

Westminster Confession of Faith

Chapter 3, 9:

The Issue of God's Decree and Free Will Applied to Evangelism and Prayer

"I form light and create darkness, I make well being and create calamity, I am the Lord who does all these things" (Isaiah 45:7 cf. 46:9-11).

"Men treat God's sovereignty as a theme for controversy, but in Scripture it is matter for worship." (J.I.Packer)

Readings:

A.A. Hodge, Chapt 3, & 9

John Calvin, *Institutes*, Chapter 21, pp.920-932, 947-964

George Whitfield, "Letter to John Wesley"

WCF 3: The decrees of God

1. *God, from all eternity, did, by the most wise and holy counsel of his own will, freely, and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass: yet so, as thereby neither is God the author of sin, nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather established.*

1. Note that paragraph 1 indicates an *awareness* of the common "objections" to the idea of God's ordaining all things; yet, it also denies that any of the common objections are valid. That is, the Confession affirms *both* God's ordination of all things *and*:

- a. neither is God the author of sin,
- b. nor is violence offered to the will of the creatures;
- c. nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather d. established.

Our difference, then, is that we do not consider the *mystery* involved in this sufficient to cause us to deny either the one or the other. If the Bible affirms both, we confess both, whether they are reconcilable in our minds or not.

2. What is denied in paragraph 2?

3. What, specifically, is affirmed in paragraph 3?
(good summary in Hodge, p.66)

See also Calvin, p.925, "we indeed place both doctrines in God, but we say that subjecting one to the other is absurd."

See also, Calvin, p.956, "no distinction between God's will and God's permission")

4. How does Hodge distinguish between an "absolute" decree and a "conditional" decree? (p.66) Which kind of decree is the Confession affirming and why is this affirmation essential to our doctrine of God?

5. Paragraph 3-5 (and those related to it) contain that which many people find most objectionable about our understanding of scripture. Professor Van Til, however, was prone to speak of Calvinism as merely "more consistent Christianity." For him, all Christians affirm God's sovereignty over *creation* (that is, they agree that they are men and not dogs because God *chose* to make them men and not dogs); and almost all affirm His sovereignty over *providence* (that is, they would die tomorrow if God has not numbered their days differently); yet not all affirm His sovereignty over *redemption*. Calvinism understands them to be related. Either the Creator *is* completely free to do as He wishes with His creation (including determining, solely of His own will, whether immortality will even be offered to it), or He *is not* free to do so.

6. Paragraph 3 is justified by the following scriptures:

3. By the decree of God, for the manifestation of his glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life; and others foreordained to everlasting death.

Prov. 16:4 The Lord has made everything for its own purpose, Even the wicked for the day of evil.

Rom. 9:22 What if God, although willing to demonstrate His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience *vessels of wrath prepared for destruction?*

Rom. 9:23 And He did so in order that He might make known the riches of His glory upon *vessels of mercy*, which He prepared beforehand *for glory*,

How does John 3:4ff fit into all this?

Note also:

Mt.11:25, I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes Father, for such was your gracious will...

Mt. 16:17, Blessed are you, simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven.

7. What attribute of God is assumed by paragraph 4? Why is this so important to our relationship to God, especially compared to paragraph 5?

4. These angels and men, thus predestinated, and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed, and their number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

8. Notice carefully what all the Confession is and is not saying. On the one hand, this section deals more with the topics of God's attributes in relation to "cosmology" (or the nature of things pertaining to the cosmos or "world") and consistently applies this to topics of salvation. On the other hand, the Confession is not presently dealing with anthropology as within creation, especially as it relates to our free will as described later in Chapter 9 and fallen anthropology as it is discussed in Chapter 6. Therefore, it would be an error to pit this section *against* either "free will" or "human responsibility" Perhaps one way of reconciling these things is to remember that God's decrees, while acting upon time and space, are

transcendent to time and space as a created order. Therefore, what God decrees in his transcendent state may very well work through created orders such as free will within time and space such that the created orders are not violated by God's sovereignty, but rather the in complement to God's sovereignty. Hmmm!

9. Paragraph 6 indicates that God ordains not only the ends, but also the means. This is established by 1 Pet. 1:1-2: "...who are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure."

6. As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath he, by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Wherefore, they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by his Spirit working in due season, are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by his power, through faith, unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

10. Note also the "train" of saving activity affirmed in paragraph 6, and based upon Romans 8:29-30: "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined {to become} conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He predestined, these He also called; and whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified."

