

295 *Shining like stars IV – Freedom?*

Trying to reach Brad Jersak's *A more Christlike God*, chapter 3, 'Freedom or love?', I had another detour: editing a book for a friend of my Tim's. It's sort of about education/politics/history/philosophy/psychology/religion – well, life – relating to the amazing way the Nordic countries have transitioned from being dirt poor agricultural, ruled by clergy and aristocrats to among the richest, most industrialised countries in Europe in something like 100–150 years. What's *The Nordic secret*?!

Obviously, the poor needed education – this gave them the freedom to think for themselves and develop their potential – but it must be the right kind of education (for people of all ages), and that involves relationships. I can't precis 150,000 words, but one thing I hadn't appreciated was the crushing domination of aristocrats and clergy. Like the Pharisees before them: 'This is what God says you have to do!' But they now know not to just accept 'What you've always been taught' – think for yourself! (Isn't that what I've been doing?)

But the author thinks it's beginning to unravel; people are misusing that hard-won freedom, and the rich/poor gap is opening up again. I wonder why?

Now back to Brad 3, where he looks at two important moral strands, freedom and love – both important, both good, but his point is, when push comes to shove, which is **more** important. He asks what happens when our freedom is threatened; how do we react? That might be at a personal level or at any level up to international relations. (Somewhat germane with the current Middle East situation.)

One thing that stuck in my mind when I read Brad's book in 2018 was the freedom to bear arms, and Charlton Heston's comment (then president of the NRA): 'I'll give you my gun when you pry it from my cold dead hands.' He had the right to protect his freedom.

The Nordics used to just accept the authority they were under and had little or no freedom. Then the general populus were given access to education, and as the 'believe and do what you're told' ethos changed, they flourished, massively. But pure freedom can go wrong – very wrong – it has to be tempered by love, unselfish laying-aside-of-freedom love, in the interest of others. (Does 'laying aside' sound familiar?)

So what about God? God is free. God can do anything. God has ultimate freedom to do whatever he wills. And God is good, so whatever he does is good? (Even genocide?^[294])

But **does** God exercise his total freedom and do whatever he wills? We could ask the OT authors and get one view – but it's an incomplete view of God. So maybe we'd better ask Jesus, the one who *...did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped...*

Anyway, if God does whatever he wills, and no-one can stop him, why did Jesus tell us to pray, 'Thy will be done'?!

I just re-prayed the Lord's prayer, and it's looking very different these days.

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