

**How God Reigns Supremely
over all creation**

**The Sovereignty of God
A.W. Pink
1918**

**A Summary/Key quotes.
Julian Kennedy Julian Kennedy.**

The Sovereignty of God

Summary Part 1

From the various forewords (1918, 1921, 1929).

The purpose of the book is “to examine anew in the light of God’s word some of the profoundest questions that can engage the human mind.”

So few Christian leaders are sound in doctrine specifically who believe that “the condition of the sinner is entirely hopeless” and also “in the absolute sovereignty of God.”

Pink graciously addresses his bitter enemies whom he “commends to God and the Word of His grace, remembering that it is written, ‘a man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.’ John 3:27.”

“Nothing is so tranquillising and so stabilising as the assurance that the Lord Himself is on the Throne of the universe, ‘working all things after the counsel of His own will.’”

Introduction: “Throughout Christendom, with an almost negligible exception, the theory is held that man is a ‘free agent’, and therefore, lord of his fortunes and the determiner of his destiny.” Interestingly and somewhat prophetically in 1918 he said, “none can say how soon another great war will be set in motion.”

“After nineteen centuries of Gospel preaching, Christ is still “despised and rejected of men.” Worse still, He (the Christ of Scripture) is proclaimed and magnified by very few. In the majority of modern pulpits, He is dishonoured and disowned.”

“Who is regulating affairs on this earth today-God, or the Devil? What impression is made upon the minds of those men of the world who, occasionally, attend a Gospel service? What are the conceptions formed by those who hear even those preachers who are counted as “orthodox?” Is it not that a disappointed God is the One whom Christians believe in? From what is heard from the average evangelist today, is not any serious hearer obliged to conclude that he professes to represent a God who is filled with benevolent intentions, yet unable to carry them out; that He is earnestly desirous of blessing men, but that they will not let Him? Then, must not the average hearer draw the inference that the Devil has gained the upper hand, and that God is to be pitied rather than blamed?”

“But what does “walking by faith” signify? It means that our thoughts are formed, our actions regulated, our lives moulded by the Holy Scriptures, for, “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10:17). It is from the Word of Truth, and that alone, that we can learn what is God’s relation to this world.”

‘The people that do know their God shall BE STRONG AND DO EXPLOITS’
(Daniel 11:32)

Summary Part 2

Chapter 1 God’s sovereignty defined

“The Sovereignty of God. What do we mean by this expression? We mean the supremacy of God, the kingship of God, the god-hood of God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that God is God. To say that God is Sovereign is to declare that He is the Most High, doing according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, so that none can stay His hand or say unto Him what doest Thou? (Dan. 4:35).”

“How different is the God of the Bible from the God of modern Christendom! The conception of Deity which prevails most widely today, even among those who profess to give heed to the Scriptures, is a miserable caricature, a blasphemous travesty of the Truth. The God of the twentieth century is a helpless, effeminate being who commands the respect of no really thoughtful man. The God of the popular mind is the creation of maudlin sentimentality. The God of many a present-day pulpit is an object of pity rather than of awe-inspiring reverence. To say that God the Father has purposed the salvation of all mankind, that God the Son died with the express intention of saving the whole human race, and that God the Holy Spirit is now seeking to win the world to Christ; when, as a matter of common observation, it is apparent that the great majority of our fellowmen are dying in sin, and passing into a hopeless eternity; is to say that God the Father is disappointed, that God the Son is dissatisfied, and that God the Holy Spirit is defeated. We have stated the issue baldly, but there is no escaping the conclusion. To argue that God is “trying His best” to save all mankind, but that the majority of men will not let Him save them, is to insist that the will of the Creator is impotent, and that the will of the creature is omnipotent. To throw the blame, as many do, upon the Devil, does not remove the difficulty, for if Satan is defeating the purpose of God, then, Satan is Almighty and God is no longer the Supreme Being.”

“To argue that man is a free moral agent and the determiner of his own destiny, and that therefore he has the power to checkmate his Maker, is to strip God of the attribute of Omnipotence.” “The Sovereignty of the God of Scripture is absolute, irresistible, infinite.”

“Many other instances might be adduced illustrating the Sovereign exercise of God’s power. Take one other example. God put forth His power and David was delivered from Goliath, the giant; the mouths of the lions were closed and Daniel escaped unhurt; the three Hebrew children were cast into the burning fiery furnace and came forth unharmed and unscorched. But God’s power did not always interpose for the deliverance of His people, for we read: “And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented” (Heb. 11:36, 37). But why? Why were not these men of faith delivered like the others? Or, why were not the others suffered to be killed like these? Why should God’s power interpose and rescue some and not the others? Why allow Stephen to be stoned to death, and then deliver Peter from prison?”

He highlights God’s sovereign selectivity..... “What a display of Divine Sovereignty, the illiterate shepherds singled out for peculiar honour, and the learned and eminent passed by! And why was the birth of the Saviour revealed to these foreigners, and not to those in whose midst He was born? See in this a wonderful foreshadowing of God’s dealings with our race throughout the entire Christian dispensation; Sovereign in the exercise of His grace, bestowing His favours on whom He pleases, often on the most unlikely and unworthy. “

Summary Part 3

Chapter 2 The sovereignty of God in creation.

This chapter could be summed up in the fact that God has made such a variety of galaxies, stars, planets, habitats, animals, birds, fish, plants and people. People are all made differently with different abilities sovereignly bestowed upon them by God. (I Cor.4:7)

Chapter 3 The sovereignty of God in administration (providence)

Pink explains the need for God to reign over our world, otherwise it might be destroyed. He then proceeds to show from Scripture that God does rule, actually

rule, and that His government extends to and is exercised over all things and all creatures.

God governs the weather. No rain fell on earth for the first 1600 years till the flood! God governed the plagues, the movement of the sun (to make it stand still and even go back ten degrees), the star of Bethlehem, snow, wind (Psalm 147 and Mark 4:39) and rain. He governs all creatures-the animals He brought to Adam and Noah, the oxen that pulled the cart (I Sam.6), the raven that fed Elijah, the she-bears that killed forty two youth who mocked Elisha and the great fish that swallowed Jonah.

In the realm of mankind, “every action of the most lawless of His subjects is entirely beneath His control, yea that the actor is, though unknown to himself, carrying out the secret decrees of the Most High. Was it not thus with Judas? and is it possible to select a more extreme case? If then the arch-rebel was performing the counsel of God is it any greater tax upon our faith to believe the same of all rebels?” Acts 17:28, Daniel 5:23. What a man does and says (Prov.16:1, 9,19:2, 21:1). Man proposes, God disposes (JK). “We read the Scriptures in vain if we fail to discover that the actions of men, evil men as well as good, are governed by the Lord God.” Nimrod at Babel and Esau regarding Jacob, Balak and Haman are all examples. He governs good and evil angels including Satan (I Chronicles 21:15,27. Acts 12:11, Matt.13:41, Judges 9:23, I Sam.16:14, Job 1).

