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God and Free Will

Radically Biblical, Apostolic, Christianity



Bishop D.R. Vestal, PhD

Larry L Yates, ThD, DMin

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Introduction

The Branches of Philosophy

Philosophic inquiry can be made into any subject because philosophy deals with everything in the world and all of knowledge. Philosophy is basically divided into five branches. The branches are:

1. **Metaphysics**
2. **Epistemology**
3. **Logic**
4. **Ethics**
5. **Aesthetics**

A. **Metaphysics** is the study of the fundamental nature of reality and existence and of the essences of things. Metaphysics is itself often divided into two areas: *Ontology* and *cosmology*.

Ontology is the study of being. Cosmology is the study of the physical universe, or the cosmos, taken as a whole. Cosmology is also the name of the branch of science that studies the organization, history, and future of the universe.

B. **Epistemology** aims to determine the nature, basis, extent of knowledge. It explores the various ways of knowing, the nature of truth, and the relationships between knowledge and belief.

C. **Logic** is the study of the principles and methods of reasoning. It explores how we distinguish between good reasoning and bad reasoning.

D. **Ethics** concerns human conduct, character, and values. It studies the nature of right and wrong and the distinction between good and evil. Ethics explores the nature of justice and of a just society, and also one's obligations to oneself, to others, and to society.

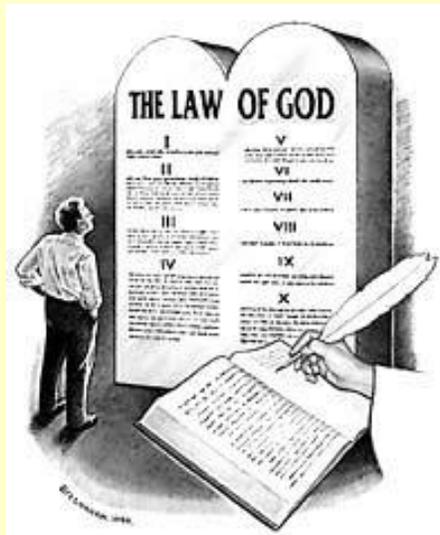
E. **Aesthetics** deals with the creation and the principles of art and beauty. It also studies our thoughts, feelings, and attitudes when we see, hear, or read something beautiful.

Other fields of philosophy can include the philosophy of science, the philosophy of language, and the philosophy of Religion.

We have put together many lessons in the field of philosophy for the student, and give a variety of subjects which affect man and his existence in society.

Some of these lessons include, Creation, the existence of God, Law, Education, Economics, Government, Language, Child development, Adult development, Creation and Evolution, Predestination, Christian morality, Moral philosophy, Chemical Dependence, Christian marriage, Marriage and divorce, Deviant behaviors, Venereal Diseases, Abortion, Ancient philosophers, Astronomy, Science and philosophy and many other subjects related to Philosophy.

Moral Law & Moral Government



1. **Law means a rule of action** established by recognized authority to enforce justice and prescribe duties and obligations to those governed. *Physical law* is the rule of action of the material universe whereby all things are kept perpetually in their own courses, and work in harmony according to the divine plan. *Moral law* is the rule of action for free moral agents to direct them in their moral action and their own creative powers according to the divine plan. It is the rule of free and intelligent action and liberty as opposed to the law of bondage and unintelligent action.

2. **The Purpose of Moral Law.** It is to reveal and declare the rule of moral action of free wills concerning the highest good of being and of the universe; and to govern the acts and intents of free wills in their relation to God and the universe. It lies in the reason and declares that which a moral agent ought to choose, will, and intend.

3. **The Immutability of Moral Law.** It can never change or vary in its requirements that all free wills consecrate themselves to the same end to which God is consecrated--the highest good of the universe and all things therein. Rebellion of free wills will never change God's plan concerning the good of His creation. Because of this, moral law can never change.

4. **The Obligation of Moral Law.** Because it governs the best good of being, it is naturally obligatory upon all. What is contrary to the good of being is plainly illegal and unwise and must be prohibited. Free moral agents must cooperate to bring about the greatest public good. They must be against that which brings misery and hardships to society. It is a mutual plan for the good of each person and of the universe as a whole, and all are obligated to keep the moral law on every occasion according to the light received.

5. **The Requirement of Moral Government.** To have moral law there must be moral government to direct, guide, and control moral agents. It must include rewards for good and

punishments for evil, or no society of free wills can function. There must be in every community some standard of living to which all must conform to prove themselves worthy of being part of that society. There must be some means of dealing with rebels who disturb such society. Law without penalties and rewards is no law at all. It is merely advice which free wills can freely accept or reject without fear of punishment or hope of reward. Moral government is under obligation to execute faithfully the moral law to the letter.

6. **Requirement of a Moral Governor.** Since it is necessary to have moral law and moral government to execute this law, there must also be a moral governor whose will and decisions are considered infallible by all the subjects of government. He should be authoritative, not merely advisory. He must be able to maintain the respect of his subjects by faithful and unselfish execution of his duties. He must be able to execute penalties and mete out rewards. Naturally, the one whose attributes and character best qualify him to rule and secure the highest good of all should be the one to rule. It is both his right and duty to be the one to rule. There can be no other person to meet these requirements but God. His natural attributes, His perfect moral character, His relation to the universe as Creator, and His history of absolute justice to all, qualify Him to be the Supreme Moral Governor. As our good and His glory depend upon mutual conformity to the same end, He is under obligation to require of us to be holy and consecrated to help Him secure the highest good of being.

7. **Free Moral Agency Defined.** It consists of intellect, sensibility, and free will, and these form the foundation of moral obligation to moral government. *The intellect* includes reason and self-determination. *The sensibility* includes self-consciousness, all sensation, desire, emotion, passion, and all feeling. *Free will* is the power of choice concerning moral law. It is man's faculty of choosing good or evil without compulsion or necessity. It was originally created in man, and he will have it in all eternity.

8. **The Basis of Right Choice.** Moral obligation to always act for the best good of

all is the basis of moral action. Nothing can happen in life but what is the choice of someone. It is all important that right choices be made that will affect the greatest public and private good. Moral obligation extends to the ultimate acts of the will or the intention. The moral agent is under obligation to choose holiness as the means to the best good and happiness of being.

