



## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?

Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?, on: 2007/7/6 4:56

### Regeneration:

- Is regeneration "gracious ability" or obedience to "gracious illumination"?
- Is regeneration forced or voluntary; is it by causation or by influence?
- Is regeneration the reception of a new faculty or the proper use of an existing faculty?

### WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is **profitable for doctrine**, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness." 2Tim 3:16

I propose that the bible nowhere says that regeneration consist in the reception of a new faculty, (freewill) neither in the healing of a broken faculty, (freewill), but regeneration is synonymous with conversion – cleansing – washing – renewing, which is the proper usage of the already existing freewill, which proper use the Spirit of God brings about, not by force or causation, but by the influence of the truth upon the mind of man, and when the will yields to, submits to, and obeys, the revelation of the Spirit perceived by the mind, then a sinner is regenerated/converted.

#### 1. Regeneration by the Holy Ghost through the means of Revelation:

"And ye shall **know the truth**, and the truth shall make you **free**." John 8:32

"Who will have all men to be **saved**, and to come unto the **knowledge of the truth**." 1Tim 2:4

"And be **renewed** in the Spirit of your **mind**." Eph 4:23

"And have put on the new man, which is **renewed in knowledge** after the image of him that created him." Col 3:10

"According to his mercy he saved us, by the **washing of regeneration**, and the **renewing of the Holy Ghost**" Titus 3:5

"**Grace and peace** be multiplied unto you through the **knowledge** of God, and of Jesus our Lord." 2Peter 1:2

2. Because regeneration, or conversion, is brought about by the influential means of the illumination or enlightening of the Holy Ghost, who reveals truth to man's mind which man's freewill ought to submit to, the Spirit is striving with all men, convicting (or convincing) their mind of the truth, bringing to their attention afresh the truth which their own reason and conscience cannot deny:

"And when he is come, he will **reprove** the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." John 16:8

3. In evangelism, seeking the regeneration/conversion of sinners, we are to work hand in hand with the Holy Ghost in a synergistic relationship for the salvation of others:

“I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.” 1Cor 3:6

“For we are **laborers together with God**: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” 1Cor 3:9

**4.** In such a synergetic relationship, we are to preach sin, self-control, and judgment to come, teaching all of the commandments of God, as the Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come:

“Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.**” Matthew 28:19-20

“And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days **reasoned** with them out of the Scriptures.” Acts 17:2

“And he **reasoned** in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.” Acts 18:4

“And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and **reasoned** with the Jews.” Acts 18:19

“And as he **reasoned** of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled.” Acts 24:25

**5.** This regeneration by revelation is a gracious act of God, so regeneration occurs always and only with “gracious illumination”. Regeneration is not the impartation of “Gracious ability”, for freewill already exists in all moral agents, but rather regeneration is the conversion of the heart brought about by “gracious illumination”:

“For the **grace** of God that **bringeth salvation** hath appeared to all men, **teaching us** that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” Titus 2:11-12

**6.** The sin-servant hood of sinners is not the absence of freewill, but is a voluntary yielding of freewill to their own selfish desires, so sinners are willful servants of sin. Willfulness precedes the servant hood, (for what a man obeys a man is serving, obeying = serving), so that the willfulness causes sin as opposed to the servant hood causing sin.

“Jesus answered them, verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever **commits sin** is the **servant of sin.**” John 8:34

“Know ye not, that to **whom you yield yourselves servants to obey**, his **servant you are to whom you obey**; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” Rom 6:16

**7.** Sinners are also in the bondage of willful self deception, of voluntary ignorance, and therefore must be freed by the knowledge of the truth (the truth shall set you free):

“Because that, when **they knew God**, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but **became vain in their imaginations**, and their **foolish heart was darkened.**” Rom 1:21

“Having the **understanding darkened**, being alienated from the life of God through the **ignorance** that is in them, because of the **blindness of their heart.**” Eph 4:18

“Unto them that are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their **mind and conscience is defiled.**” Titus 1:15

**8.** The Holy Spirit uses the means of revelation to bring about regeneration/conversion, and those who obey the revelation of the Spirit, out of their freewill, are thereby regenerated/converted,

“But God be thanked, that you were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed from the heart** that form of **doctrine** which was delivered unto you.” Romans 6:17

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always **obeyed**, not as in presence only, but now much more in my absence, **work out your own salvation** with fear and trembling.” Php 2:12

**9.** But those who obey not the gospel are condemned.

“But unto them that are contentious, and **do not obey the truth**, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.” Romans 2:8

“But they have not all **obeyed the gospel**. For Isaiah said, Lord, who has believed our report?” Romans 10:16

“O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should **not obey the truth**?” Gal 3:1

“You did run well; who did hinder you that you should **not obey the truth**?” Gal 5:7

“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that **obey not the gospel** of our Lord Jesus Christ” 2Thes 1:8

“For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if the first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that **obey not the gospel of God**?” 1Pet 4:17

And so regeneration/conversion is never a forced change, but is always a voluntary change, which in essence consists in the cleansing of the heart - in a changing of the inner man - which is a radical change of man's freewill from evil to righteousness.

The Spirit of God regenerates men, not by force of causation, not by giving them some new faculty or repairing an old one, but the Spirit of God regenerates men by illuminating their minds, convicting their hearts, and thus influencing their wills to voluntarily be converted unto God.

**Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary? - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/7/6 5:17**

Jesse,

Why "Forced or Voluntary" and not "Inevitable or Optional"? The former implies **an accusation cruelty to a God who forces Himself on another vs the freedom to choose our own way**, while the latter **points to a God who chooses vs freedom to choose our own way**. The former shames God and deifies man, while the latter glorifies God and shames man.

If the former were true, then I can see why you reject all notion of predestination, as it presents the Sovereignty of God as dictatorial, rather than loving.

My two cents...

## Scriptures and Doctrine :: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?

**Re:, on: 2007/7/6 6:14**

If God wants everyone to be saved, and regeneration/conversion is inevitable, why isn't everyone regenerated/converted ?

The whole idea of an unavoidable salvation seems to leave room for either:

1. A God who doesn't love everyone, but makes the salvation of some unavoidable and the condemnation of others unavoidable
2. A God who loves everyone and therefore makes the salvation of everyone unavoidable - Universalism

To escape both of those traps, I wrote the original post.

**Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary? - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2007/7/6 9:31**

Quote:  
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The Spirit of God regenerates men, not by force of causation, not by giving them some new faculty or repairing an old one, but the Spirit of God regenerates men by illuminating their minds, convicting their hearts, and thus influencing their wills to voluntarily be converted unto God.

If regeneration allows someone to know, experience and testify of God's reality when he has no voluntary means of doing so in the first place, what reason then should there be for a regenerate man to reject the gospel if the spirit of God has truly convicted him of the gravity behind it's concern?

**Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary? - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2007/7/6 11:17**

Quote:  
-----I propose that the bible nowhere says that regeneration consist in the reception of a new faculty, (freewill) neither in the healing of a broken faculty, (freewill), but regeneration is synonymous with conversion &#8211; cleansing &#8211; washing &#8211; renewing, which is the proper usage of the already existing freewill, which proper use the Spirit of God brings about, not by force or causation, but by the influence of the truth upon the mind of man, and when the will yields to, submits to, and obeys, the revelation of the Spirit perceived by the mind, then a sinner is regenerated/converted.

I don't believe that conversion is synonymous with regeneration. Conversion involves the opening of men's eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light. It is man coming to see his utter need. Before God can regenerate a man he has to open his eyes to see his own corrupted heredity and that at the Cross Jesus provided the way for me to partake of His heredity. Then we can begin to understand what Jesus is talking about when He says we must be holy. Conversion is agreement with God's verdict on sin at the Cross.

Regeneration is receiving something from God, a precious gift, and we do need to be conscious of our need for this hence our eyes must be opened. The man who has been born again knows it because he has received a gift from God and not because of his own decision.

It is possible for eyes to be opened and yet not receive anything. I think this is the case for many in Christendom today. Many sign decision cards in churches but nothing has been received from God.

*To **open their eyes**, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, **that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.**(Act 26:18)*

In Christ,

Ron

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/6 11:55

The new birth is not synergistic at all. God does not need man to cooperate with Him to give the new birth, for it is like the wind, it happens where it will. Can man manufacture wind? Neither can he manufacture the new birth.

What is important in this discussion is to remember that God in no way forces anyone into regeneration. The Spirit of God changes the desires of the will/heart and suddenly the gospel seems logical, Christ is who He says He is, sin is what the Bible says it is, and this happens without any work of man.

In saying that because God loves people, He must save everyone, or give everyone a chance to be saved, one need but only look at the OT to see that many were outside of Israel, and far from the salvation they experienced. We cannot come to this discussion with humanistic ideologies of who or what God is. The facts are pretty straight forward, if God wanted all men everywhere to be saved, they would be, end of story.

God is the Creator, and as such He has absolute authority of His creation. He alone gives the new birth which allows faith. Consider the following verses-

John 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: *Now note what John says next about these ones mentioned above*

John 1:13 Which were **born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.**

And again,

Romans 9:15 For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

Romans 9:16 So then **it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.**

Romans 9:17 For the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. *Before anyone says, "but Pharaoh hardened his heart first", I suggest reading Exodus 7 and seeing what God says*

Romans 9:18 **Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.**

Now this is speaking of election, and some would argue that it is only speaking of elect nations, but then again, what are nations made of? People of course, and either way you are stuck with some people being elected, and others not being elected.

The Holy Spirit through Paul understands that man will not like this at all, and then poses the question-

Romans 9:19 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?

Or, how can this be fair, how can God find fault if He alone elects those who are saved, and those who are not? How can God punish those who are only acting according to how He has ordained? Then comes the answer, which completely puts man back in his place, and God in His.

Romans 9:20 Nay but, O man, **who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?**

**Romans 9:21 Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?**

The synergistic approach Jesse is putting forth, is nothing more than the Pelagian heresy of the by gone days. Man is dead and needs life, not just a little guidance to get onto the right path, or enough evidence to convince him he is wrong. Man needs life.

Now consider also would man come to God on his own volition if he could? If so, why don't all come then, it seems logical does it not that if men were a rational creature able to discern what is best for himself, he would choose life.

Sadly we know that unless God intervenes, man will be content to remain in death and sin, and no amount of preaching or bible reading will help that man, but only add to his condemnation as he has rejected much more light than others have.

Consider when Christ told the Pharisees, "search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have life. But they testify of me, and you will not come to me that you may have life." Of course we must compare Scripture with Scripture and ask, how does one come to Christ?

John 6:44 **No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:** and I will raise him up at the last day.

John 6:45 It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. **Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me.**

John 6:64 **But there are some of you that believe not.** For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believe not, and who should betray him.

John 6:65 And he said, **Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.**

The new birth is not something that man cooperates with, or manipulates. Thus in Scripture this work is referred to as the new birth, the new creation, and other phrases that show that man cannot do this.

How much involvement did you have in your natural birth? Did you get to choose your parents, or did God sovereignly choose them for you (for better or worse:-) )

This is a key doctrine to everything in the Christian walk. For if I must cooperate with God to be born, then I must cooperate with Him to live. Thus it becomes a very legal, and law-like relationship wherein I can boast of my wondrous obedience, and degrade those who "just don't get it".

However, if God alone births His Son in me by His Spirit, and He does not need my help to do so, then I can have all the confidence in the world that what He has begun, He is faithful to complete, and the relationship I have is one of sonship, and not law. It is a truly organic and living life, wherein I cannot boast for the grace I have received, and I cry out from my unworthiness, Amazing grace, how sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me, and I cannot hold others as fools for not understanding as their eyes are darkened at the moment, but God is still working.

One last look at Scripture for now

1Co 1:26 For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called:

1Co 1:27 But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;

1Co 1:28 And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are:

1Co 1:29 That no flesh should glory in his presence.

1Co 1:30 **But of him are ye in Christ Jesus**, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption:

1Co 1:31 That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.

This whole section is about the calling or election of God, and culminates with the grand statement, "of him are ye in Christ." Naturally we must ask, "of who?", and seeing as the passage has been speaking about God and His work in calling us, it is safe and proper to say, "of God are ye in Christ."

