NEW FOCUS

God's Multiple Wills

Counterfeit Gospels

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Many free-willers and duty-faith people who call themselves ‘Calvinists’ speak of two different wills in God which they call His secret and revealed wills. These two sides of God, they believe, run parallel to each other and never the twain shall meet in this life. They tell us that this paradox or seemingly self-contradiction in God will be explained in glory. In other words, they refuse to preach the full will of God as revealed in His full gospel and ban it to that area of thought symbolised by the adage ‘Pie in the sky when you die’! Theirs is a half-gospel which is thus no gospel.

Maximising and minimising God’s will

Such would-be Calvinists tell us that those who reject duty obedience leading to faith, which they claim is God’s revealed law, maximise God’s secret will in election but minimise His revealed will concerning salvation. This is, of course, utter nonsense. How do they presume to know that God has two wills and how do they discern which is which? The Scriptures only reveal one will and that will is manifested in the work of Christ within the mutual Trinitarian Covenant which is revealed openly from Genesis to Revelation. This Covenant explains clearly why our triune God implemented the creation of this earth for the election process of choosing out a people of God, otherwise called, Christ’s Bride, the Church.

A false will revealed and a false will hidden

False gospelers of separate wills in God, one concerning predestination and another salvation, usually teach that God has only revealed one of His wills in Scripture which is present in a conditional form for the salvation of sinners, should thy accept it. Their gospel is thus a half-truth at best. God, they say, has kept back from believers and unbelievers alike His true, secret or hidden will with regards to predestination which they say is unconditional in the salvation of the elect. Indeed, they separate election from Christ’s atoning work feeling that paradoxically enough, though Christ atoned for all sinners thus warranting salvation for all, only some are chosen out of the number for whom Christ died to be ever with Christ in His heavenly home. This unscriptural view isolates predestination from the Atonement and ignores the fact that we are elected in Christ and not by a fiat of God separate and prior to it in some fanciful time before time. This is what expositors from more able times called ‘Hyper-Calvinism’. Such ‘Hyper-Calvinism’ is fundamental to the Liberal, speculative philosophical

postulation held by most Fullerite advocators. Fullerites should examine the historical Hyper-Calvinistic roots in Fuller's Soham thinking which he never gave up as we know from his subsequent stand alongside Hyper-Calvinists, Arians and Socinians. The Fullerite gospel in whatever modern form, is utterly foreign to the God who has revealed His one immutable will in both law and gospel within the Covenant of Grace from Genesis to Revelation. For Fullerites, the universal, redemptive nature of the Atonement was a failure as Christ did not save most of those for whom He died.

An error anchored in denominational creeds and constitutions

Sadly, this wayward teaching is outlined in a number of denominational creeds and confessions which feature separate doctrines of predestination and election on the one hand and Christ's atoning work on the cross on the other as if God were at enmity with Himself. A case in point is the Westminster Confession's Article III 'On God's Eternal Decree' which starts with a Zwinglian definition of God's decree of predestination in a time before time but mentions Christ's Atonement as secondary and subsidiary to it. Similarly, in Article VII 'Of God's Covenant with Man', the covenant outlined can hardly be called Christocentric and scarcely reflects the Pan-Biblical Covenant of Grace the gospel of which does not distinguish between predestination and salvation. This Covenant was engaged in and ratified by the Holy Trinity with Christ as its Alpha and Omega. So, too, systematizing God's Covenant into separate covenants with man hardly touches on the Divine Tribunal that authored and authorized the Covenant of Grace. Yet Scripture testifies to the comforting fact that God's Eternal Covenant has to do with seeking out a people of God who are elected in Christ and for whom Christ died. To them alone belongs the New Birth. One cannot possibly make two separate doctrines out of the one doctrine and then claim that God must have two wills. Sadly, I have often been pestered by 'well-meaning' pastors who have claimed that Christ had a different will to His Father's and who believe in a Father of predestinating wrath and a Son of loving, saving compassion. This old and long condemned heresy is still rampant today.

So, too, a theology which splits up its 'god' into conflicting characters is not the theology of the Bible unless we are talking about Baal. The Push-Me-Pull-You, Yin and Yang Fullerite view of God is utterly pagan but they tell me that their division allows for a clearer doctrine of salvation which sinful man understands. How can one see clearer through the agency of confusion and utter spiritual darkness?

