The Godhood of God

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The Godhood of God! What is meant by this expression? Ah, sad it is that such a question needs to be asked and answered. And yet it does: for a generation has arisen that is well nigh universally ignorant of the important truth which this term connotes. That which is popular today in the colleges, in the pulpits, and in the press, is the dignity, the power, and the attainments of man. But this is only the corrupt fruit that has issued from the Evolutionary teachings of fifty years ago. When Christian theologians (?) accepted the Darwinian hypothesis, which excluded God from the realm of Creation, it was only to be expected that more and more God would be banished from the realm of human affairs. Thus it has proven. To the twentieth-century mind God is little more than an abstraction, an impersonal "First Cause," or if a Being at all, One far removed from this world and having little or nothing to do with mundane affairs. Man, forsooth, is a "god" unto himself. He is a "free agent" and therefore the regulator of his own life and the determiner of his own destiny. Such was the Devil's lie at the beginning - "Ye shall be as God" (Gen. 3:5). But from human speculation and Satanic insinuation we turn to Divine revelation.

The Godhood of God! What is meant by the expression? This: the omnipotency of God, the absolute sovereignty of God. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that God is God. We affirm that God is something more than an empty title: that God is something more than a mere figure-head: that God is something more than a far-distant Spectator, looking helplessly on at the suffering which sin has wrought. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." We affirm that God is something more than a disappointed, dis-satisfied, defeated Being, who is filled with benevolent desires but lacking in power to carry them out. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that He is "the Most High." We affirm that God is something more than One who has endowed man with the power of choice, and because He has done this is therefore unable to compel man to do His bidding. We affirm that God is something more than One who has waged a protracted war with the Devil and has been worsted. When we speak of the Godhood of God we affirm that He is the Almighty.

To speak of the Godhood of God then, is to say that God is on the Throne, on the Throne as a fact and not as a say so; on a Throne that is high above all. To speak of the Godhood of God is to say that the Helm is in His hand, and that He is steering according to His own good pleasure. To speak of the Godhood of God is to say that He is the Potter, that we are the clay, and that out of the clay He shapes one as a vessel to honor and

another as a vessel to dishonor according to His own sovereign rights. To speak of the Divine Despot doing "according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him what doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35). Therefore, to speak of the Godhood of God is to give the mighty Creator His rightful place; it is to recognize His exalted majesty; it is to own His universal scepter.

The Godhood of God stands at the base of Divine revelation: "in the beginning God" - in solemn majesty, eternal, un-caused, self-sufficient. This is the foundation doctrine, and upon it all other doctrines must be built, and any other doctrine which is not built upon it will inevitably fail and fall in the day of testing. At the beginning of all true theology lies the postulate that God is God - absolute and irresistible. It must be so. Without this we face a closed door: with it we have a key which unlocks every mystery. This is true of Creation; exclude an Almighty God and nothing is left but blind and illogical materialism. This is true of Revelation: the Bible is the solitary miracle in the realm of literature; exclude God from it and you have a miracle and no miracle-Worker to produce it. This is true of Salvation. Salvation is "of the Lord," entirely so; exclude God from any aspect or part of salvation, and salvation vanishes. This is true of History, for history is His story: it is the outworking in time of His eternal purpose; exclude God from history and all is meaningless and purposeless. The absolute Godhood of God is the only guaranty that in the end it shall be fully and finally demonstrated that God is "All in all" (1 Cor. 15:28).

"In the beginning God." This is not only the first word of Holy Scripture but it must be the firm axiom of all true philosophy - the philosophy of human history, for example. Instead of beginning with man and his world and attempting to reason back to God, we must begin with God and reason forward to man and his world. It is failure to do this which leaves unsolved the "riddle of the universe." Begin with the world as it is today and try to reason back to God, and what is the result? If you are honest of heart and logical of mind, this - that God has little or nothing at all to do with the world. But begin with God and reason forward to the world as it is today and much light is cast on the problem. Because God is holy, His anger burns against sin. Because God is righteous, His judgments fall on those who rebel against Him. Because God is faithful, the solemn threatenings of His Word are being fulfilled. Because God is omnipotent, no problem can master Him, no enemy defeat Him, and no purpose of His can be withstood. It is just because God is who He is and what He is that we now behold what we do - the gathering clouds of the storm of Divine wrath which will shortly burst upon the earth.