If what Jesse is saying were right, it would say this, "but of yourselves are ye in Christ, who by your choice has been made unto you..." Or

"but from your cooperation are ye in Christ"

But it says neither.

The first of many posts I am sure :-D

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?**

**Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/6 13:36**

Quote:  
-----Lazarus1719 wrote:  
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The whole idea of an unavoidable salvation seems to leave room for either:  
  
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2. A God who loves everyone and therefore makes the salvation of everyone unavoidable - Universalism  
  
To escape both of those traps, I wrote the original post.  
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3. A God who loves everyone and therefore makes the salvation available for everyone to choose, but not all choose salvation.

**Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/7/7 5:21**

Quote:  
-----  
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#3 is not **unavoidable salvation**, so why insert it?

**Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/7/7 5:25**

Quote:  
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roaringlamb wrote:  
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God is the Creator, and as such He has absolute authority of His creation. He alone gives the new birth which allows faith.  
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Way to save me alot of time typing stuff out ;-). Well put.

Scriptures and Doctrine :: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?

Re: - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2007/7/7 11:30

Quote:

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InTheLight wrote:

Quote:

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Regeneration is receiving something from God, a precious gift, and we do need to be conscious of our need for this hence our eyes must be opened. The man who has been born again knows it because he has received a gift from God and not because of his own decision.  
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I have started another thread in response to this post, entitled ([http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodethread&order0&topic\\_id17841&forum36&post\\_id139688&refreshGo](http://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodethread&order0&topic_id17841&forum36&post_id139688&refreshGo)) Regeneration: The Sovereign Prerogative of God

Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?, on: 2007/7/7 14:29

What Jesse is promoting is Pelegianism. This is bad.

Unregenerate man has no free will to "choose to obey" God. His will is bound by the Devil:

2 Timothy 2:24-26 And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, (25) In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; (26) And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, **who are taken captive by him at his will.**

*1 Cor. 2:14; "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."*

The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, and HE CAN NOT know them. Eyes to see and ears to hear is something granted by the supernatural revelation of the Spirit, and the ability to obey is a gift of grace. A carnal and unregenerate man cannot obey God unless God grants him the gift of faith with the ability to understand and obey. Regeneration most certainly involves receiving as a gift of grace the ABILITY to obey God by faith, otherwise, man can of his own free will only choose to be in slavery to Satan. "Unless a man is born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God". He has to be born again before he can see into the Kingdom to obey the King. And the new birth is a gift of God's grace.

*Joh 15:5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.*

Unless we are first regenerated and abiding in Christ, we can't bring forth any fruit of obedience to God. We have to be abiding in the True Vine. Without Him we CAN DO NOTHING.

Furthermore, scripture calls us children of wrath by nature (Eph 2:3). You might as well start hoping to see a leopard change his own spots or an Etheopian change the color of his own skin and have more hope of that happening than for a sinner to change his own nature:

Quote:

-----Jeremiah 13:23 Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do



evil.

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Scripture says that the unregenerate are blind and deaf to the things of God. You have better luck hoping for a blind man to open his own eyes or for a deaf man to start hearing by human effort than you have of hoping that a sinner can see and hear on his own power to obey the things of God. Christ has to give sight to the blind! Christ alone! The most the blind man can do is look pitifully helpless and lost as he cries out in desperation, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Scripture says we are dead in trespasses and sins. You might as well just as much hope to see Lazarus rise from the dead on his own power as you will see a sinner be born again and choose to obey God on his own power. Only Christ can raise the dead! Christ alone!

Here's a couple quotes I find most true and applicable to refute the original post:

*Man's depravity, as a result of the Fall, is total. All men are born into this world spiritually dead, blind, and deaf to the things of God; the sinner's heart is desperately corrupt. His will is not free; it is in bondage to his evil nature. Therefore, he has lost his ability to choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. It takes more than the Spirit's assistance to bring the sinner to Christ - it takes regeneration by which the Spirit makes the sinner alive and gives him a new nature. Faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation - it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God. Psalm 51:5, 58:3; Isaiah 53:6, 64:6; Jeremiah 17:9; John 3:3, 8:44; Romans 3:10-12, 5:12; Ephesians 2:2-3; I Corinthians 2:14*

*"...if man is totally depraved, how is it that he can bring forth so many good things? This question is indeed valid but misrepresents what is meant when we talk about man as being rendered depraved by the fall. So what is meant, then, by the total depravity and spiritual inability of the natural man? It means that man's many good works, even though in accord with God's commands, are not well pleasing to God when weighed against His ultimate criteria and standard of perfection. The love of God and His law is not the unbelievers' deepest animating motive and principle (nor is it his motive at all), so it does not earn him the right to redemptive blessings from a holy God. The Scripture clearly implies this when it states "...without faith it is impossible to please Him." (Hebrews 11:6a, NASB) and "whatever is not from faith is sin." (Romans 14:23)*

**Re: on: 2007/7/7 23:49**

Josef, all of the Early Church Greek Fathers believed in freewill. For the first 5 centuries of the Church, freewill was a pillar of the faith, questioned only by the pagan philosophers of the day, which the Church Fathers fought viciously against. The Early Fathers even spoke of "self-election" believe it or not. But freewill is not pelagianism, freewill is an unquestioned doctrine of the Early Church and is even classical arminianism. Augustine was the first necessitarian to enter the Church, all the fathers before him were libertarians.

The early church declared the doctrine of synergy as orthodox and sound. I obviously do not believe in the Calvinistic doctrine of Monogism, not the Calvinistic notion that freewill has been lost.

I argue, just as the Early Church - John Fletcher - John Wesley - Charles Finney - argued, that without freewill there can be no moral character. Without the power of contrary choice, there can be no blameworthiness in doing wrong nor reward worthiness of doing right. Moral character is derived from voluntary choices only, and a voluntary choice must be an avoidable choice.

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Dead in sin does not speak about ability any more than dead to sin speaks of ability. If dead in sin means a sinner can't repent, then dead to sin means a Christian cannot sin. Dead is a reference to their voluntary moral condition, not their involuntary moral ability.

Men are most definitely born physically biased towards gratification, and with a fallen body because of Adam. But freewill is not a faculty of the body, but a faculty of the human personality. Even without the body, if man was totally in the spirit, man would still have a freewill.

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?**

Regeneration is totally the working of the Holy Spirit, with the cooperation of man. The Holy Spirit draws a man to repentance, convicting him of sin and of righteousness and of judgment to come, and the man yields himself up to God, and then God fills the man with the indwelling Holy Spirit.

I listed an abundance of scripture that list the relation of revelation to regeneration.

1. Where is there a scripture that says sinners have their wounded freewill repair, so that they can choose to be converted?
2. Where does the bible ever make a distinction between regeneration and conversion?

**Re:, on: 2007/7/8 2:29**

- If you deny freewill, you must admit involuntary/forced regeneration.

- If you admit involuntary/forced regeneration, then you must admit personal predestination and personal reprobation.

- If this is all admitted, the only way that you can account for the fact that not everyone is regenerated, is by admitting that God does not want to regenerate everyone, and therefore that God does not want everyone to repent and be converted.

A denial of freewill lays the foundation of Calvinism. And some may disagree with me, but that's a very dangerous and blasphemous thing, because it denies that God loves everyone and that God wants everyone to be saved.

You would have to say, because of the fact that not everyone is regenerated, that God loves only a small number of people, but actually hates the majority of the people he has created.

The only way you can acknowledge the fact that not everyone is regenerated, without denying the universal love of God, is by admitting that regeneration must be voluntary, that it's a work of the Spirit in changing a cooperating man.

**Re: - posted by intrcssr83 (), on: 2007/7/8 7:31**

Quote:

-----by Lazarus1719 on 2007/7/8 17:29:44

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You would have to say, because of the fact that not everyone is regenerated, that God loves only a small number of people, but actually hates the majority of the people he has created.

The only way you can acknowledge the fact that not everyone is regenerated, without denying the universal love of God, is by admitting that regeneration must be voluntary, that it's a work of the Spirit in changing a cooperating man.

-----

By any chance have you read Luther's The Bondage of the Will? It affirms what many call "calvinism" perhaps more so than Calvin's Institutes

Re:, on: 2007/7/8 7:34

I have not read Luthers writings on the will. I know Luther was a student of Augustine (Luther studied Augustines works) and Augustine in the 5th Century introduced the idea that man lost his freewill, when that was never taught by the Early Church Fathers, they were libertarians.

I have also read Edwards on the Will. Who is a necessitarian.

But the best book on FreeWill that I know of is Asa Mahan, who was a libertarian and an associate of Charles G. Finney.

Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/8 10:47

ooops!

Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/8 10:47

Quote:

-----Josef\_Urban wrote:

Unregenerate man has no free will to "choose to obey" God. His will is bound by the Devil:

Unregenerate man has no free will to "choose to obey" God. His will is bound by the Devil:

**2Timothy 2:24-26** Now a slave of the Lord must not be fighting, but be gentle toward all, apt to teach, bearing with evil, **25** with meekness training those who are antagonizing, seeing whether God may be giving them repentance to come into a realization of the truth, **26** and they will be sobering up out of the trap of the Adversary, **having been caught alive by him, for that one's will.**

seeing whether God may be giving them repentance to come into a realization of the truth;

Seeing whether God give them such a view of the error which they have embraced by instructing those that oppose, that they shall be willing to admit the truth of their way and repent.

**Rom 2:4** Or are you despising the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience, being ignorant that the kindness of **God is leading you to repentance?**

Here, repentance is not given as a gift as you imply, but one is lead to repentance. The way one is lead to repentance is by God revealing Himself through His spoken Word to a man by those who preach the Word to instruct with meekness those who are opposing.

This is done by showing the kindness and forbearance and patience of God. This revelation will fashion or build up a man to repent.

**2Corinth 7:10** For sorrow according to God is producing repentance for unregretted salvation, yet the sorrow of the world is producing death.

**2Timothy 2:26** And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are **taken captive** by him at his will.

This same saying, " taken captive" is the same as **Luk 5:10** And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from now on you shall **catch men.**

Therefore, it is by revealing God in preaching His word to instruct with meekness those who are opposing.

If one chooses to sin, one chooses to repent.

**1 Corinth 2:14** But the natural man receives not the **things of the Spirit of God**: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. Though the natural man receives not the **things of the Spirit of God** the natural man is able to receive **the things of God** being clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse **Rom 1:20**

Quote:

-----Josef\_Urban wrote:

A carnal and unregenerate man cannot obey God unless God grants him the **gift of faith** with the ability to understand and obey.

-----  
Please explain what a "gift of believe" is.

Faith is belief & belief is faith, all depends Who or what one has faith in or on **or** Who or what one believes in or on.

All men are able/capable to believe, therefore, faith is an inherent concept in his mind.

Quote:  
-----Josef\_Urban wrote:  
Regeneration most certainly involves receiving as a gift of grace the ABILITY to obey God by faith, otherwise, man can of his own free will only choose to be in slavery to Satan.

-----  
if regeneration is not salvation, you have unsaved people pleasing God by having faith in God to obey Him as you just said in that quote.  
However, since regeneration is salvation its self, it involves the ABILITY to obey God by faith.  
Furthermore, if regeneration is not salvation, there is millions of born agains unsaved people out there in limbo. What is the time period between regeneration and salvation? month? day? certainly one needs time to count the cost(Luke 14:28-32).  
Now, the ABILITY to fully obey God comes from the love for Him, it is not a "gift of grace the ABILITY".

If man can of his own free will only choose to be in slavery to Satan, then man can of his own free will may also choose to respond to God.

Quote:  
-----Josef\_Urban wrote:  
Furthermore, scripture calls us children of wrath by nature (Eph 2:3). You might as well start hoping to see a leopard change his own spots or an Ethiopian change the color of his own skin and have more hope of that happening than for a sinner to change his own nature:

-----  
How ever, man is not born a child of wrath, because infants don not fulfill the desires of the flesh and of the mind;(Eph 2:3)

Quote:  
-----Josef\_Urban wrote:  
Man's depravity, as a result of the Fall, is total. All men are born into this world spiritually dead,

-----  
Is not total, for even Paul admitted before he was saved that he delighted in the requirements of God according to his **true self**(Rom 7:22)  
and  
The different set of requirements which were in his members, wared against the standard of his moral conscience(Rom 7:23).  
Therefore, if he still had a standard of moral conscience and his inward man delighted in the law of God, there is no such thing as "total depravity"  
Furthermore, Man can not be born into this world spiritually dead, because spiritually death is the penalty of ones own sin. Man is born into this world innocent of sin.