God's one will is revealed in Christ

In the Scriptures, we learn how God's immutable will is done through Christ who is the author and finisher of our faith and there is nothing in the Bible which speaks of what our Fullerite friends call the separate secret and revealed wills of God in salvation. The lost, of course, do not know God's

will at all, whether we think of God's hidden will or His revealed will, but lost sheep found by Christ do. When we repeat the Lord's Prayer and say with Christ, 'Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven', we believe as Jesus teaches, that God's one will is universal and singular and there is no 'secret' about that. That God alone is God and His ways past finding out by fallen man has nothing to do with a separate, secret will of God but has all to do with man's incapability to understand and accept God by himself. However, it is the duty of all preachers who preach the dark gospel of legal obedience and duty faith to sinners, blind to God, to listen to God's enlightening Word which preaches a true and eternally valid full gospel for their half-deaf ears and half-blind eyes. Then, they will see that they are duty-bound as Christ's ambassadors to teach their flocks what they claim is God's secret will. They are called by God to preach God's way for the sake of Christ's Church. Obviously, if they do not know God's ways, they cannot direct others along God's paths.

God continually reveals His ways to His people

How God reveals His ways to Christ's Church which are past finding out for unbelievers is illustrated in the opening chapters of Isaiah. This New Covenant preacher is unwisely overlooked by many modern evangelists and preachers who erroneously think the New Covenant started with Luke's Gospel and Acts. After condemning Israel of the flesh and rebuking the harlot Jerusalem but thankful for the small spiritual remnant that God has preserved, Isaiah prepares the world for God's New Jerusalem and the true House of Israel which is to be found in all the nations of the earth. In Chapter 2:3, he proclaims:

And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

Here, God reveals that He has chosen out His gospel-bearers to teach sinners the ways and will of God so as not to become unprofitable servants. It is through such full gospel preaching and not half-gospel preaching that God has chosen to make His ways and paths well known to true Israel. This truth is also continuously emphasised in the New Testament where hitherto hidden things are revealed to Christ's flock. God has no secrets from His own. Indeed, Isaiah's message is repeated more or less verbatim throughout the whole Old Testament and the New Testament. This gospel is that God reveals His hidden will to those whom He chooses out of the world. This will is lost to the lost.

That great preacher of the Covenant of Grace, Jeremiah, constantly taught his flocks that the hidden and secret mind of God concerning salvation is revealed in the preaching of the Word. The preacher and prophet, imprisoned because of his gospel of hope, declares in Chapter 33 that the Lord's people who call on the Lord will be told things they know not (v. 3)

and will be cured of their sin and an abundance of grace and truth shall be revealed to them (v. 6) and they shall be cleansed from all their iniquity (v. 8). This was also the gospel of Daniel when in Daniel 2:22 he proclaimed: 'He revealeth the deep and secret things', and what about the prophet Amos who declared in Amos 3:7, 'Surely the Lord God will do nothing but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets'? Then we have David, forerunner of Christ, who praises God throughout Psalm 25 for showing him His ways and teaching His paths (v. 4) and leading him in the truth and rejoicing in the fact that 'the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him' (v. 14). We see also that Micah in Micah 4:2 quotes every single word of Isaiah when referring to God teaching the elect of all nations who make up God's true Zion. As Isaiah, he puts all this into an international, world-wide setting which is continued until Malachi and the announcement of the coming of John the Baptist to make clear the paths of the Lord. The New Testament starts in its opening books with the announcement that the Old Testament is continued in the New. Here we see that the Old Testament doctrines are opening New Testament eyes and even the Old Testament angels such as Gabriel are still at work.

God's will is the same in both the Old and New Testaments

This gospel or New Covenant message, hidden to unbelievers and revealed to believers, is carried on from the Old Testament into the New Testament where we find Mark in Mark 4:22 telling us that in the gospel 'there will be nothing hid that shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad'. This is echoed verbatim in Luke 8:17. This is the constant teaching of the gospel from Genesis to Revelation and it has always been God's way of bringing in the sheep and God's secret things which are the gospel are certainly not left to our reason, or rather guess-work, until the gospel harvest is brought in. I was greatly moved by the insight of Jaques Courvoisier in his work on Zwingli where he comments:

The Gospel speaks to the humble, those who know they know nothing. The Jews asked Jesus by what authority He did what He did. But the people who believed in Him did not need to ask. They knew perfectly well!

Is this gospel still hidden from our Fullerite friends? This is the gospel they ought to be preaching instead of playing at being higher gods themselves in foolishly setting themselves over God and analysing and dissecting His eternal and immutable will as if it had never been revealed to them. Yet our Fullerite friends claim that their lop-sided gospel represents ‘Calvinism’. Sadly, in spite of what both Testaments tell us about preaching the gospel, there are still modern Pharisees and Sadducees leading our churches who behave like the unbelieving Jewish religious leaders of our Lord Jesus Christ’s day and not the believing House of Israel who look forward to the New Jerusalem.

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