But even for the omnipotent God there was no other way. It is important that we clearly explain this biblical and logical truth when we present the gospel.

Suppose a judge has before him a son, a daughter or other loved one found guilty of multiple murders by the jury. In spite of his love, the judge must uphold the penalty demanded by the law. Love cannot nullify justice. The only way God could forgive sinners and remain just would be for Christ to pay the penalty for sin (Rom 3:21-28)

There are two other matters of vital importance in relation to man's salvation which God cannot do: He cannot force any one to love Him; and He cannot force anyone to accept a gift. By the very nature of love and giving, man must have the power to choose. The reception of God's love and of the gift of salvation through Jesus Christ can only be by an act of man's free will.

Some argue that if it were God's will for all men to be saved, the fact that all are not saved would mean that God's will would be frustrated and His sovereignty overturned by men. It is also argued that if man can say yes or no to Christ, he has the final say in his salvation and his will is stronger than God's will: "The heresy of free will dethrones God and enthrones man." 5

There is nothing in either the Bible or logic to suggest that God's sovereignty requires man to be powerless to make a real choice, moral or otherwise.

Giving man the power to make a genuine, independent choice does not diminish God's control over His universe. Being omnipotent and omniscient, God certainly could so arrange circumstances as to keep man's rebellion from frustrating His purposes. In fact, God could even use man's free will to help fulfill His own plans and thereby be even more glorified.

God's grand design from the foundation of the world to bestow upon man the Gift of His love precludes any ability to force

e that Gift upon any of His creatures. Both love and gifts of any kind must be received. Force perverts the transaction.

The fact that God cannot fail, lie, sin, change or deny Himself does not in the least diminish His sovereignty. Nor is He any the less sovereign because He cannot force anyone to love Him or to receive the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. And from man's side, the reverse limitation prevails: there is nothing anyone can do to merit or earn either love or a gift. They must be given freely from God's heart without any reason other than love, mercy and grace.

Wonderfully, in His sovereign grace, God has so constituted man and has so designed a gift that man may receive it voluntarily by an act of his will and respond in love to God's love. Someone has said, "The free-will of man is the most marvelous of the Creator's works." 6 The power of choice opens the door to something wonderful beyond comprehension: genuine fellowship between God and man for eternity. Without a free will man could not receive the gift of eternal life, thus God could not give it to him.

Pusey points out that "Without free-will, man would be inferior to the lower animals, which have a sort of limited freedom of choice....It would be self-contradictory, that Almighty God should create a free agent capable of loving Him, without also being capable of rejecting His love...without free-will we could not freely love God. Freedom is a condition of love." 7

It is the power of genuine choice from man's own heart and will which God has sovereignly given him that enables God to love man and for man to receive that love and to love God in return "because he first loved us" (1 Jn 4:19). It is impossible that the power of choice could challenge God's sovereignty since it is God's sovereignty which has bestowed this gift upon man and set the conditions for both loving and giving.

Suggesting that God would be lacking in "power" (thus denying His sovereignty) if He offered salvation and some rejected it is missing the point. Power and love do not belong in the same discussion. In fact, of the many things which we have seen that God cannot do, a lack of "power" is not the reason for any of them, nor is His sovereignty mitigated in the least by any of these.

Thus for mankind to have been given by God the power to choose to love Him or not and to receive or to reject the free gift of salvation, far from denying God's sovereignty, is to admit what God's sovereignty itself has lovingly and wonderfully provided.

May we willingly respond from the heart to His love with our love, and in gratitude for His great gift proclaim the good news to others. TBC

Endnotes

1 Arthur W. Pink, *The Sovereignty of God* (Baker Book House, 1984), 240. 2 Edwin H. Palmer, *the five points of Calvinism* (Baker Books, 1999), 25.

3 C. Norman Sellers, *Election and Perseverance* (Schoettle Publishing Co., 1987), 3.

4 Augustine of Hippo, *The City of God* (n.p.n.d.), V. 10.

5 W.E. Best, *Free Grace Versus Free Will* (W.E. Best Books Missionary Trust, 1977), 35.

6 Junius B. Reimensnyder, *Doom Eternal* (N.S. Quiney, 1880), 257; cited in Samuel Fisk, *Calvinistic Paths Retraced* (Biblical Evangelism Press, 1985), 223.