"For of Him, and through Him and to Him, are all things" (Rom. 11:36). In the beginning - God. In the center - God. At the end - God. But as soon as this is insisted upon men will stand up and tell you what they think about God. They will prate about God working consistently with His own character, as though a worm of the earth was capable of determining what was consistent and what was inconsistent with the Divine perfections. People will say with an air of profound wisdom that God must deal justly with His creatures, which is true, of course, but who is able to define Divine justice, or any other of God's attributes? The truth is that man is utterly incompetent for forming a proper estimate of God's character and ways, and it is because of this that God has given us a revelation of His mind, and in that revelation He plainly declares, "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher then your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55:8,9). In view of such a scripture as this it is only to be expected that much of the contents of the Bible conflicts with the sentiments of the carnal mind which is "enmity against God." And further: in view of such a Scripture as the above we need not be surprised that much of

human history is so perplexing to our understandings.

The natural world, to begin with the simplest, presents sufficient problems to humble man, were it not that he was blinded by pride. Why should there be diseases and remedies for them? Why poisons and their antidotes? Why rats and mice, and cats to kill them? Why not have left un-made the evils, and then no necessity for the instruments to remove them! Ah, why are we so slow to learn that God's ways are different from ours? And when we enter the human realm the mystery deepens. What is man placed here for at all? To learn some lesson or lessons or to undergo some test or experience which he could not learn or undergo elsewhere? If so, then why is such a large proportion of the race removed in infancy, before such lessons can be learned and such experiences be gained? Why indeed! Such questions as these might be multiplied indefinitely, but sufficient has been said to point out the manifest limitations of human wisdom. And if we are confronted with insolvable problems in the domain of nature and of human existence, what of the Divine realm! Who can fathom the ways of the Almighty? Canst thou by searching find out God? No indeed. "Clouds and darkness are round about Him" (Ps. 97:2). If God were not a mystery He would not be God to us.

But why write in this strain? Surely the need of our day is for that which will strengthen faith, not that which paralyzes it. True; but what is faith? we mean faith in the abstract. Faith is, essentially, an attitude rather than an act: it is that which lies behind the act. Faith is an attitude of dependency, of recognized weakness. Faith is a coming to the end of ourselves and looking outside of ourselves - away from ourselves. Faith is that which gives God His proper place. And if we give God His proper place, we must take our proper place, and that is in the dust. And what is there that will bring the haughty, self-sufficient creature into the dust so quickly as a sight of the Godhead of God! Nothing is so humbling to the human heart as a true recognition of the absolute sovereignty of God. So then, instead of seeking to weaken faith, we write to promote and strengthen it. The chief trouble is that so much that passes for faith today is really only maudlin sentimentality. The faith of Christendom in this twentieth century is mere credulity, and the "god" of many of our churches is not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, but a mere figment of the imagination. Modern theology has invented a "god" which the infinite mind can understand, whose ways are pleasing to the natural man, a "god" who is altogether "such a one as" (Ps. 50:21) those who profess to worship him, a "god" concerning whom there is little or no mystery. But how different the God which the Holy Scriptures reveal! Of Him it is said, His ways are "past finding out" (Rom. 11:33). To particularize:

1. The "god" of the moderns is altogether lacking in power. The popular idea of today is that deity is filled with amiable intentions but that Satan is preventing the making good of them. It is not God's will, so we are told, that there should be any wars, for wars are something which men are unable to reconcile with their ideas of Divine mercy. Hence, the conclusion is, that all wars are of the Devil. Plagues and earthquakes, famines and tornadoes, are not sent from God, but are attributed solely to natural causes. To affirm that the Lord God sent the recent Influenza epidemic as a judgment scourge, would be to shock the sensibilities of the modern mind. All such things as this are a cause of grief to "god" for "he" desires nought but the happiness of everybody.

