

The Impotency of Man's Will

THE IMPOTENCY OF THE HUMAN WILL

Does it lie within the province of man's will to accept or reject the Lord Jesus as Saviour? Granted that the Gospel is preached to the sinner, that the Holy Spirit convicts him of his lost condition, does it, in the final analysis, lie within the power of his own will to resist or yield himself up to God? The answer to this question defines our conception of human depravity. That man is a fallen creature all professing Christians will allow, but what many of them mean by "fallen" is often difficult to determine. The general impression seems to be that man is now mortal, that he is no longer in the condition in which he left the hands of his Creator, that he is liable to disease, that he inherits evil tendencies; but, that if he employs his powers to the best of his ability, somehow he will be happy at last. O, how far short of the sad truth! Infirmities, sickness, even corporeal death, are but trifles in comparison with the moral and spiritual effects of the Fall! It is only by consulting the Holy Scriptures that we are able to obtain some conception of the extent of that terrible calamity.

When we say that man is totally depraved, we mean that the entrance of sin into the human constitution has affected every part and faculty of man's being. Total depravity means that man is, in spirit and soul and body, the slave of sin and the captive of the Devil — walking "according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph. 2:2). This statement ought not to need arguing: it is a common fact of human experience. Man is unable to realize his own aspirations and materialize his own ideals. He cannot do the things that he would. There is moral inability which paralyzes him. This is proof positive that he is no free man, but instead, the slave of sin and Satan. "Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts (desires) of your father ye will do." (John 8:44). Sin is more than an act or a series of acts; it is a man's make-up. It has blinded the understanding, corrupted the heart, and alienated the mind from God. And the will has not escaped. The will is under the dominion of sin and Satan. Therefore, the will is not free. In short, the affections love as they do and the will chooses as it does because of the state of the heart, and because the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked "There is none that seeketh after God" (Rom. 3:11).

Arthur Pink

What man does cannot change what God has done. What man thinks cannot change what God knows! What man says cannot change what God has said! What man determines cannot change what God has decreed! What man wills cannot change what God has wrought! "The Lord of hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it?" (Isa. 14:27)

Gary Shepard

CHRIST SHALL HAVE HIS OWN

I do not come into this pulpit hoping that perhaps somebody will of his own free will return to Christ. My hope lies in another quarter. I hope that my Master will lay hold of some of them and say, "You are mine, and you shall be mine. I claim you for myself." My hope arises from the freeness of grace, and not from the freedom of the will. A poor haul of fish will any gospel fisherman make if he takes none but those who are eager to leap into the net. Oh, for five minutes of the great Shepherd's handiwork!

Charles H. Spurgeon