

The Sovereignty Of God In Reprobation

by Arthur W. Pink

“Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God” [Romans 11:22]

In the last chapter when treating of the Sovereignty of God the Father in Salvation, we examined seven passages which represent Him as making a choice from among the children of men, and predestinating certain ones to be conformed to the image of His Son. The thoughtful reader will naturally ask, And what of those who were not “ordained to eternal life?” The answer which is usually returned to this question, even by those who profess to believe what the Scriptures teach concerning God’s Sovereignty, is, that God passes by the non-elect, leaves them alone to go their own way, and in the end casts them into the Lake of Fire because they refused His way, and rejected the Saviour of His providing. But this is only a part of the truth; the other part—that which is most offensive to the carnal mind—is either ignored or denied.

In view of the awful solemnity of the subject here before us, in view of the fact that today almost all—even those who profess to be Calvinists—reject and repudiate this doctrine, and in view of the fact that this is one of the points in our book which is likely to raise the most controversy, we feel that an extended inquiry into this aspect of God’s Truth is demanded. That this branch of the subject of God’s Sovereignty is profoundly mysterious we freely allow, yet, that is no reason why we should reject it. The trouble is that, nowadays, there are so many who receive the testimony of God only so far as they can satisfactorily account for all the reasons and grounds of His conduct, which means they will accept nothing but that which can be measured in the petty scales of their own limited capacities.

Stating it in its baldest form the point now to be considered is, Has God foreordained certain ones to damnation? That many will be eternally damned is clear from Scripture, that each one will be judged according to his works and reap as he has sown, and that in consequence his “damnation is just” (Rom. 3:8), is equally sure, and that God decreed that the non-elect should choose the course they follow we now undertake to prove.

From what has been before us in the previous chapter concerning the election of some to salvation, it would unavoidably follow, even if Scripture had been silent upon it, that there must be a rejection of others. Every choice evidently and necessarily implies a refusal, for where there is no leaving out there can be no choice. If there be some whom God has elected unto salvation (2 Thess. 2:13), there must be others who are not elected unto salvation. If there are some that the Father gave to Christ (John 6:37), there must be others whom He did not give unto Christ. If there be some whose names are written in the Lamb’s Book of Life (Rev. 21:27), there must be others whose names are not written there. That this is the case we shall fully prove below.

Now all will acknowledge that from the foundation of the world God certainly foreknew and foresaw who would and who would not receive Christ as their Saviour, therefore in giving being and birth to those He knew would reject Christ, He necessarily created them unto damnation. All that can be said in reply to this is, No, while God did foreknow these would reject Christ, yet He did not decree that they should. But this is a begging of the real question at issue. God had a definite reason why He created men, a specific purpose why He created this and that individual, and in view of the eternal destination of His creatures, He purposed either that this one should spend eternity in Heaven or that this one should spend eternity in the Lake of Fire. If then He foresaw that in creating a certain person that that person would despise and reject the Saviour, yet knowing this beforehand He, nevertheless, brought that person into existence, then it is clear He designed and ordained that that person should be eternally lost. Again; faith is God's gift, and the purpose to give it only to some, involves the purpose not to give it to others. Without faith there is no salvation-"He that believeth not shall be damned"-hence if there were some of Adam's descendants to whom He purposed not to give faith, it must be because He ordained that they should be damned.

Not only is there no escape from these conclusions, but history confirms them. Before the Divine Incarnation, for almost two thousand years, the vast majority of mankind were left destitute of even the external means of grace, being favored with no preaching of God's Word and with no written revelation of His will. For many long centuries Israel was the only nation to whom the Deity vouchsafed any special discovery of Himself- "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways" (Acts 14:16)-"Y ou only (Israel) have I known of all the families of the earth" (Amos 3:2). Consequently, as all other nations were deprived o f the preaching of God's Word, they were strangers to the faith that cometh thereby (Rom. 10:17). These nations were not only ignorant of God Himself, but of the way to please Him, of the true manner of acceptance with Him, and the means of arriving at the everlasting enjoyment of Himself.

