

Doctrine of Free Will and the Sovereignty of God

1. In the battle over free will, the question arises how it relates to the sovereignty of God.
2. Humanism exalts the free will of man over the sovereignty of God and so oppose the doctrine of election and the doctrine of predestination.
3. Divine providence is also a challenge to those who exalt free will. How can God govern and rule His creation in sovereignty and power and man have free will? Of God the Scriptures affirm that He raises up nations, and destroys them, all things are by the determinate counsel of God, and a man's days are determined by the Lord.
4. Does God make intelligent guesses about tomorrow, or does He determine what will happen tomorrow?
5. Does God knowing something make it certain? Does foreknowledge carry with it predetermining what is going to come to pass?
6. To solve this tension, the metaphor of the parallel lines is used, sovereignty and free will, and they "meet" in eternity. But, this metaphor of the parallel lines does not solve the problem but only affirms the problem.
7. Human freedom and sovereignty are not inheriting contradictory, though they are a mystery.
8. What is contradictory is sovereignty and human autonomy, meaning man is a law unto himself. If man is autonomous, God cannot be sovereignty, and vice versa.
9. We can conceive of human autonomy and we can conceive of divine sovereignty, what we cannot conceive is how they are reconciled: like an immovable force meeting an irresistible force. (Song?)
10. The Bible does not elevate the freedom of man of autonomy. The chief sin of Adam and Eve was for autonomy. The sin of Satan was to be like God!
11. Freedom is real, freedom is far reaching, but the freedom God gives is not absolute. Do not eat of the Tree of Knowledge or you will die. Sin is the attempt of man to increase the scope of the freedom to which he has been endowed.
12. It is argued that God is limited by human freedom. But if my freedom can stop God in His tracks than man is sovereign! There is no other option. God is freer than me and in any conflict, man will lose. God will permit sin, in His sovereignty. He does not force, or bless sin but He will allow it. But that is how God govern providentially.

In Genesis 50:20 we read, "You meant to hurt me, but God meant your actions for good!"

Judas freely chose to hurt Jesus, but God used his treachery for good.

13. Intentionality is an important part of the discussion of the sovereignty of God.
14. This is in contrast of something being done accidentally. We see the moral import of intentionality when there is a car “accident.”
15. However, even our intentions are subject to the authority of God. In God we live and move and have our being.
16. We are real secondary casual agents, and bring about an effect, but we are still subject to the sovereign. God does not force what we do, nor excuse what we have done.