Resisting God’s Grace

The doctrine of God giving to each individual unique gifts, skills, talents and abilities for specific jobs is one of the clearest in the word of God, 1 Cor 12:6, 11, 12; 2 Cor 10:13; Rom 12:6; Eph 4:7, &c. He gives to individuals according to His own will and good pleasure, and the individual is/will be held accountable for his use of the Lord’s gifts in the Kingdom work, Mat 6:33; 1 Cor 4:2, 7; 2 Cor 5:10, 11. Furthermore, no one can say to Him, Why hast thou made me thus? Ro 9:20; Da 4:35.

How

God’s grace resisted? With the God-given ability to study, see problems, write and present solutions to social ills, comes the responsibility to use these abilities from God. The problem is, though, that we want the gifts and abilities given by the Spirit of God, BUT WE DO NOT WANT THE RESPONSIBILITIES which go with the abilities. Responsibilities require work, sacrifice, standing alone for things which others cannot see, making enemies in high places (Eph 6:12), and standing against public policy and sin in every area (civil, religious, social, &c.). Most want abilities apart from responsibilities, but to accept the God-given abilities without accepting (and yet even thanking God for the abilities and responsibilities) the accompanying responsibilities, is an insult to the grace of God, He 10:29, Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite (or insult) unto the Spirit of grace? Acts 7:51 Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers [did], so [do] ye. We resist the Holy Spirit when we resist the responsibilities attached to His given abilities.

In Mat 25:14-30, the unprofitable servant refused to accept the responsibility that went with his talent, i.e. he had an ability from God, yet refused to accept the responsibility attached to his ability. I know many godly individuals (pastors & laymen) who, by God’s grace (Ph 2:13), see society’s problems and difficulties; as they talk about the difficulties and problems, obviously they have plausible (even Biblical) solutions, yet they do nothing but talk about the bad situations. The grace of God has given them an ability to see the problem (the vast majority of people see no problem), God’s grace provides the “thinking” ability to formulate proper solutions, and yet they do nothing. By doing nothing, they mock the grace of God; they resist the Holy Ghost’s (Who has opened their eyes) work in their lives; they hath done despite (insult) unto the Spirit of grace. The Master has NOTHING good to say about them because they resist the Spirit’s enlightening work in their heart by refusing to take proper action. He calls them unprofitable servants, good for nothing but His wrath, v. 30. Note furthermore that being a man of God makes one more responsible before the Lord. In other words, with his ability from God, comes a far greater responsibility, 1 Kgs 13:26.

Though totally condemned in Scripture in passages such as Psalms 82, people’s refusal to accept responsibility with their ability to grasp and understand social issues is understandable (see EN). Responsibility involves work, sacrifice, separation, loss of things one holds important and many other things which repels the fallen nature. But the power of God’s Spirit enables one to accept responsibility before God. Certainly, there is great fear of what man can do (Ps 118:6; Pr 29:25), but if fear of man makes our decisions, then we have denied the faith (1 Tim 5:8, provides not a just society for his family. Also, Mat 10:28; Mat 6:24). Solomon, after examining absolutely every area of life, summed up man’s total duty: Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man, Ecc 12:13.

Fear & why

Christians refuse responsibility. Hebrews 13:5 & 6 gives the major reason why Christians fear what man can
do to them, thus causing them not to accept their ability's responsibility: they are controlled by covetousness, i.e. afraid of the cost ([Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord [is] my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.). Note the unprofitable servant in Matthew 25 was covetous: fearful of what he would lose, v. 25.

Queen Esther

God enabled Queen Esther to see past the wicked deceit of the evil man, Haman. Queen Esther feared man; therefore, she was not going to accept the responsibility to do what she could. Mordecai confronted her with her fear, and in doing so, forced her to make a choice between her fear of man and her fear of God (although the word "God" is not used in Esther, it is implied throughout). Esther then made the choice that every Christian is required to make: If I perish, I perish. She gave up her covetousness (fear for her life), made the proper choice and God exalted His people, Est 4:16.