7 Edward B. Pusey, *What Is Of Faith As To Everlasting Punishment?* (James Parker & Co., 1881), 22-23; cited in Fisk, *op. cit.*, 222.�

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/9/6 2:30

Quote:

.....Any one who believes that man's will is entirely free, and that he can be saved by it, does not believe the fall...

On the Fall of Man

"Dust thou are, and unto dust shalt thou return." Gen. 3:19.

1. Why is there pain in the world; seeing God is "loving to every man, and his mercy is over all his works?" Because there is sin: Had there been no sin, there would have been no pain. But pain (supposing God to be just) is the necessary effect of sin. But why is there still in the world? Because man was created in the image of God: Because he is not mere matter, a clod of earth, a lump of clay, without sense or understanding; but a spirit like his Creator, a being endued not only with sense and understanding, but also with a will exerting itself in various affections. To crown all the rest, he was endued with liberty; a power of directing his own affections and actions; a capacity of determining himself, or of choosing good or evil. Indeed, had not man been endued with this, all the rest would have been of no use: Had he not been a free as well as an intelligent being, his understanding would have been as incapable of holiness, or any kind of virtue, as a tree or a block of marble. And having this power, a power of choosing good or evil, he chose the latter: He chose evil. Thus "sin entered into the world," and pain of every kind, preparatory to death.

2. But this plain, simple account of the origin of evil, whether natural or moral, all the wisdom of man could not discover till it pleased God to reveal it to the world. Till then man was a mere enigma to himself; a riddle which none but God could solve. And in how full and satisfactory a manner has he solved it in this chapter! In such a manner, as does not indeed serve to gratify vain curiosity, but as is abundantly sufficient to answer a nobler end; to

Justify the ways of God with men.

To this great end I would, First, briefly consider the preceding part of this chapter; and then, Secondly, more particularly weigh the solemn words which have been already recited.

I. 1. In the First place let us briefly consider the preceding part of this chapter. "Now the serpent was more subtil," or intelligent, "than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made;" (Gen. 3:1;) -- endued with more understanding than any other animal in the brute creation. Indeed, there is no improbability in the conjecture of an ingenious man, that the serpent was endued with reason, which is now the property of man. And this accounts for a circumstance which, on any other supposition, would be utterly unintelligible. How comes Eve not to be surprised, yea, startled and affrighted, at hearing the serpent speak and reason; unless she knew that reason, and speech in consequence of it, were the original properties of the serpent? Hence, without showing any surprise, she immediately enters into conversation with him. "And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" See how he, who was a liar from the beginning, mixes truth and falsehood together! Perhaps on purpose, that she might be the more inclined to speak, in order to clear God of the unjust charge. Accordingly, the woman said unto the serpent, (Gen. 3:2,) "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the tree in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die." Thus far she appears to have been clear of blame. But how long did she continue so? "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:4, 5.) Here sin began; namely, unbelief. "The woman was deceived," says the Apostle. She believed a lie: She gave more credit to the word of the devil, than to the word of God. And unbelief brought forth actual sin: "When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, and to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit, and did eat;" and so completed her sin. But "the man," as the Apostle observes, "was not deceived." How then came he to join in the transgression? "She gave unto her husband, and he did eat." He sinned with his eyes open. He rebelled against his Creator, as is highly probable,

Not by stronger reason moved,
But fondly overcome with female charms.

And if this was the case, there is no absurdity in the assertion of a great man, "That Adam sinned in his heart before he sinned outwardly; before he ate of the forbidden fruit;" namely, by inward idolatry, by loving the creature more than the Creator.