9. **The Basis of Justice.** Judgment based on intention is the right basis of justice under moral government. This is also the basis of justice in civil governments. If choices are made that had good intentions but did not turn out for the best, or if choices had bad intentions and turned out to be good, the one making the choice should be held responsible for the intention and would not be judged on the basis of accomplishments.

The Bible respects the intention more than the results of the outward actions (2 Cor. 8:12; Mark 7:15-23; James 1:13-15; 3:9-14). All vice and virtue are considered as coming from the heart. Where the heart is right, all is considered right, and where the heart is bad, all is considered bad (Matt. 7:15-21). Even sinners do some things outwardly that are required by God, but the heart is not right. The intention is generally selfish, and the acts themselves do not change the heart. Virtue consists of consecration to the same end to which God is consecrated.

Vice consists in consecration to the end to which Satan is consecrated--self-gratification contrary to the moral law and the highest good of the universe.

10. **The Extent of Obedience to the Moral Law.** The foundation of moral obligation is the highest good of all. Since this is true, then entire consecration of free wills to secure this end must constitute obedience to moral law. Obedience must be whole and entire. One cannot choose the good of others and at the same time choose self-gratification. God cannot tolerate half-heartedness in choice and service (Rev. 3:15-16; Matt. 22:36-40). He cannot justify one who renders partial obedience according to his light.

If a person is always coming short of full obedience to known duty, then there is not a moment in which he is not under the curse of a broken law (Gal. 3:10-14; James 2:10; 4:17). God cannot dispense with the execution of the penalty until repentance, forgiveness, and full obedience are realized (Rom. 8:1-13; Gal. 5:16-26; Rom. 6:16-23; John 8:34; 1 John 3:8-10).

11. **Of What Does Disobedience to the Moral Law Consist?** It consists in the choice and life of self-gratification as the end in life instead of the greatest good of the universe. It consists in the commitment of the will and the consecration of the life to serve sin and Satan and the senses instead of the moral law of the intelligence. It seeks to be governed by the impulses and passions instead of by intelligence and reason. Self-gratification is the root of all sin. Man's selfishness is closely allied to the self-interests of Satan.

The will is always free to oppose desire and lust contrary to the law; but when it does not, sin is committed. The mind knows its obligation; so when it chooses contrary to the law, it is not a choice of ignorance. It becomes a free action and brings condemnation by the law. Selfishness is always unreasonable. It is the denial of true manhood and rational nature. It is contempt of the law of God in man's reason. No sinner chooses the way of reason and common sense. He seldom consults reason for his actions. He usually obeys lust and is in stubborn rebellion against the moral law and reason. He is lustful at heart whether he can obey all lusts or not. As long as he remains so, he is condemned before God and needs regeneration to bring him to obedience to the law.

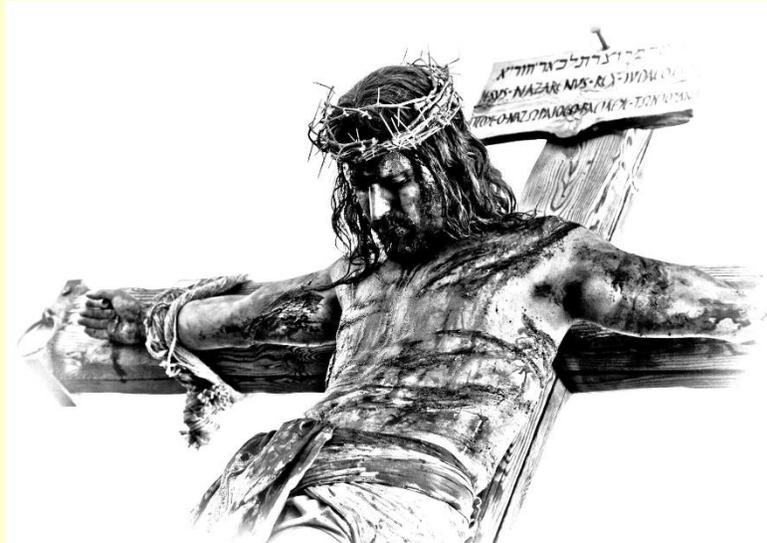
12. **The Basis of Degrees of Guilt and Virtue.** Both reason and revelation affirm that there are degrees of guilt and virtue; that some are more guilty or more virtuous than others; and that one may be more guilty or more virtuous at one time than at another, whether he is a saint or a sinner. All guilt and virtue are dependent on the exercise of moral obligation, and this depends upon the light and knowledge concerning moral law.

Degrees of guilt and virtue are measured by the knowledge of the value of the end chosen in life. The sinner's guilt is equal to his knowledge of the value of the interests he rejects. He is held more responsible today than of old, because he knows more (Acts 17:30; James 4:17). A man's guilt or virtue, then, is equal to the knowledge he has of the subject and his conformity to it (Rom. 2:12-16; John 9:41; 15:22-24; Matt. 13:11-12; Luke 12:47-48).

Selfishness is the rejection of all moral obligation, regardless of light. Sin lies in the intention, and this can be measured only by the knowledge under which the intention is formed and maintained. Thus, if a selfish man should preach the gospel, it would be for the reason that it is the most gratifying thing he could do for himself. He might even preach for the good of others and yet have as his chief motive personal benefits. Take away personal gain, financially or socially, and he would cease to preach. If the same man became a robber, it would be to the same end: not to do evil, but to gratify self.

If a sinner abstains from some evil for the sake of loved ones, his reputation, for fear of judgment or disgrace, or for any reason, it is not because he is good at heart, or because he thinks it is wicked to do that thing, but merely for selfish reasons and personal gain. So it is with every phase of life in which the heart is not right. Natural man looks for gain or advantage in everything. It is only when the sinner consecrates himself to the end of the highest good of being, that he ceases being a sinner by nature and practice and begins to do things from an unselfish standpoint instead of for self-gratification as the end in life.

The Philosophy of Redemption



The Bible from Genesis to Revelation teaches a substitutional and vicarious atonement for the sin of man. This is the only sane, logical, and scriptural doctrine of all those that are taught to man to help him in his fallen state. The atonement of Jesus Christ should be understood as both legal and practical. The reason and necessity for the atonement is clear when we understand the love of God, His relationship to the human race, the fall of man, and his need of redemption. The atonement is a necessity in view of these truths. We should understand the atonement as being not only necessary if man is to be restored to original fellowship with the Creator, but that it was not an afterthought on the part of God because man fell.