2. The "god" of the moderns is altogether lacking in wisdom. The popular belief is that God loves everybody, and that it is His will that every child of Adam should be saved. But if this be true, He is strongly lacking in wisdom, for He knows quite well that under existing conditions the majority will be lost. If He is really desirous that every creature should have an equal chance to be saved, then why suffer so many to be born into families (of criminal parents, for example) and be brought up under conditions where they will never hear the Gospel - and there are many

thousands such in this country. If it should be said in reply God has not created these criminal conditions, the point is readily ceded, but nevertheless God is responsible for sending children into them, for the fruit of the womb is solely in His hands. Why not produce sterility among criminals, if it is contrary to His will for children to be born into such conditions, conditions which frequently preclude all reading of the Scriptures and all hearing the Gospel.

3. The "god" of the moderns is lacking in holiness. That crime deserves punishment is still allowed in part, though more and more the belief is gaining ground that the criminal is really an object of pity rather than censure, and that he stands in need of education and reformation rather than of punishment. But that SIN - sins of thought as well as deed, sins of the heart as well as life, sins of omission as well as commission, the sinful root itself as well as the fruit - should be hated by God, that His body nature burns against it, is a concept that has gone almost entirely out of fashion; and that the sinner himself is hated by God is indignantly denied even among those who boast most loudly of their orthodoxy.

4. The "god" of the moderns is altogether lacking in a sovereign prerogative. Whatever rights the deity of present-day Christendom may be supposed to possess in theory, in fact they must be subordinated to the "rights" of the creature. It is denied, almost universally, that the rights of the Creator over His creatures is that of the Potter over the clay. When it is affirmed that God has the right to make one as a vessel unto honor, and another as a vessel unto dishonor, the cry of injustice is instantly raised. When it is affirmed that salvation is a gift and that this gift is bestowed on whom God pleases, it is said He is partial and unfair. If God has any gifts to impart, He must distribute them evenly, or else bestow them on those that merit them, whoever they may be. And thus God is allowed less freedom than I, who may disburse my charity as I best please, giving to one beggar a quarter, to another a dime, and to a third nothing at all if I think well.

How different is the God of the Bible from the "god" of the moderns!! The God of Scripture is all-mighty. He is one who speaks and it is done, who commands and it stands fast. He is the One with whom "all things are possible" and "who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). He is the One "who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with the span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance" (Is. 40:12). He is the One with whom "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance," with Whom "all nations before Him are as nothing and they are counted to Him less than nothing, and vanity" (Is. 40:15,17). He is One that "sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in; that bringeth the princes to nothing; He maketh the judges of the earth as vanity" (Is. 40:22,23). He is the One who declares, "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretched forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by Myself. That frustrateth the tokens of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish. That confirmeth the word of His servant, and performeth the counsel of His messengers; that saith to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be inhabited; and to the cities of Judah, Ye shall be built, and I will raise up the decayed places thereof. That saith to the deep, Be dry, and I will dry up thy rivers: That saith of Cyrus (a heathen idolater) he is My shepherd, and shall perform all My pleasure" (Is. 44:24-28). Such is the God of the Bible, the God who throws out the challenge, "To whom then will ye liken God, or what likeness will ye compare unto Him?" (Is. 40:18). And as though that were not enough, in the same chapter He asks again, "To whom then will ye liken Me, or shall I be equal?

saith the Holy One. Lift up your eyes on high and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: He calleth them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power, not one faileth...Hast thou not known? has thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary?" (Is. 40:25,26,28).

