



Faith Messenger

The Will and Works of God

If there is one objection I have been presented with more than any other in all of my theological life as a Reformed believer, it is the objection concerning the incompatibility of the free-will of man and the sovereign decrees of God. “If God controls *every* action, then how can He hold us responsible for sin?” I certainly would never pretend that this is not a difficult question - from man’s perspective - but in this excerpt from one of his works, James Boyce points out that our inability to fully understand something concerning the nature and work of God, far from DISPROVING it, only further adds to the truth of that distinction between Him and us that makes Him worthy of all worship.

Mark your calendars now!

*Come join the family of Faith on **Sunday, May 29**, as we say farewell to our dear friends the Bell family.*

*Bring your own lunch (dessert will be provided) and join us after worship at **Wade Park** for a time of fellowship and fun!*

Upcoming Events

Wednesday, May 25

6:00pm - “Question the Confession?”

Thursday, May 26

11:00am – Heritage House Bible Study Ministry

Sunday, May 29

9:45am - Sunday school for adults and children

10:45am – Morning Worship
- **5th Sunday Deacon’s Fund Collection**

- Going Away party for the Bell family at Wade Park following morning worship

This plan, or purpose, includes all things whatsoever that come to pass; not some things, but all things; not all things in general, but each thing in particular.

So interwoven are all these things, that the lack of purpose, as to any one, would involve that same lack as to multitudes of others, indeed as to every other connected in the slightest degree with the one not purposed.

This is evidently true as to all subsequent events; but it is equally so as to those that are antecedent, for these thus connected antecedent events have been established with efficient causative power, relative to all their effects. God knows the existence of this power; he has in fact ordained and bestowed it. He knows also what will be its effects. With this knowledge, God must, therefore, either allow them to act, because he purposes that the result shall follow, or he must hinder, or restrain, or accelerate their action because he would change the effect. In each case he purposes, in the one to effect, in the other to permit, and his purpose thus extends to all things. Any limitation of his purpose involves limitation of his knowledge, and this cannot be true of the omniscient God.

To such an extent is the force of this realized, that it is admitted by all, that, in the mechanical universe, and even in the control of the lower animals, this is true. But the free agency of man, and of other rational and moral agents, is supposed to prevent God’s purposing, or willing, all things with reference to them. It is said that such purposing would take away that free agency, and consequent responsibility.

The Scriptures recognize both the sovereignty of God, and the free agency, and accountability of man. Consciousness assures us of the latter. The nature of God, as has just been shown, proves the former. The Bible makes no attempt to reconcile the two. Paul even declines to discuss the subject, saying, “Nay but, oh man, who art thou that repliest against God?” Rom. 9:20. The two facts are plainly revealed. They cannot be contradictory, they must be reconcilable. That we cannot point out the harmony between them is a proof, only of our ignorance, and limited capacity, and not that both are not true. It is certain, however, that, whatever may be the influences which God exercises, or permits, to secure the fulfillment of his purposes, he always acts in accordance with the nature, and especially with the laws of mind he has bestowed upon man. It is equally true, that his action is in full accord with that justice, and benevolence, which are such essential attributes of God himself.

- From James Boyce, “A Doctrinal Study: The Decrees of God”, Founders Journal Fall 2001 (p25-28)

WESTMINSTER LARGER CATECHISM

- **Question 14** -

How doth God execute his decrees?

- **Answer** -

God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will.

“In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will...”

— Ephesians 1:11

Prayer and Praise

Please remember to submit your prayers and praises so that we may shoulder the load of each other’s burdens and rejoice together in the blessed work of the lord in our lives and those around us!

1. *Praise!* for the endless grace of God poured out in His steadfast love for sinners like you and I through the ongoing ministry of the Spirit in our renewed hearts that have been purchased with the blood of Christ!

2. *Prayer* for the work of that Spirit in our midst to lift our church upon a lamppost to shine the light of Christ into the darkened hearts of the culture around us.

M’Cheyne Weekly Scripture Readings

	Private (Morning)	Family (Evening)
5/25	<i>Numbers 34 / Psalms 78:38-72</i>	<i>Isaiah 26 / 1 John 4</i>
5/26	<i>Numbers 35 / Psalms 79</i>	<i>Isaiah 27 / 1 John 5</i>
5/27	<i>Numbers 36 / Psalms 80</i>	<i>Isaiah 28 / 2 John 1</i>
5/28	<i>Deuteronomy 1 / Psalms 81-82</i>	<i>Isaiah 29 / 3 John 1</i>
5/29	<i>Deuteronomy 2 / Psalms 83-84</i>	<i>Isaiah 30 / Jude</i>
5/31	<i>Deuteronomy 3 / Psalms 85</i>	<i>Isaiah 31 / Revelation 1</i>
5/31	<i>Deuteronomy 4 / Psalms 86-87</i>	<i>Isaiah 32 / Revelation 2</i>