**Re:, on: 2007/7/8 17:08**

Quote:  
-----Josef, all of the Early Church Greek Fathers believed in freewill. For the first 5 centuries of the Church, freewill was a pillar of the faith, questioned only by the pagan philosophers of the day, which the Church Fathers fought viciously against. The Early Fathers even spoke of "self-election" believe it or not. But freewill is not pelagianism, freewill is an unquestioned doctrine of the Early Church and is even classical arminianism. Augustine was the first necessitarian to enter the Church, all the fathers before him were libertarians.

-----  
Don't get me wrong, Jesse. I believe man has a free will. That's undeniable. I never said he didn't. And I never said that man is not personally guilty for sin, because I still hold he is far more guilty than even you make him out to be. The thing I'm saying is that the free will of man is so Hell-bent toward sin and self-destruction as a result of sin entering in and corrupting.

upting his heart that apart from the divine influence of the grace of God, that man will choose to do nothing by his own free will except sin and reject God. Man can of his own free will choose to do nothing except earn himself a deeper crevice in the pits of hell except grace open his eyes and convert him. That self-will has to be broken and utterly crushed if he is to come to the end of self and get truly converted.

As to this "self-election" nonsense, I see no such thing in scripture. Scripture, Jesse, scripture. Not ex-pagan Greek theologians, philosophers and apologists that formed much of their doctrine on free-will based on the controversies they were having with heathen philosophers (and don't get me wrong, most of the church fathers were extraordinary men of God -I study their works myself- but they certainly weren't infallible). If what they say don't line up with scripture, it must be rejected. The same with Finney and Wesley too, even though they were mightily used of God.

This one verse utterly destroys your whole theology:

**1Pe 1:2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.**

1. It speaks of election according to God's sovereign and unchanging foreknowledge, not according to man's self-will. This utterly demolishes your "self-election" doctrines to powder. And this verse can be cross-referenced to MANY such scriptures that say the same, proving I am keeping it's context in truth.

2. It says "Through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience..." Signifying we must be born again and regenerated by the Holy Spirit before we can follow God "unto obedience". The Spirit comes first, then obedience comes as a result. Unregenerate man cannot obey God. All he can do is sin, sin, sin! The best of his good deeds are but filthy rags! He must be born again, saved by grace through faith, and that not of himself, it is the gift of God.

Joh 1:12 But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:

Joh 1:13 Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

By the way, I've not ever read a single work of either Augustine, Luther, or Calvin. I don't even agree with or endorse these guys according to my knowledge. My doctrine I get from the Word of God.

And "Logic", dear friend, it appears you are terribly misunderstanding me. Please go back and read my original post. -And yes, regeneration and salvation occur simultaneously in a true convert, just to clarify.

**Re:, on: 2007/7/8 21:17**

Quote:  
-----Don't get me wrong, Jesse. I believe man has a free will. That's undeniable. I never said he didn't. And I never said that man is not personally guilty for sin, because I still hold he is far more guilty than even you make him out to be. The thing I'm saying is that the free will of man is so Hell-bent toward sin and self-destruction as a result of sin entering in and corrupting his heart that apart from the divine influence of the grace of God, that man will choose to do nothing by his own free will except sin and reject God. Man can of his own free will choose to do nothing except earn himself a deeper crevice in the pits of hell except grace open his eyes and convert him. That self-will has to be broken and utterly crushed if he is to come to the end of self and get truly converted.

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By the way, I've not ever read a single work of either Augustine, Luther, or Calvin. I don't even agree with or endorse these guys according to my knowledge. My doctrine I get from the Word of God.

amen.

**Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?, on: 2007/7/8 22:37**

9. But those who obey not the gospel are condemned

But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath.Â”  
Romans 2:8

Â”But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah said, Lord, who has believed our report?Â” Romans 10:16

Â”O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, that you should not obey the truth?Â” Gal 3:1

Â”You did run well; who did hinder you that you should not obey the truth?Â” Gal 5:7

Â”In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ?Â”  
2Thes 1:8

Â”For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if the first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?Â” 1Pet 4:17

Quote:

-----9. But those who obey not the gospel are condemned  
-----

Jesse,

I completely agree with you on this point. In order for any man or woman to avoid the wrath of God, he or she must obey (clearly, an act of the will) the Gospel. For clarification though, my question(s) to you is/ are:

What is the Gospel that is to be obeyed? and,

Why does man even need a Gospel in the first place?

Mahoney

**Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?, on: 2007/7/10 10:55**

RE: Topic theme

Lazarus,

May I inquire where you got this printing on the subject matter?

I am writing a paper in response to it but want to know that I am reading it correctly.

Thanks,

**Scriptures and Doctrine :: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary?**

Orm

**Re:, on: 2007/7/10 11:06**

Quote:

-----  
Lazarus1719 wrote:

A denial of freewill lays the foundation of Calvinism. And some may disagree with me, but that's a very dangerous and blasphemous thing,  
-----

True--- Amen.

Quote:

-----because it denies that God loves everyone and that God wants everyone to be saved.  
-----

God doesn't love everyone. Remember, Jacob He loved. Who does Esau, in this, represent. Why did God hate Esau except Esau, in so many words, hated Him? Conversely, who does Jacob represent except the Spiritual seed of Abraham ---- in whom the elect of God are to be "begotten again" because of their love to Him.

However, having said that, it doesn't take away from the fact that God stills desires everyone to come into the knowledge of Him unto salvation.

**Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/7/10 12:18**

Quote:

-----  
Ormly wrote:

RE: Topic theme

Lazarus,

May I inquire where you got this printing on the subject matter?

I am writing a paper in response to it but want to know that I am reading it correctly.

Thanks,

Orm  
-----

Hello,

I'm fairly sure he wrote it himself.

**Re:, on: 2007/7/10 12:50**

Quote:

-----  
PreachParsly wrote:

Quote:

-----  
Ormly wrote:

RE: Topic theme

Lazarus,

May I inquire where you got this printing on the subject matter?

I am writing a paper in response to it but want to know that I am reading it correctly.

Thanks,

Orm  
-----

Hello,

I'm fairly sure he wrote it himself.  
-----

Thanks Preach. That gives some direction to my thinking.

Orm

**Re:, on: 2007/7/12 0:05**

### **The Doctrine of Synergy**

God saves man, by influencing man's freewill with truth, and man voluntary obeys the gospel.

#### **NEW HEART**

- God says He gives man a new heart:

Eze 36:26 - A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

- God commands man to make his own new heart:

Eze 18:31 - Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?

#### **RECONCILIATION:**

- God reconciles the world unto Himself:

2Co 5:19 - To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself

- God commands men to reconcile themselves unto God:

2Co 5:20 - God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

#### **BEING SAVED:**

- Jesus saves men:

Mt 1:21 - JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

- God commands men to save themselves:

Ac 2:40 - And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

#### **PURIFICATION**



- God purifies men through revelation:

Eph 5:26 - That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

- Men purify themselves through obedience to revelation:

1Pe 1:22 - Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth

-----

All of these scriptures simply go to prove the biblical doctrine of synergism, and are utterly opposed to a calvinistic monergism. God calls men, convicts men, pleads with men, all to influence their freewills to voluntarily surrender their lives to him, so that they give their hearts voluntarily to Jesus Christ.

A great theological lecture by Finney is on "Regeneration" where he plainly lays out the scriptural synergetic regeneration:

<http://truthinheart.com/EarlyOberlinCD/CD/Finney/Theology/st42.htm>

**Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary? - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/7/12 4:00**

Quote:

-----regeneration is synonymous with conversion

-----

Can you justify this statement?

**Re:, on: 2007/7/12 4:26**

Regeneration is described as a "washing": Tit 3:5

Nowhere in scripture is it described as the reception of a new faculty (freewill) or the repairing of a broken faculty (freewill). Regeneration is not when the incapable become capable, at least I cannot draw that from any scripture.

But regeneration is a washing from sin, it is a new birth. And that is precisely what conversion is, a turning from sin, being born again.

If regeneration preceding conversion, then there is a time period when there is a man who is regenerated but is not yet converted. But does the bible ever describe an regenerate man was unconverted? No. A man who is regenerated is a man who is converted, because regeneration and conversion are identical.

Finney explains how regeneration and conversion are synonymous in this message: <http://truthinheart.com/EarlyOberlinCD/CD/Finney/Theology/st42.htm>

**Re:, on: 2007/7/12 4:34**

I thought it would be good to post this whole lecture. As many of you know, Finney was an anointed preacher used of God to convert hundreds of thousands of souls, the majority of which persevered in the faith until the end of their lives.

## LECTURE XLII. REGENERATION

Professor Charles G. Finney

In the examination of this subject I will--

- I. POINT OUT THE COMMON DISTINCTION BETWEEN REGENERATION AND CONVERSION.
- II. STATE THE ASSIGNED REASONS FOR THIS DISTINCTION.
- III. STATE OBJECTIONS TO THIS DISTINCTION.
- IV. SHOW WHAT REGENERATION IS NOT.
- V. WHAT IT IS.
- VI. ITS UNIVERSAL NECESSITY.
- VII. AGENCIES EMPLOYED IN IT.
- VIII. INSTRUMENTALITIES EMPLOYED IN IT.
- IX. THAT IN REGENERATION THE SUBJECT IS BOTH ACTIVE AND PASSIVE.
- X. WHAT IS IMPLIED IN REGENERATION.
- XI. PHILOSOPHICAL THEORIES OF REGENERATION.
- XII. EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

I. I am to point out the common distinction between regeneration and conversion.

1. Regeneration is the term used by some theologians to express the divine agency in changing the heart.

2. With them regeneration does not include and imply the activity of the subject, but rather excludes it. These theologians, as will be seen in its place, hold that a change of heart is first effected by the Holy Spirit while the subject is passive, which change lays a foundation for the exercise, by the subject, of repentance, faith, and love.

3. The term conversion with them expresses the activity and turning of the subject, after regeneration is effected by the Holy Spirit. Conversion with them does not include or imply the agency of the Holy Spirit, but expresses only the activity of the subject. With them the Holy Spirit first regenerates or changes the heart, after which the sinner turns or converts himself. So that God and the subject work each in turn. God first changes the heart, and as a consequence, the subject afterwards converts himself or turns to God. Thus the subject is passive in regeneration, but active in conversion.

When we come to the examination of the philosophical theories of regeneration, we shall see that the views of these theologians respecting regeneration result naturally and necessarily from their holding the dogma of constitutional moral depravity, which we have recently examined. Until their views on that subject are corrected, no change can be expected in their views of this subject. I said in a concluding remark, when upon the subject of moral depravity, that erroneous views upon that subject must necessarily materially affect and modify one's views upon most of the questions in practical theology. Let us bear this remark in mind as we proceed, not only in the discussions immediately before us, but also in all our future investigations, that we may duly appreciate the importance of clear and correct views on the subject of practical theology.

II. I am to state the assigned reasons for this distinction.

1. The original term plainly expresses and implies other than the agency of the subject.

2. We need and must adopt a term that will express the Divine agency.

3. Regeneration is expressly ascribed to the Holy Spirit.

4. Conversion, as it implies and expresses the activity and turning of the subject, does not include and imply any Divine agency, and therefore does not imply or express what is intended by regeneration.

5. As two agencies are actually employed in the regeneration and conversion of a sinner, it is necessary to adopt terms that will clearly teach this fact, and clearly distinguish between the agency of God and of the creature.

6. The terms regeneration and conversion aptly express this distinction, and therefore should be theologically employed.

III. I am to state the objections to this distinction.

1. The original term *gennao*, with its derivatives, may be rendered, (1.) To beget. (2.) To bear or bring forth. (3.) To be begotten. (4.) To be born, or brought forth.

