

Grace Notes

December 2022

The Active Decree Of The Will Of God

By
Randy Borill

The idea that God does not positively determine moral evil, but merely permits the sinner to act on his own is a very common teaching found in many Churches, some that even call themselves "reformed". In *The Writings of James Arminius* (Baker, 1977). Arminius wrote: "God is the permitter of sin, ... in that He leaves to the creature the free disposition of his own influence" (Book 3, 450). These statements are contradicted by numerous scripture verses, for example: "The king's heart [i.e. mind] is in the hand of the Lord.... He turns it whithersoever he will" (Proverbs 21:1). "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue is from the Lord" (Proverbs 16:1); "He turned their heart to hate his people, to deal subtly with his servants (Psalm 105:25); "And the Lord said to Moses ... I will harden [Pharaoh's] heart, that he shall not let the people go" (Exodus 4:21); "There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, ... for it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that he might utterly destroy them" (Joshua 11:19, 20).

These verses, and many more, teach that the sinful acts of men are not the result of a "negative," permissive decree, but rather a positive, active decree in the will of God. Nevertheless, some divines such as John Gerstner claimed God "does not change the heart of the individual, or enable or incline the individual to do the virtuous and saving act, but on the contrary leaves the individual to himself. This individual then inclines toward the evil and does the wicked deed which brings about his damnation".(1) By concluding thus, as though sinners acted independently of God, he denies the plain teaching of Scripture and is deserving of Calvin's rebuke. For Calvin wrote: "It is easy to conclude how foolish and frail is the support of divine justice afforded by the suggestion that evils come to be not by His will, but merely by His permission. Of course, so far as they are evils, which men perpetrate with their evil mind, ... I admit that they are not pleasing to God. But it is quite a frivolous refuge to say that God otiosely permits them, when Scripture shows Him not only willing but the author of them... Who does not tremble at these judgments with which God works in the hearts of even the wicked whatever He will, rewarding them none the less according to desert? Again it is quite clear from the evidence of Scripture that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills just as He will, whether to good for His mercy's sake or to evil according to their merits, His judgment being sometimes open and sometimes concealed, but always just" (Concerning the Eternal Predestination of God, 176-177).

A Predestination Primer by John H. Gerstner (Winona Lake, Indiana: Alpha Publications, 1979 [1960])

Note:

Dr. Gerstner was professor of Church History and Government at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. He was also a minister of the apostate United Presbyterian Church. One is not surprised, then, by the fact that Dr. Gerstner's "*magnum opus*" on predestination is a defense of free will and an attack on divine sovereignty. John Gerstner was R. C. Sproul's mentor and was a lifelong disciple of Thomas Aquinas, the official philosopher of the Roman Catholic Church. Consequently, R. C. was as well.

Following the Morning Worship Service,
The Annual Christmas Dinner
of Grace Presbyterian Church
will be held on

Sunday, December 11th



*The meat and drinks will be provided.
Bring your favorite Christmas side dish
or dessert to share, and stay after
worship for a fellowship meal with our
church family.*

Guests are welcome!

FOR UNTO US
a child is born,
unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder:
and his name shall be called
***WONDERFUL**,*
COUNSELLOR,
THE MIGHTY GOD,
The everlasting Father,
THE PRINCE OF PEACE.

Isaiah 9:6

GRACE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

INVITES YOU TO ATTEND
SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:15 A.M.,
MORNING WORSHIP AT 10:45 A.M.

AND A
**CHRISTMAS DAY
WORSHIP SERVICE**
ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 25TH
AT 10:45 A.M.

PLEASE INVITE YOUR FAMILY AND
ATTEND THIS
WORSHIP SERVICE AS WE CELEBRATE,
WITH MESSAGE AND SONG, THE BIRTH OF
OUR SAVIOR,
JESUS CHRIST. THE SACRAMENT OF
HOLY
COMMUNION WILL BE OBSERVED DURING
THE CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE

WE WILL NOT HAVE A CHRISTMAS EVE
SERVICE SINCE CHRISTMAS FALLS ON A
SUNDAY.



The Lord's Supper

Grace Presbyterian Church will observe
The sacrament of Holy Communion during the
Christmas Day Worship Service, Sunday
December 25th at 10:45 a.m.

Everyone should spend time during the week before
preparing their hearts and minds to partake in this
sacrament.

Praying for our Nation...

Every Wednesday morning at 10:00 a.m.

Our group of prayer warriors meets in the
sanctuary for the sole purpose of praying for
our nation. If you cannot attend, please join
us in prayer from your home or office during
that time as we follow the command to pray
for all those in authority.

*"First of all then, I urge that supplications,
prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be
made for all people, for kings and all who
are in high positions, that we may lead a
peaceful and quite life, godly and dignified
in every way."*

(I Timothy 2: 1-2)



*Then you will call on me and come and pray to me,
and I will listen to you."*
Jeremiah 29: 12

Bible Study

DATE: EVERY WEDNESDAY

TIME: 10:30

Where: Fellowship Hall

Don & Dana Andries will be teaching from the
book

"Survey of The New Testament"

By

Jack B. Scott, Ph.D.