Thus, if one can see past the "smoke and mirrors" evil men use to hide their actions from public scrutiny, it is because of Divine grace and Providence. The purpose of God enabling one to rightly evaluate situations is not to impress others; rather, it is responsibility: responsibility to take Godly action. The Lord will not give ability to see without giving ability to do.

The covetousness which causes Christians (pastors & laymen) to refuse to stand and act against evil has consequences:

Covetousness prevents God's people from doing what they know they should do from God's word: Ezekiel 33:31 And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee [as] my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, [but] their heart goeth after their covetousness. Furthermore, covetousness causes pastors and laymen to keep quiet when they should speak out against evil, Lev 5:1; Deut 22:22-29; Ps 50:18.

Covetousness causes one to seek safety and deliverance through compromise: Jeremiah 51:13 O thou that dweltest upon many waters, abundant in treasures, thine end is come, [and] the measure of thy covetousness. Habakkuk 2:9 Woe to him that coveteth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil!

Covetousness brings the wrath of God: Isaiah 57:17 For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him: I hid me, and was wroth, and he went on frowardly in the way of his heart. (Note that because everyone is given to covetousness, evil reigns: Jeremiah 6:13 For from the least of them even unto the greatest of them every one [is] given to covetousness; and from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.)

Covetousness causes God to strip one of everything (covetousness was afraid to stand for fear of loss; now it loses everything): Jeremiah 8:10 Therefore will I give their wives unto others, and their fields to them that shall inherit [them]: for every one from the least even unto the greatest is given to covetousness, from the prophet even unto the priest every one dealeth falsely.

The Lord Jesus Himself warned of the evils of covetousness which causes compromise: Luke 12:15 And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Covetousness, being cloaked in righteousness, is many times hard to recognize: 1 Thessalonians 2:5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God [is] witness; 2 Peter 2:3 And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

The Christian's command is to flee from covetousness because it is idolatry; it sets something before obedience to the word of God: Ephesians 5:3 But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Colossians 3:5 Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

When covetousness is conquered by God's grace, there is assurance of God's presence in the stand against society's evils: Hebrews 13:5 [Let your] conversation [be] without covetousness; [and be] content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never thee, nor forsake thee.

An answer to covetousness is confession prayer: Psalms 119:36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness.

Finally, blessings of a life free of covetousness is promised: Proverbs 28:16 The prince that wanteth understanding [is] also a great oppressor: [but] he that hateth covetousness shall prolong [his] days.

Covetousness had killed Christian America's freedom and liberty. Only oppressive persecution against Godly Christianity lies ahead unless American Christianity turns from its wicked ways: covetousness which causes it to avoid its responsibility to stand for God in a Godless society.

•  End Note:

Ps. 82, although the word gods here refers to judges, the implications of this Psalm speak to every Child of God. Thus, this Psalm is probably one of God's clearer presentation of responsibility to stand against
wickedness in society, even if the wickedness is not
directed toward the Christian personally. It points out
that, because they have exalted themselves above their
responsibility, those whose duty is to defend the helpless,
refuse their responsibility. Consequently, they will be
judged by the Lord Himself as He would judge any other
person. (Note that the Lord God has appointed His people
as, what we could call, "guardians" of His creation.
Adam, in the fall, lost his guardianship; the child of God,
through the second Adam, Jesus Christ, is restored to the
place of guardianship which Adam lost. This "guardianship"
involves guardianship over the helpless.)

The thought of Christian responsibility toward the
helpless is found in Jas 1:27, Pure religion and undefiled
before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless
and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself
unspotted from the world. Note the word visit. It does not
mean simply go visit them and pass the time of day. Visit
carries with it the implications of looking out for their
welfare. In other words, visit implies responsibility to
defend the poor and fatherless; do justice to the afflicted
and needy. Deliver the poor and needy: rid them out of
the hand of the wicked. (Ps 82:3, 4. V. 2, the Lord asks how
long will His people tolerate the wicked's activity against
the poor, fatherless and needy; how long will they refuse
their social obligations and responsibilities?)

