

## Free Will

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Wednesday, 19 May 2010 00:03 -

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The will, choice and desire practically mean the same thing. Men act freely in choosing that which is agreeable with their nature, love and desires; but they do not thus act freely with that which is not agreeable, for it is contrary to their real choice. They may be, and very often are prevented from possessing their choice, but not from willing or desiring it. But the Arminian belief that the will is self-determining and that man can of himself change his will is a very great error. In nature's night men act freely in committing sin, because they are willingly in love with it and as willingly bound with its chain. and are willingly haters of God, and they have no power or ability or real willingness in and of themselves to reverse all this.

They may, and often do, claim to make such a choice; but as this can only be an empty profession, what is it but hypocrisy? For without the blessed Spirit's work of grace in the heart, no one can make a genuine profession of religion. And it is very wrong to urge anyone who has not had this heart-change to make such a profession, for of all things surely this is the worst place to practice deception. But when the gracious Lord is pleased to take away the hard and stony heart and give a tender heart of flesh, and shed abroad His love therein, then this regenerated person freely loves God, and can then freely and truly choose to make a profession of His service. For when he is painfully made aware of the awful plague of his heart, he then will freely hate sin instead of loving it as before. And such awakened sinners should certainly always be encouraged and comforted, and it is wrong not to do so.

But man positively cannot of himself reverse his desires, change his heart, and prepare himself for God's service. And all men are quite powerless to aid each other in this line, for "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord."-Pr 16:1. "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil."-Jer 13:23. "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."-Mt 12:34-35. Lu 6:43-45.

I am very positive that the above is true. But, sad to say, in this proud age of popular profession, free will is so often perverted and "run up to seed," and an acquired head-knowledge is generally substituted for the positively necessary Spirit-given heart-work. The devils plainly possessed quite an intellectual knowledge of Jesus Christ. Lu 4:34,41; Jas 2:19. But historical knowledge alone puffeth up; but God's grace in the human heart humbleth.