“Nothing in all the vast universe can come to pass otherwise than God has eternally purposed. Here is a foundation of faith. Here is a resting place for the intellect. Here is an anchor for the soul, both sure and steadfast. It is not blind fate, unbridled evil, man or Devil, but the Lord Almighty who is ruling the world, ruling it according to His own good pleasure and for His own eternal glory.”

Summary Part 4

Sovereignty of God in salvation.

The Lord makes his people willing (Psalm 110:3, Phil.2:13) but why then does He not make all sinners willing? He is sovereign, He does as He pleases. "Upon whom then does He bestow this saving favour? And we answer, upon His own elect, 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed' Acts 13:48.”

“Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory?”

These verses represent fallen mankind as inert and as impotent as a lump of lifeless clay. This Scripture evidences that there is “no difference,” in themselves, between the elect and the non-elect; they are clay of “the same lump,” which agrees with Ephesians 2:3, where we are told that all are by nature “children of wrath.” It teaches us that the ultimate destiny of every individual is decided by the will of God, and blessed it is that such be the case; if it were left to our wills, the ultimate destination of us all would be the Lake of Fire. It declares that God Himself does make a difference in the respective destinations to which He assigns His creatures, for one vessel is made “unto honour and another unto dishonour”; some are “vessels of wrath fitted to destruction,” others are “vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.”

...”believing is the consequence and not the cause of God’s decree... a limited number only are “ordained to eternal life,” for if all men without exception were thus ordained by God, then the words “as many as” are a meaningless qualification..... this “ordination” of God is not to mere external privileges but to “eternal life,” not to service but to salvation itself... that all-“as many as,” not one less, who are thus ordained by God to eternal life will most certainly believe.”

A remnant according to the election of grace. You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you. The elect are chosen IN HIM (Eph.1:3-5). His grace was given us IN CHRIST JESUS before the world began (II Tim.1:9). “If His choice has been from eternity it will last to eternity.”

What does foreknowledge mean?...”when we read in Scripture of God “knowing” certain people the word is used in the sense of knowing with approbation and love: “But if any man love God, the same is known of Him” (1 Cor. 8:3). To the hypocrites Christ will yet say “I never knew you”, He never loved them. “Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father” signifies, then, chosen by Him as the special objects of His approbation and love.”

Pink proves from Scripture the absolute sovereignty of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in salvation. “Christ died not merely to make possible the salvation of all

mankind, but to make certain the salvation of all that the Father had given to Him." Christ died not simply to render sins pardonable, but "to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself" (Heb. 9:26). As to whose "sin" (i.e., guilt, as in 1 John 1:7, etc.) has been "put away," Scripture leaves us in no doubt, it was that of the elect, the "world" (John 1:29) of God's people!" The predestinate were substituted for by Christ who propitiated God's wrath against their sin. "His expiation and supplication are co-extensive."

If the Lord Jesus has decreed, desired, purposed the salvation of all mankind, then the entire human race will be saved, or, otherwise, He lacks the power to make good His intentions; and in such a case it could never be said, "He shall see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." "The issue raised involves the deity of the Saviour, for a defeated Saviour cannot be God." As far as the Spirit is sovereign too. "The wind is regulated by Divine wisdom, yet, so far as man is concerned, it is absolutely Sovereign in its operations. The new birth is solely the work of God the Spirit and man has no part or lot in it. This from the very nature of the case. Birth altogether excludes the idea of any effort or work on the part of the one who is born. Personally we have no more to do with our spiritual birth than we had with our natural birth." The new birth is a spiritual resurrection, a "passing from death unto life" (John 5:24) and, clearly, resurrection is altogether outside of man's province. No corpse can re-animate itself. Hence it is written, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing" (John 6:63).

But the Spirit does not "quicken" everybody, why? The usual answer returned to this question is, because everybody does not trust in Christ. It is supposed that the Holy Spirit quickens only those who believe. But this is to put the cart before the horse. Faith is not the cause of the new birth, but the consequence of it. This ought not to need arguing. Faith (in God) is an exotic, something that is not native to the human heart. If faith were a natural product of the human heart, the exercise of a principle common to human nature, it would never have been written, "All men have not faith" (2 Thess. 3:2). Faith is a spiritual grace, the fruit of the spiritual nature, and because the unregenerate are spiritually dead, "dead in trespasses and sins", then it follows that faith from them is impossible, for a dead man cannot believe anything. That the work of the Holy Spirit precedes our believing is unequivocally established by 2 Thessalonians 2:13 "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Note that "sanctification of the Spirit" comes

before and makes possible “belief of the truth.” On Luke 14:23 he is insightful, “In the above Scripture we see that “the Servant,” the Holy Spirit, compels certain ones to come in to the “supper” and herein is seen His Sovereignty, His omnipotency, His Divine sufficiency.

The clear implication from this word “compel” is, that those whom the Holy Spirit does “bring in” are not willing of themselves to come. This is exactly what we have sought to show in previous paragraphs. By nature, God’s elect are children of wrath even as others (Eph. 2:3), and as such their hearts are at enmity with God. But this “enmity” of theirs is overcome by the Spirit and He “compels” them to come in. Is it not clear then that the reason why others are left outside, is not only because they are unwilling to go in, but also because the Holy Spirit does not “compel” them to come in? Is it not manifest that the Holy Spirit is Sovereign in the exercise of His power, that as the wind “bloweth where it pleaseth” so the Holy Spirit operates where He pleases?

And now to sum up. We have sought to show the perfect consistency of God’s ways: that each Person in the Godhead acts in sympathy and harmony with the Others. God the Father elected certain ones to salvation, God the Son died for the elect, and God the Spirit quickens the elect.”

Summary Part 5

Sovereignty in reprobation

This was the chapter that the Banner of Truth purposely omitted presumably because it ran counter to their belief in common grace and the ‘offer’ of the gospel through which God sincerely desires the salvation of all who hear it.

Pink admits this doctrine is solemn and mysterious. “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.”

He illustrates this by the fact for millennia only the Jews has the word of God and also the purposeful destruction of the Canaanites by Joshua (Joshua 11:18-20). "God has made the wicked that, at the end, He may demonstrate His power, demonstrate it by showing what an easy matter it is for Him to subdue the

stoutest rebel and to overthrow His mightiest enemy.” When we read in Romans 11:2 “God hath not cast away His people (Israel) which He foreknew,” it is obvious that what was signified is, “God has not finally rejected that people whom He has chosen as the objects of His love,” cf. Deuteronomy 7:8. In the same way (and it is the only possible way) are we to understand Matthew 7:23. In the Day of Judgment the Lord will say unto many, “I never knew you.” Note, it is more than simply “I know you not.” His solemn declaration will be, “I never knew you,” you were never the objects of My approbation. Contrast this with “I know (love) My sheep, and am known (loved) of Mine” (John 10:14). The “sheep,” His elect, the “few” He does “know”; but the reprobate, the non-elect, the “many” He knows not-no, not even before the foundation of the world did He know them, He “NEVER” knew them!”