2. Regeneration is in the Bible the same as the new birth.

3. To be born again is the same thing in the Bible use of the term, as to have a new heart, to be a new creature, to pass from death unto life. In other words, to be born again is to have a new moral character, to become holy. To regenerate is to make holy. To be born of God, no doubt, expresses and includes the Divine agency, but it also includes and expresses that which the Divine agency is employed in effecting, namely, making the sinner holy. Certainly, a sinner is not regenerated whose moral character is unchanged. If he were, how could it be truly said, that whosoever is born of God overcometh the world, doth not commit sin, cannot sin, &c.? If regeneration does not imply and include a change of moral character in the subject, how can regeneration be made the condition of salvation? The fact is, the term regeneration, or the being born of God, is designed to express primarily and principally the thing done, that is, the making of a sinner holy, and expresses also the fact, that God's agency induces the change. Throw out the idea of what is done, that is, the change of moral character in the subject, and he would not be born again, he would not be regenerated, and it could not be truly said, in such a case, that God had regenerated him.

It has been objected, that the term really means and expresses only the Divine agency; and only by way of implication, embraces the idea of a change of moral character and of course of activity in the subject. To this I reply--

(1.) That if it really expresses only the Divine agency, it leaves out of view the thing effected by Divine agency.

(2.) That it really and fully expresses not only the Divine agency, but also that which this agency accomplishes.

(3.) The thing which the agency of God brings about, is a new or spiritual birth, a resurrection from spiritual death, the inducing of a new and holy life. The thing done is the prominent idea expressed or intended by the term.

(4.) The thing done implies the turning or activity of the subject. It is nonsense to affirm that his moral character is changed without any activity or agency of his own. Passive holiness is impossible. Holiness is obedience to the law of God, the law of love, and of course consists in the activity of the creature.

(5.) We have said that regeneration is synonymous in the Bible with a new heart. But sinners are required to make to themselves a new heart, which they could not do, if they were not active in this change. If the work is a work of God, in such a sense, that He must first regenerate the heart or soul before the agency of the sinner begins, it were absurd and unjust to require him to make to himself a new heart, until he is first regenerated.

Regeneration is ascribed to man in the gospel, which it could not be, if the term were designed to express only the agency of the Holy Spirit. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel."--1 Cor. iv. 15.

(6.) Conversion is spoken of in the Bible as the work of another than the subject of it, and cannot therefore have been designed to express only the activity of the subject of it. (1.) It is ascribed to the word of God.--"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple."--Ps. xix. 7. (2.) To man. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."--James v. 19, 20.

(7.) Both conversion and regeneration are sometimes in the Bible ascribed to God, sometimes to man, and sometimes to the subject; which shows clearly that the distinction under examination is arbitrary and theological, rather than biblical.

(8.) The fact is, that both terms imply the simultaneous exercise of both human and Divine agency. The fact that a new heart is the thing done, demonstrates the activity of the subject; and the word regeneration, or the expression "born of the Holy Spirit," asserts the Divine agency. The same is true of conversion, or the turning the sinner to God. God is said to turn him, and he is said to turn himself. God draws him, and he follows. In both alike God and man are both active, and their activity is simultaneous. God works or draws, and the sinner yields or turns, or which is the same thing, changes his heart, or, in other words, is born again. The sinner is dead in trespasses and sins. God calls on him, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Eph. v. 14. God calls; the sinner hears and answers, Here am I. God says, Arise from the dead. The sinner puts forth his activity, and God draws him into life; or rather, God draws, and the sinner comes forth to life.

(9.) The distinction set up is not only not recognized in the Bible, but is plainly of most injurious tendency, for two reasons:--

(i.) It assumes and inculcates a false philosophy of depravity and regeneration.

(ii.) It leads the sinner to wait to be regenerated, before he repents or turns to God. It is of most fatal tendency to represent the sinner as under a necessity of waiting to be passively regenerated, before he gives himself to God.

As the distinction is not only arbitrary, but anti-scriptural and injurious, and inasmuch as it is founded in, and is designed to teach, a philosophy false and pernicious on the subject of depravity and regeneration, I shall drop and discard the distinction; and in our investigations henceforth, let it be understood, that I use regeneration and conversion as synonymous terms.

IV. I am to show what regeneration is not.

It is not a change in the substance of soul or body. If it were, sinners could not be required to effect it. Such a change would not constitute a change of moral character. No such change is needed, as the sinner has all the faculties and natural attributes requisite to render perfect obedience to God. All he needs is to be induced to use these powers and attributes as he ought. The words conversion and regeneration do not imply any change of substance, but only a change of moral state or of moral character. The terms are not used to express a physical, but a moral change. Regeneration does not express or imply the creation of any new faculties or attributes of nature, nor any change whatever in the constitution of body or mind. I shall remark further upon this point when we come to the examination of the philosophical theories of regeneration before alluded to.

V. What regeneration is.

It has been said that regeneration and a change of heart are identical. It is important to inquire into the scriptural use of the term heart. The term, like most others, is used in the Bible in various senses. The heart is often spoken of in the Bible, not only as possessing moral character, but as being the source of moral action, or as the fountain from which good and evil actions flow, and of course as constituting the fountain of holiness or of sin, or, in other words still, as comprehending, strictly speaking, the whole of moral character. "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."--Matt. xv. 18, 19. "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."--Matt. xii. 34, 35. When the heart is thus represented as possessing moral character, and as the fountain of good and evil, it cannot mean,--

1. The bodily organ that propels the blood.

2. It cannot mean the substance of the soul or mind itself: substance cannot in itself possess moral character.

3. It is not any faculty or natural attribute.

4. It cannot consist in any constitutional taste, relish, or appetite, for these cannot in themselves have moral character

5. It is not the sensibility or feeling faculty of the mind: for we have seen, that moral character cannot be predicated of it. It is true, and let it be understood, that the term heart is used in the Bible in these senses, but not when the heart is sp

oken of as the fountain of moral action. When the heart is represented as possessing moral character, the word cannot be meant to designate any involuntary state of mind. For neither the substance of soul or body, nor any involuntary state of mind can, by any possibility, possess moral character in itself. The very idea of moral character implies, and suggests the idea of, a free action or intention. To deny this, were to deny a first truth.

6. This term heart, when applied to mind, is figurative, and means something in the mind that has some point of resemblance to the bodily organ of that name, and a consideration of the function of the bodily organ will suggest the true idea of the heart of the mind. The heart of the body propels the vital current, and sustains organic life. It is the fountain from which the vital fluid flows, from which either life or death may flow, according to the state of the blood. The mind as well as the body has a heart which, as we have seen, is represented as a fountain, or as an efficient propelling influence, out of which flows good or evil, according as the heart is good or evil. This heart is represented, not only as the source or fountain of good and evil, but as being either good or evil in itself, as constituting the character of man, and not merely as being capable of moral character.

It is also represented as something over which we have control, for which we are responsible, and which, in case it is wicked, we are bound to change on pain of death. Again: the heart, in the sense in which we are considering it, is that, the radical change of which constitutes a radical change of moral character. This is plain from Matthew xii. 34, 35, and xv. 18, 19, already considered.

7. Our own consciousness, then, must inform us that the heart of the mind that possesses these characteristics, can be nothing else than the supreme ultimate intention of the soul. Regeneration is represented in the Bible as constituting a radical change of character, as the resurrection from a death in sin, as the beginning of a new and spiritual life, as constituting a new creature, as a new creation, not a physical, but a moral or spiritual creation, as conversion, or turning to God, as giving God the heart, as loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Now we have seen abundantly, that moral character belongs to, or is an attribute of, the ultimate choice or intention of the soul.

Regeneration then is a radical change of the ultimate intention, and, of course, of the end or object of life. We have seen, that the choice of an end is efficient in producing executive volitions, or the use of means to obtain its end. A selfish ultimate choice is, therefore, a wicked heart, out of which flows every evil; and a benevolent ultimate choice is a good heart, out of which flows every good and commendable deed.

Regeneration, to have the characteristics ascribed to it in the Bible, must consist in a change in the attitude of the will, or a change in its ultimate choice, intention, or preference; a change from selfishness to benevolence; from choosing self-gratification as the supreme and ultimate end of life to the supreme and ultimate choice of the highest well-being of God and of the universe; from a state of entire consecration to self-interest, self-indulgence, self-gratification for its own sake or as an end, and as the supreme end of life, to a state of entire consecration to God, and to the interests of his kingdom as the supreme and ultimate end of life.

#### VI. The universal necessity of regeneration.

1. The necessity of regeneration as a condition of salvation must be co-extensive with moral depravity. This has been shown to be universal among the unregenerate moral agents of our race. It surely is impossible, that a world or a universe of unholy or selfish beings should be happy. It is impossible that heaven should be made up of selfish beings. It is intuitively certain, that without benevolence or holiness no moral being can be ultimately happy. Without regeneration, a selfish soul can by no possibility be fitted either for the employments, or for the enjoyments, of heaven.

2. The scriptures expressly teach the universal necessity of regeneration. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."--John iii. 3. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature."--Gal. vi. 15.

#### VII. Agencies employed in regeneration.

1. The scriptures often ascribe regeneration to the Spirit of God. "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."--John iii. 5, 6. "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."--John i. 15.

2. We have seen that the subject is active in regeneration, that regeneration consists in the sinner changing his ultimate

ate choice, intention, preference; or in changing from selfishness to love or benevolence; or, in other words, in turning from the supreme choice of self-gratification, to the supreme love of God and the equal love of his neighbour. Of course the subject of regeneration must be an agent in the work.

3. There are generally other agents, one or more human beings concerned in persuading the sinner to turn. The Bible recognizes both the subject and the preacher as agents in the work. Thus Paul says: "I have begotten you through the gospel." Here the same word is used which is used in another case, where regeneration is ascribed to God.

Again: an apostle says, "Ye have purified your souls by obeying the truth." Here the work is ascribed to the subject. There are then always two, and generally more than two agents employed in effecting the work. Several theologians have held that regeneration is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. In proof of this they cite those passages that ascribe it to God. But I might just as lawfully insist that it is the work of man alone, and quote those passages that ascribe it to man, to substantiate my position. Or I might assert that it is alone the work of the subject, and in proof of this position quote those passages that ascribe it to the subject. Or again, I might assert that it is effected by the truth alone, and quote such passages as the following to substantiate my position: "Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures."--James i. 18. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."--1 Peter i. 23. The fact is, when Dr. Woods and others insist that regeneration is the work, or a work of God, they tell the truth, but not the whole truth. For it is also the work of man and of the subject. Their course is precisely like that of the Unitarian, who when he would prove that Christ is not God, merely proves that he was a man. Now we admit that he was a man, but we hold that he is more, that he is also God. Just so we hold that God is active in promoting regeneration, and we hold also that the subject always and necessarily is active in the work, and that generally some other human agency is employed in the work, in presenting and urging the claims of God.

It has been common to regard the third person as a mere instrument in the work. But the fact is, he is a willing, designing, responsible agent, as really so as God or the subject is.

If it be inquired how the Bible can consistently ascribe regeneration at one time to God, at another to the subject, at another to the truth, at another to a third person; the answer is to be sought in the nature of the work. The work accomplished is a change of choice, in respect to an end or the end of life. The sinner whose choice is changed, must of course act. The end to be chosen must be clearly and forcibly presented: this is the work of the third person, and of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit takes of the things of Christ and shows them to the soul. The truth is employed, or it is truth which must necessarily be employed, as an instrument to induce a change of choice. See this illustrated in Sermons on Important Subjects, Sermon I. on Regeneration.

#### VIII. Instrumentalities employed in the work.

1. Truth. This must, from the nature of regeneration, be employed in effecting it, for regeneration is nothing else than the will being duly influenced by truth.

2. There may be, and often are, many providences concerned in enlightening the mind, and in inducing regeneration. These are instrumentalities. They are means or instruments of presenting the truth. Mercies, judgments, men, measures, and in short all those things that conduce to enlightening the mind, are instrumentalities employed in effecting it.