It is the most wonderful pre-planned, necessary, just, authoritative, and legal work of God in all prophecy and history. The entire subject is a judicial one, and all the terms used in Scripture to express it are legalistic, such as an advocate, an intercessor, a mediator, a judge, a judgment, condemnation, pardon, justification, redemption, adoption, intercession, restitution, reconciliation, law, sin, penalty, justice, government, etc.

In the fall of man Satan appears as more than a kidnaper or slave-master holding his slaves for ransom or redemption, but he has assumed a pseudo-sovereignty over man on the principle of the consent of a responsible agent. He governs men only by the

consent of man. His government is only by the consent of the governed. This kind of government is the only kind that God Himself recognizes or could reasonably establish with laws of rewards and penalties. This is the only kind that could possibly be carried on with free moral agents. Satan became the usurper of man's dominion and assumed the position as "the prince of this world" and "the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (John 12:31; 2 Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:1-3). Fallen men are called spiritual children of the devil (John 8:44; 1 John 3:8-10; Matt. 13:38).

That natural fallen men are bound to sin and Satan by consent of the will is clear from the fact that when men become old enough to be accountable for their personal acts, they can continue in sin or freely choose to renounce sin and Satan and turn to God (John 3:16; Rom. 6:16-23; 2 Cor. 4:2-6). They are willing subjects of sin and Satan and are free to become subjects of God and dispossess the devil at any time.

If men could once and for all learn that they can of their own consent be made free from sin, sickness, disease, failure, and the works of the devil; that they can by their own consent refuse to be subject to Satan and his government; that they can turn from sin and become righteous through Christ; that they can reject and refuse sickness and be healthy through the atonement; and that they do not have to remain defeated in life in any endeavor, they would reject all demon powers and doctrines; they would accept God and the truth and be made free and kept free by the power of God through faith in Christ.

God planned through the atonement to defeat Satan and cause him to lose control over his usurped dominion. God chose the atonement as the means to enlighten, transform, and deliver man from all of Satan's power and influence through the gospel. Satan is now perfectly defeated by the atonement, and every man can resist, defeat, and get rid of Satan and demons in his life by faith in Jesus Christ. Satan is forced to flee when he is thus resisted and rejected by faith in the blood (James 4:7). He still tries to cling to his dominion over men through intimidation and fallacies of various kinds. As long as saints permit him to make them afraid, make them doubt God and keep them in

error, he will be more or less successful in holding them in some sort of bondage. To completely dislodge Satan and demons entirely, the whole truth must be known, and firm and vigorous resistance to them must be practiced until they flee.

The Philosophy of Redemption May Be Summed Up as Follows:

Man was created sinless and perfect and given dominion over all the works of God's hands. He was supposed to rule for God and to continue in righteousness and true holiness. He was supposed to protect his dominion from outlaws and all intruders who were enemies of God and man. He was fully enlightened as to the will of the Creator. The law as well as the penalty for breaking the law was made clear. Man was trusted to obey God and do His will.

Man sinned and forfeited his right to life and fellowship with God. By his own consent he submitted his dominion to the devil and evil spirit forces who took advantage of man and his morally fallen nature and weakness to resist. The penalty for sin was death. The penalty had to be paid, and God's moral law and His adherence to moral law had to be upheld. Man could not pay the penalty and still go free, for he had not the power to take his life up again should he die and pay the penalty. If he paid the penalty he must remain forever dead. If man was to become reconciled to God and go free, some substitute had to be found to take man's place and fully meet the demands of the law.

This substitute had to be a man in order to take man's place. He had to be more than man to be able to rise from the dead after paying the penalty, else he would remain forever dead. He must be someone who would willingly take man's place, for it would have been unjust of God to force anyone to die against his will. He had to be a sinless person, for if he were a sinner he would have to die for his own sin only. He could not have also died for all other sinners. He also had to be a federal representative of all men like Adam; else he could not have propitiated God for all men.

Fallen man could not have provided such a being. He must come from God. God could not create a being for the express purpose of having Him die for a sinner, else He would have been charged with injustice by all other free moral agents, especially His enemies. If God was to have men on the Earth to carry out His original purpose, He must either let the sinner pay his own penalty and remain forever dead and He must create another man to take the place of the original man, or He must Himself take the place of the original man, so that he could go free. This latter plan was the one God chose, for if He had chosen the first plan, the second man might have sinned as did the first. In that event, God's plan would have been no further along. Of course, this latter plan was the original plan of God, for He made man on a low plane and placed him on probation and planned that if he fell, a Savior would be provided so that all who would accept His substitutionary work for them could go free.

In this way God would be free from any charge of injustice, and His own Being and form of government would be magnified before all free moral agents in all eternity. In this way man could be retried, tested, and given another probationary chance to prove true so that finally God's purpose concerning man and the Earth could be realized.

Now no free moral agent can accuse God of being a tyrant or unjust to any person, for God did not create an innocent victim to take a sinner's place, nor demand that somebody else do something He would not do Himself. Neither did He take the rebel's life nor judge him without giving him a chance to make good and become reconciled if he so desired. God Himself took



man's place and took the full penalty and met the demands of justice, thus demonstrating His love and mercy. By this act of taking the rebel's place, God silenced forever all mouths in any form of accusation against Him and His dealings with His own creation; and by this act He fully upheld the demands of law and justice and proved that He is merciful and loving to all offenders and would give them another chance to prove themselves worthy of His great love.

For the sake of upholding the law and maintaining His government over all free wills in the universe, God could not have lessened the penalty or have been lenient with sin in any form. Otherwise, there would have been no end to a demand on such leniency by free wills who wished to sin. The law had to be upheld. Yet it certainly was not unjust for God to uphold the law and still have mercy by paying the penalty Himself, thus giving the rebel a chance of permanent reconciliation. Jesus Christ was indeed God manifest in flesh, born of a virgin, taking man's place so that God could be just in justifying all who accept this substitutionary work of God for man and desire full redemption from the fall.