In a comprehensive exposition of Romans 9 he uses Pharaoh as the prime case, a man filled up the full measure of his sins and ripened himself for his fully-deserved but predestined ruin. His case proves the doctrine of reprobation. God sovereignly blinds or hardens sinners, (John 12:37-40, Romans 9:18). It is His prerogative.” The rectitude of God’s will must not be questioned. Whatever He does must be right.” Writing to the saints at Thessalonica the Apostle declared, “For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thess. 5:9).

Now surely it is patent to any impartial mind that this statement is quite pointless if God has not “appointed” any to wrath. To say that God “hath not appointed us to wrath” clearly implies that there are some whom He has “appointed to wrath,” and were it not that the minds of so many professing Christians are so blinded by prejudice, they could not fail to clearly see this.

“A Stone of stumbling, and a Rock of offence, even to them who stumble at the Word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Peter 2:8). The “whereunto” manifestly points back to the stumbling at the Word, and their disobedience. Here, then, God expressly affirms that there are some who have been “appointed” (it is the same Greek word as in 1 Thess. 5:9) unto disobedience.” He mentions also the fact many do not have their names written in the book of life (Rev.13:8). His conclusion which must be ours also is, “we unhesitatingly affirm (after nearly twenty years careful and prayerful study of the subject) that the Word of God unquestionably teaches both Predestination

and Reprobation," or to use the words of Calvin, "Eternal Election is God's predestination of some to salvation, and others to destruction."

From the human standpoint the reprobate, "Have no desire for holiness; they love darkness rather than light. Where, then, is there any injustice if God "gives them up to their own heart's lusts" (Psalm. 81:12). And "Remember that God is the Creator of the wicked, not of their wickedness; He is the Author of their being, but not the Infuser of their sin." "Thus the decree of reprobation neither interferes with the bent of man's own fallen nature, nor serves to render him the less inexcusable." He then names Calvin, Luther, John Fox, Westminster Catechism, John Bunyan, Jonathan Edwards, Augustus Toplady and George Whitfield, among many others, as all holding to this doctrine. "O the depth of the riches both of wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For what hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever, Amen" (Rom. 11:33-36).

"Of Him" His will is the origin of all existence; "through" or "by Him" He is the Creator and Controller of all; "to Him" all things promote His glory in their final end.

Part 6

Sovereignty in operation

God is One "who worketh all thing safter the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11).

God foreknows what will be because He has decreed what shall be? There is nothing certain to be unless God has ordained it shall be. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Acts 15:18), which shows that God has a plan, that God did not begin His work at random or without a knowledge of how His plan would succeed. My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. 46:9, 10). To what extent and by what influence does God control the sons of men? We shall divide our answer to this question into two parts and consider first God's method of dealing with the righteous, His elect; and then His method of dealing with the wicked.

God's method of dealing with the righteous.

God exerts upon His own elect a quickening influence or power. A new heart is given them.

God exerts upon His own elect an energizing influence or power. Eph.1:18,3:16. He gives power to the faint. (Isaiah 40:29). Also Acts 1:8. He works the graces of Christian character.

God exerts upon His own elect a directing influence or power. Ps.48:14. He "guides" us by working in us both to will and to do His good pleasure. That He does so guide us is clear from the words of the Apostle in Ephesians 2: 10, Isaiah 26:12.

God exerts upon His own elect a preserving influence or power. Ps.97:10, I Pet.1:5

God's method of dealing with the wicked.

God exerts upon the wicked a restraining influence by which they are prevented from doing what they are naturally inclined to do e.g. Abimelech Gen.20:6

2. God exerts upon the wicked a softening influence disposing them contrary to their natural inclinations to do that which will promote His cause e.g. Joseph Gen.39:3,4, and Esau Gen.32:4. Daniel 1:9. Ezra 7:27.

3. God exerts upon the wicked a directing influence so that good is made to result from their intended evil. Case of Joseph's brethren. Isaiah 10:5-7.

The supreme example of the controlling, directing influence which God exerts upon the wicked, is the Cross of Christ with all its attending circumstances. If ever the superintending providence of God was witnessed it was there. From all eternity God had predestined every detail of that event of all events. Nothing was left to chance or the caprice of man. God had decreed when and where and how His blessed Son was to die. Much of what He had purposed concerning the Crucifixion had been made known through the Old Testament prophets, and in the accurate and literal fulfillment of these prophecies we have clear proof, full demonstration, of the controlling and directing influence which God exerts upon the wicked. Not a thing occurred except as God had ordained, and all that He had ordained took place exactly as He purposed. Had it been decreed (and made known in Scripture) that the Saviour should be betrayed by one of His own disciples-by His "familiar friend"-see Psalm 41:9 and compare Matthew

26:50-then the Apostle Judas is the one who sold Him. Had it been decreed that the betrayer should receive for his awful perfidy thirty pieces of silver, then are the chief priests moved to offer him this very sum. Had it been decreed that this betrayal sum should be put to a particular use, namely, purchase of the potter's field, then the hand of God directs Judas to return the money to the chief priests and so guided their "counsel" (Matt. 27:7) that they did this very thing. Etc.

God also hardens the hearts of wicked men and blinds their minds. Psalm 105:25. But before Moses started out on his journey God warned him concerning Pharaoh, "I will harden his heart that he shall not let the people go" (Exo. 4:21). If it be asked, Why did God harden Pharaoh's heart? the answer furnished by Scripture itself is, In order that God might show forth His power in him (Rom. 9:17); in other words, it was so that the Lord might demonstrate that it was just as easy for Him to overthrow this haughty and powerful monarch as it was for Him to crush a worm. Deut 2:30. John 12:37-40. It needs to be carefully noted here that these whose eyes God "blinded" and whose heart He "hardened" were men who had deliberately scorned the Light and rejected the testimony of God's own Son. II Thess.2:11,12. Just as the Jews of Christ's day despised His testimony, and in consequence were "blinded," so a guilty Christendom which has rejected the Truth shall yet have sent them from God a "strong delusion" that they may believe a lie.

Upon His own elect God exerts a quickening, an energizing, a directing, and a preserving power. Upon the wicked God exerts a restraining, softening, directing, and hardening and blinding power, according to the dictates of His own infinite wisdom and unto the outworking of His own eternal purpose. God's decrees are being executed. What He has ordained is being accomplished. Man's wickedness is bounded. The limits of evil-doing and of evildoers has been Divinely defined and cannot be exceeded. Though many are in ignorance of it, all men, good and bad, are under the jurisdiction of and are absolutely subject to the administration of the Supreme Sovereign-"Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" (Rev. 19:6) reigneth over all.

Summary Part 7

God's sovereignty and human will.

Has man "free will," and does salvation comes to the sinner through his will co-operating with the Holy Spirit. "To deny the "free will" of man, i.e., his power to choose that which is good, his native ability to accept Christ, is to

bring one into disfavour at once, even before most of those who profess to be orthodox. And yet Scripture emphatically says, “It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy” (Rom. 9:16)”

But does not Scripture say, “Whosoever will may come”? It does, but does this signify that everybody has the will to come? What of those who won’t come? “Whosoever will may come” no more implies that fallen man has the power (in himself) to come, than “Stretch forth thine hand” implied that the man with the withered arm had ability (in himself) to comply. In and of himself the natural man has power to reject Christ; but in and of himself he has not the power to receive Christ. And why? Because he has a mind that is “enmity against” Him (Rom. 8:7); because he has a heart that hates Him (John 15:18).