Personal note: we have been very deeply involved in
a couple local battles (which are extremely time
consuming). One is with the local school board over a 5
million bond issue to "repair" 3 buildings which have
only been open for 5 years (built at a total cost of 16
million). As we have examined many details concerning
the 5 million bond issue, the apparent corruption and
coverups are astounding. One of the basic points which
surfaced was the tremendous pressure placed on the
contractors to hurriedly complete the buildings.
Evidently, the pressure influenced the contractors to take
"short cuts," and the lawyer for the school corporation
called the "short cuts" after the buildings were built.
The emotional frenzy generated over the whole situation
is being used to expedite a 5 million bond issue to "bring
the buildings up to code." (Though apparently not
structurally unsound, the buildings are being presented
as unsound to generate pressure to proceed quickly with
the 5 million indebtedness without giving the contractors
opportunity to correct the difficulties as they desire to do.)

Though God clearly condemns statist education as
presented in modern education, we are forced to support
it through property tax (why are not tax protesters
working against the supper ungodly property tax? Yes,
income tax pays for abortion, but property tax supports
the system that teaches abortion [sodomy & c.] as an
acceptable procedure. It's time to stop straining at gnats
[income tax] and swallowing camels [property tax], for
without property tax, an individual could be self
sufficient enough that he could have no income to tax).

The second area of battle is the area of increased
taxes. Our county does not have a wheel tax (at the time
of this article). The county commissioners have requested
the tax from the council. We have organized opposition to
the new increase tax, and the number that turned out
against the tax overwhelmed the council. (The
courthouse was flooded on the upper floor where the
meeting was, and the overflow filled the first floor;
therefore, I did not see who all was there.) The fire
marshal closed the county courthouse where the council's
public tax meeting was being held because the building
was overcrowded. The council must reschedule the
meeting, and, Lord willing, we will have more at that
meeting. We are a small county with under 20,000
registered voters.

In the two instances mentioned, I am amazed at the
lack of leadership among the general population. I can
only speculate, but, in my opinion, the ones who could
lead opposition are so busy making money that they do
not have time to organize; only the ungodly have the
funds (taxes) and time to organize their battle against
people and property. Furthermore, the "Christian"
leaders who should be taking the stand may be controlled
by covetousness (or just as bad, indifference). I do
understand though, there was at least one other
fundamental pastor at the council meeting which,
because of the crowd, I was unable to meet.

Those of you who work with people see the same
problem I see: a desperate yearning for leadership. The
problem of no leadership is compounded by two facts: 1)
the pulpit is not providing leadership, and 2) people are
really not looking for Bible-based leadership. Unless
there is a general return to Godly righteousness among
"Christians," the leadership vacuum presents a perfect
opportunity for a charismatic leader to take control, 2
Chr 7:14.

The word of God clearly tells the Christian that if he
does not warn and protect his neighbor against evil
intents of the thief, the Christian is as guilty as is the
thief, Ps 50:17, 18. We have been attempting to warn our
neighbours.

Brass & Gold
More than enough
Ex 36:5

We hear many messages from this passage
motivating people to give, maybe even beyond
their means. By placing the emphasis in this
chapter on the "gift and giver," do we overlook its
message to leaders? I am inclined to believe this passage
speaks more to the leaders than it does to the people. It
makes one wonder if the use of this passage to motivate
people to give quenches the Spirit from working in their
heart to give. When people are motivated to give in order
to finance personal desires and dreams of leaders, can we really expect the Spirit of God to move in their hearts?

The first key statement of Exo 36:5 is The people bring much more than enough for the service of the work. This statement is the dream statement of every person involved in the genuine work of God. Also notice the often overlooked key phrase, which the Lord commanded to make. The rest of the chapter contains God's record of the construction of the tabernacle. We will deal with this passage in two parts: first, more than enough, and second, which the Lord commanded.