Christ's virgin birth, deity, and sinlessness were all necessary in order to make Him a perfect substitute for man. He could volunteer to die for any and all men, for He was a free moral agent and capable of meeting the demands of the law so that man could go free. No other man had a life free to give, for all men had forfeited their lives by sin. The Sinless One alone could redeem. God in Christ made Himself human so that man in Christ might become divine. Jesus made Himself like man so that man could make himself like God. He came to Earth that men might go to Heaven. Even now by faith and by accepting Christ as our substitute all that was His becomes ours.

In other words, His sinlessness was necessary for His substitutional and vicarious work. His humanity was necessary for His work of taking man's place as a man condemned by God for committing sin. His virgin birth was necessary for His work of becoming a man. His deity was necessary for His work of representing God and of

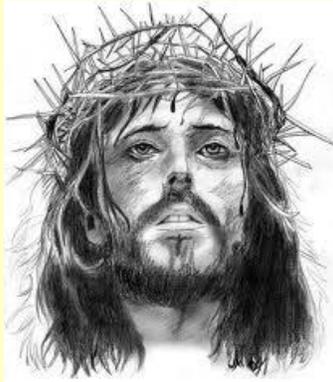
living again, that is, so that he could live after the death penalty was paid. It was impossible to hold Him in death since He had power to lay down His life and take it again (John 10:17-18; Acts 2:24). In this way He could go free from further penalty as well as those for whom He was a substitute. Both could live and serve God eternally. His temptation was necessary to prove His sinlessness. His sinlessness also was necessary to His right of eternal life. His eternal life was necessary to His right to resurrection, ascension, and eternal priesthood for those for whom he became a substitute. He lives now to represent them before God and defeat the false claim of Satan over them in this life (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 4:14-16; 6:20; 7:25; 9:11-28; 10:1-25).

When Satan put to death the sinless and uncondemned Christ, he forfeited all his satanic claims, rights, and pseudo-authority over all other men who were sinful and condemned. Through death Christ destroyed the devil and set man free (Heb. 2:14-15). When Satan did this, the Court of Heaven cancelled all the rights and power of Satan over his victims. Now Satan holds only a false authority over his devotees.

His chief method now is that of intimidation of his victims; and all who resist him and refuse to be intimidated get immediate victory over him. As representatives of God and officers of God's law we can now dispossess and cast out devils. Anyone who refuses to do this or who staggers in unbelief is out of the divine will and must suffer what he permits satanic forces to do to him. It is only by full co-operation with God and His truth that demon forces are destroyed and their powers are broken in the lives of believers.

Thus it is clear that God Himself assumed the entire responsibility to provide salvation for man. In the nature of things, however, this salvation had to be conditional, for it could be imparted only to those who repent and accept the substitutionary work of Christ for them and who purpose to rectify their lives; else it would become a premium on wickedness. If God would give salvation unconditionally and to all without their meeting the requirements of repentance, faith, and obedience to the gospel, it would be setting the divine approval upon sin and rebellion. It would encourage lawlessness and

freedom of self-gratification contrary to the holiness and nature of God and His law.



By the sacrifice of Christ, the penalty for sin was paid, the sentence of the law was upheld, the offender was propitiated, the offended was satisfied, and His honor and Word were justified, the holy demands were met, man and God were reunited, the usurper was destroyed, and the whole creation was delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. This work of God and His only begotten Son was entirely a work of grace--unmerited favor, for the ruined race who possessed no legal standing or merit at all.

Now, all sinners can be transformed by faith in the atonement. The incoming divine life with all its affections, dispositions, and ideals gives them victory over and freedom from the old sinful traits that are contrary to the will of God. This is not salvation by self-effort or human works or education. It is a new-born divine life imparted by the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, and faith in Christ and His atoning work. It is a supernatural life imparted to the inner man by the Spirit. Mere natural cultured virtues are never Christian graces and powers, for that which is born of the

flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit (John 3:1-8); Rom. 8:1-16; Gal. 5:16-26). No human development, education, or human effort will ever transform the human life from a life after the flesh to a life after the Spirit. Conversion is never evolution but the making of a new creature by a divine supernatural act (2 Cor. 5:17). The demands of the law are fully satisfied and humanity is cleared of all its claims through Christ. God is now justified in making new creatures out of sinful men and fully

reconciling them to Himself, as they were before the fall.

The incarnation was necessary for the substitute to become man to take the place of fallen man. He did not deserve death. He gave up His life for sinners. Therefore, His death became vicarious, propitiatory, and substitutional. In life He had set an example of how men should live like God, but an example is not enough to make men like God. An example of health will not heal a sick man, nor will an example of virtue make a sinner into a saint. It takes the death of Christ to do both. It was through His death, not His life, that He saved men from death and eternal Hell.

Satan in Scripture is pictured as “the accuser of our brethren,” accusing them before God day and night (Rev. 12:9-10). He is therefore the official slanderer or relentless prosecutor condemning men for the least sins. God the Father is pictured as the Defender and Enforcer of the moral law. Jesus is pictured as the Advocate or Defense Attorney, the Intercessor, the Mediator between God and man, and the Saviour of all men who believe. Men are accused of having sinned against God and as having broken His law; they are the “defendants” in a capital offense charge. Christ could not defend men as innocent because “ALL have sinned” (Rom. 3:23); nor could He set aside or combat the righteous decree nor remit the penalty. He could, however, become their substitute, as we have seen above, and He can now free from the penalty all who repent and rectify their lives from that moment on to obey the law.

The Supreme Moral Governor and Judge cannot condemn those in Christ as long as they remain in Him, and as long as they obey the moral law. Neither can He keep free from guilt those who go back into sin and break the law. The law must be upheld in every case, and the devil, the Prosecutor, wins the case of every one who chooses to live in sin, regardless of past cases Satan has lost in the Court of Heaven in the same lives when they chose to repent and rectify their lives and keep the holy law.

What a great responsibility this places upon man, to receive gracious pardon and the adoption into the family of God on the grounds of repentance and obedience to the

moral law! What a great opportunity man has to stay out of court forever if he will obey the law! No case will be considered against him as long as he does so. But let him commit sin again and he is immediately brought to trial, accused by the devil, tried in the Court of Heaven and sentenced to die. Satan wins the case and the sinner remains cut off from God until confession of sin is made and Christ is accepted as the sin-bearer, the sin is put away, and the death sentence cancelled.