Man chooses that which is according to his nature, and therefore before he will ever choose or prefer that which is Divine and spiritual a new nature must be imparted to him; in other words, he must be born again. Yet, it is a fact which must not be lost sight of that the Holy Spirit does something more in each of God’s elect than He does in the non-elect: He works in them “both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Phil. 2:13). Ephesians 2:8, “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.”

What determines human will? With one it may be the logic of reason, with another the voice of conscience, with another the impulse of the emotions, with another the whisper of the Tempter, with another the power of the Holy Spirit; whichever of these presents the strongest motive power and exerts the greatest influence upon the individual himself is that which impels the will to act. Hence we say that, if the will is controlled, it is neither Sovereign nor free, but is the servant of the mind. We affirm that it is the heart and not the will which governs the man. Men either have an evil heart or a new heart. Unregenerate man has a bias toward evil. Total depravity means that man is, in spirit and soul and body, the slave of sin and the captive of the Devil. The will is under the dominion of sin and Satan. Therefore, the will is not free. To affirm that he is a free moral agent is to deny that he is totally depraved. The Roman Catholic church puts a curse on all who deny free will. In order for any sinner to be saved three things were indispensable: God the Father had to purpose his salvation, God the Son had to purchase it, God the Spirit has to apply it. God does more than “propose” to us: were He only to “invite,” every last one of us would be lost.

Why preach the Gospel if man is powerless to respond? Why preach the Gospel if man is powerless to respond? Why bid the sinner come to Christ if sin has so enslaved him that he has no power in himself to come? Reply: We do not preach the Gospel because we believe that men are free moral agents and therefore capable of receiving Christ, but we preach it because we are commanded to do so (Mark 16:15); and though to them that perish it is foolishness yet, “unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Cor. 1:18).

Summary Part 8

God’s sovereignty and human responsibility

We have concluded that man is fallen and enslaved and thus does not have ‘free will’. But this begs several questions:

How is it possible for God to so bring His power to bear upon men that they are PREVENTED from doing what they desire to do, and IMPELLED to do other things they do not desire to do, and yet to preserve their responsibility? Take the case of Abimelech in Genesis 20:6. “And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against Me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.” It is argued, almost universally, that God must not interfere with man’s liberty, that he must not coerce or compel him, lest he be reduced to a machine. But the above Scripture proves, unmistakably proves, that it is not impossible for God to exert His power upon man without destroying his responsibility. Here is a case where God did exert His power, restrict man’s freedom, and prevent him from doing that which he otherwise would have done. Also one more illustration: “And the fear of the LORD fell upon all the kingdoms of the lands that were round about Judah, so that they made no war against Jehoshaphat” (2 Chron. 17:10). The implication here is clear. Had not the “fear of the LORD” fallen upon these kingdoms they would have made war upon Judah.

In Adam’s case why did God refuse to exercise His power and prevent Adam’s fall, “we should say, Because Adam’s fall better served His own wise and blessed purpose-among other things, it provided an opportunity to demonstrate that where sin had abounded grace could much more abound. Should someone respond, ‘Then is God the Author of Sin?’ We would have to ask, in turn, ‘What is meant by “Author”?’ Plainly it was God’s will that sin should enter this world otherwise it would not have entered, for nothing happens save as God has eternally decreed. Moreover, there was more than a bare permission for God

only permits that which He has purposed. But we leave now the origin of sin, insisting once more, however, that God could have “withheld” Adam from sinning without destroying his responsibility. What does moral “freedom,” real moral freedom, consist? We answer, it is the being delivered from the BONDAGE of sin. The more any soul is emancipated from the thralldom of sin the more does he enter into a state of freedom, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). True liberty is not the power to live as we please, but to live as we ought! Hence, the only One Who has ever trod this earth since Adam’s fall that has enjoyed perfect freedom was the Man Christ Jesus.” So God never overrides the will of man. Take also the writing of Scripture, “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation (Greek: of its own origination). For the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit.” (2 Peter 1:20, 21) Here we have man’s responsibility and God’s Sovereignty placed in juxtaposition. These holy men were “moved” (Greek: “borne along”) by the Holy Spirit, yet was not their moral responsibility disturbed nor their “freedom” impaired. God enlightened their minds, enkindled their hearts, revealed to them His truth, and so controlled them that error on their part was, by Him, made impossible, as they communicated His mind and will to men.

2. How can the sinner be held responsible FOR the doing of what he is UNABLE to do? And how can he be justly condemned for NOT DOING what he COULD NOT do?

As a creature the natural man is responsible to love, obey, and serve God; as a sinner he is responsible to repent and believe the Gospel. But at the outset we are confronted with the fact that natural man is unable to love and serve God, and that the sinner, of himself, cannot repent and believe. The fact is that the sinner’s inability or absence of power is itself due to lack of willingness to come to Christ, and this lack of willingness is the fruit of a depraved heart. Should some sinner here object, I cannot help being born into this world with a depraved heart and therefore I am not responsible for my moral and spiritual inability which accrue from it, the reply would be, Responsibility and Culpability He in the indulgence of the depraved propensities, the free indulgence, for God does not force any to sin. We say again that the above distinction between the natural ability and the moral and spiritual inability (in Adam-JK) of the sinner is of prime importance.

By nature he possesses natural ability but lacks moral and spiritual ability. The fact that he does not possess the latter does not destroy his responsibility, because his responsibility rests upon the fact that he does possess the former. Let me illustrate again. Here are two men guilty of theft: the first is an idiot, the second perfectly sane but the offspring of criminal parents. No just judge would sentence the former; but every right-minded judge would the latter. Even though the second of these thieves possessed a vitiated moral nature inherited from criminal parents that would not excuse him, providing he was a normal rational being. Here then is the ground of human accountability-the possession of rationality plus the gift of conscience. It is because the sinner is endowed with these natural faculties that he is a responsible creature; because he does not use his natural powers for God's glory, constitutes his guilt.

3. How is it possible for God to DECREE that men SHOULD commit certain sins, hold them RESPONSIBLE in the committal of them, and adjudge them GUILTY because they committed them?

Take Judas for example, a man decreed to betray Christ. "Was Judas a responsible agent in fulfilling this decree of God? We reply that he was. Responsibility attaches mainly to the motive and intention of the one committing the act." And also the cross, "Acts 2:23 teach very much more than a bare permission by God, declaring, as they do, that the Crucifixion and all its details had been decreed by God. Yet, nevertheless, it was by "wicked hands," not merely "human hands" that our Lord was "crucified and slain" "Wicked" because the intention of His crucifiers was only evil." In other words the sinner is condemned because he disobeys God's revealed will without knowing His decretive will-JK

4. How can the sinner be held responsible to receive Christ, and be damned for rejecting Him, when God FOREORDAINED him TO condemnation?