The offering

Before we examine the command to stop giving, we should mention a few points about the offering itself as commanded by the Lord in Exodus 25:2ff. It consisted of God-ordained material required to build the wilderness tabernacle, and came from several sources: passed down by their fathers from Abraham; Egypt (they spoiled Egypt when the Lord brought them out); Amalek, whom they had already obtained victory over; probably from trade with the surrounding nations; and from the wilderness itself (shittim wood).

Its basis

1) Oehler rightly describes this offering as a "free gift for which there was no other occasion than the will of the offerer, whom his heart impelled to show his thankful sense of all the blessings which the goodness of God had bestowed upon him." Remember, just before the offering was taken the Lord in His mercy had spared the nation from complete destruction after their sin with the calf. 2) God tells Moses to invite, not command, His people to give this offering to the Lord. 3) 25:2, willingly... Of course, it goes without saying that one's willingness to offer his wealth and abilities in the work of the Lord is a mark of the Spirit at work in him, For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure, Php 2:13. Thus the people are made willing by the Lord.

Willingly also implies that if the offering was not willingly, it was unacceptable. The willingness mentioned here was probably restricted to this offering because the rest of the offerings, sacrifices and tithes, were mandatory. Thus the rest were given in obedience to God. This offering was not commanded though Moses was commanded. 4) Notice that the Lord specified what was to be offered: it was not open for discussion or personal opinion. If the individual had not or did not want to give what was required, he could not give because everything was for a specific purpose. After all is brought in, the Lord spends the rest of Exodus explaining its use. Any other gifts or use would have displeased the Lord.

• Observe:

This offering was extremely expensive consisting of gold, silver, brass, and other specific items. Only the best could be given.

Furthermore, although this first offering was a free will offering (not an enforced tax upon the people), neither the gift nor the use of the gift was 'free will.' In other words, the people could not "freely" give according to their own will and Moses could not "freely" use it according to his own will. Everything had to be given and used according to the command word of God, or the gift and giver were vanity and rebellion. The pattern for its use was already established in heaven (at least in the mind of God), and Moses' responsibility was simply to follow the pattern and see that others followed it.

The use

of the offering. When we compare Exo 36:13 & 18, we find a very interesting point: taches of gold coupled the inner curtains; taches of brass coupled the outer curtains. Thus, in spite of "unlimited" funds for gold everywhere, the builders used brass on the outside and gold on the inside. We will develop a few things before we come back to which the Lord commanded.

• Note:

1) The command word of God is very practical. Gold hooks on the inside were fit for the King of Israel, and brass hooks on the outside were fit for the same King. The thought can be reversed: brass was not sufficient for the inner curtains. 2) The workmen used good common sense: gold hooks would not have been suitable for connecting the outside curtains. God's command word is sensible and practicable, not mystical and impractical. 3) The wise hearted men (v. 1) neither took advantage of the working of the Spirit of God in the hearts of the people, nor took more from them than needed for the project at hand. Obviously, these wise hearted men used brass and gold as required by the word of the Lord. They did not allow the "love of money and praise" to cause them to depart from God's word.

The command

of the Lord. The second key statement in 36:5 is which the Lord commanded to make. Even with the overabundance of funds, the wise hearted men (in whom the Lord put wisdom and understanding) did not go beyond the command-word of God. The Lord provided detailed plans for what He wanted done and the men worked within those plans. Moreover, these men were to devise curious works...,
35:32. *Deulse:* to think, plan, esteem, calculate, invent, make a judgment, imagine, count. *Curious:* thought, device, plan, purpose, invent. These men were given clear, plain instructions by the Lord God, but they were to think, plan, invent, &c., within God's established guidelines. The command word of God does not make robots out of us; rather, it establishes frameworks in which to freely operate. How much freedom did these builders have in making the tabernacle? We will not speculate other than to say that maybe their freedom involved developing methods of doing the required work. All we know is that they were to devise curious works.