One trial and one acquittal in the Court of Heaven does not suffice for all, unless the justified one quits the sin business and never goes back into sin again. If he sins he must incur the same penalty as before. He must be tried for his new crimes; and unless he frankly confesses his sins and gets them under the blood, he must pay the penalty as much as ever before.

No human court could forgive and justify any man once and forever and permit him to continue in the same crimes or later go back into those same crimes without going through the same process of a court trial and punishment again. So, it is with the Court of Heaven. The Supreme Judge, who is sworn to uphold the demands of the law in every case, cannot condone sin and guilt and excuse one person from the just penalty. If He did so in one case, all free moral agents and the subjects of moral government would lose respect for Him. Such a program would break down all moral restraint and encourage lawlessness on every hand.

The Divine Defense Attorney cannot in any one case take the place of the guilty until the sinner has met the conditions of repentance, faith, and consecration to again rectify his life in conformity to the moral law. Christ filed a counter-claim suit against Satan and won the case in the Court of Heaven. Now all one needs to do is to legally and personally reject all the claims of Satan and assert his proper authority over all demons.

If all Christians could come to see this simple and biblical truth, it would solve many problems and answer many questions concerning God's dealings with the saved and unsaved. It would settle many differences between large bodies of believers--one

holding to the truths stated above and the other maintaining that one time justified in the Court of Heaven the saved one can never be brought into judgment concerning any later sin committed.

John plainly shows that when a saved man sins he has an Advocate with the Father (1 John 2:1-4). No man is forced to use the services of the heavenly Advocate; and if he does not, he goes back into continued sin and rebellion; and if cut off in this state, will be lost as much as he ever was (James 5:19-20; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:9-11; Rom. 1:18-32; 6:16-23; 8:1-13; Ezek. 18:4; Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-29; 2 Pet. 2:20-22).

Does God exist?



Yes, the Bible provides compelling evidence that God exists. It encourages us to build faith in God, not by blindly believing religious assertions, but by using our “power of reason” and” mental perception” *Romans 11:34, 36* “*For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor? **For of him and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.***”

The existence of an orderly universe containing life points to a Creator. The Bible says: “*Of course, every house is constructed by someone, but the one who **constructed all things is God***”

(Romans 3:4). Although this logic is simple, many well-educated people find it to be powerful!

As humans, we have an innate desire to understand the meaning and purpose of life, a type of hunger that can remain after our physical needs have been met. This is part of what the Bible calls our “spiritual need.” which includes the desire to know and worship God (Matthew 5:3; Revelation 4:11). This spiritual need not only gives evidence that God exists but also indicates that He is a loving Creator who wants us to satisfy that need (Matthew 4:4).

Detailed prophecies in the Bible were written centuries ahead of time and came true exactly as predicted. The accuracy and detail of those predictions strongly suggests that they came from a superhuman source (2 Peter 1:21).

The late astronomer Allan Sandage once said regarding the universe, “I find it quite im-probable that such order came out of chaos.. There has to be some organizing principle. God to me is a mystery, but is the explanation for the miracle of existence, why is there is something instead of nothing.”

Free Will, is God in control?



God dignifies us with free will, the power to make decisions of our own rather than having God or fate predetermine what we do.

God created humans in His image (Genesis 11:26). Unlike animals, which act mainly

on instinct, we resemble our Creator in our capacity to display such qualities as love and justice. And like our Creator, we have free will.

To a great extent, we can determine our future. The Bible tells us to “choose life....by listening to His voice,” that is, by choosing to obey His commands (Deut. 30:19-20). This offer would be meaningless, even cruel, if we lacked free will. Instead of forcing us to do what He says, God warmly appeals to us” “O if only you would actually pay attention to my command-ments! Then your peace would become just like a river” (Isaiah 48:18).

Our success or failure in this life is not determined by fate. If we want to succeed at an endeavor, we must work hard. “And that your hand finds to do,” says the Bible, “do with your very power” (Eccl. 9:10). The Bible also says, The plans of the diligent one surely make for advantage” (Proverbs 21:5).

Free will is a precious gift from God to humanity, for it lets us love Him with our “whole heart” because we want to.

If man is not a free moral agent, then God can be held entirely responsible for all sin, rebellion, sickness, and all the effects of sin, as well as for the damnation of men and angels.

If Adam was responsible for his fall from grace or favor with God, if he chose to fall from his former state, if grace and divine favor did not keep him saved and holy, and if God left it up to the free will of man in the beginning, then it is the same with all men today. There is no passage of Scripture, and no one has ever give one, that proves that man is not a free moral agent all the days of his life, whether he is saved or unsaved.

Man is absolutely a free moral agent, and serves God or the devil as he freely chooses the devil or God ad he free chooses. If man wants to turn to God from the devil, he is always free to do so, and if he wants to turn from God to the devil he is

always free to do so. Neither master can force man to obey him if man does not freely choose to do so. Man has the free choice until death, of serving either master.



Man is morally obligated by his moral make-up to serve righteousness, live holy, unconsecrated himself to the same end that God consecrated--the highest good of all. Man is not forced to live holy. He is free to consecrate to the end that the devil is consecrated--a life of self-gratification. He is free to choose either end and to use the means of attaining to that end.

A saved man has the same power of choice as he had before he came converted to Christ. His desires are changed in Christ, but he can again permit the same desires to take hold of him again, and the flesh can gain as tendency over him again and he can choose to live in the old sin again. If he chooses to sin again he incurs the same death penalty and will be damned as much as if he had never been saved (Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 6:14-23; 8:1-13; Gal. 6:7-8; James 5:19-20).

In the matters outside the moral realm in which man has no choice, such as the case where man is not free to choose to be born, such has nothing to do with free moral agency which every man has when he is born. He is as he grows up, free to choose his own destiny by the choice of the life he lives in serving God or Satan. It is only when man becomes a free moral agent that he is held responsible.

To say that a man has no will power when he chooses to go back into sin and becomes over-powered by sin and Satan is to state falsehood. This does not prove he

is not a free moral agent. It proves man is a free moral agent or he could not have chosen to sin again. When man chooses to yield to sin again, Satan can make him a captive and can more or less dominate his life, depending on how much the man submits to him. Man can completely submit to demons and become a total slave to them. He can at any moment turn to God by his own free will and defeat the same spirit-rebels by the help of God. If he had no choice power to live right and turn to God, then we might argue he is not a free moral agent in the moral realm.