Each sinner is among those whom God now "commandeth to repent" (Acts 17:30). Each sinner who hears the Gospel is "commanded" to believe (1 John 3:23). And all who do truly repent and believe are saved. Therefore, is every sinner responsible to repent and believe. Is it not still a fact that each of the non-elect is unable to repent and believe? The reply is, Yes. Of every sinner it is a fact that, of himself, he cannot come to Christ. And from God's side the "cannot" is absolute. But we are now dealing with the responsibility of the sinner (the sinner foreordained to condemnation, though he knows it not), and

from the human side the inability of the sinner is a moral one, as previously pointed out. Moreover, it needs to be borne in mind that in addition to the moral inability of the sinner there is a voluntary inability, too. The sinner must be regarded not only as impotent to do good but as delighting in evil. From the human side, then, the “cannot” is a will not; it is a voluntary impotence. Man’s impotence lies in his obstinacy. Hence, is everyone left “without excuse,” and hence, is God “clear” when He judgeth (Psa. 51:4), and righteous in damning all who “love darkness rather than light.” Why has God demanded of man that which he is incapable of performing? The first answer is, Because God refuses to lower His standard to the level of our sinful infirmities. Being perfect, God must set a perfect standard before us. An illustration helps, “Suppose I had slipped on the icy pavement late at night, and had broken my hip. I am unable to arise; if I remain on the ground I must freeze to death. What, then, ought I to do? If I am determined to perish I shall be there silent; but I shall be to blame for such a course. If I am anxious to be rescued I shall lift up my voice and cry for help. So the sinner, though unable of himself to rise and take the first step toward Christ, is responsible to cry to God, and if he does (from the heart) there is a Deliverer to hand. God is “not far from every one of us” (Acts 17:27); yea, He is “a very present help in trouble” (Psa. 46:1). But if the sinner refuses to cry unto the Lord, if he is determined to perish, then his blood is on his own head, and his “damnation is just” (Rom. 3:8).”

Summary Part 9

Sovereignty in prayer

“Throughout this book it has been our chief aim to exalt the Creator and abase the creature. The well-nigh universal tendency now, is to magnify man and dishonour and degrade God.” The same God who has decreed the end has also decreed that His end shall be reached through His appointed means, and One of these is prayer. The God who has determined to grant a blessing also gives a spirit of supplication which first seeks the blessing. There is no need whatever for God to change His designs or alter His purpose for the all-sufficient reason that these were framed under the influence of perfect goodness and unerring wisdom.”

So why pray?

1) It honours God. Knowing that salvation is of the Lord we must pray for the lost.

- 2) It is worship redounding to His glory.
- 3) It shows our dependency.
- 4) It is a spiritual blessing-we delight in unburdening ourselves.
- 5) As He answers we love Him more (Psalm 116:1).
- 6) Prayer is appointed to seek from Him what we need.
- 7) We are bid to ‘Pray without ceasing.’
- 8) Because He promises certain things we can ask for them.

“No; prayer is a coming to God, telling Him my need, committing my way unto the Lord, and leaving Him to deal with it as seemeth Him best. This makes my will subject to His, instead of, as in the former case, seeking to bring His will into subjection to mine.

To ask God in the name of Christ is as though Christ Himself were the suppliant.

Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude-an attitude of dependency, dependency upon God. Prayer is a confession of creature weakness, yea, of helplessness.

Because prayer is an attitude of dependency, the one who really prays is submissive, submissive to the Divine will; and submission to the Divine will means that we are content for the Lord to supply our need according to the dictates of His own Sovereign pleasure. And hence it is that we say every prayer that is offered to God in this spirit is sure of meeting with an answer or response from Him.

Prayer is not the requesting of God to alter His purpose or for Him to form a new one. Prayer is the taking of an attitude of dependency upon God, the spreading of our need before Him, the asking for those things which are in accordance with His will, and therefore there is nothing whatever inconsistent between Divine Sovereignty and Christian prayer.”

Summary Part 10

“Our attitude to God’s sovereignty.”

“It is designed as a motive for godly fear, it is made known to us for the promotion of righteous living, it is revealed in order to bring into subjection our

rebellious hearts. A true recognition of God's Sovereignty humbles as nothing else does or can humble, and brings the heart into lowly submission before God, causing us to relinquish our own self-will and making us delight in the perception and performance of the Divine will.

To truly recognize the Sovereignty of God is, therefore, to gaze upon the Sovereign Himself."

Pink then quotes the examples of Job, Isaiah and Daniel who were all humbled to the dust when confronted with God.

GODLY FEAR "And nothing will foster this godly fear like a recognition of the Sovereign Majesty of God."

IMPLICIT OBEDIENCE and sense of dependency. "True reverence will produce and promote obedience. Nothing less than an unqualified and whole-hearted submission becomes the creature."

ENTIRE RESIGNATION- "God has a perfect right to do as He wills." We say regarding future events or our own plans....If the Lord wills (DV)."

DEEP THANKFULNESS AND JOY "there is no real rest for your poor heart until you learn to see the hand of God in everything." And because He is sovereign in our lives, as believers, we can be confident in His perfect good sovereignty in our lives that He has planned.

Christ exemplified all these attitudes perfectly viz Godly fear, obedience unto death, absolute resignation, thankfully and joyously bowing to the will of the Lord.

ADORING WORSHIP "It has been well said that "true worship is based upon recognized GREATNESS, and greatness is superlatively seen in Sovereignty, and at no other footstool will men really worship" (J. B. Moody). In the presence of the Divine King upon His throne even the seraphims 'veil their faces."

Summary Part 11

Objections

"That God is sovereign is explicitly declared in Scripture: that man is a responsible creature is also expressly affirmed.

1). If God's counsel is NOW being accomplished, then why did our Lord teach His disciples to pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven"? Is it not a clear implication from these words that God's will is not now being done on earth? The answer is very simple. The emphatic word in the above clause is "as." God's will is being done on earth today, if it is not, then our earth is not subject to God's rule, and if it is not subject to His rule then He is not, as Scripture proclaims Him to be, "The Lord of all the earth" (Josh. 3:13). But God's will is not being done on earth as it is in Heaven.

But God's will is not being done on earth as it is in Heaven. How is God's will "done in Heaven"?-consciously and joyfully. How is it "done on earth"? for the most part, unconsciously and sullenly. In Heaven the angels perform the bidding of their Creator intelligently and gladly, but on earth the unsaved among men accomplish His will blindly and in ignorance. As we have said in earlier pages, when Judas betrayed the Lord Jesus and when Pilate sentenced Him to be crucified they had no conscious intentions of fulfilling God's decrees yet, nevertheless, unknown to themselves they did do so!"

2). As regards God repenting that He made man (Genesis 6:6), Pink points out that this is an anthropologism, God speaking in human language. It is not God expressing regret but rather abhorrence. Cross-reference I Sam 15:29 and Numbers 23:19 to see God never repents or changes His mind (eternal decree).