11. Paragraph 7 teaches that God is to be praised for his decrees. The Assembly noted the prayer of thanksgiving offered by Jesus "I praise Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes" (Mat. 11:25).

Calvin: (p.952)

God's hidden decree is not to be searched out but obediently marveled at... I say with Paul that we ought not to seek any reason for it because in its greatness it far surpasses our understanding... Would he wish God's might so limited as to be unable to accomplish any more than his mind can conceive?

12. How does the doctrine of predestination encourage evangelism and sanctification?

See Whitfield to Wesley

See also Calvin, p.960

John Wesley's Objection to the Doctrine of Election in Relation to Evangelism:

If this be so (i.e. if there be an election) then is all preaching vain: it is needless to them that are elected; for they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be saved. Therefore, the end of preaching to save souls is void, with regard to them. And it is useless to them that are not elected; for they cannot possibly be saved; they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be damned. The end of preaching is therefore void, with regard to them likewise. So that in either case our preaching is in vain."

George Whitefield's response:

O dear Sir, what kind of reasoning, or rather sophistry is this! Hath not God, who hath appointed salvation for a certain number appointed also the preaching of the word, as a means to bring them to it? Does any one hold election in any other sense? And if so, how is preaching needless to them that are elected; when the gospel is designed by God himself, to be the power of God unto their eternal salvation? And since we

know not who are elect, and who reprobate, we are to preach promiscuously to all. For the word may be useful, even to the non-elect, in restraining them from much wickedness and sin. However, it is enough to excite to the utmost diligence in preaching and hearing, when we consider that by these means, some, even as many as the Lord that ordained to eternal life, shall certainly be quickened and enabled to believe. And who, that attends, especially with reverence and care, can tell but he may be found of that happy number? ... it is the doctrine of election that mostly presses me to abound in good works. I am made willing to suffer all things for the elect's sake. This makes me to preach with comfort, because I know salvation does not depend on man's free will, but the Lord makes willing in the day of his power and can make use of me to bring some of his elect home, when and where he pleases.

What was Whitfield's source for motivation in Evangelism and what Biblical references support them?

1. Whitfield was motivated by his trust in God's power working in the gospel to save.

Rom. 1:16 For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

2. Whitfield was motivated by his love not for the "lost" generally, but for the lost of God's sheep, those who are the elect but do not enjoy the privileges.

2Tim. 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, so that they may also obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

Notice also:

Matt. 24:22 *And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short.*

Titus 1:1 *Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect and the knowledge of the truth that is in accordance with godliness,*

Luke 15:11ff It was love for a lost "son" that Christ says ought to motivate the Pharisees to preach the gospel:

3. Whitfield's confidence in the efficacious power of the Holy Spirit to effectually call those God has prepared for salvation.

Eph. 2:1 And you were dead in the trespasses and ... **4** But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, **5** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ— by grace you have been saved...**8** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,

1Cor. 1:18 For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. **19** For it is written,

"I will destroy the wisdom of the wise,
and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart."

1Cor. 1:20 Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? **21** For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. **22** For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, **23** but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, **24** but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. **25** For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

1Cor.2:9

But, as it is written,

"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,

nor the human heart conceived,
what God has prepared for those who love him”—
10 these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. 11 For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God.

13. What would be missing in theology and Christian experience without the doctrine of predestination?
(Romans 9:22ff)

See for instance:
Calvin: p.921, 948

For instance: What would be missing if it were not true, that "God has also predestined the fall into sin"
(Calvin, p.955)

14. What are your general observations about Calvin's description of God and His electing some into everlasting life?

15. What does the Confession warn against in Section 8? What does it teach is the proper end to this discussion?

The Issue of "Predestination" summarized:

Predestination does not come from John Calvin; it comes from the Bible.

- The word "predestined" is found in Romans 8:29,30 and Ephesians 1:5,11.
- The words "elect" and "election" are used 14 times in the New Testament.
- The idea of God's sovereignty (control) in the salvation of sinners is found throughout the Bible (Mt. 24:22; Mk. 13:27; Rom. 11:7; II Tim. 2:10; Titus 1:1; I Peter 1:1; Acts 13:48; Jn. 6:37; 10:27-29; 6:39, 44, 65; 17:6,9)

Romans 9:22-23 – "What if God, desiring to show his wrath and to make known his power, has endured with much patience vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, in order to make known the riches of his glory for vessels of mercy, which he has prepared beforehand for glory...."