If man can resist sin at all it proves will power on his part. If he is exercising will in the least degree concerning moral things it proves he is a free moral agent. To be a servant of Jesus Christ does not do away with will power. It proves that the man does have such power or he could not have chosen to turn from Satan and sin. It is Satan who tries to enslave men and control their choices.

God always gives them freedom of action to serve Him. God said to Israel, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve" (Joshua 24:15). When people voluntary turn to God, then He will deliver them from Satan and permits freedom of action as to whether they will continue to serve Him or go back into sin.

Is Man a Free Moral Agent?

When God finished forming man from dust, God breathed life into Adam and he became a living soul (Genesis 2:7). When a person dies, his body returns to the earth and his spirit returns to God (Ecclesiastes 12:7). While a person may consider himself a "free moral agent," God has never relinquished His claim to every body He ever created and to every spirit He ever gave.

This is the first question to settle, for if man is not a free moral agent then God can

be held entirely responsible for all sin, rebellion, sickness, and all the effects of sin, as well as for the damnation of men and angels, as unconditional security men teach.

One of these teachers says, "No man is an absolutely free moral agent, for he is either led away by the devil against his will or he is a servant of Christ. I do not simply choose to keep myself in a place where I am secure. God has chosen me and I am secure in His choice." Another says, "Ownership means lordship. That which is owned has no right of will contrary to the will of the owner. . . . Adam was the only true free moral agent. When he sinned he lost free moral agency. No man ever wills to be born in the human race, and equally impotent is he to will to separate himself from the human race. . . . Yet it is argued that man can separate himself

from God. . . . It was not his own will to be born again, but the will of God (John 1:13) . . . Man has as little to do with that as he had to do with his physical birth.

As it is impossible for man to separate himself from the human race, so it is equally impossible for him, by a free act, to separate himself from God's kingdom. There is no such thing as free moral agency in the kingdom of God. . . . To say that a man can will to go away from God and be lost is to make the sovereign grace of God subject to the will of man."

MAKE A CHOICE

Man is a free-moral agent . He can determine his destiny by the choices he makes in relation to God's law. How much pain and suffering do we inflict upon ourselves and others because of bad choices?

"Choose for yourselves this day what you will believe"(Josh.24:15). "Choose life and the supremacy of the Name of Jesus, that both you and your descendants may live without fear and intimidation (Deut. 30:19-20)

These statements simply mean that man has no power to choose to serve God and consequently no responsibility in any sense in serving God or Satan or in being saved or lost, that it is up to God to choose each one or not, that those God sees fit to choose are secure by His own choice and not by man having anything to do with it, that God is a respecter of persons in not choosing some and in not making all men secure and in saving all men alike, that God is responsible for the sins and damnation of the lost as well as for the security of the few pets some say He delights in choosing, that some men can never be saved due to the fact God has not chosen them to be saved and to be as secure as the others, and that God is responsible for all the sins and sufferings and curses of the universe.

If Adam was responsible for his fall from grace or favor with God, if he chose to fall from his former state, if grace and divine nature did not keep him saved and holy, and if God left it up to the free will of man in the beginning, then it is the same with all men today. There is no passage, and no one has ever given one, that proves that man is not a free moral agent all the days of his life, whether he is saved or unsaved.

Man is absolutely a free moral agent and serves the devil or God as he freely chooses. If man wants to turn to God from the devil he is always free to do so, and if he wants to turn from God to the devil he is always free to do so. Neither master can force man to obey him if man does not freely choose to do so. Man has the free choice until death, of serving either.

Man is morally obligated by his moral make-up to serve righteousness, live holy, and conse-

crate himself to the same end that God is consecrated--the highest good of all. Man is not forced to live holy. He is free to consecrate to the end that the devil is consecrated-- a life of self-gratification. He is free to choose either end and to use the means of attaining to the end he

chooses. He is not forced to choose either end or the means of attaining to that end.



NATURAL LAW

- I. PHYSICAL LAWS & their properties -
The nature of all created things which is the principle of their movements & actions.
- II. MORAL ORDER – the universal natural moral laws built into human beings by God when creating them & are made accessible to the light of reason (discern what is good & what is evil).
 - It binds man to seek the good fitting his rational nature.

A saved man has the same power of choice as he had before salvation. His desires are changed in salvation, but he can again permit the same old desires to take hold of him again and the flesh can gain ascendancy over him again and he can choose to live in the old sins again. If he chooses to sin again he incurs the same death penalty and will be damned as much as if he had never been saved (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:14-23; 8:1-13; Gal. 6:7-8; James 5:19-20).

In matters outside the moral realm in which man has no choice, such as the case where man is not free to choose to be born, such has nothing to do with free moral agency which every man has when he is born. He is, as he grows up, free to choose his own destiny by the choice of the life he lives in serving God or Satan. It is only when man becomes a free moral agent that he is held responsible.

To say that a man has no will power when he chooses to go back into sin and becomes overpowered by sin and Satan is to state a falsehood. This does not prove he is not a free moral agent. It proves man is a free agent or he could not have chosen to sin again. When man chooses to yield to sin again, Satan can make him a captive and can more or less dominate his life, depending on how much the man submits to him.

Man can completely submit to demons and become a total slave to them. He can at any moment turn to God by his own free will and defeat the same spirit-rebels by the help of God. If he had no choice power to live right and turn to God, then we might argue he is not a free agent in the moral realm.

Because the Allies overcame the Axis nations in the last World War is no proof that the Axis did not have will power. We were stronger than they were and we were helped by God in their defeat. Their resistance as well as their choice in making war and in choosing to surrender proves they had will power.

If man can resist sin at all it proves will power on his part. If he is exercising will in the least degree concerning moral things it proves he is a free moral agent. To be a servant of Christ does not do away with will power. It proves that the man does have such power or he could not have chosen to turn from Satan and sin. To believe as the above men do would make God an unjust tyrant holding slaves in greater bondage than Satan ever did. It is Satan who tries to enslave men and control their choices. God always gives them freedom of action to serve Him. When they voluntarily turn to God then He delivers them from Satan and sin and permits perfect freedom of action as to whether they will continue to serve Him or go back into sin. It is true men are spoken of as servants to God, but it is a voluntary service. There is nothing arbitrary about it on God's part.