3). Matthew 23:37 is oft quoted as showing God's will being thwarted. No such thing! Christ upbraids the Jews for having in all ages rejected His grace and Spirit through whom His prophets spoke (Nehemiah 9:20). Reformed theologians also point out that Christ did gather Jerusalem's children (the elect) despite the opposition of Jerusalem (the leaders). The external privileges of the Jews and their calling to obey Jehovah's perceptive will, constitute their resisting the Spirit, as Stephen boldly pointed out in his defence. They could not however resist the irresistible grace of the Holy Spirit working internally-JK. Furthermore in relation to the intransigence of His people, "The Man Christ Jesus was no emotionless stoic, but One "filled with compassion." Those tears expressed the sinless sympathies of His real and pure humanity. Had He not "wept" He had been less than human. Those "tears" were one of many proofs that "in all things it behooved Him to be made like unto His brethren" (Heb. 2:17)." (This despite the fact that as God His decree to punish the Jews in time and eternity stood fast-JK).

4). In answering the idea that God hates the sin, not the sinner he states,” What is there in a sinner but sin? To tell the Christ-rejecter that God loves him is to cauterize his conscience as well as to afford him a sense of security in his sins.” This was something that bothered me nearly thirty years ago when I heard this false gospel being ‘preached’ by members of the OM Ship MV Logos!-JK.

5). Pink also has some good things to say about gospel preaching, “there is far too much presenting of Christ to sinners today (by those sound in the faith), and far too little showing sinners their need of Christ, i.e., their absolutely ruined and lost condition, their imminent and awful danger of suffering the wrath to come, the fearful guilt resting upon them in the sight of God: to present Christ to those who have never been shown their need of Him, seems to us to be guilty of casting pearls before swine. If it be true that God loves every member of the human family then why did our Lord tell His disciples “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father. If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him” (John 14:21, 23)? Why say “he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father” if the Father loves everybody? The same limitation is found in Proverbs 8:17: “I love them that love Me.” Again; we read, “Thou hatest all workers of iniquity”-not merely the works of iniquity. Here then is a flat repudiation of present teaching that, God hates sin but loves the sinner; Scripture says, “Thou hatest all workers of iniquity” (Psa. 5:5)! Again; is it not evident that the words “The love of God which is in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:39) marks a limitation, both in the sphere and objects of His love? God’s love is restricted to the members of His own family?” He expounds John 3:16 very adequately saying that,” the term “the world” often has a relative rather than an absolute force. God’s love is international in its scope.” Indeed “For the bread of God is He which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world” (John 6:33)-this explicitly teaches that He regenerated the world He loves-JK. He also explains that other old Arminian ‘chestnut’ II Peter 3:9.

“Why preach the Gospel to every creature? If God the Father has predestined only a limited number to be saved, if God the Son died to effect the salvation of only those given to Him by the Father, and if God the Spirit is seeking to quicken none save God’s elect, then what is the use of giving the Gospel to the world at large, and where is the propriety of telling sinners that “Whosoever believeth in Christ shall not perish but have everlasting life”. The Gospel is not an “offer” to be bandied around by evangelical peddlers. **The Gospel is no**

mere invitation but a proclamation, a proclamation concerning Christ; true whether men believe it or not. No man is asked to believe that Christ died for him in particular. The Gospel, in brief, is this: Christ died for sinners, you are a sinner, believe in Christ, and you shall be saved. In the Gospel God simply announces the terms upon which men may be saved (namely, repentance and faith) and, indiscriminately, all are commanded to fulfil them. The Gospel is the means which God uses in the saving of His own chosen ones. The Gospel is God's winnowing fan: it separates the chaff from the wheat, and gathers the latter into His garner." He could have quoted II Cor.2:16 here-JK. He reiterates that the gospel is the power of God, has to be preached to all nations as Christ commanded.

Summary Part 12

The value of this doctrine.

"It is by doctrine (through the power of the Spirit) that believers are nourished and edified, and where doctrine is neglected growth in grace and effective witnessing for Christ necessarily cease. There is an inseparable connection between belief and practice: "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Prov. 23:7). The relation between Divine truth and Christian character is that of cause to effect: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)-free from ignorance, free from prejudice, free from error, free from the wiles of Satan, free from the power of evil; and if the truth is not "known" then such freedom will not be enjoyed. The substitution of so-called "practical" preaching for the doctrinal exposition which it has supplanted is the root cause of many of the evil maladies which now afflict the Church of God. The reason why there is so little depth, so little intelligence, so little grasp of the fundamental verities of Christianity is because so few believers have been established in the faith through hearing expounded and through their own personal study of the doctrines of grace. While their soul is unestablished in the doctrine of the Divine Inspiration of the Scripture, their full and verbal inspiration, there can be no firm foundation for faith to rest upon. While the soul is ignorant of the doctrine of Justification there can be no real and intelligent assurance of its acceptance in the Beloved. While the soul is unacquainted with the teaching of the Word upon Sanctification it is open to receive all the crudities and errors of the Perfectionists or "Holiness" people. While the soul knows not what Scripture has to say upon the doctrine of the

New Birth there can be no proper grasp of the two natures in the believer, and ignorance here inevitably results in the loss of peace and joy. And so we might go on right through the list of Christian doctrine. It is ignorance of doctrine that has rendered the professing church helpless to cope with the rising tide of infidelity. It is ignorance of doctrine which is mainly responsible for thousands of professing Christians being captivated by the numerous false isms of the day. It is because the time has now arrived when the bulk of our churches “will not endure sound doctrine” (2 Tim. 4:3) that they so readily receive false doctrines. Of course it is true that doctrine, like anything else in Scripture, may be studied from a merely cold intellectual viewpoint, and thus approached, doctrinal teaching and doctrinal study will leave the heart untouched, and will naturally be “dry” and profitless. But, doctrine properly received, doctrine studied with an exercised heart, will ever lead into a deeper knowledge of God and of the unsearchable riches of Christ. The doctrine of God’s sovereignty is the plumbline by which every creed needs to be measured, the balance in which every human dogma must be weighed. It is designed as the sheet-anchor for our souls amid the storms of life. The doctrine of God’s Sovereignty is a Divine cordial to refresh our spirits. It is designed and adapted to mould the affections of the heart and to give a right direction to conduct. It produces gratitude in prosperity and patience in adversity. It affords comfort for the present and a sense of security respecting the unknown future. It is, and it does all, and much more than we have just said because it ascribes to God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the glory which is His due, and places the creature in his proper place before Him-in the dust.”

1.IT DEEPENS OUR VENERATION OF THE DIVINE CHARACTER.

His creatorial rights, the inscrutableness of His wisdom, the irreversiblens of His will and magnifies His grace.

2. IT IS THE SOLID FOUNDATION OF ALL TRUE RELIGION.

It alone gives God His rightful place.

3. IT REPUDIATES THE HERESY OF SALVATION BY WORKS.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Prov. 14:12). The way which “seemeth right” and which ends in “death, “death eternal, is salvation by human effort and merit. (This is why we must oppose Arminianism and all false religion-they damn people!-JK)

4.IT IS DEEPLY HUMBLING TO THE CREATURE.