Those who hold to physical or constitutional moral depravity must hold, of course, to constitutional regeneration; and, of course, consistency compels them to maintain that there is but one agent employed in regeneration, and that is the Holy Spirit, and that no instrument whatever is employed, because the work is, according to them, an act of creative power; that the very nature is changed, and of course no instrument can be employed, any more than in the creation of the world. These theologians have affirmed, over and over again, that regeneration is a miracle; that there is no tendency whatever in the gospel, however presented, and whether presented by God or man, to regenerate the heart. Dr. Griffin, in his Park Street Lectures, maintains that the gospel, in its natural and necessary tendency, creates and perpetuates only opposition to, and hatred of God, until the heart is changed by the Holy Spirit. He understands the carnal mind to be not a voluntary state, not a minding of the flesh, but the very nature and constitution of the mind; and that enmity against God is a part, attribute, or appetite of the nature itself. Consequently, he must deny the adaptability of the gospel to regenerate the soul. It has been proclaimed by this class of theologians, times without number, that there is no philosophical connection between the preaching of the gospel and the regeneration of sinners, no adaptedness in the gospel to produce that result; but, on the contrary, that it is adapted to produce an opposite result. The favourite illustrations of their views have been Ezekiel's prophesying over the dry bones, and Christ's restoring sight to the blind man by putting clay on his eyes. Ezekiel's prophesying over the dry bones had no tendency to quicken them, they say. And the clay used by the Savio

ur was calculated rather to destroy than to restore sight. This shows how easy it is for men to adopt a pernicious and absurd philosophy, and then find, or think they find, it supported by the Bible. What must be the effect of inculcating the dogma, that the gospel has nothing to do with regenerating the sinner? Instead of telling him that regeneration is nothing else than his embracing the gospel, to tell him that he must wait, and first have his constitution recreated before he can possibly do anything but oppose God? This is to tell him the greatest and most abominable and ruinous of falsehoods. It is to mock his intelligence. What! call on him, on pain of eternal death, to believe; to embrace the gospel; to love God with all his heart, and at the same time represent him as entirely helpless, and constitutionally the enemy of God and of the gospel, and as being under the necessity of waiting for God to regenerate his nature, before it is possible for him to do otherwise than to hate God with all his heart?

IX. In regeneration the subject is both passive and active.

1. That he is active is plain from what has been said, and from the very nature of the change.

2. That he is, at the same time, passive, is plain from the fact that he acts only when and as he is acted upon. That is, he is passive in the perception of the truth presented by the Holy Spirit. I know that this perception is no part of regeneration. But it is simultaneous with regeneration. It induces regeneration. It is the condition and the occasion of regeneration. Therefore the subject of regeneration must be a passive recipient or percipient of the truth presented by the Holy Spirit, at the moment, and during the act of regeneration. The Spirit acts upon him through or by the truth: thus far he is passive. He closes with the truth: thus far he is active. What a mistake those theologians have fallen into who represent the subject as altogether passive in regeneration! This rids the sinner at once of the conviction of any duty or responsibility about it. It is wonderful that such an absurdity should have been so long maintained in the church. But while it is maintained, it is no wonder that sinners are not converted to God. While the sinner believes this, it is impossible, if he has it in mind, that he should be regenerated. He stands and waits for God to do what God requires him to do, and which no one can do for him. Neither God, nor any other being, can regenerate him, if he will not turn. If he will not change his choice, it is impossible that it should be changed. Sinners who have been taught thus, and have believed what they have been taught, would never have been regenerated had not the Holy Spirit drawn off their attention from this error, and ere they were aware, induced them to close in with the offer of life.

X. What is implied in regeneration.

1. The nature of the change shows that it must be instantaneous. It is a change of choice, or of intention. This must be instantaneous. The preparatory work of conviction and enlightening the mind may have been gradual and progressive. But when regeneration occurs, it must be instantaneous.

2. It implies an entire present change of moral character, that is, a change from entire sinfulness to entire holiness. We have seen that it consists in a change from selfishness to benevolence. We have also seen that selfishness and benevolence cannot co-exist in the same mind; that selfishness is a state of supreme and entire consecration to self; that benevolence is a state of entire and supreme consecration to God and the good of the universe. Regeneration, then, surely implies an entire change of moral character.

Again: the Bible represents regeneration as a dying to sin and becoming alive to God. Death in sin is total depravity. This is generally admitted. Death to sin and becoming alive to God, must imply entire present holiness.

3. The scriptures represent regeneration as the condition of salvation in such a sense, that if the subject should die immediately after regeneration, and without any further change, he would go immediately to heaven.

Again: the scripture requires only perseverance in the first love, as the condition of salvation, in case the regenerate soul should live long in the world subsequently to regeneration.

4. When the scriptures require us to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, this does not imply that there is yet sin remaining in the regenerate heart which we are required to put away only by degrees. But the spirit of the requirement must be, that we should acquire as much knowledge as we can of our moral relations, and continue to conform to all truth as fast as we know it. This, and nothing else, is implied in abiding in our first love, or abiding in Christ, living and walking in the Spirit, &c.

**Re: Regeneration: Forced or Voluntary? - posted by Nile (), on: 2007/7/12 8:03**

I haven't read the whole thread yet, but I for one agree with you Jesse. I appreciate this post, it has helped clarify some truths that God has been showing me recently.

Nile

**Re:, on: 2007/7/12 8:21**

Nile,

I'm very glad we agree! And that this helps to clarify some of the things God is showing you!

I see you live in Raleigh NC. I am moving to Middlesex, near Baily, in August so that I can regularly preach on the Unive rsity in Raleigh and the other in Chapelhill.

It would be great to connect for coffee/tea and fellowship sometime.

**Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2007/7/12 12:37**

Quote:

-----Regeneration is described as a "washing": Tit 3:5

Nowhere in scripture is it described as the reception of a new faculty (freewill) or the repairing of a broken faculty (freewill). Regeneration is not when t he incapable become capable, at least I cannot draw that from any scripture.

But regeneration is a washing from sin, it is a new birth. And that is precisely what conversion is, a turning from sin, being born again.

If regeneration preceeding conversion, then there is a time period when there is a man who is regenerated but is not yet converted. But does the bible ever describe an regenerate man was unconverted? No. A man who is regenerated is a man who is converted, because regeneration and conversion are identical.

How does what you said justify *scripturally* they are identical? We know you believe they are the same...

I can very well say that no where in scripture does it say conversion and regeneration are identical.

**Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/12 13:04**

I would encourage all to read their Bibles, and this article, before endorsing anything Finney teaches.

(<http://www.graceonlinelibrary.org/etc/printer-friendly.asp?ID405>) The Legacy Of Charles Finney

Finney's teachings are nothing more than the heresy of Pelagius who said, "if I ought, I can." In other words, man can m ake himself holy by his own works, and be accepted by God for our own works. This tramples the work of Christ under fo ot. If Christ is not our only righteousness, then the Bible is in error. But if itis as the Bible declares, that Christ alone is ou r righteousness then Finney and his like are in error, and need not be listened to.

Of course if this came to our ears from a Buddhist, we would cast it aside as heresy, if a new age guru taught us this, we would rightly do the same. How then is it that a man who says he is a brother tells us this lie, and we swallow it hook, lin e, and sinker?

This teaching is exactly what produces man working to obtain salvation, which is what the Jews thought they could do, w hich is what Muslims do, and on and on. Man wants to be able to work to achieve salvation, or to have something to hol d up to God to show Him that He must accept them because of their works.

The Gospel never teaches anything like this. We are born "children of wrath" until God intervenes in His grace, and impa rting faith to us, for it is impossible for a natural man to understand spiritual things until he is given spiritual life. The Gos pel of the Bible does not tell us, this do and you shall live, but rather this has been done for you, now believe.

As one who cares deeply for the souls of my brothers, I urge you to stay away from Finney, let not his teachings cloud y



our mind.

Grace and peace to you.

Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/12 13:59

Edited

Quote:

-----roaringlamb wrote:  
I would encourage all to read their Bibles...

Finney's teachings are nothing more than the heresy of Pelagius who said, "if I ought, I can."  
-----

Are you saying that we ought to read our bibles?

3John 1:8 We therefore **ought** to receive such, that we might be fellow helpers to the truth.

1John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we **ought** also to love one another.

1John 3:16 By this perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we **ought** to lay down our lives for the brethren.

1John 2:6 He that says he abides in him **ought** himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

2Peter 3:11 Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons **ought** you to be in all holy conduct and godliness,

James 4:15 For you **ought** to say, If the Lord wills, we shall live, and do this, or that.

James 3:10 Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things **ought** not so to be.

I could go on with these **oughts** that we are able to do of our own volition.

Quote:

-----roaringlamb wrote:  
The Gospel never teaches anything like this. We are born "children of wrath"  
-----

No where in the Bible says the we are "born children of wrath".

The Bible says that "we had our behavior in times past in the lusts of our flesh." This behavior is not in new-borns, it is developed as a behavior.

Quote:

-----for it is impossible for a natural man to understand spiritual things until he is given spiritual life.  
-----

It is not impossible, the natural man **is not receiving** the things of the Spirit of God...Not because he is incapable, but that he **will not** because he does not understand them. However, that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.(Rom 1:19-20)

Quote:

-----roaringlamb wrote:  
The Gospel of the Bible does not tell us, this do and you shall live, but rather this has been done for you, now believe.  
-----

**Matthew 19:17** And he said unto him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: **But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.**

The law is used to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.(Gal 3:24)

The Law is used to show us that we cannot consistently uphold the law and we are incapable to do it perfectly and that we need to be changed from within in order to accomplish the Law.

Finney taught Christ and Him crucified and being raised from the dead. Finney is our brother in Christ.

He based His theology on the character of God and upon reality.

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/12 14:41

Quote:  
-----No where in the Bible says the we are "born children of wrath".  
The Bible says that "we had our behavior in times past in the lusts of our flesh." This behavior is not in new-borns, it is developed as a behavior.  
-----

Brother, what does this say

Eph 2:2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

Eph 2:3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; **and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.**

These verses are not speaking to unsaved people, but rather the Ephesian Christians. Paul is saying that they were like that, but not any more by the grace of God.

Also notice the little phrase "even as others" which points to the unsaved. We are all born into this state, but Someone changes us by giving us life.

Let me also ask you, do children suffer the effects of sin? Are they not prone to death, and sickness? now of course the answer is obvious, thus we conclude that it is in them already. They have original sin within, but it has not become actual sin.

Now I personally believe because of God's mercy and grace that children that die in infancy, and before "actual" sin, as well as those with mental illnesses are among the elect, and thus are saved, as the Bible does not mention an age of accountability.

Quote:  
-----true, however, that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God has showed it to them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.(Rom 1:19-20)  
-----

Now continue on with the rest of what Paul is saying-

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

Rom 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.

Then right after your quote

Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Men know there is a God, and suppress that. But they are also unable to come to Him on their own merit, or free will. To throw out this fact changes the whole theology of redemption. For if indeed man can save himself by his own works, then Christ death is in vain, and the imputation of Christ's righteousness to His people is null and void.

The Bible is a story of God's redemptive history throughout His people. He saves, He makes covenant, He does not ask man's opinion, or seek man's approval of what He does. He is God.

Quote:  
-----Matthew 19:17 And he said unto him, Why do you call me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: But if you desire to enter into life, keep the commandments.  
The law is used to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.(Gal 3:24)  
The Law is used to show us that we cannot consistently uphold the law and we are incapable to do it perfectly and that we need to be changed from within in order to accomplish the Law.  
-----

No, we need One to fulfill the Law perfectly in our behalf

Mat 5:17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

Rom 8:3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

Even if man could perfectly keep the Law in his renewed state, someone would have to keep it and put it to his account for the breaking of the Law prior to conversion. This of course would require imputation of righteousness, or a putting to one's account of something they did not do, or deserve. Finney believed this to be blasphemous, and taught against it.

This is contrary to the Scriptures. For the picture of substitutionary atonement is all through the Scriptures. In Abraham and Isaac, we see the ram dying in the place of Isaac, in the sacrificial system we see the animals dying in the stead of the sinners, and the sinful nation of Israel. To throw out this Doctrine alone is grounds to question a man, let alone to have him declare it heresy, and blasphemy.

If Christ did not die in your place, you are lost, and must atone for your own sins before God (good luck, and I hope you are a much better person than me). Sadly many believe that they must add to the perfect atonement of Christ, but we are justified by faith alone, not by repentance, not by good works. But of course a genuine God given faith will produce repentance and good works, but those are not the means by which we have acceptance with God-

Rom 5:1 Therefore **being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:**

**Rom 5:2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God**

Notice Paul says we stand in this grace, not we fall out of it, and come back into it. One can fall from grace, but only by seeking to justify themselves before God with their own works, or keeping of the Law, that is the point Paul makes here-

Gal 5:2 Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing.