2. Immediately pain followed sin. When he lost his innocence he lost his happiness. He painfully feared that God, in the love of whom his supreme happiness before consisted. "He said," (Gen. 3:10,) "I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid." He fled from Him who was, till then, his desire and glory and joy. He "hid himself from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden." Hid himself! What, from the all-seeing eye? the eye which, with one glance, pervades heaven and earth? See how his understanding likewise was impaired! What amazing folly was this! such as one would imagine very few, even of his posterity, could have fallen into. So dreadfully was his "foolish heart darkened" by sin, and guilt, and sorrow, and fear. His innocence was lost, and, at the same time, his happiness and his wisdom. Here is the clear, intelligible answer to that question, "How came evil into the world?"

3. One cannot but observe, throughout this whole narration, the inexpressible tenderness and lenity of the almighty Creator, from whom they had revolted, the Sovereign against whom they had rebelled. "And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" -- thus graciously calling him to return, who would otherwise have eternally fled from God. "And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked." Still here is no acknowledgment of his fault, no humiliation for it. But with what astonishing tenderness does God lead him to make that acknowledgment! "And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked?" How camest thou to make this discovery? "Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" "And the man said," still unhumiliated, yea, indirectly throwing the blame upon God himself, "The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." "And the Lord God," still in order to bring them to repentance, "said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done?" (Gen. 3:13.) "And the woman said," nakedly declaring the thing as it was, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." "And the Lord God said unto the serpent," to testify his utter abhorrence of sin, by a lasting monument of his displeasure, in punishing the creature that had been barely the instrument of it, "Thou art cursed above the cattle, and above every beast of the field. -- And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Thus, in the midst of judgment hath God remembered mercy, from the beginning of the world; connecting the grand promise of salvation with the very sentence of condemnation!

4. "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and," or in, "thy conception: In sorrow" or pain "thou shalt bring forth children;" -- yea, above any other creature under heaven; which original curse we see is entailed on her latest posterity. "And thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." It seems, the latter part of this sentence is explanatory of the former. Was there, till now, any other inferiority of the woman to the man than that which we may conceive in one angel to another? "And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake. -- Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee:" -- Useless, yea, and hurtful productions; whereas nothing calculated to hurt or give pain had at first any place in the creation. "And thou shalt eat the herb of the field:" -- Coarse and vile, compared to the delicious fruits of paradise! "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground: For out of it wast thou taken: For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

II. 1. Let us now, in the Second place, weigh these solemn words in a more particular manner. "Dust thou art:" But how fearfully and wonderfully wrought into innumerable fibres, nerves, membranes, muscles, arteries, veins, vessels of various kinds! And how amazingly is this dust connected with water, with inclosed, circulating fluids, diversified a thousand ways by a thousand tubes and strainers! Yea, and how wonderfully is air impacted into every part, solid, or fluid, of the animal machine; air not elastic, which would tear the machine in pieces, but as fixed as water under the pole! But all this would not avail, were not ethereal fire intimately mixed both with this earth, air, and water. And all these elements are mingled together in the most exact proportion; so that while the body is in health, no one of them predominates, in the least degree, over the others.

II. 2. Such was man, with regard to his corporeal part, as he came out of the hands of his Maker. But since he sinned, he is not only dust, but mortal, corruptible dust. And by sad experience we find, that this "corruptible body presses down the soul." It very frequently hinders the soul in its operations; and, at best, serves it very imperfectly. Yet the soul cannot dispense with its service, imperfect as it is: For an embodied spirit cannot form one thought but by the mediation of its bodily organs. For thinking is not, as many suppose, the act of a pure spirit; but the act of a spirit connected with a body, and playing upon a set of material keys. It cannot possibly, therefore, make any better music than the nature and state of its instruments allow it. Hence every disorder of the body, especially of the parts more immediately subservient to thinking, lay an almost insuperable bar in the way of its thinking justly. Hence the maxim received in all ages, *Humanum est errare et nescire,* -- "Not ignorance alone," (that belongs, more or less, to every creature in heaven and earth; seeing none is omniscient, none knoweth all things, save the Creator,) "but error, is entailed on every child of man." Mistake, as well as ignorance, is, in our present state, inseparable from humanity. Every child of man is in a thousand mistakes, and is liable to fresh mistakes every moment. And a mistake in judgment may occasion a mistake in practice; yea, naturally leads thereto. I mistake, and possibly cannot avoid mistaking the character of this or that man. I suppose him to be what he is

ot; to be better or worse than he really is. Upon this wrong supposition I behave wrong to him; that is, more or less affectionately than he deserves. And by the mistake which is occasioned by the defect of my bodily organs I am naturally led so to do. Such is the present condition of human nature; of a mind dependent on a mortal body. Such is the state entailed on all human spirits, while connected with flesh and blood!