**Much more**

than enough. Note that an overabundance of funds does not permit going (must not be used to go) beyond the restrictions of God's word. God has established His boundaries, and all the world's wealth does not permit going beyond His boundaries. (Thus God's blessings upon men or projects are not determined by the funds (& people) available, 1 Tim 6:5, 6.)

The Godly workers stayed within the framework of God's commands even though they had plenty of funds to f0 go further. They could have said, "We have abundant funds, so even though it will cost more, let us make the outside taches of gold instead of brass." Such a thought, statement &/or action establishes one as his own god as he places his own opinion above the word of God.

**Conclusion**

- **TRUE FREEDOM!**

Though the people gave a free will offering, both its giving and use were bound by the will of God, His law-word. Free-will had to operate within the frame work of God's command word. "Here's the way you must give and use this free will offering." Even though this was a free will offering, its misuse in giving and using would cause its rejection. They were not free to give a wagon or a live beast in this offering; therefore, free does not mean free to do our own thing. Freedom means free to do by His enabling grace what God commands us to do. (EN 2.)

- **TRUE SERVICE!**

The people could only carry out what God appointed, and could only fulfill their covenant duty, by the readiness with which they supplied the materials required for the erection of the sanctuary and completed the work with their own hands. Keil

Genuine, godly service to the Lord (36:5) is only doing what He has appointed us to do and giving back to Him what is already His. Did not our Lord make this clear in Luke 17:10, So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are

unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.

Consequently, we see that the only way the covenant-people of God can serve their God is by simply doing their duty as outlined in God's revelation to man, because the God of our redemption has total claim upon the total person and all his possessions. The word of God defines man's duty to his Master. Furthermore, no matter how hard one works for the Master, he is only doing his duty under his covenant-responsibilities. In other words, none of these people gave great treasures to the Lord, but it was their covenant-responsibility to give them.

How many folks feel that: 1) because they are "sacrificially" giving over and above what the Lord requires of them they have done a great service to God (when actually they were only doing their duty)? 2) because they are giving such a "great sum," they can serve (and do) according to their own will? and 3) they can give whatever they desire because it is given of their own "free-will?"

- **TRUE WORKSMANSHIP!**

Sadly, modern thinking seems to be "Just enough is enough." "No one will see the inner hooks, so let's make them out of brass instead of gold," but the Lord sees the shortcuts taken in every area of our life. One of God's major promises is that we will reap what we sow, and one of the major ways we reap our crop is through society around us; the results will come to pass. How can people expect others to live up to standards which they themselves are unwilling to live up to? Shortcuts and compromise in the church, with the word of God and in our personal lives, will reap a terrible price in our society. There is no thought, word or deed done in secret that is not seen and rewarded by the Lord. Gold and brass cannot be substituted for each other without departing from the word of God. The Lord sees the "shortcuts" and compromise. See Endnote.

There is another point which we should touch on: there were many things connected with the tabernacle which were for beauty alone. They had no functional purpose other than that the Lord commanded them (cf. Ex 28:2). Thus not only should the Lord's work be functional, it should be beautiful (yet still within the guidelines of His word).

- **TRUE GIVING!**

Note that man did not have to constrain Israel to give because the Lord constrained them to give. I wonder how much giving is done because man constrained the people rather than because God constrained the people? Furthermore, if man constrains the people to give, are the people actually giving to the Lord? How much do we try to do the Spirit's work for Him?

- **TRUE WILLINGNESS!**
By this liberal contribution of free-will gifts, for the work commanded by the Lord, the people proved their willingness to uphold their covenant relationship with Jehovah their God. Keil.

Thus we see the willingness of the people proved by their generosity in giving. Many times we pastors hesitate to give God's people opportunity to give a free-will offering above what is required of them: an offering may be for maintenance on the buildings or special projects, &c. But all service to the Lord must begin with freely giving one's self to the Lord, Rom 12. Clearly, leaders are required to give God's people opportunity to give unto the Lord of their own free will because it is the Lord which makes them willing, 2 Cor 8:11, 12; 9:7. Will we grieve the Spirit by not giving His people opportunity to give? Will people grieve the Spirit by not giving, Eph 4:30?