Ephesians 1:5-6 – "In love he predestined us for adoption through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace...."

Proverbs 16:4 – "The Lord has made everything for its purpose, even the wicked for the day of trouble."

Predestination is not fatalism. It is not the case that some people want to come to Christ but cannot since God has not predestined them. Critics of predestination jest, "*You can but you can't, you will but you won't, you're damned if you do, and damned if you don't.*" This is not the case. Note first and secondary causes etc.

Predestination does not cancel out human responsibility. The Bible holds election and human responsibility side-by-side. Dutch theologian R.B. Kuiper compared the balance between God's sovereignty and human responsibility to two ropes coming down through two holes in a ceiling; they appear as two ropes, but actually are one rope suspended by a pulley above the ceiling. If you wish to support yourself by them, you must grasp both ropes; clinging to just one rope will be disastrous. Similarly, it will one day become clear that the twin strands of divine sovereignty and human responsibility are of a piece.

Predestination does not cancel out the free offer of the gospel. Christ offers salvation freely to all who would receive it.

- Mt. 11:28 - "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."
- Jn. 3:16 - "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."
- Acts 17:30 - "he commands all people everywhere to repent"
- Rom. 10:13 - "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."
- Cf. John 6:37, 40, 47; Rev. 22:17

Note: We "will" to believe, even if we need a "new nature" to will God! (see below Free Will).

Predestination is necessary. If God were not sovereign in granting salvation none would be saved.

Thomas Boston, the great Scottish theologian (1636-1732), illustrated man's spiritual condition by comparing the unconverted person to a man in a pit. He can only get out of the pit by grabbing hold of the rope of gospel let down by Christ and be pulled out of his misery. Yes, he may decide to pull himself up by the rope of the gospel, but there's one problem: the unconverted man is dead in the pit. Can a dead man grab the rope of the gospel? Can a dead man reach out in faith for Jesus?

We are unable to save ourselves.

- Eph. 2:1,4,5 - "you were dead in your transgressions and sins...But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions -- it is by grace you have been saved."
- I Cor. 2:14 - "The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned."

Predestination is difficult to understand. Romans 11:33; Deuteronomy 29:29)

Chapter 9: Free Will

1. *God hath endued the will of man with that natural liberty, that it is neither forced, nor, by any absolute necessity of nature, determined to good, or evil.*
2. *Man, in his state of innocency, had freedom, and power to will and to do that which was good and well pleasing to God; but yet, mutably, so that he might fall from it.*
3. *Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation: so as, a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto.*
4. *When God converts a sinner, and translates him into the state of grace, he freeth him from his natural*

bondage under sin; and, by his grace alone, enables him freely to will and to do that which is spiritually good; yet so, as that by reason of his remaining corruption, he doth not perfectly, nor only, will that which is good, but doth also will that which is evil.

5. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.

1. What does Section 1 basically teach?

2. What are three views regarding "free will" and their respective implications?
(See Hodge, p.159ff)

3. Unlike with God, people are said to be created "mutable." Why is this significant according to the WCF, section 2?

The human will is not a distinct agent, but only a power of the rational soul. It is essential to the soul to have a moral disposition, good or bad, or a mixture of both; and according to what is the prevailing moral disposition of the soul, must be the moral actings of the will. Hence there is a great difference in regard to the freedom of the will in the different states of man. In the state of innocence, the natural inclination of man's will was only to good; but it was liable to change through the power of temptation, and therefore free to choose evil. In his natural corrupt state, man freely chooses evil, without any compulsion or constraint on his will; and he cannot do otherwise being under the bondage of sin. In the state of grace, he has a free will partly to good and partly to evil. In this state there is a mixture of two opposite moral dispositions, and as sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, prevails to the will sometimes chooses that which is good and sometimes that which is evil. In the state of glory, the blessed freely choose what is good and being confirmed in a state of perfect holiness, they can only will what is good.

Robert Shaw, *An Exposition of the Confession of Faith*

Note implications for ethics.

4. The WCF states that "man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all *ability* of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation." In what sense ought we to distinguish between "liberty" and "ability" according to Hodge? (p.164)

What role do religious affections play regarding the above distinction?

5. Why is it important that Westminster qualified the above statement with "accompanying salvation?" How does the distinction between "common grace/particular grace" or "general revelation/special revelation" assist us here?