Pennies for Missions

Just a reminder that the WIC is still
collecting pennies for our missionaries! If you have any spare
change that you've been looking to get rid of, feel free to drop
it in the container in the Foyer or in the Sunday School
Rooms.

Grace Presbyterian Church
Website



www.gracepresbyterianbr.church

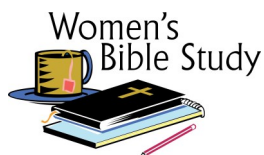
WIC Circle Meeting...

The Circle at Grace will be studying the book of James written by Mary Beth McGreevy. We are looking forward to seeing how this book of the Bible relates to each of us in our life today.

Please consider joining this group of ladies in our study, and the ministry we have at Grace. We have prayer, study, and fellowship every month.

We meet the second Tuesday of the month at 10 a.m. at Grace. We even love to invite friends to join us.

If you have any questions, please contact Marsha Allison.

**ChristianInquiry**

A Blog About Topics and Views of Interest to Christians

www.christianinquiry.com

This is a new blog from Dr. Gaylan McLin containing topics of interest, especially to Christians, and for sharing his views about those topics. Gaylan hopes that this blog will edify the readers and give glory to God.

Calendar of Activities for the Month

Men of the Covenant: Monday, December 1, 6:30p.m.
WIC Council Meeting: Tuesday, December 6, 10:00a.m.
Session Meeting: Monday, December 12, 5:00 p.m.
WIC Circle: Tuesday, December 13, 10:00a.m.
Prayer for our Nation: Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.
Bible Study: Wednesdays at 10:30 a.m.

The next **Session Meeting** will be
 Monday,
December 12 at 5:00 p.m.

Please contact Jesse Arnold, Kit Bonvillian, Randy Borill, Cleve Chandler, Dana Andries, Don Andries prior to the meeting if you have items to bring to their attention.

**Men of the Covenant
 Thursday, December 1**

All men of GPC are invited to the Men of the Covenant (first Thursday of each month, except for June through August).

We enjoy a nice meal around 7:00 p.m., but many of the men arrive around 6:30 to enjoy some good fellowship. Following the meal we will hear a devotion from the Word of God.

Men, please sign up in the foyer if you are planning to attend.

*“As iron sharpens iron,
 so one person sharpens another.”
 Proverbs 27: 17*

Cards for the Troops!

We greatly appreciate all the thought and care that was put into writing Christmas cards to our Troops who are serving overseas.

417 cards were filled out this year! Thanks again for blessing our Troops in this way! It means so much to them, knowing that they are not forgotten, especially at this time of year.



Christmas
 for **Christ**






December 2022

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” which means, God with us.” - Matthew 1:23



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 6:30 Men of the Covenant	2	3
4	5	6 10:00 WIC Council	7 10:00 Prayer for Nation 10:30 Bible Study	8	9	10
11 12:00 noon Christmas Luncheon 	12 5:00 Session	13 10:00 WIC Circle	14 10:00 Prayer for Nation 10:30 Bible Study	15	16	17
18	19	20	21 10:00 Prayer for Nation 10:30 Bible Study	22	23	24
25 Christmas Day Service Communion	26	27	28 10:00 Prayer for Nation 10:30 Bible Study	29	30	31



<u>December Birthdays</u>	
John McGehee	6
Nonie Futch	7
Stefanie Fletcher	13
Carol McGehee	16
Frank Allison	18
Donna Blanchard	20
Chris Devall	27

Grace Presbyterian Church
Presbyterian Church in America
9526 Joor Road
Baton Rouge, LA 70818

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Merry Christmas December 2022

PCA Ministerial Relief Offering

“For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints—and this, not as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then by the will of God to us. But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also”
2 Corinthians 8: 4-7

In 2023, the PCA and the Relief Fund will celebrate 50 years of ministry. As the ministry commissioned by the denomination to care for not only for our ministry workers, pastors, and widows now and in the future, we need your help. It is our prayer that your generosity will abound to meet these growing needs.

Every year, we pause to remember, honor, and care for those who faithfully serve Christ’s Church.

All over the country, PCA churches are collecting donations for the PCA Relief Fund. An increasing number of retired ministers, their widows, and other ministry staff live near the poverty line. We can change that. Your gifts help with groceries, housing, medical expenses and more.

As the church, we have a responsibility to look after those who have faithfully served our churches—in every season of ministry.

An offering will be taken at Grace Presbyterian Church on December 18th and 25th for the PCA Ministerial Relief Fund. This fund supports needy retired and disabled pastors, missionaries, church lay workers, their widows and dependent children. Please prayerfully consider how you may be able to aid in this effort.