**TRUE WISDOM!**

How many "Christian leaders" are taking advantage of God's people in whom the Lord has placed a willing heart? They take the "over abundance" given and pursued their pride: personal dreams, goals and ambitions. The workmen could have easily gone overboard (beyond the command of the Lord) with the surplus of funds and material, but did not. God's wisdom will not take advantage of the moving of the Spirit of God. Leaders must not misuse the willingness of those under them. If God made them willing, then their willingness must be used to advance God's kingdom on earth, not man's ambitions.

**TRUE STANDARDS!**

It is just as bad to go overboard, or beyond the word of God (gold in place of brass), as it is to not go far enough (brass in place of gold). In other words, it is just as much sin to set standards above God's (established in His law-word) as it is to set standards below God's, i.e. it is just as much sin to expect more from folks than God's word requires as it is not to expect enough. In fact, maybe there is more sin involved in "overexpectation" or "overbuilding." Christ, while walking here on this earth, strongly condemned the pharisaical attitude which went further than the what His law had already established. Cf. Mt 5-7, &c.

We must carefully avoid misusing funds &/or people: placing gold where brass is required by the word of God (or placing brass where gold is required). If God's people replace brass with gold (i.e. require more than God requires), can we blame civil government for purchasing "gold plated" toilets?

Endnotes:

1. Though Dobson offers pleasant-sounding "Christianized, Humanist Psychology," he made an excellent observation on a program dealing with the recent sodomite march in Washington: society now accepts open sodomy because the same society accepts open immorality. Living together is an accepted life-style, both in and out of the church; sodomy and immorality go hand in hand. Therefore, it is impossible to deal with sodomy without first dealing with the immorality as accepted by professed Christians. In other words, a church (or society) which will not confront immorality cannot confront sodomy.

2. As if to confirm what I had already put together above: as a result of our public exposure in some recent confrontations over some very "taxing" issues, a lady contacted me over an extremely immoral, if not outright corrupt, situation against her 21 year old daughter by the local sheriff's department. It would have been useless to tell her that the immorality that is about to swallow her daughter from the department is no worse than the immorality she is overlooking in the life of her daughter. Thus, people are vainly searching for "moral & just" civil government because they are ignoring the required Christian basis for Godly civil government.

**Saving Souls?**

By R.E. McMaster, Jr.

In modern Christendom, there are two perspectives on the Gospel, the Good News. The first is from God's perspective. This is often called the Calvinistic Gospel. It rests on God's sovereignty. It focuses upon His election, calling, predestination, foreknowledge and men who are chosen by God, saved eternally. The second perspective, the Arminian perspective, focuses on man, and man's so-called "free will." The Arminian viewpoint in effect declares that man has the option of choosing or not choosing Jesus Christ as his personal Savior, and thus determining for himself his eternal destiny. This makes man effectively sovereign.

The Arminian perspective puts Jesus Christ in the awkward position of having walked victoriously through life on earth in the flesh without sinning, fending off all of Satan's temptations, going over the cross, taking on the sins of the world, defeating Satan and all his demons of hell, rising from the grave, ascending, sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and now having to wait and hope that sinning man chooses Him. This Arminian perspective makes Jesus Christ not unlike a dog waiting for a pat on the head from his master. Who is the master, Christ or man? The Scriptures clearly teach that faith is a gift given by God. Faith is not something that arises automatically from within the heart, mind and soul of naturally fallen, sinful man.

A problem in church history with the Calvinistic...
perspective is that the God who is sovereign and elects, calls, foreknows, chooses, and predestines, picked the "frozen chosen." Along with a lack of emphasis on evangelism. "After all, if God is sovereign, He'll take of saving His elect," to often is the attitude. By contrast, the Arminian free will perspective, which de facto has man as sovereign, is openly and aggressively evangelistic. After all, from this perspective, if Christians don't get out there and witness and evangelize, they won't save souls and people will go to hell, lost forever. There is a sense of urgency to the Arminian viewpoint.