No freedom of choice to come into existence and no freedom of choice to become nothing again is naturally true, for man is an eternal creature and cannot will to cease to exist. This does not disprove free moral agency for man, who is always free to choose the highest good for himself and others or to choose selfish ends contrary to the highest good.

If we admit actions have certain effects we should also admit that these actions are free moral actions. If man had no free actions concerning moral living and God alone had the choice in man's actions, then He would be responsible for all evil and its effects.

God would be responsible for sin and could not justly judge man for his actions. He would also be responsible for death, the penalty for sin, and could not rightly execute the sentence of the broken law.

Adam or no other man ever lost the power of choice in the moral realm as long as sanity remained. To lose power to be what man was before the fall does not do away with man's power of choice. This is simply the result of the fall and of a wrong choice. Man is still free to choose God and righteousness and come back to the original state where the effects of the moral fall are erased. Man can be redeemed from the effects of the moral fall and again do right from free choice. Being overpowered by sin was a willing action to begin with or Adam never would have fallen unless God can be blamed for it. Since the fall, it is a willing co-operation with Satan to the same end, to gratify self, for one does not have to serve sin and Satan even one day, if he does not choose to do so.

If man never wills to be saved he will never be saved. This is why some are saved and some are not saved. It is God's will that all be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). If God's will is done all will be saved, but God will not and cannot save man until he chooses to be saved and calls upon God. God's plan is to "whosoever will" and God will not operate contrary to His own Word. However, man is not saved by his own choice *alone*, for there is no saving power in a mere choice. Then, too, salvation cannot be given by God without man's choice (Mark 16:15; John 3:15-20; 4:13-22; 14:6; Rom. 1:16; Heb.7:25; 1 John 1:9; 5:1; Rev. 22:17). Neither can man continue to be saved apart from his free choice (Isa. 59:2; Rom. 8:1-13; 2 Tim. 2:12; 1 Cor. 15:2; 1 Thess. 3:8; Heb. 10:26-29; 2 Pet. 2:20-21; etc.).

the penalties for disobedience and rewards for obedience. If he has no free moral choice to render obedience or disobedience and meet his own moral obligation, his own existence is an act of injustice and abortion on the part of the Creator. That man has intellect, reason, sensibility, and powers of knowledge and choice cannot be doubted as long as man is sane.

The freedom of the will of man in moral action has been denied IN THEORY by unconditional securities, but it has never been disproved and never will be. Those very ones who deny free will have admitted it in their arguments in trying to disprove it. The fact that they freely choose to deny such a plain fact as free action in man proves they have it and are exercising it. The fact that others who are more logical and do not choose to believe their vain arguments, but are honest enough to admit plain everyday facts also proves that all men have free wills to do as they please.

No man can deny the fact of free action in daily life without incurring the charge of insanity, for he knows in his own daily life that he has freedom of action to do right or wrong, or to be saved or lost according to God's law. By the necessity of his own nature he himself knows that he is a free agent in the moral realm. If he can hide this fact from himself, or argue himself out of this fact, he can likewise deceive himself about his very existence. He may, in speculation and for the sake of argument deny either fact, but the truth remains that he knows both. That HE IS and that HE IS FREE to choose his own destiny and moral actions in every stage of his life until eternity, are facts well known by virtue of his own creation and experience in life.

He not only has the power of choice but he has a natural created faculty that dictates to him what choice he should make concerning every moral action of free will. To deny the will is to deny the conscience and by so doing he can soon make himself believe he is not responsible for sin and its effects, even though he may sin every day. However, it will take more than a false doctrine of unconditional security to make him immune from sin and its effects.

Possession of the will and conscience makes man subject to the moral obligation to keep moral law and obey moral government. Every normal man recognizes these powers in himself and in all other men. This assumption is irresistible and universal and cannot logically be called into question, and would not be unless it is for some selfish purpose to prove a point or to excuse one's self in living in sin, contrary to Scripture.

Regardless of why it is called into question man's free will still remains an established fact of man's constitutional make-up. The affirmation by millions of men of sound mind that they are responsible for their acts among men and before God, shows beyond contradiction that all men regard themselves, and others, as subjects of moral obligation.

Moral obligation, made possible by the free will and the conscience, extends to the ultimate acts of the will concerning moral law. Man is free to choose obedience to the moral law, although he may be overpowered by sin and Satan in some acts because he wills not to serve God and live spiritually alive enough to resist the effects of a moral fall. Nevertheless, in these matters he is always free to reject Satan and turn to God to be free from the effects and responsibility of these sinful acts, or he is free to continue to submit to such bondage by his own free will.

He has a Helper in God and a deliverance in salvation if he chooses such, but as long as he chooses to remain in rebellion against God he has no claim on such help. Man is absolutely free to choose the end in life to which God is consecrated--the highest good of all, or he is free to choose the end to which Satan and all rebels are consecrated--a life of self-gratification contrary to the highest good of the universe and all societies therein.

Man can choose his own end and the means of securing that end. He is free to relinquish, at any moment, his choice of an end as well as the means to that end. He is free to refuse known necessary conditions and means to an end or he is free to accept them. He can always choose holiness as an end and also the means of attaining to that

end, or he can choose sin and the means to secure that end. He can choose any object or any means to an end, or refuse both as he pleases. He has absolute preference and choice in all matters pertaining to moral law and moral obligation and can choose the means to obey moral law and live up to moral obligations, or he can reject them. No choice can be made without the mind having a reason for that choice, and in this sense free will extends to the ultimate intention of the mind.

Such freedom of the will and conscience is recognized in young children who justify themselves in their acts in childhood. Grown people also exercise such freedom and make excuses to justify many acts. In many actions some are honest enough to admit wrong although in some acts they are justified by right and voluntary decisions. Courts of justice have always assumed that man is free to choose and they judge him on the basis of the ultimate intention of the will. Only lunatics are regarded as not being responsible for their acts, thus proving in the universality of belief in free moral agency as the first truth of reason, as well as of revelation.