Gal 5:3 For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law.

Gal 5:4 **Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.**

**Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/12 14:56**

Quote:

-----roaringlamb wrote:

Let me also ask you, do children suffer the effects of sin? Are they not prone to death, and sickness? now of course the answer is obvious, thus we conclude that it is in them already. They have original sin within, but it has not become actual sin.

Children suffer the effects of sin not because of their own sin, but because of the sin of the world. In order to have sin within, one must have an inclination for it.

- 1) What is an infant's nature? Innocent.
- 2) Is it natural for a newborn to rebel?
- 3) What law do they know in their hearts yet to rebel against?
- 4) Can a babe just out of the womb have sinful thoughts? Obsured.
- 5) What is their guilt since they are not even ignorant of a law, but unable to be put under a law?
- 6) Why would God, with such a great love for His creation, condemn it with Adam's sin when it has not yet sinned?
- 7) Furthermore, put a nature on creation for it to do naturally what HE hates?

To put the indictment or a responsibility of sin that has not yet been committed and put a penalty or a price on the innocent is unjust.

If "Sin Nature" is true, it would pervert the justice of God and distort the love of God.

If "Sin Nature" is true, why would God condemn for what is natural?

Since God loves His creation so much, why would He impose a nature on it against its will and/or charge it with an indictment or a responsibility which they don't deserve and one of which HE hates?

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/12 15:24

Quote:  
-----To put the indictment or a responsibility of sin that has not yet been committed and put a penalty or a price on the innocent is unjust.  
-----

Says who?  
Where in the Scripture does it say this?

Quote:  
-----If "Sin Nature" is true, it would pervert the justice of God and distort the love of God.  
-----

Not at all, the original creation(Adam) was perfect and without sin. We were in Adam when he sinned, as all have come from Adam. He bore children in his likeness(fallen), and thus here we are.

God is by no means unjust, for man at the instigation of the devil did forfeit his ability to keep and obey what God commands, thus a spiritual death fell upon man as he is unable to keep the law. thus God says to Adam, "in the day you eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, you shall surely die." We understand that even the Hebrew idiom used there means, "dying you shall die" which points to one death leading to a greater death.

Quote:  
-----Since God loves His creation so much, why would He impose a nature on it against its will and/or charge it with an indictment or a responsibility which they don't deserve and one of which HE hates?  
-----

God did not impose the sin nature upon man. Man when he had free will did forfeit free will, and brought upon all his descendants the same spiritual death. For reasons unknown to us, God allowed sin to come into the World. He did not have to, have you ever thought of that? God decreed before the foundation of the World that there would be a Saviour from sin as Christ is the Lamb slain from the foundation of the Earth, so in His providence, and sovereignty God allowed Adam to be tested in the Garden. Adam of course failed horribly, but praise God!!! Christ succeeded in the Garden when tempted to give in, Christ also triumphed in the wilderness temptation. Christ has won back all that Adam lost, and much more.

Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/12 19:10

Quote:  
-----roaringlamb wrote:

Quote:  
-----To put the indictment or a responsibility of sin that has not yet been committed and put a penalty or a price on the innocent is unjust.  
-----

Says who?  
Where in the Scripture does it say this?  
-----

It is a fact of reality.  
It is like putting the indictment of murder on someone who has not committed murder and having that person serve the time in prison for the crime that he has not done.

Quote:  
-----roaringlamb wrote

Quote:  
-----If "Sin Nature" is true, it would pervert the justice of God and distort the love of God.  
-----

Not at all, the original creation(Adam) was perfect and without sin. We were in Adam when he sinned, as all have come from Adam. He bore children in his likeness(fallen), and thus here we are.

-----  
that verse that says "Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham." is not a doctrinal verse.

**Hebrews 7:9-10** And as I may say so , Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.

**:10** For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

Notice the first part of this verse, **one must not make a doctrine from idioms and hyperbole.**

Furthermore, the verse that says "in Adam, all are dying"(1Co 15:22) That is not a heretical thing.

It is a spiritual death and does not say is not say "in Adam, all are dead", therefore, People are not born spiritually dead.

One dies spiritually from one's own sin once accountable.

Quote:  
-----roaringlamb wrote:  
God did not impose the sin nature upon man. Man when he had free will did forfeit free will, and brought upon all his descendants the same spiritual death.

-----  
No where does it say that man forfeited free will.

Nor, does it say that Adam brought upon all his descendants spiritual death. It says that Adam brought physical death.

**Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/12 20:48**

Quote:  
-----It is a fact of reality.  
It is like putting the indictment of murder on some one who has not committed murder and having that person serve the time in prison for the crime that he has not done.

Scripture please.

Also while on this topic of imputing crime to the innocent. Show me one man born innocent, for David declared, "in sin did my mother conceive me, and I was brought forth into iniquity."

What of Christ? He was made a curse for His people whom He died to redeem, but what crime or sin had He committed? He died in the place of the wicked, and the transgressors, by His stripes we are healed.

Quote:  
-----that verse that says "Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham." is not a doctrinal verse.

Hebrews 7:9-10 And as I may say so , Levi also, who receives tithes, paid tithes in Abraham.

**:10** For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchizedek met him.

Notice the first part of this verse, one must not make a doctrine from idioms and hyperbole.

-----  
I wasn't even thinking of that verse, but rather this one-

Rom 5:12 Wherefore, **as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:**

Again man is born spiritually unable to please God, you cannot refute this. Jesus said, "he that commits sin is the servant of sin." One cannot get around the fact that unless God imparts spiritual life, then man will be spiritually dead.

Do you take credit for your existence? Did you create yourself and give yourself life? Or did God sovereignly choose your parents, the time and place of your birth, and also the time and place of your death? Or did you manage all this on your own?

Quote:  
-----No where does it say that man forfeited free will.  
Nor, does it say that Adam brought upon all his descendants spiritual death. It says that Adam brought physical death.

-----  
Again, I must point you to this verse

Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

It is safe to ask, what is the cause of physical death? Of course we would say sin. Then if indeed it is as you propose, and that we are not spiritually dead, then why a need to be re-born? Or re-created into the image of Christ? Why do the Scriptures tell us things like, you were dead, but now are made alive in Christ?

If man is spiritually alive at birth, then he does not ever need to repent, or be born again, and thus you have made Christ a fool for suggesting that man needs to be changed, and that the change can only be by God by His Spirit.

Show me from Scripture where it says that man prior to salvation is spiritually alive, and not a verse taken from what is meant for Christians who have already been made alive, to back up your statement.

Jesus made sure to point out that what was born flesh remains flesh, and that the flesh profits nothing. Not so though you say, for flesh is good and able to meet its Creator's demands. Your views do not need a Saviour, but only an instructor to teach you how to better your flesh, this is not Scriptural.

**Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/12 23:34**

Quote:

-----roaringlamb wrote:

Quote:

-----It is a fact of reality.

It is like putting the indictment of murder on some one who has not committed murder and having that person serve the time in prison for the crime that he has not done.

-----  
Scripture please.

-----  
**Eze 18:20** The soul that sins, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.

Quote:

-----roaringlamb wrote:

-----  
**Luke 1:15** For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and **he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb.**

How would the Holy Spirit indwell the guilty?

Quote:

-----roaringlamb wrote:

for David declared, "in sin did my mother conceive me, and I was brought forth into iniquity."

-----  
Psa 51:5 is not to be taken literally or as a doctrine.

If so,

The Bible says, "He can command the sun not to rise"(**Job 9:7**)rather than, "He can command the earth to stop moving."

Make a doctrine that the sun moves and not the Earth. That God directed His command at the sun rather than the earth implies the sun moves and not the Earth.

"The sun rises and the sun sets; And hastening to its place it rises there again." (**Eccles. 1:5**)

This verses that spoke of the "rising" and "setting" of the sun, "hastening to its place" so that it may "rise there again," is not so easy to explain away.

Why don't you make a doctrine that the sun moved daily around the earth and not the Earth rotating?

Compare **Psalm 19:4-6** "In the heavens He has placed a tent for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber; it rejoices like a strong man to run its course, its rising from one end of the heavens, and its circuit to the other end of them."

Surly you can't ignore these. GO make a doctrine that the sun moves around the Earth and not the Earth rotating. You have plenty of Scriptural backing: The sun stood still, but it don't say that the Earth stood still.

Quote:  
-----roaringlamb wrote:  
Again man is born spiritually unable to please God, you cannot refute this.  
-----  
I do and I have.  
You have not proved that man is born spiritually dead. Nor have you disproved my proof of man being born spiritually alive.

Quote:  
-----roaringlamb wrote:  
It is safe to ask, what is the cause of physical death? Of course we would say sin. Then if indeed it is as you propose, and that we are not spiritually dead, then why a need to be re-born?  
-----  
The cause of physical death is Adam's sin, not our own.  
We need to be re-born because all mankind will eventually sin.  
Our own sin(first accountable) causes spiritual death, not someone else's(Adam's) sin.

Quote:  
-----roaringlamb wrote:  
If man is spiritually alive at birth, then he does not ever need to repent, or be born again, and thus you have made Christ a fool for suggesting that man needs to be changed, and that the change can only be by God by His Spirit.  
-----  
Of course one would need to repent, or be born again, because all mankind will eventually sin, even though they are born innocent.

Newborns do not need to be changed by Christ because they are innocent of sin because they have not yet committed a sin.

Newborns are incapable of acknowledging the need of being changed by Christ, incapable of repenting, incapable of having faith(not refusal of faith)

Quote:  
-----roaringlamb wrote:  
Show me from Scripture where it says that man prior to salvation is spiritually alive, and not a verse taken from what is meant for Christians who have already been made alive, to back up your statement.  
-----  
I will prove by deduction.

**1John 3:4** sin is the transgression of the law.  
What law do they know in their hearts yet to rebel against?

**Rom 14:23** for whatever is not of faith is sin.  
Newborns are incapable of having faith. Refusal of having faith is the sin of Romans 14:23

**James 4:17** Therefore to him that knows to do good, and does it not, to him it is sin.  
What does a newborn know?

**1John 5:17** All unrighteousness is sin:  
An infant?

**Re: - posted by Logic, on: 2007/7/12 23:35**

Sorry for hijacking this thread, let's get back on subject.

**Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/12 23:57**

Quote:

-----Sorry for hijacking this thread, let's get back on subject.  
-----

Ok, since Jesse has brought up the Church Fathers, I think it would be good to see that they also taught much of what he argues against.

Here is a link to a wondrous work by John Gill entitled "The Cause of God and Truth"

([http://www.pbministries.org/books/gill/gills\\_archive.htm#5](http://www.pbministries.org/books/gill/gills_archive.htm#5)) The Cause of God and Truth

Scroll down to section four, and you will see various headings on Calvinistic themes long before Calvin or anyone else wrote about them written by none other than the Church Fathers.

**Re:, on: 2007/7/13 0:05**

Augustine, in the Fifth Century, was the first Church Father to teach:

- Total Inability
- Unconditional Election
- Limited Atonement
- Irresistible Grace
- Perseverance of the Saints

Every one of these doctrines is specifically taught in his writings.

It was however, the Early GREEK Fathers, the Ante-Nicean Fathers, who were before the Latin Fathers like Augustine, who taught:

- Free-will
- Conditional election
- Resistible grace
- Universal atonement

I agree with the Early Greek Fathers, and completely disagree with the Latin Fathers and their "African Orthodoxy". Augustine brought in pagan and heathen doctrines of necessity - determination - fate - and the evil of the physical.



Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/13 0:12

I suggest you read some of these quotes before you say too much. Some of these are from before 70 AD, and are contrary to what you are saying, and are more in line with the Augustinian view.