Like so many principles in Scripture, rather than an either/or perspective, the truth lies in a harmonious "both," with the authority relationship differentiating. Just as Christ is the bridegroom while the church is the bride, and the husband is head of the wife in a covenantal marriage, so too is the sovereignty of God in eternal salvation superior to man's perspective of having chosen God.

Look at it this way. Because God is sovereign, which makes Him God, He has in fact elected, chosen, predestined, called and foreordained His elect, who will be awakened to the reality of their eternal salvation during their time here on earth. That's the purpose of the Gospel, the Great Awakening. God the Holy Spirit during some point of time in an elected man's life will move on him, probably when he hears the Gospel. Then faith is given, his human spirit is quickened, and one of God's chosen believes in the reality of his salvation through Christ. This man has, from his humanistic perspective, chosen Jesus Christ. He has made a decision to respond positively to the Gospel. But in eternal salvation, as with so many other things man does, man must be careful not to put himself first, not to put the cart before the horse, so to speak. God must come first.

From God's primary and sovereign perspective, the Gospel, the Good News, is past tense. From man's perspective it is present tense. From God's sovereign perspective, the Gospel is the Good News announcing that Jesus Christ through His sinless life's work, perfect keeping of the law, death on the cross, burial, resurrection, ascension, and seating at the right hand of the Father, has saved His people eternally. Past tense! He has also called his elect to discipleship in time here on earth to do the work and fulfill the calling for which purpose they were created, thus working out their temporal (time on earth) salvation with fear and trembling. So, the Gospel of Jesus Christ awakens God's people to the reality of their gift of eternal salvation through the work of Jesus Christ (and subsequently the Holy Spirit), so they can then grow to maturity, move from milk to meat, and armor up and fight as soldiers in God's army, fully equipped according to Ephesians 6, working out their temporal salvation in time on earth. Thus, salvation rightfully seen Biblically has both an eternal and temporal aspect. After man is awakened to the reality of his eternal salvation, he then grows in Christ to become more Christlike in his remaining years (time) left on earth. After all, faith without works is dead. But the initial quickening, the presentation of the Gospel, speaks of a past tense historical reality. The present tense is the working out of temporal salvation, beginning with the Holy Spirit's awakening to the reality of salvation.

The Arminian gospel, the present tense gospel, standing on it's own, is incorrect, humanistic, because man is not the instrument nor the ultimate determinant of his or any other person's eternal salvation. That would effectively make man God, like in evolution, which also has man saving himself. Neither man nor the Gospel (Good News) is the instrument of salvation in a present tense sense. Let's look at this from the perspective of the heathen.

If the Arminian Gospel is true, if man is responsible for saving other men's souls eternally, and thus the Gospel is both present tense and the instrument of salvation, what happens to the heathen who never hears the Gospel? There are only two choices. The heathen who never hears the Gospel is either (1) eternally saved, or (2) eternally damned. Those are the only two options. If the heathen who never hears the Gospel is eternally saved, then we are better off never taking him the Gospel, ever. Why? Because if the heathen who never heard the Gospel is eternally saved, and we take him the Gospel and he rejects it, he becomes eternally damned. Thus, the Gospel becomes the "Bad News." This is obviously incorrect.

What about the heathen who never hears the Gospel and therefore is eternally? If the heathen is eternally damned unless he hears the Gospel and accepts it, how can a just and loving God bless us rich American Christians when we have nice homes, cars, savings accounts, and sit on our duffs watching NFL football while millions of our fellow men, dying to hear the Gospel, are going to hell? How is a just and loving God going to bless us when we don't give every cent we have to missions and evangelism for the spreading of the Gospel? Clearly throughout Scripture God promises to bless His obedient saints with good health, peace and prosperity. Obviously, this perspective violates the character of God and is contrary to His relationship with His saints.