3. "And unto dust thou shalt return." How admirably well has the wise Creator secured the execution of this sentence on all the offspring of Adam! It is true He was pleased to make one exception from this general rule, in a very early age of the world, in favour of an eminently righteous man. So we read, Gen. 5:23, 24, after Enoch had "walked with God" three hundred sixty and five years, "he was not; for God took him." He exempted him from the sentence passed upon all flesh, and took him alive into heaven. Many ages after, he was pleased to make a second exception; ordering the Prophet Elijah to be taken up into heaven, in a chariot of fire, -- very probably by a convoy of angels, assuming that appearance. And it is not unlikely that he saw good to make a third exception in the person of the beloved disciple. There is transmitted to us a particular account of the Apostle John's old age; but we have not any account of his death, and not the least intimation concerning it. Hence we may reasonably suppose that he did not die, but that, after he had finished his course, and "walked with God" for about a hundred years, the Lord took him, as he did Enoch; not in so open and conspicuous a manner as he did the Prophet Elijah.

4. But setting these two or three instances aside, who has been able, in the course of near six thousand years, to evade the execution of this sentence, passed on Adam and all his posterity? Be men ever so great masters of the art of healing, can they prevent or heal the gradual decays of nature? Can all their boasted skill heal old age, or hinder dust from returning to dust? Nay, who among the greatest in masters of medicine has been able to add a century to his own years? yea, or to protract his own life any considerable space beyond the common period? The days of man, for above three thousand years, (from the time of Moses at least,) have been fixed, by a middling computation at threescore years and ten. How few are there that attain to fourscore years! Perhaps hardly one in five hundred. So little does the art of man avail against the appointment of God!

5. God has indeed provided for the execution of his own decree in the very principles of our nature. It is well known, the human body, when it comes into the world, consists of innumerable membranes exquisitely thin, that are filled with circulating fluid, to which the solid parts bear a very small proportion. Into the tubes composed of these membranes, nourishment must be continually infused; otherwise life cannot continue, but will come to an end almost as soon as it is begun. And suppose this nourishment to be liquid, which, as it flows through those fine canals, continually enlarges them in all their dimensions; yet it contains innumerable solid particles, which continually adhere to the inner surface of the vessels through which they flow; so that in the same proportion as any vessel is enlarged, it is stiffened also. Thus the body grows firmer as it grows larger, from infancy to manhood. In twenty, five-and-twenty, or thirty years, it attains its full measure of firmness. Every part of the body is then stiffened to its full degree; as much earth adhering to all the vessels, as gives the solidity they severally need to the nerves, arteries, veins, muscles, in order to exercise their functions in the most perfect manner. For twenty, or, it may be, thirty years following, although more and more particles of earth continually adhere to the inner surface of every vessel in the body, yet the stiffness caused thereby is hardly observable, and occasions little inconvenience. But after sixty years (more or less, according to the natural constitution, and a thousand accidental circumstances) the change is easily perceived, even at the surface of the body. Wrinkles show the proportion of the fluids to be lessened, as does also the dryness of the skin, through a diminution of the blood and juices, which before moistened and kept it smooth and soft. The extremities of the body grow cold, not only as they are remote from the centre of motion, but as the smaller vessels are filled up, and can no longer admit the circulating fluid. As age increases, fewer and fewer of the vessels are pervious, and capable of transmitting the vital stream; except the larger ones, most of which are lodged within the trunk of the body. In extreme old age, the arteries themselves, the grand instruments of circulation, by the continual apposition of earth, become hard, and, as it were, bony, till, having lost the power of contracting themselves, they can no longer propel the blood, even through the largest channels; in consequence of which, death naturally ensues. Thus are the seeds of death sown in our very nature! Thus from the very hour when we first appear on the stage of life, we are travelling toward death: We are preparing, whether we will or no, to return to the dust from whence we came!