Re:, on: 2007/7/13 0:20

### The EARLY CHURCH ON FREEWILL & VOLUNTARY SALVATION

• Justin Martyr of the Early Church said, "Every created being is so constituted as to be capable of vice and virtue. For he can do nothing praiseworthy, if he had not the power of turning either way." And "unless we suppose man has the power to choose the good and refuse the evil, no one can be accountable for any action whatever." (Doctrine of the Will by Asa Mahan, p. 61, published by Truth in Heart)

• Tertullian of the same century said, "No reward can be justly bestowed, no punishment can be justly inflicted, upon him who is good or bad by necessity, and not by his own choice." (Doctrine of the Will by Asa Mahan, p. 61, published by Truth in Heart)

• Origen said, "The soul does not incline to either part out of necessity, for then neither vice nor virtue could be ascribed to it; nor would its choice of virtue deserve reward; nor its declination to vice punishment." Again, "How could God require that of man which he had not power to offer Him?" (Doctrine of the Will by Asa Mahan, p. 62, published by Truth in Heart)

• Augustine said, "They that would not come, ought not to impute it to another, but only to themselves, because, when they are called, it was in the power of their free will to come." (Doctrine of the Will by Asa Mahan, p. 63, published by Truth in Heart)

• Clement of Alexandria said, "Neither promises nor apprehensions, rewards, no punishments are just if the soul has not the power of choosing and abstaining; if evil is involuntary." (Doctrine of the Will by Asa Mahan, p. 63, published by Truth in Heart)

• Jerome said, "God has bestowed us with free will. We are not necessarily drawn either to virtue or vice. For when necessity rules, there is no room left either for damnation or the crown." (Doctrine of the Will by Asa Mahan, p. 62, published by Truth in Heart)

• Tertullian said, "In pursuance of that aspect of the association of body and soul that we now have to consider, we maintain that the puberty of the soul coincides with that of the body. Generally speaking, they both attain together this full growth at about the fourteenth year of life. The soul attains it by the suggestion of the senses, and the body attains it by the growth of the bodily members. I do not mention because reflection begins at that age (as Asclepiades supposes). Nor do I choose it because the civil laws date the commencement of the real business of life from this age. Rather, I choose it because this was the appointed order from the very first. For after their obtaining knowledge of good and evil, Adam and Eve felt that they must cover their nakedness. Likewise, we profess to have the same discernment of good and evil from the time that we experience the same sensation of shame. Now, beginning with the aforementioned age, sex is suffused and clothed with a special sensibility. This eye gives way to lust and communicates its pleasure to another. It understands the natural relations between male and female, and it wears the fig-leaf apron to cover the shame that it still excites." (c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 7, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Justin Martyr said, "In the beginning, He made the human race with the power of thought and of choosing truth and doing right, so that all men are without excuse before God." (c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 271, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Justin Martyr said, "Let some suppose, from what has been said by us, that we say that whatever occurs happens by a fatal necessity, because it is foretold as known beforehand, this too we explain. We have learned from the prophets, and we hold it to be true, that punishments, chastisements, and good rewards, are rendered according to the merit of each man's actions. Now, if this is not so, but all things happen by fate, then neither is anything at all in our own power. For if it is predetermined that this man will be good, and this other man will be evil, neither is the first one meritorious nor the latter man to be blamed. And again, unless the human race has the power of avoiding evil and choosing good by free choice, they are not accountable for their actions." (c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 271, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Justin Martyr said, "I have proved in what has been said that those who were foreknown to be unrighteous, whether men or angels, are not made wicked by God's fault. Rather, each man is what he will appear to be through his own fault." (c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Tatian said, "We were not created to die. Rather, we die by our own fault. Our free will has destroyed us. We who were free have become slaves. We have been sold through sin. Nothing evil has been created by God. We ourselves have manifested wickedness. But we, who have manifested it, are able again to reject it." (c.160, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Melito said, "There is, therefore, nothing to hinder you from changing your evil manner to life, because you are a free man." (c.170, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Theophilus said, "If, on the other hand, he would turn to the things of death, disobeying God, he would himself be the cause of death to himself. For God made man free, and with power of himself." (c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Irenaeus said, "But man, being endowed with reason, and in this respect similar to God, having been made free in his will, and with power over himself, is himself his own cause that sometimes he becomes wheat, and sometimes chaff." (c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 286, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Irenaeus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good deeds... And Why call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do the things that I say?... All such passages demonstrate the independent will of man... For it is in man's power to disobey God and to forfeit what is good." (c.180, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 287, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Clement of Alexandria said, "We... have believed and are saved by voluntary choice." (c.195, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 287, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Clement of Alexandria said, "Each one of us who sins with his own free will, chooses punishment. So the blame lies with him who chooses. God is without blame." (c.195, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 287, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Clement of Alexandria said, "To obey or not is in our own power, provided we do not have the excuse of ignorance." (c.195, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 287, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

• Tertullian said, "I find, then, that man was constituted free by God. He was master of his own will and power... For a law would not be imposed upon one who did not have it in his power to render that obedience which is due to law. Nor again, would the penalty of death be threatened against sin, if a contempt of the law were impossible to man in the liberty of his will... Man is free, with a will either for obedience or resistance. (c.207, A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs by David Bercot, p. 288, published by Hendrickson Publishers)

Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2007/7/13 0:54

### Section 1—Clemens Romanus. A.D. 69

Clemens was so far from ascribing vocation, conversion, or sanctification, to the will of man, that he always considers it as the effect and produce of the will of God. His epistle to the Corinthians begins thus, "The church of God which dwells at Rome, to the church of God which dwells at Corinth, kletois egiasmenois en thelemati Theou, 'to the called and sanctified by the will of God,' through our Lord Jesus Christ." He denies that men are called and justified, and come to honor, glory, and greatness, by themselves, or by their own works, but by the will and grace of God; for thus he expresses himself, "All therefore are glorified and magnified, ou di eauton, e ton ergon auton, e tes dikaioprarias, es katargeisai ntoi, alla dia ton thelematos auton, not by themselves or their own works of righteous actions, which they have wrought out, but by his will;" and we also being called by his will in Christ Jesus are justified, ou di eauton, ou de dia tes emeteras sophias, e suneseos, e eusebeias, e ergon, on kateirgasametha, en osioteti kardias, "not by ourselves, nor by our wisdom, or understanding, or piety, or the works which we have done in holiness of heart, but by faith by which God Almighty hath justified all from the beginning, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

### Section 3—Ignatius. A.D. 110

Ignatius was no favorer of the doctrine of free will; he ascribes sanctification and illumination to the will of God. His epistle to the Romans is inscribed, "To the church sanctified and enlightened, en qelhmasi Qeou to>u poihsantov 'by the will of God who does," or according to another, tou qelhsantov, "who wills all things which are according to the faith and love of Jesus Christ our God and Savior." He represents repentance as very hard to be obtained, when he warns the members of the church at Smyrna against beasts in the forms of men, and advises them "not to receive them, and if possible, not meet them, only," says he, "pray for them, if so be they may repent, oper duskolon, 'which is very difficult; but Jesus Christ, our true life, has the power of this," that is, of giving repentance. He roundly asserts, that men in a carnal state, have not a power to anything that is spiritual, oi sarkikoi to pneumatika prawein ou dunantai, "They that are carnal," says he, "cannot do the things that are spiritual, nor they that are spiritual do the things that are carnal, as neither faith the things of unbelief, nor unbelief the things of faith." He denies Christianity to be the produce of moral suasion, but the effect of divine power; his words are these, Ou peisonmhv to ergonallamegeqouv estin o Cristianov, "The Christian is not the work of persuasion but of greatness;" that is, of the exceeding greatness of God's power, which is wonderfully displayed in making the Christian, in continuing, preserving, and supporting him as such, especially, as he observes, when he is hated by the world.

#### Section 4—Justin. A.D. 150

Justin Martyr held the doctrine of original sin; he says that "mankind by Adam fell under death, and the deception of the serpent; that amartwloi egegoneimen, 'we are born sinners;" and that we are entirely flesh, and no good thing dwells in us; he asserts the weakness and disability of men either to understand or perform spiritual things, and denies that man, by the natural sharpness of his wit, can attain to the knowledge of divine things, or by any innate power in him save himself, and procure eternal life." In one of his treatises, speaking of the doctrines of the Scriptures, he has these words; "Ou de tar phusei onte anthropine ennoia, onto megala kai theia ginoskein anthropois dunaton, 'for neither by nature, nor by human understanding, is it possible for men to acquire the knowledge of things so great and so divine;" but by a free gift descending from heaven upon holy men, who had no need of the art of words, nor of the contentious and vain-glorious way of speaking, but to exhibit themselves pure to the energy of the divine Spirit." And as for himself, he could say, "I do not study to show an apparatus of words by mere art alone, for I have no such power, alla charis para Theou mone eis to sunienai tas graphas auton edothe moi, but grace alone is given to me by God to understand his Scriptures." He bids Trypho pray that "above all things the gates of light might be opened to him." for neither are they seen nor known by all, ei me to Theos do sunienai kai o Christos auton, unless God and his Christ give them to understand, them." And in another place he says "At that time being convicted by our own works that we were unworthy of life, and manifested that of ourselves, adunaton eis elthein eis ten basileian ton Theou, to duamei ton Theou dunatoi genethomen, it was impossible to enter into the kingdom of God, by the power of God we might be made able." And a little after he says, "Having sometime before convinced us to adunaton tea emeteras phuseos ds to tuchein zoes, of the impossibility of our nature to obtain life, hath now shown us the Savior, who is able to save that which otherwise were impossible to be saved." It must be owned, that Justin in many places asserts the free will of man; but then it is to be observed, that in all those places, even in those which Dr. Whitby refers to, in proof of his being an advocate for free will, he speaks of it as men and angels were possessed of it, thn archn "at the beginning of their creation," when they had full power to do that which is good, and avoid that which is evil; though their natures being mutable were capable both of vice and virtue, and of being turned either way, as the event showed, and which is not denied by us. In like manner are we to understand some passages in Athenagoras and Tatian which the Doctor also refers to, where they ascribe free will to men and angels, when created by God, who has a power of doing good and avoiding evil, which clears God from being the author of sin, or being guilty of injustice in punishing of them; for as for Tatian, he clearly asserts the corruption and weakness of human nature; he says, that at the beginning there was a spirit which lived familiar with the soul, but when it would not follow it, the spirit left it, but retaining some spark of its power, though because of the separation, that is, from the spirit, ta t eleia kathoran me dunamene, 'it is not able to behold things that are perfect," and seeking, after God, through error feigns many gods; he adds, that the Spirit of God is not with all men, only with such as live uprightly; yea, he plainly intimates, that man through his free will is now become a slave; which is stating in a few words the doctrine of free will, as he told us; for he expressly says, apolesen emas to autezousion, douloi gegonamen oi eleutheroi dia ten amartian emprat hemen, "free will has destroyed us; we who were free are become servants, and for our sin are sold." Theophilus of Antioch also says, that God made man possessed of free will, but then he represents him now as impotent and standing in need of the grace of God: "They that know not God, and do wickedly," he says, "are like to birds who have wings, but are not able to fly; no such men creep upon the ground, and mind earthly things, katabaroumenoi upo ton amartion, 'and being pressed down by their sins," cannot move upward unto God." He expresses his sense which he himself had of the need of divine grace, as well as how necessary it was to others to know the truth, and understand the mind and will of God, when he says, ego di aitoumai charin para ton monou Theou, "I desire grace from God alone," that I may exactly explain the whole truth according to his will; as also that thou, and every one that reads these things, odegetai upo tes aletheias kai tharitos autou, might be guided by his truth and grace."

Re:, on: 2007/7/13 8:46

Quote:

PreachParsly wrote:

Quote:

-----Regeneration is described as a "washing": Tit 3:5

Nowhere in scripture is it described as the reception of a new faculty (freewill) or the repairing of a broken faculty (freewill). Regeneration is not when the incapable become capable, at least I cannot draw that from any scripture.

But regeneration is a washing from sin, it is a new birth. And that is precisely what conversion is, a turning from sin, being born again.

If regeneration preceding conversion, then there is a time period when there is a man who is regenerated but is not yet converted. But does the bible ever describe an regenerate man was unconverted? No. A man who is regenerated is a man who is converted, because regeneration and conversion are identical.

How does what you said justify *scripturally* they are identical? We know you believe they are the same...

I can very well say that no where in scripture does it say conversion and regeneration are identical.

