

His dead-will had been made alive! Is yours?

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# IS GOD A GENTLEMAN?

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(editing by Kathy Boynton)

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# IS GOD A GENTLEMAN?

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“Your thoughts of God are too human.” This famous statement was written by Martin Luther as a rebuke to the scholar, Erasmus. Erasmus had failed to recognize that the fall of man, in the Garden of Eden, had caused man’s spirit to die and his will to become totally depraved. Scripture refers to this depraved will as “the carnal mind,” and says, “... the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God” (Romans 8:7-8). Man’s fall was complete and rendered his mind and will unable to please God by choosing righteousness.

Some have said “God is a gentleman and would never violate a person’s will by forcing him or her to believe in Him.” The words “violate,” and “forcing,” here, are unfortunate because they are designed to generate antagonism toward God’s supreme authority over man’s fallen will. When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, Lazarus had no ability, whatsoever, to choose life. He was dead. Yet I have never heard anyone accuse Jesus of violating Lazarus’ dead will! Jesus’ command, “Lazarus come forth,” gave Lazarus life where none had been. There

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was no option for God the Son’s command to be disobeyed!

Lazarus pictures a spiritual reality. Jesus was sovereign over Lazarus’ physically dead status. He is also sovereign over the spiritual death from which He chooses and calls His own. He has the power and authority to fill a dead person with life thereby giving that person a new and living will. This is not a violation of that person’s rights. It is a merciful rescue from death! Without God’s sovereign power over man’s dead will, Salvation is impossible! The Psalmist said of Christ, “Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power ...” (Psalm 110:3).

I once knew a man who pitied his “gentleman God” as an impotent beggar, constantly seeking followers, but lacking power to overcome their wills. Only when he understood God’s authority, power, and majesty did he understand his own fallen state and inability to choose righteousness. He cried out to Jesus, God the Son, for mercy and forgiveness based on Christ’s sacrificial death and shed blood on the cross of Calvary.

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