6. Let us now take a short review of the whole, as it is delivered with inimitable simplicity; what an unprejudiced person might, even from hence, infer to be the word of God. In that period of duration which He saw to be most proper, (of which He alone could be the judge, whose eye views the whole possibility of things from everlasting to everlasting,) the Almighty, rising in the greatness of his strength, went forth to create the universe. "In the beginning he created," made out of nothing, "the matter of the heavens and the earth:" (So, Mr. Hutchinson observes, the original words properly signify:) Then "the Spirit" or breath "from the Lord," that is, the air, "moved upon the face of the waters." Here were earth, water, air; three of the elements, or component parts of the lower world. "And God said, Let there be light: And there was light." By his omnific word, light, that is, fire, the fourth element, sprang into being. Out of these, variously modified and proportion

ed to each other, he composed the whole. "The earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit after his kind;" and then the various tribes of animals, to inhabit the waters, the air, and the earth. But the very Heavens could observe,

_Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius aluae
Deerat adhuc!_

There was still wanting a creature of a higher rank, capable of wisdom and holiness. _Natus homo est._ So "God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him!" Mark the emphatical repetition. God did not make him mere matter, a piece of senseless, unintelligent clay; but a spirit, like himself, although clothed with a material vehicle. As such he was endued with understanding; with a will including various affections; and with liberty, a power of using them in a right or wrong manner, of choosing good or evil. Otherwise neither his understanding nor his will would have been to any purpose; for he must have been as incapable of virtue or holiness as the stock of a tree. Adam, in whom all mankind were then contained, freely preferred evil to good. He chose to do his own will, rather than the will of his Creator. He "was not deceived," but knowingly and deliberately rebelled against his Father and his King. In that moment he lost the moral image of God, and, in part, the natural: He commenced unholy, foolish, and unhappy. And "in Adam all died:" He entitled all his posterity to error, guilt, sorrow, fear, pain, diseases, and death.

7. How exactly does matter of fact, do all things round us, even the face of the whole world, agree with this account! Open your eyes! Look round you! See darkness that may be felt; see ignorance and error; see vice in ten thousand forms; see consciousness of guilt, fear, sorrow, shame, remorse, covering the face of the earth! See misery, the daughter of sin. See, on every side, sickness and pain, inhabitants of every nation under heaven; driving on the poor, helpless sons of men, in every age, to the gates of death! So they have done well nigh from the beginning of the world. So they will do, till the consummation of all things.

8. But can the Creator despise the work of his own hands? Surely that is impossible! Hath he not then, seeing he alone is able, provided a remedy for all these evils? Yea, verily he hath! And a sufficient remedy; every way adequate to the disease. He hath fulfilled his word: He hath given "the seed of the woman to bruise the serpent's head." -- "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." Here is a remedy provided for all our guilt: He "bore all our sins in his body on the tree." And "if any one have sinned, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." And here is a remedy for all our disease, all the corruption of our nature. For God hath also, through the intercession of his Son, given us his Holy Spirit, to renew us both "in knowledge," in his natural image; -- opening the eyes of our understanding, and enlightening us with all such knowledge as is requisite to our pleasing God; -- and also in his moral image, namely, "righteousness and true holiness." And supposing this is done, we know that "all things" will "work together for our good." We know by happy experience, that all natural evils change their nature and turn to good; that sorrow, sickness, pain, will all prove medicines, to heal our spiritual sickness. They will all be to our profit; will all tend to our unspeakable advantage; making us more largely "partakers of his holiness," while we remain on earth; adding so many stars to that crown which is reserved in heaven for us.

9. Behold then both the justice and mercy of God! -- his justice in punishing sin, the sin of him in whose loins we were then all contained, on Adam and his whole posterity; -- and his mercy in providing an universal remedy for an universal evil; in appointing the Second Adam to die for all who had died in the first; that, "as in Adam all died, so in Christ all" might "be made alive;" that, "as by one man's offence, judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift" might "come upon all unto justification of life," -- "justification of _life_," as being connected with the new birth, the beginning of spiritual life, which leads us, through the life of holiness, to life eternal, to glory.