For the most part and my reason most simply stated, I am with you but am having a hard time reconciling the below passage with my thinking that conversion is strictly of the mind unto God while regeneration is His gift in response:

"For this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should **understand with their heart, and should be converted**, and I should heal them. {/quote  
Matthew 13:15 (KJV)

Re: - posted by philologos (), on: 2007/7/13 11:36

Quote:

-----But regeneration is a washing from sin, it is a new birth. And that is precisely what conversion is, a turning from sin, being born again.

If regeneration preceding conversion, then there is a time period when there is a man who is regenerated but is not yet converted. But does the bible ever describe an regenerate man was unconverted? No. A man who is regenerated is a man who is converted, because regeneration and conversion are identical.

I am not of the Calvinist persuasion that sees regeneration as the beginning of it all, so I will not get into that aspect of this. I believe conversion precedes regeneration and I am not alone in this; Campbell Morgan, Drysdale and Oswald Chambers believed the same. It is the failure to distinguish between conversion and regeneration that is at the root of so much superficial evangelism.

The verb 'convert' never has God as its subject, as far as I can see, in the scriptures. Man is always the agent of conversion, either of his own or that of another. Regeneration, on the other hand, must always have God as its subject; it is the

unique work of the Spirit and in this sense 'monergistic'. I do not see salvation as monergistic because I see man's response in conversion as being a necessary criterion for God's work of regeneration.

**Re: - posted by HopePurifies (), on: 2007/7/16 22:58**

I'm going to pretend for a moment that I'm not a theologian.

I know that one can't go on experiences. Experiences can be very misleading. But those who are posting in defense of voluntary regeneration have mentioned several scriptures that align with my experience.

I formerly believed that I could do nothing to regenerate or cooperate with my salvation. I floated on the water belly up, a cold dead fish. But then I heard that I had freewill from Thomas of Cusa. I heard God say "Swim" and I did. There was life in this.

Those of you who say you can't do anything- is this your practice? I figure that you behave as though you have the ability to help yourself.

It certainly is not the case that we can do things without God. We must abide in Him. But we are active, we cooperate with Him.

I'm responding and bumping this thread because I honestly think more people may be blessed by knowing that they can do what God commands them, God will always help them because He always loves them.

**Re:, on: 2007/7/19 2:47**

Many deny man's ability to repent "theologically" but yet assume it and expect it "practically".

Every cry to repentance, every evangelism effort, presupposes man's ability to repent.

Without man having the ability to repent, God would not call all men to repent, Jesus would not have rebuked the cities that did not repent, and Jesus would not have "marvelled" at their unbelief.

Without man's ability to repent, God would have nothing to call men to do, Jesus would have given no rebuke, and Jesus would not have "marvelled".

Besides, voluntary regeneration/conversion is the only way to account for the fact that God loves everyone and wants everyone to be saved, and yet not all men are saved. Their impenitence can only be properly accredited to their freewill, nobody can blame "the Sovereignty of God" for man's own voluntary impenitence.

**Re: Bing!, on: 2007/7/19 3:03**

Referee call:

Jesse's ECF's beat Roaringlamb's ECF's post.

Reason for decision.

1-Out-numbered.

2-References & pg. #'s.

Bing ~ proceed.

:-D

Edit:decision recalled~corrected!

**Re:, on: 2007/7/19 3:24**

Grannie your funny!

Without any special commentary, if we simply read the writings of the early Church, they very clearly believed that we inherit original ability from our parents, ie freewill.

And they no doubt have some very sound arguments for it, as they battled against the heathen philosophy of their day which taught necessity (fatalism).

**Re:, on: 2007/7/19 3:27**

I learned that from mrbillpro.

:-D

Never too old to learn a new trick. Ha.

**Re: - posted by theopenlife, on: 2007/7/19 3:48**

Jesse, I suppose I have a different (and unlearned) view of this situation...

When I "call people to repent", I am urging them to immediately cease from known sin and to throw themselves wholeheartedly into the use of the methods afforded by common grace to precede regeneration... namely, I tell them to do what any sinner can do, to go on their knees with a bible and make urgent prayers until God gives them faith in Christ and a new nature.

So there is common grace which any man can use to pray and read and forego a certain amount of brazen sin, and then there is the need for supernatural overshadowing that results in a spiritual change.

My belief is that those who pursue common grace to the end - regeneration unto new birth - are those who were called forth by God unto salvation. The others are those who rejected the call, though none would have come without the call.

Hmm... makes sense to this poorly-worded young man.

**Re:, on: 2007/7/19 5:16**

Whatever God calls us to do, He gives us the power to do.

God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:31) because God has given all men the ability to repent.

**Re: I Love ALL the Classic Authors Here., on: 2007/7/19 14:10**

I grew up in the faith devouring as many Classics as I could get my hands on.

Murray, Spurgeon, Torrey, Simpson, Nee, Tozer, Finney and on and on, and I've heard bad things about all of them, but I don't expect a human or even GOD Himself to "please everyone".

I just found this message below and I think it expresses the burden I've been feeling on this topic for the past ? weeks and why I grieve to think that sometimes we can separate on these issues. I pray we never do and hope that everyday, because like I've said, I'm in a reformed church that I love to pieces, but they know I'm not reformed, yet the Love of God is the tie that binds so strongly between us and we don't discuss our differences at all -- no need. :-D

Anyhow, here's one I just found that I liked to bridge some gaps that I wish I could bridge also.

Like I said, how I feel, no man has a "perfect" reputation with 'all' and even a Prof I had, had problems with a certain author or of old .... but this article below is one that I thought has things right.

Letters On Revival--No. 4.

To All The Friends And Especially All The Ministers Of Our Lord Jesus Christ:

Dear Brethren:

I said in my last that there seemed to be two extremes toward which different classes of persons are continually verging. Those extremes are Antinomianism on the one hand, and legality on the other -- both manifestly at an equal remove from the true idea of religion. In that letter I made some remarks upon the class of legalists; in this I propose to notice the Antinomian class.

Antinomianism is the opposite extreme of legalism. Legalists are all work, and Antinomians no work. The latter have almost universally been legalists and very self-righteous. They have done a great deal of hard labor in their own strength, and in a perfectly legal, as opposed to an evangelical spirit. They have depended on their own resolutions, and have found them a bruised reed and a broken staff. In short, they have generally gone through nearly every stage of legal experience, from the dead formality of a self-righteous Pharisee to the sharp conflicts and agonizing efforts described in Romans's eventh. They have known what it is to be blind to their own sins, and also what it is to be in a good measure awake to their own sins; what it is to make almost no effort to serve the Lord, and what it is to make most agonizing efforts in their own strength. They have generally been brought to see the futility, emptiness, and downright wickedness of all these self-righteous, self-originated, and self-sustained efforts. Finding their own impotence, and being bad philosophers, they vault quite over into the opposite extreme, and from being all work and no faith, they become all faith and no work; not considering that this kind of faith is dead, being alone. They seem not aware that their faith is a state of the sensibility and not of the heart; a passive and not an active state of mind. It does not touch the will; if it did, their works would show it.

That they come into this state usually, by swinging like a pendulum from one extreme to the other, is most manifest. Having learned the folly of self-righteous and self-originated efforts, they feel a kind of contempt for all effort, and fall right back into a state of supineness and quietism. Professing to have yielded up their whole agency to Christ, they throw all the responsibility upon him and do nothing. Under pretence of being led by the Spirit and of waiting for God to reveal his will to them, they give themselves up very much to spiritual indolence.

This class of persons are extremely apt to suppose that all efforts to promote revivals, are of course legal efforts, such as they are conscious they used to make. The active Christian who sympathizes with Christ and is led by the Spirit to labor as Christ and the Apostles labored, they look upon as being engaged as they formerly were, running before they are sent, going forward in their own strength, self-righteous and legal. Now these dear souls do not realize that there is such a thing as great spiritual activity and aggressiveness, and that true spirituality always implies this; that true faith always begets sympathy with Christ, that true Christianity is always and necessarily the spirit of missions, of revivals, of self-sacrifice, of holy activity; that it is a living, energizing principle; that holiness in man is just what it was in Christ; indeed that holiness is always one and the same thing--benevolence or good-willing--and by a law of its own nature is continually putting forth efforts to realize the great end of benevolence; namely, the highest good of all beings.

True Christianity is the law of love written in the heart by the Holy Spirit, and of course necessarily acted out in practical life. Now any thing that professes to be Christianity and does not sympathize with Christ, must be a delusion.

The mistake of the Antinomian lies not, as with the legalist, in the want of apprehending the emptiness, folly, and even wickedness of all self-righteous efforts to please God, but rather in a mistaken apprehension of the nature of faith and of true religion. They do not distinguish between that faith which consists in a persuasion of the intellect, accompanied by a corresponding state of feeling, in which however there is no assent of the heart or will; and that faith in which the heart or will most fully yields to perceived and admitted truth. The faith of the heart is necessarily a powerful and active principle. The faith of the intellect, or mere intellectual apprehension, accompanied with corresponding feelings, is not a voluntary, active, and energizing principle. This should always be understood. It is often not very easy to distinguish between these two. It should always be remembered, that where the faith of the heart or true faith exists, the other also does and must exist; that is, where the heart confides in the truth of God, there must be an intellectual apprehension of truth and a corresponding state of feeling, so that true faith cannot exist without the other, though the other may exist without it; that is, the intellect may apprehend the truth, the feelings may be affected by it, while the heart does not receive it.

There is another mistake into which Antinomians fall, of a very serious character. Indeed there are many, but one is of too much importance to be omitted here. I refer to their mistake in respect to being led by the Spirit of God. The manner in which they expect and profess to be led by the Spirit, seems to be that of impulse rather than divine illumination through the word. They sometimes seem to suppose that the Spirit leads the people of God by impressions upon their sensibility

or feelings, rather than by enlightening their intelligence, and leading them to act rationally, and in accordance with the written word. This is undoubtedly a great and fundamental error. True religion does not consist in obeying our feelings, but in conforming our heart to the law of our intelligence. Mere feeling is blind; and to follow it is never virtue. Now for persons to give themselves up to follow mere impressions on their sensibility, is not to be led by the Spirit of God, but by the ever-varying fluctuations and effervescings of their own restless and agitated sensibility. There is no end to the mistakes in to which souls may be led in this way.

God has given us reason, and requires us to understand what we are about. He has given us the written word, and the Holy Spirit to shine upon it, to make us understand its great principles and the application of them to all the circumstances and duties of life. Surely then it is a great mistake to give ourselves up to blind impulse, instead of submitting ourselves to be taught and led of God in his plainly appointed way. Antinomians amuse themselves very much with views and consequent feelings. They often seem to be very happy in certain views which they have of Christ and of gospel salvation, while it cannot be perceived that they really sympathize with Christ in the great work of saving souls.

Now as I said in my last, this is one extreme, and legality is another extreme. The truth lies between them. A true Christian is active, but his activity and energy arise out of a deep sympathy with the indwelling Spirit of Christ. Christ is formed within him. The Spirit of Christ is the mighty energizing power of his soul. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made him free from the law of sin and death. In short, he has become dead to the law. He may be as active as he ever was in the days of his most strenuous legality, and even more so. His strenuousness, energy and zeal are not at all abated, but generally increased. Indeed they are always increased, unless the comparison be made with his most convicted and agonized legal states.

But his activity is that of love and faith. It is the activity of the eternal life of Christ that dwells within him. Now Antinomians commit a great mistake when they do not distinguish between this activity and their own former legal activity.

Again, I should say that legalists are exceedingly apt to reproach Antinomians without any very good reasons. In their bustle and zeal they seem to have the very spirit of Jehu. They drive furiously and seem to say--"Come see my zeal for the Lord." Now as a matter of fact, their legal bustle is not a whit better than Antinomian quietism. They would indeed compass sea and land to make one proselyte; but he is after all, a legalist like themselves; for they beget children in their own likeness.

Now it appears to me to be of the last importance that such discriminations should be made as to guard, if possible, against these two extremes, and so to conduct revivals of religion that the churches will take the middle ground; that is, that they will have the true idea of religion developed in their minds, and the true spirit of it in their hearts. So far as this can be secured, religious excitements are valuable and desirable, but no farther. It is very easy to show that there are many excitements that are not revivals of true religion; but this must be deferred to a future number. Your brother, C. Finney