6. According to Section 3, Why would it be wrong to think of "free will" in contrast to "predestination?" What are some ways that the Standards seek to avoid this false dichotomy?

7. What did the fall do to "free will" and how does this effect our understanding of "freedom?"

7. According to Section 4, what happens to us in relation to "free will" after our Christian conversion? What about immutability/mutability? (Note also Luther, p.139-40)

8. Discuss the contrast between biblical "freedom" and the freedom patterned after the sinful nature.

John 6:44,66, No one can come to me unless drawn by the FAther who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day... For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father. (See also John 3)

Romans 6:6ff, We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. For whoever has died is freed from sin.

Romans 6:16, Do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God that you, having once been slaves of sin, have become obedient from the heart to the form of teaching to which you were entrusted, and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

2 Peter 2:19 They (false prophets) promise them freedom, but they themselves are slaves of corruption; for people are slaves to whatever master them...

Martin Luther, BOW, "that a will which has no power without grace is not free"

Hence it follows that "free will" without God's grace is not free at all, but is the permanent prisoner and bondslave of evil, since it cannot turn itself to good. This being so, I give you full permission to enlarge the power of "free will" as much as you like, make it angelic, make it divine, if you can!— but when once you add this doleful postscript, that is ineffective apart from God's grace, straightway you rob it of all its power... Note, however, that if we meant by "the power of free will" the power which makes human beings fit subjects to be caught up by the Spirit and touched by God's grace, as creature made for eternal life or eternal death, we should have a proper definition. And I certainly acknowledge the existence of this power, this fitness, or "dispositional quality" and "passive aptitude" which as everyone knows is not given to plants or animals. As the proverb says, God did not make heaven for geese!

9. When are we "immutably free."

10. Why do you think the Divines included the word "only" in section 5.

11. What did Luther mean by his Horse and rider analogy? What elements in this analogy correspond to the WCF? (Luther, p.140, 232)

Notice what he assumes about the horse.

Notice what he assumes about the rider.

12. How does Luther describe "free will" in relation to God's power? (p.232-239)

13. How does Luther describe "free will" in relation to sin?

(Paul Althous, The Theology of Martin Luther, p.156-157)

Without such a rebirth, man's will remains enslaved and bound. Man stands as under the inescapable necessity of sinning in everything that he is and does. This, however, does not remove his responsibility and guilt. A man is not forced to sin against his own inner will. Rather it is in his will that he experiences the inescapability of sin. He is necessarily a sinner but he is also a sinner voluntarily. "We do not sin against our will but rather according to our will... we are not able to sin involuntarily." Man is, however unable to change his basic will. And he himself is bound within it as a person. He cannot handle his lack of freedom to do good and his subjection to the evil as though it were his fate or a natural condition of his existence that could be separated from himself as a person. His will is bound, but it is and remains his will. He repeatedly and voluntarily acts according to it. For this reason, the inescapability of sin does not cast doubt on the fact of man's guilt. Luther always asserted both at one and the same time

14. Notice that Luther, like Calvin and we believe like Paul, affirms the Biblical response to the mysteries of God regarding these topics.

This belongs to the secrets of his majesty, where his judgments are incomprehensible. (Rom.11:33) it is not our business to ask this question, but to adore these mysteries. And if flesh and blood is offended here and murmurs (cf. John 6:61), by all means let it murmur; but it will achieve nothing; God will not change on that account. And if the ungodly are scandalized and depart in great numbers (John 6:66f.) yet the elect will remain.

15. To what exactly do we make our appeal when preaching? To what do we place our confidence? Is the distinction helpful?

Applied to Prayer

16. How should we relate all this to Prayer? (See B.M. Palmer's excellent *A Theology of Prayer*)

Charles Spurgeon

It is well said that "asking is the rule of the kingdom." It is a rule that will never be altered in any body's case. If the royal and divine Son of God cannot be exempted from the rule of asking that He may have, you and I cannot expect to have the rule relaxed in our favor. God will bless Elijah and send rain on Israel, but Elijah must pray for it. If the chosen nation is to prosper, Samuel must plead for it. If the Jews are to be delivered, Daniel must intercede. God will bless Paul, and the nations shall be converted through him, but Paul must pray. Pray he did, without ceasing; his epistles show that he expected nothing except by asking for it.

