

Reformed Doctrine, Chapter IX Of Free Will

I.

God created man so that the will of man has liberty and by absolute necessity is neither determined to good or evil.¹

II.

Man being created in a state of innocence had the freedom to will and do what was pleasing to God.² This ability to please God however was changeable in that man could fall from his place of innocence³ with the ability to please God.

III.

Because of his fall into sin man has completely lost all ability of will to do any spiritual good as accompanies salvation.⁴ A natural man is altogether against such good.⁵ All mankind is dead in sin⁶ and unable to save self by his own strength. Man cannot convert himself or prepare himself to be converted⁷.

IV.

God converts a sinner and thereby translates him into a state of grace that releases the converted from their natural bondage under sin.⁸ By God's grace alone God enables the converted to will and do that which is spiritually good.⁹ Nonetheless, because man still has corruption in his flesh man cannot perfectly or only will to do only that which is spiritually good, but also to will and do that which is evil.¹⁰

V. The will of man is made perfectly and immutably free to good alone, in the state of glory only.¹¹

Questions

1. How does man have free will?
2. Without conversion what is the only thing man can will or do?
3. What ability did man have when created that he no longer has because of sin?
4. When is this state of glory whereby the will of man is made perfect achieved?

¹ James 1:13-14; 4:7; Deut. 30:19; Isa. 7:11-12; Matt. 17:12; John 5:40

² Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 1:26, 31; Col. 3:10

³ Gen. 2:16-17; 3:6, 17

⁴ Rom. 5:5; 8:7-8; John 6:44, 65; 15:5

⁵ Rom. 3:9-10, 12, 23

⁶ Eph. 2:1, 5; Col 2:13

⁷ John 3:3, 5-6; 6:44, 65; I Cor. 2:14; Titus 3:3-5

⁸ Col. 1:13; John 8:34, 36; Rom. 6:6-7

⁹ Phil. 2:13; Rom. 6:14, 17-19, 22

¹⁰ Gal. 5:17; Rom. 7:14-25; I John 1:8, 10

¹¹ Heb. 12:23; I John 3:2; Jude 1:24; Rev. 21:27