The Bible throughout recognizes the freedom of the will and conscience. Moral obligation then extends to everything about us, over which the will has direct or indirect control. Our muscles, intellect, senses, and appetites are all controlled by the will. If one cannot directly do as he wills concerning moral law, then he can choose the means of grace that will enable him to obey the letter of the law. Hence, he is a free moral agent in the highest sense of the term.

The moral action is a voluntary action and moral obligation respects the ultimate intention only. Involuntary acts are not moral actions. Choices concerning the well-being of God and the universe constitute moral obligation and this God demands in His moral law. He cannot excuse breaking this law because He has provided all necessary means to obey it, if man wills to use them. This is why man is as responsible for his sins after he is saved as before. God requires both in the law and in the gospel that free moral agents choose the same end to which He is consecrated, consequently, all obligation consists of the choice to the same end. Virtue

consists of consecration to this end, and vice consists of consecration to the wrong end, self-gratification.

The so-called sovereign grace and the will of God are not the basis of moral obligation and free action. The moral law legislates over voluntary action only. It is our moral obligation to will the best good of all regardless of the will of God or of grace, for it is the law of our creative make-up. Whether God commanded it or not we would by nature be obligated to will, choose, and secure the highest good for ourselves and others.

God's will merely reveals to us the rule of action and choice but it never forces the choice in right action. This must be a free choice of man himself. The will of God as expressed in His law, is the rule for all free wills. This law defines the rule of moral action, and the reason to conform to it is the highest good of the universe. If God should command us to do that which our reason tells us is unwise and not for the good of all, it would be impossible for us to feel obligated to obey Him. Thus, reason does not regard His law as the foundation of moral obligation, but only as proof that what He commands is wise and best for all and that it is commanded for that reason.

The moral law makes known to free wills what is right and wrong but the whole thing is a farce if man has no choice in whether he should do right or wrong. Any theory concerning moral action that destroys the free moral agency of man is wholly illogical, impractical, unnatural, factitious, and unscriptural and must be rejected. All this fallacy of self-indulgence with a dream of Heaven and irresponsibility here and hereafter is a religion of Satan to damn souls and it should be treated as such. To teach it means that we make God the one committing the sins in both saints and sinners and the one responsible for some to be lost and others to be saved.

The Bible never teaches that God saves and keeps any man contrary to his will. Any action that man is responsible for in exercising his own created will power, should he make the wrong choice, does not make God responsible, nor lessen God's power, will,

purpose, or change God's attitude or plan to help man, should he change to the right choice and accept God's way and help.

God is limited in blessing man, should he rebel against Him. If He were not, then He would be obligated to force all men to be saved alike. If one is lost it only proves failure on the part of man, not God. It is God's will that all men should be saved, but the question of who will be saved depends on the individual, who must meet the conditions of salvation and of keeping saved (1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9; John 3:15-20, 36; Rev. 22:17). A saved man no longer belongs to God, if he rebels and lives and dies in sin.



The following statements prove both saints and sinners have the power of free choice and that God holds them responsible for wrong use of this faculty: "Choose you this day whom ye shall serve" (Josh. 24:15), "did not choose the fear of the Lord" (Prov. 1:29-33), "I have chosen the way of truth" (Psalms 119:30, 173), "They have chosen their own ways" (Isa. 66:3), "he will hold to the one, and despise the other" (Matt. 6:24), "I will follow thee" (Matt. 8:19), "If any man will come after me" (Matt. 16:24, 25), "Whosoever will do the will of God" (Mark 3:35; 16:16), "ye shall not come to me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40), "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7:17; 9:31), "If any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:26), "hath power over HIS OWN WILL" (1 Cor. 7:37), "If I do this thing willingly" (1 Cor. 9:17), "not by constraint, but willingly" (1 Pet. 5:2), "whosoever will" (Rev. 22:17).

These and literally hundreds of like passages in the Bible prove free moral agency.

The words “choice,” “will,” etc., are used over 4,000 times in Scripture. Other words expressing power of choice in all phases of life are used thousands of times, so to deny free moral agency of all men, saved or unsaved, is the rankest ignorance of all and willful blindness to plain facts.

Moral Education

Moral Education is instruction focused on questions of right and wrong. Moral education also includes the development of *values*, the standards by which people judge what is important, worthwhile, and good.

People receive moral education from many sources, including their church, family, friends, and teachers--and even television. Schools have always been involved in such education, either intentionally or unintentionally. For example, many stories for young readers include a moral lesson. During the 1970's, educators in the United States began to develop special teaching methods to help students deal with moral questions.

Methods of Moral Education

Schools use four chief methods in moral education: (1) inculcation, (2) values clarification, (3) moral development, and (4) value analysis.

Inculcation is an effort to teach children the values that educators believe lead to moral behavior. These values include fairness, honesty, justice, and respect for others. One way of teaching such standards is to provide appropriate praise and punishment. Another means is to have teachers reflect the desired values in their own behavior.

Values Clarification tries to help students understand the values they already have, not to teach them new ones. The learning procedures stress choosing thoughtfully from alternatives and acting on one's own convictions. Students also learn to respect their personal values and to declare them in discussion.

Moral Development helps students improve their ability to judge moral questions. This method is based on the theory that people progress from lower to higher stages of moral reasoning. According to the theory, young children's thinking about moral issues is based on their wish to avoid punishment or to satisfy their desires. Most adults reach a higher stage of development, where they obey moral laws to gain the approval of society. At the highest moral level, an individual might oppose the laws of society if they conflict with moral principles that are even higher.

Educators work to stimulate moral development by discussing difficult moral choices called *dilemmas*. One dilemma might be whether a physician should stop the treatment of a fatally ill patient who would rather die than continue to suffer unbearable pain. Classroom discussion focuses on exploring why a student favors a particular action, not on determining what action should be taken.

Value Analysis helps students apply techniques of logic and scientific investigation to matters involving values. Teachers stress the importance of exploring all alternatives, of gathering and evaluating the facts, and of making a logical decision.

Arguments About Moral Education

Some people oppose the teaching of moral education in schools. Many of these individuals feel that the family and church should provide such instruction. Others argue that moral education takes class time that should be used for such basic subjects as reading, writing, and mathematics.

Surveys indicate that most parents favor some form of moral education in schools. Supporters of such education argue; that the family and church have not done a good job of teaching moral behavior. They believe schools should also teach young people the skills to solve problems of morality.

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