B.M.Palmer on God's sovereignty and prayer:

The scriptural principle is not that favors are, by our importunity, wrung from the reluctance of the Divine Being, but that they antedate the prayer in the determinations of His sovereign and gracious will; and the true spirit of prayer, which He also imparts, is the sign and pledge of the gift to be conveyed. Prayer then, as already stated, is not the cause which procures through its own efficiency, but merely the antecedent condition upon which a predetermined benefit is suspended. The purpose to give is, on Jehovah's part, sovereign and free; it is the spontaneous movement of His own gracious and loving will. Yet, in the exercise of the same sovereignty and goodness, He interposes the prayer of the creature as the channel through which His favor shall descend.

Palmer on "in the Spirit"

It is the effectual, fervent prayer of the righteous man that prevails. But what renders prayer "effectual"? Not its length, nor its vehemence, nor its eloquence, nor its passion, but simply the living sympathy which is established between the soul pleading in the closet, and the Savior interceding in the heavens. This is secured through the intervention of the Divine Spirit. He takes the desires which are in the heart of Jesus Christ, and works them into our hearts so that they become our desires. He takes the pleas which is upon the lips of the great Advocate above, and seals it upon our lips as our prayer in Christ's blessed name. It is this sweet, but secret, correspondence between our Head and ourselves that makes true prayer at all. Aside from this all is mere posture and the mutter of incantations... His work (consists in) bringing the intercession of our Lord above, into the desires and petitions of the Christian below; whereby they become the intercessions of the Spirit, who thus blends his advocacy with that of Christ himself.

Free Will-- Scripture References

Human Liberty-- to exercise volition as we please

James 1:12 ¶ Blessed is anyone who endures temptation. Such a one has stood the test and will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him. **13** No one, when tempted, should say, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil and he himself tempts no one. **14** But one is tempted by one's own desire, being lured and enticed by it; **15** then, when that desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and that sin, when it is fully grown, gives birth to death.

Deut. 30:19 I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live,

Eccl. 7:29 See, this alone I found, that God made human beings straightforward, but they have devised many schemes.

Gen. 1:26 ¶ Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth."

Gen. 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, "You may freely eat of every tree of the garden; **17** but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die."

Gen. 3:6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate.

Human Inability-- pertaining to the capacity to will that which is contrary to our most fundamental affections, or the capacity to exercise volition to make oneself desire and love that which one does not spontaneously desire or love.

Rom. 5:6 ¶ For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

Rom. 8:7 For this reason the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law--indeed it cannot,

Rom. 3:9 ¶ What then? Are we any better off? No, not at all; for we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin, **10** as it is written: ¶ "There is no one who is righteous, not even one; **11** there is no one who has understanding, there is no one who seeks God. **12** All have turned aside, together they have become worthless; there is no one who shows kindness, there is not even one."

Eph. 2:1 ¶ You were dead through the trespasses and sins

Rom. 7:15 I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate.

Divine Intervention Alone Can alter our fundamental affections

Eph. 2:5 even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--

John 6:44 No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day.

John 6:65 And he said, "For this reason I have told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted by the Father."

Eph. 2:2 in which you once lived, following the course of this world, following the ruler of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work among those who are disobedient. **3** All of us once lived among them in the passions of our flesh, following the desires of flesh and senses, and we were by nature children of wrath, like everyone else. **4** But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us **5** even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved--

1Cor. 2:14 ¶ Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.

Titus 3:3 For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, despicable, hating one another. **4** But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, **5** he saved us, not because of any works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy, through the water of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

Phil. 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Liberty is always relative to our fundamental affections-- our affections are enslaved to either sin or righteousness... It is therefore appropriate to say that God saved us for freedom!

Col. 1:13 He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son,

John 8:34 ¶ Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin.

John 8:36 So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.

Phil. 2:13 for it is God who is at work in you, enabling you both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

Rom. 6:18 and that you, having been set free from sin, have become slaves of righteousness.

Rom. 6:22 But now that you have been freed from sin and enslaved to God, the advantage you get is sanctification. The end is eternal life.

Gal. 5:17 For what the flesh desires is opposed to the Spirit, and what the Spirit desires is opposed to the flesh; for these are opposed to each other, to prevent you from doing what you want.

Rom. 7:18 For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh. I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. **19** For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do.

Immutable Liberty in ultimate glorification

Jude 1:24 ¶ Now to him who is able to keep you from falling, and to make you stand without blemish in the presence of his glory with rejoicing,

1 John 3:2 Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

Heb. 12:23 and to the assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,