Obviously neither option is viable in the Arminian Gospel. The Arminian perspective that the Gospel is present tense and that the Gospel/man is the instrument of salvation, that man is responsible for saving other men's souls eternally or else they go to hell or are eternally saved, is an erroneous one. Men are not necessary to save other men's souls eternally. Free will is not primary. Neither man nor the Gospel is the present tense instrument of salvation. The Gospel is instead past tense. God saves eternally. The Gospel is the Good News announcing that the work of Jesus Christ has saved man
eternally (past tense). The Biblical Gospel thus focuses on the historical work of Jesus Christ as opposed to the pervasive modern day Gospel which is clearly humanistic.

It's a miracle that God saved any of us, not that He didn't save all of us. God built the entire eternal salvation bridge. God did not build half of the bridge through the work of Christ, and then require man to swim the other half in order to be saved. In fact, more are saved by God's saving them than are saved with man supposedly having to swim halfway to meet God of his own volition (free will). Missionaries to the bush have consistently discovered, more times than not to their surprise, that "primitives" who have never seen or heard the Gospel presented by man before, already have "eternity in their hearts." Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and His angelic realm have already revealed themselves to these primitives before a missionary ever brought them the Gospel, the Holy Spirit prepared them for the Gospel. They have been "saved" eternally and quickened. This is clearly recorded in missionary history.

So why take men to the Gospel at all? When we present the Gospel, God the Holy Spirit uses it to awaken His elect/chose/foreordained/called/predestined to the reality (past tense) of their eternal salvation so they can then become active in God's army in time on earth, producing fruit and good works. This perspective should set Calvinists on fire preaching the Gospel. After all, it's lonely out there in today's lost world.

We never know whom God has elected, so we preach the Gospel to all. We should be preaching the Gospel to everyone so that God the Holy Spirit can quicken the eternally redeemed human spirit in time here on earth so he can join us for the work that God has created and called us to do. After all, the more workers, the greater the fellowship, the greater the fruit. Also, the greater is the individual corporate peace and prosperity across the earth commensurate with the spreading and application of the Gospel. Secular religious and economic studies have demonstrated that the per capita income of Protestant cultures is six to seven times that of Catholic cultures, and that the per capita income of the Christian community overall versus that of the non-Christian community is a slam dunk win for the Christians! Religion does come down to economics, as faith comes down to works.

One final thought on Christian evangelism. We know that the wages of sin are death. Therefore, over time, those who consistently sin (and their offspring) will die, both in time and eternally. The darkness in them does them in. We have seen this historically, such as during the time of "The Great Sacrilege," when Henry VII and his knights, nobles and coconspirators seized the church's lands and properties, putting the orphans, indigent, widows and poor out in the streets. Less than 150 years later, all of the descendants of the perpetrators of this sacrilege were dead. Their lines were cut off. This applies today to homosexuals, who die on average at age 41, not to mention the AIDS plague. This means, logically, the longer history continues, the more elect there are running around to be awakened. The sinful have died or are dying. Let's preach the Gospel!

We are going through a time in human history now when God clearly is separating the wheat from the chaff, the sheep from the goats (and wolves), the saved from the unsaved. And while the evil rule for a season, they are becoming a dwindling, dying minority. Perhaps this is their last gasp. This means the fields are ripe to be harvested by us.

It's time for Calvinist Christians to become evangelical reapers! Let's awaken our army to a call to arms. We, by presenting the Gospel, may serve as the catalyst by which God the Holy Spirit quickens awakens a member of His elect to the reality of his salvation so he can join us. Thereby our numbers increase and for what purpose? For producing fruit and works! Isn't this the essence of "reconstruction"?

We build the kingdom of God from the bottom up, beginning with the evangelism of the individual, then the family, building the church, the schools, the community, the state, the nation, occupying in the world, Basically, as goes the individual human heart, eventually so goes the world, (Christianity on earth is bottom up. Paganism is top down.) Moving out with the balanced perspective of (masculine) dominion and (feminine) stewardship, Christians thereby subdue the earth. What a tremendous basis of hope, What an incredible call to action. Our God is a God of power and absolute victory.


Pastor Ovid Need jr.