If, in the light of God’s Sovereignty, we have seen our own worthlessness and helplessness we shall indeed cry with the Psalmist “All my springs are in Thee” (Psa. 87:7)

5. IT AFFORDS A SENSE OF ABSOLUTE SECURITY.

God is infinite in power and therefore it is impossible to withstand His will or resist the outworking of His decrees. Such a statement as that is well calculated to fill the sinner with alarm, but from the saint it evokes naught but praise. Let us add a word and see what a difference it makes: My God is infinite in power! then “I will not fear what man can do unto me.” My God is infinite in power, then “what time I am afraid I will trust in Him.” Oh the preciousness of this truth! Here am I, a poor, helpless, senseless “sheep,” yet am I secure in the hand of Christ. And why am I secure there? None can pluck me thence because the hand that holds me is that of the Son of God, and all power in Heaven and earth is His! Again; I have no strength of my own: the world, the flesh, and the Devil, are arrayed against me so I commit myself into the care and keeping of the Lord and say with the Apostle “I know Whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Tim. 1:12).

6. IT SUPPLIES COMFORT IN SORROW.

God is too wise to err and too loving to cause His child a needless tear. Therefore if God be perfect wisdom and perfect goodness how blessed is the assurance that everything is in His hand and moulded by His will according to His eternal purpose! “Behold, He taketh away, who can hinder Him? who will say unto Him what doest Thou?” (Job 9:12). Yet, how comforting to learn that it is “He,” and not the Devil, who “taketh away” our loved ones! Ah! what peace for our poor frail hearts to be told that the number of our days is with Him (Job 7:1; 14:5); that disease and death are His messengers and always march under His orders; that it is the Lord who gives and the Lord who takes away!

7. IT BEGETS A SPIRIT OF SWEET RESIGNATION.

To bow before the Sovereign will of God is one of the great secrets of peace and happiness. There can be no real submission with contentment until we are broken in spirit, that is, until we are willing and glad for the Lord to have His

way with us. Not that we are insisting upon a spirit of fatalistic acquiescence: far from it. The saints are exhorted to “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God” (Rom. 12:2).

8. IT EVOKES A SONG OF PRAISE.

What is the force of that word “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4)? Mark it is not “Rejoice in the Saviour,” but we are to “Rejoice in the Lord” as “Lord,” as the Master of every circumstance. Need we remind the reader that when the Apostle penned these words he was himself a prisoner in the hands of the Roman government. A long course of affliction and suffering lay behind him. Perils on land and perils on sea, hunger and thirst, scourging and stoning, had all been experienced. He had been persecuted by those within the church as well as by those without: the very ones who ought to have stood by him had forsaken him. And still he writes, “Rejoice in the Lord always”! What was the secret of his peace and happiness? Ah! had not this same Apostle written “And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose” (Rom. 8:28)? But how did he, and how do we, “know” that all things work together for good? The answer is, Because all things are under the control of and are being regulated by the Supreme Sovereign, and because He has naught but thoughts of love toward His own, then “all things” are so ordered by Him that they are made to minister to our ultimate good. It is for this cause we are to give “thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Eph. 5:20). Yes, give thanks for “all things” for, as it has been well said “Our disappointments are but His appointments.” To the one who delights in the Sovereignty of God the clouds not only have a ‘silver lining’ but they are silver all through, the darkness only serving to offset the light.

9. IT GUARANTEES THE FINAL TRIUMPH OF GOOD OVER EVIL.

This then is our confidence-God is on the Throne. There can be no failure with God. The promise made to His own beloved people to come for them and take them from hence to glory will not fail. He will surely come and gather them in His own presence.

10. IT PROVIDES A RESTING-PLACE FOR THE HEART.

It is upon the gracious self-humiliation of the King Himself that His kingdom is established. O wondrous Cross! By it He who suffered upon it has become

not the Lord of our destinies (He was that before), but the Lord of our hearts. Therefore, it is not in abject terror that we bow before the Supreme Sovereign, but in adoring worship we cry “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Rev. 5:12). Here then is the refutation of the wicked charge that this doctrine is a horrible calumny upon God and dangerous to expound to His people. Can a doctrine be “horrible” and “dangerous” that gives God His true place, that maintains His rights, that magnifies His grace, that ascribes all glory to Him and removes every ground of boasting from the creature? Can a doctrine be “horrible” and “dangerous” which affords the saints a sense of security in danger, that supplies them comfort in sorrow, that begets patience within them in adversity, that evokes from them praise at all times? Can a doctrine be “horrible” and “dangerous” which assures us of the certain triumph of good over evil, and which provides a sure resting-place for our hearts, and that place, the perfections of the Sovereign Himself? No; a thousand times, no! Instead of being “horrible and dangerous” this doctrine of the Sovereignty of God is glorious and edifying, and a due apprehension of it will but serve to make us exclaim with Moses, “Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?” (Exodus 15:11).

Summary Part 13

Conclusion

Almost all doctrinal error is really, Truth perverted, Truth wrongfully divided, Truth disproportionately held and taught. Beauty is, primarily, a matter of proportion. Thus it is with the Word of God: its beauty and blessedness are best perceived when its manifold wisdom is exhibited in its true proportions. Here is where so many have failed in the past. A single phase of God’s Truth has so impressed this man or that he has concentrated his attention upon it, almost to the exclusion of everything else. Some portion of God’s Word has been made a “pet doctrine,” and often this has become the distinctive badge of some party. But it is the duty of each servant of God to “declare all the counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

What the preacher needs to give out is not what his people most like to hear, but what they most need, i.e., those aspects of truth they are least familiar with, or least exhibiting in their walk.

When the Son of God became incarnate He came here in “the form of a servant” (Phil. 2:7); nevertheless, in the manger He was “Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11)! All things are possible with God (Matt. 19:26) yet God “cannot lie” (Titus 1:2). Scripture says “Bear ye one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2), yet the same chapter insists “every man shall bear his own burden” (Gal. 6:5). We are enjoined to take “no thought for the morrow” (Matt. 6:34), yet “if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (1 Tim. 5:8). No sheep of Christ’s can perish (John 10:28, 29), yet the Christian is bidden to make his “calling and election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). And so we might go on multiplying illustrations. These things are not contradictions but complementaries: the one “balances the other.” Thus, the Scriptures set forth both the Sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man. So, too, should every servant of God, and that, in their proper proportion.

One is not surprised to find these sentiments emanating from German neologians !! (note spelling-JK)

What a demonstration of the irresistible Sovereignty of God is furnished by that wonderful statement found in Revelation 17:17: “For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill His will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the Beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” The fulfillment of any single prophecy is but the Sovereignty of God in operation. It is the demonstration that what He has decreed He is able also to perform. It is proof that none can withstand the execution of His counsel or prevent the accomplishment of His pleasure. It is evidence that God inclines men to fulfill that which He has ordained and perform that which He has foredetermined. If God were not absolute Sovereign then Divine prophecy would be valueless, for in such case no guarantee would be left that what He had predicted would surely come to pass.

1. GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY AND THE BELIEVER’S GROWTH IN GRACE.

If God has foreordained everything that comes to pass, of what avail is it for us to “exercise” ourselves “unto godliness” (1 Tim. 4:7)? If God has before ordained the good works in which we are to walk (Eph. 2:10) then why should we be “careful to maintain good works” (Titus 3:8)?

So the loss of all confidence in himself is the first essential in the believer’s growth in grace; and just as the sinner despairing of help from himself will cast him into the arms of Sovereign mercy so the Christian, conscious of his own

frailty, will turn unto the Lord for power. It is when we are weak we are strong (2 Cor. 12:10): that is to say, there must be consciousness of our weakness before we shall turn to the Lord for help. While the Christian allows the thought that he is sufficient in himself, while he imagines that by mere force of will he shall resist temptation, while he has any confidence in the flesh then, like Peter who boasted that though all forsook the Lord yet should not he, so we shall certainly fail and fall. Apart from Christ we can do nothing (John 15:5). The promise of God is “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might (of their own) He increaseth strength” (Isa. 40:29).

The answer of Augustine to this question is the best we have met with—“God gives commands we cannot perform, that we may know what we ought to request from Him.” A consciousness of our powerlessness should cast us upon Him who has all power. Here then is where a vision and view of God’s Sovereignty helps, for it reveals His sufficiency and shows us our insufficiency.

2. GOD’S SOVEREIGNTY AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

Again: what is God’s remedy for dejection at apparent failure in our labors? This: the assurance that God’s purpose cannot fail, that God’s plans cannot miscarry, that God’s will must be done. Our labors are not intended to bring about that which God has not decreed. Once more: what is God’s word of cheer for the one who is thoroughly disheartened at the lack of response to his appeals and the absence of fruit, for his labors? This: that we are not responsible for results: that is God’s side, and God’s business. Paul may “plant,” and Apollos may “water,” but it is God who “gave the increase” (1 Cor. 3:6). Our business is to obey Christ and preach the Gospel to every creature, to emphasize the “Whosoever believeth” and then to leave the Sovereign operations of the Holy Spirit to apply the Word in quickening power to whom He wills, resting on the sure promise of Jehovah: “For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from Heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater: So shall My Word be that goeth forth out of My mouth: it shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please (it may not be that which we please), and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it”(Isa. 55:10, 11). Was it not this assurance that sustained the beloved Apostle when he declared “Therefore (see context) I endure all things for the elect’s sake” (2 Tim. 2:10)!

God is no idle Spectator, looking on from a distant world at the happenings, on our earth, but is Himself shaping everything to the ultimate promotion of His own glory. Even now He is working out His eternal purpose, not only in spite of human and Satanic opposition but by means of them. How wicked and futile have been all efforts to resist His will shall one day be as fully evident as when of old He overthrew the rebellious Pharaoh and his hosts at the Red Sea.

In order to guard this from all possibility of mistake, we have only to remember who is this God, and what the glory that He seeks. It is He who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ-of Him in whom divine love came seeking not her own, among us as ‘One that serveth.’

Appendix 1

The will of God

Pink explains the difference between and the relations of God’s preceptive will and His decretive will. “God’s revealed will is frequently crost, but His secret will is never thwarted. Take these two passages: “For this is the will of God, even your sanctification” (1 Thess. 4:3); “For who hath resisted His will?” (Rom. 9:19). Would any thoughtful reader declare that God’s “will” has precisely the same meaning in both of these passages? He commanded that Pharaoh should let His people go, because that was right in the nature of things, yet, He had secretly declared that Pharaoh should not let His people go, not because it was right in Pharaoh to refuse, but because it was best all things considered that he should not let them go—i.e. best because it subserved God’s larger purpose. Thus, He decreed the entrance of sin into His universe, though His own holy nature hates all sin with infinite abhorrence, yet, because it is one of the means by which His appointed end is to be reached He suffered it to enter. God’s revealed will is the measure of our responsibility and the determiner of our duty. We repeat: the secret will of God is none of our business; it is His revealed will which measures our accountability.”

Appendix 2

The case of Adam

Pink commits his only major error in this part of the book in saying that because of the fall Adam’s responsibility is somehow ‘impaired’. “In Adam, then, each of us stood. As the representative of the human race the first man acted. As then Adam was created with full and unimpaired responsibility, unimpaired because

there was no evil nature within him; and as we were all “in Adam”, it necessarily follows that all of us, originally, were also endowed with full and unimpaired responsibility. Therefore, in Eden, it was not merely the responsibility of Adam as a single person that was tested, but it was Human Responsibility, the Responsibility of the Race, as a whole and in part, which was on trial.” If we followed through his argument mankind would be absolutely responsible for their fall but less responsible for their sin-this is mistaken.

We are guilty in Adam and in ourselves. As regards the entrance of sin, he is clear, “To affirm that God decreed the entrance of sin into His universe, and that He foreordained all its fruits and activities, is to say that which, at first may shock the reader; but reflection should show that it is far more shocking to insist that sin has invaded His dominions against His will, and that its exercise is outside His jurisdiction: for in such a case where would be His omnipotency? No; to recognize that God has foreordained all the activities of evil, is to see that He is the Governor of sin: His will determines its exercise, His power regulates its bounds (Ps. 76:10).

He is neither the Inspirer nor the Infuser of sin in any of His creatures, but He is its Master, by which we mean God’s management of the wicked is so entire that, they can do nothing save that which His hand and counsel, from everlasting, determined should be done. Had sin never been permitted; how could the justice of God have been displayed in punishing it? How could the wisdom of God have been manifested in so wondrously over-ruling it? How could the grace of God have been exhibited in pardoning it? How could the power of God have been exercised in subduing it? though God has decreed man’s sins, yet is man responsible not to commit them, and blameable because he does.

Strikingly were these two sides of this awful subject brought together by Christ in that statement of His: “Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come (because God has foreordained them); but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh” (Matt. 18:7). So, too, though all which took place at Calvary was by the “determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God” (Acts 2:23), nevertheless, “wicked hands” crucified the Lord of glory, and, in consequence, His blood has righteously rested upon them and on their children.”

Appendix 3

John 3:16 expounded.

The Greek word 'Kosmos' has many meanings in the NT Scriptures. It can mean universe, earth, wicked world-system, humanity minus believers, the elect, or Gentiles. The context is key. In context the world of John 3:16 that God loves are those who are saved and believe.

Appendix 4

I John 2:2 expounded.

First note that the context is the saints of God and specifically Jewish saints to whom John, Peter and James were the apostles. The Advocate and the people He represents must be those for whom He is the propitiation. So when John speaks about Christ being the propitiation of the whole world he means the Gentile nations as well as the Jews-that is why he says 'also.' If Christ was the propitiation of every single human being and many perish what assurance have we as believers we will not suffer the same fate? No! Propitiation means to appease God's wrath-for the elect there is no more wrath! To sum up this book in two phrases-God rules and the atonement is no failure!

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Behind all things the greater reality is that God Reigns in Jesus Christ.

'Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.'

Romans 11:33,36

Jesus Christ is Lord of all without exception so every knee will bow to Him, if not now, a day will come.

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