

The Freedom of a Christian

Martin Luther

November 1520

A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none, a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone.

Although these statements appear contradictory, yet when they are found to agree together, they will be highly serviceable to my purpose. They are both the statements of Paul himself, who says "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant until all (1Cor 9:19), and: "Owe no man anything, but to love one another (Rom 8:8) No love is by its own nature dutiful and obedient to the beloved object. Thus, even Christ, though Lord of all things, was yet made of a woman; made under the law at once free and a servant; at once in the form of God and in the form of a servant.

Bondage of the Will

Martin Luther

December 1525

I say that man without the grace of God nonetheless remains the general omnipotence of God who effects, and moves and impels all things in a necessary, infallible course; but the effect of man's being carried along is nothing--that is, avails nothing in God's sight, nor is reckoned to be anything but sin." 265

I say that man, before he is renewed into the new creation of the Spirit's kingdom, does and endeavors nothing to prepare himself for that new creation and kingdom, and when he is re-created has does and endeavors nothing towards his perseverance in that kingdom; but the Spirit alone works both blessings in us, regenerating us, and preserving us when regenerate, without ourselves..." 268

"All the passages in the Holy Scriptures that mention assistance are they that do away with "free-will", and these are countless...For grace is needed, and the help of grace is given, because "free-will" can do nothing."270