Now if God had willed their salvation, would He not have vouchsafed them the means of salvation? Would He not have given them all things necessary to that end? But it is an undeniable matter of fact that He did not. If, then, Deity can, consistently, with His justice, mercy, and benevolence, deny to some the means of grace, and shut them up in gross darkness and unbelief (because of the sins of their forefathers, generations before), why should it be deemed incompatible with His perfections to exclude some persons, many, from grace itself, and from that eternal life which is connected with it? seeing that He is Lord and Sovereign Disposer both of the end to which the means lead, and the means which lead to that end?

Coming down to our own day, and to those in our own country-leaving out the almost unnumerable crowds of unevangelized heathen-is it not evident that there are many living in lands where the Gospel is preached, lands which are full of churches, who die strangers to God and His holiness? True, the means

of grace were close to their hand, but many of them knew it not. Thousands are born into homes where they are taught from infancy to regard all Christians as hypocrites and preachers as arch-humbugs.

Others, are instructed from the cradle in Roman Catholicism, and are trained to regard Evangelical Christianity as deadly heresy, and the Bible as a book highly dangerous for them to read. Others, reared in "Christian Science" families, know no more of the true Gospel of Christ than do the unevangelized heathen. The great majority of these die in utter ignorance of the Way of Peace. Now are we not obliged to conclude that it was not God's will to communicate grace to them? Had His will been otherwise, would He not have actually communicated His grace to them? If, then, it was the will of God, in time, to refuse to them his grace, it must have been His will from all eternity, since His will is, as Himself, the same yesterday, and today and forever. Let it not be forgotten that God's providences are but the manifestations of His decrees: what God does in time is only what He purposed in eternity-His own will being the alone cause of all His acts and works. Therefore from His actually leaving some men in final impenitency and unbelief we assuredly gather it was His everlasting determination so to do; and consequently that He reprobated some from before the foundation of the world.

In the Westminster Confession it is said, "God from all eternity did by the most wise and holy counsel of His own will, freely and unchangeably foreordain whatsoever comes to pass." The late Mr. F. W. Grant-a most careful and cautious student and writer- commenting on these words said: "It is perfectly, divinely true, that God hath ordained for His own glory whatsoever comes to pass." Now if these statements are true, is not the doctrine of Reprobation established by them? What, in human history, is the one thing which does come to pass every day? What, but that men and women die, pass out of this world into a hopeless eternity, an eternity of suffering and woe. If then God has foreordained whatsoever comes to pass then He must have decreed that vast numbers of human beings should pass out of this world unsaved to suffer eternally in the Lake of Fire. Admitting the general premise, is not the specific conclusion inevitable?

In reply to the preceding paragraphs the reader may say, All this is simply reasoning, logical no doubt, but yet mere inferences. Very well, we will now point out that in addition to the above conclusions there are many passages in Holy Writ which are most clear and definite in their teaching on this solemn subject; passages which are too plain to be misunderstood and too strong to be evaded. The marvel is that so many good men have denied their undeniable affirmations.

"Joshua made war a long time with all those kings. There was not a city that made peace with the children of Israel, save the Hivites the inhabitants of Gibeon: all other they took in battle. For it was of the LORD to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly, and that they might have no favor, but that He might destroy them as the LORD commanded Moses" (Josh. 11:18-20). What could be

plainer than this? Here was a large number of Canaanites whose hearts the Lord hardened, whom He had purposed to utterly destroy, to whom He showed "no favor." Granted that they were wicked, immoral, idolatrous; were they any worse than the immoral, idolatrous cannibals of the South Sea Islands (and many other places), to whom God gave the Gospel through John G. Paton! Assuredly not. Then why did not Jehovah command Israel to teach the Canaanites His laws and instruct them concerning sacrifices to the true God? Plainly, because He had marked them out for destruction, and if so, that from all eternity.

SEE ALSO:

"The riches of Gods love unto the vessells of mercy, consistent with his absolute hatred or reprobation of the vessells of wrath, or, An answer unto a book entituled, Gods love unto mankind."