10. And it should be particularly observed, that "where sin abounded, grace does much more abound." For not as the condemnation, so is the free gift; but we may gain infinitely more than we have lost. We may now attain both higher degrees of holiness, and higher degrees of glory, than it would have been possible for us to attain. If Adam had not sinned, the Son of God had not died: Consequently that amazing instance of the love of God to man had never existed, which has, in all ages, excited the highest joy, and love, and gratitude from his children. We might have loved God the Creator, God the Preserver, God the Governor; but there would have been no place for love to God the Redeemer. This could have had no being. The highest glory and joy of saints on earth, and saints in heaven, Christ crucified, had been wanting. We could not then have praised him that, thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, yet emptied himself, took upon him the form of a servant, and was obedient to death, even the death of the cross! This is now the noblest theme of all the children of God on earth; yea, we need not scruple to affirm, even of angels, and archangels, and all the company of heaven.

"Hallelujah," they cry,
"To the King of the sky,

To the great everlasting I AM;
To the Lamb that was slain,
And liveth again,
Hallelujah to God and the Lamb!"

J.Wesley

Re: - posted by awakenwithin (), on: 2007/9/6 2:31

Quote:

-----Lord, I thank thee that you made me not like those poor confused Calvinists.

Brother what was your heart in posting this?
Come lets bow our knees and pray..

Are looking at the name, then to Gods word?

There is somthing in this post brother that makes me cry. Only thing that is poor brother when, we don't like who God tell s he is.

My pastor always says. If you have promble go to the bible and your knees. Don;t struggle with man, but Gods word and with God.

This shouldn't be about who is right, only thing matter is what God says. Who can tell God how he should do things.. I r emeber the story of Job, he had no choice, but he said blessed be God who gives and takes. I think there are great thing s of God. Even if we are wrong. May God keep us humble.

Pride builds walls, and it is sin. When we disagree do with a gentle spirit right?

It seemed you were upset? brother we are to be kind with our words? maybe I misunderstood you, if so I am sorry..

" behold how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity, it is like the precious oil on the head" Ps 133

It is true, in all these things.. We need to be on our knees, asking God to keep us humble. May he humble us... and keep us low. Do we want to be right?

What matters, who is right if we have a wrong veiw of God?

So maybe it isn't coming back so fast, but to seek the Lord?

To fall to our faces, and ask his will?

What if we fasted and ask him to show us himself?

What if we really sought him day and night prayed.. that we might know him better?

may we fall to our face down, and ask for wisdom and power and gentle spirit in every post...

Keep us praying before each post...

Let it be to his glory.. Come lets praise His name.. Come lets praise Him.. Come lets pray..

Come lets seek Him

Blessing

In His Love

charlene

Re: - posted by hmmhmm (), on: 2007/9/6 3:20

Quote:

awakenwithin wrote:

may we fall to our face down, and ask for wisdom and power and gentle spirit in every post...

wonderful sister, the best advice i have heard today , God bless you
and i recommend all to listen to the featured sermon , it is a great one!

Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/9/6 9:26

Quote:
-----awakenwithin wrote:

Quote:
-----Lord, I thank thee that you made me not like those poor confused Calvinists.

Brother what was your heart in posting this?

Attempting by contrast to show his heart that wrote the first prayer.
Both are offendin, I know.

We both know that neither C or A would pray that way.

Re: - posted by BeYeDoers (), on: 2007/9/6 11:11

This excerpt of Spurgeon is disheartening. It appears that he was either ignorant of what the Arminians really believe, or intentionally misrepresents it in order to make the Calvinist position stronger...almost a strawman type of approach. This and other quotes by Spurgeon on this topic make him look like a man full of pride who is totally ungracious to anyone who wasn't a "Five-pointer"...which quotes I do not believe truly represent him. To which I also must admit that I am probably far more prideful than Spurgeon ever imagined even in his unregenerate state.