The God of Scripture is infinite in wisdom. No secret can be hidden from Him, no problem can baffle Him, nothing is too hard for Him. God is omniscient - "Great is our Lord, and of great power: His understanding is infinite" (Ps. 147:5). Therefore is it said, "There is no searching of His understanding" (Is. 40:28). Hence it is, that in a revelation from Him we expect to find truths which transcend the reach of the creature's mind, and therefore the presumptuous folly and wickedness of those who are but "dust and ashes" undertaking to pronounce upon the reasonableness or unreasonableness of doctrines which are above their reason, and of speculating upon things that are a matter of pure revelation. Instead of coming to the Scriptures to be taught thereof, men first fill their minds with objections, and then instead of interpreting the Divine Oracles according to their obvious meaning, they submit and twist them according to the dictates of their own finite reason. Surely if we are unable to comprehend the mode of God's existence, because it is infinitely above us, then for the same reason we are unable to comprehend the counsels of infinite wisdom. Such is the explicit assertion of Holy Writ itself - "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Cor. 2:14).

The God of Scripture is infinite in Holiness. The "only true God" is He who hates sin with a perfect abhorrence and whose nature eternally burns against it. He is the One who beheld the wickedness of the antediluvians and who opened the windows of Heaven and poured down the flood of His righteous indignation. He is the One who rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah and utterly destroyed these cities of the plain. He is the One who sent the plagues upon Egypt, and destroyed her haughty monarch together with his hosts at the Red Sea. He is the One who caused the earth to open its mouth and swallow alive Korah and his rebellious company. Yes, He is the One who "spared not His own Son" when He was "made sin for us...that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." So holy is God and such is the antagonism of His nature against evil, that for one sin He banished our first parents from Eden; for one sin He cursed the posterity of Ham; for one sin He turned Lot's wife into a pillar of salt; for one sin He sent out fire and devoured the sons of Aaron; for one sin Moses died in the wilderness; for one sin Achan and his family were all stoned to death; for one sin the servant of Elisha was smitten with leprosy. Behold therefore, not only the goodness, but also "the severity of God" (Rom. 11:22). And this is the God that every Christ-rejector has yet to meet in judgment!

The God of Scripture has a will that is irresistible. Man talks and boasts of his will, but God also has a will! Men had a will on the plains of Shinar and undertook to build a tower whose top should reach unto heaven; but what came of it? God had a will, too, and their willful effort came to naught. Pharaoh had a will when he hardened his heart and refused to allow Jehovah's people to go into the wilderness and there worship Him, but what came of it? God had a will, too, and being Almighty His will was performed. Balak had a will when he hired Balaam to come and curse the Hebrews; but of what avail was it? The Canaanites had a will when they determined to prevent Israel occupying the promised land; but how far did they succeed? Saul had a will when he hurled his javelin at David, but instead of slaying the Lord's anointed, it entered the wall instead. Jonah had a will when he refused to go and preach to the Ninevites; but what came of it? Nebuchadnezzar had a will when he thought to destroy the three Hebrews; but God had a will too,

and so the fire did not harm them. Herod had a will when he purposed to slay the Child Jesus, and had there been no living and reigning God, his evil desires had been effected; but in daring to pit his puny will against the irresistible will of the Almighty, his efforts came to naught. Yes, my reader, and you had a will when you formed your plans without first seeking counsel of the Lord, and therefore did He overthrow them. As well might a worm seek to resist the tread of an elephant; as well might a babe step between the railroad tracks and attempt to push back the express train; as well might a child seek to prevent the ocean from rolling, as for a creature to try and resist the outworking of the purpose of the Lord God - "O Lord God of our fathers, art not Thou God in heaven? and rulest not Thou over all the kingdoms of the heathen? and in Thine hand is there not power and might, so that none is able to withstand thee?" (2 Chron. 20:6).

The God of Scripture is absolute Sovereign. Such is His own claim: "This is the purpose that is purposed upon the whole earth: and this is the hand that is stretched out upon all the nations. For the Lord of hosts hast purposed, and who shall disannul it? and His hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?" (Is. 14:26,27). The Sovereignty of God is absolute and irresistible: "All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. 4:35). The Sovereignty of God is true not only hypothetically, but in fact. That is to say, God exercises His sovereignty, exercises it both in the natural realm, and in the spiritual. One is born black, another white. One is born in wealth, another in poverty. One is born with a healthy body, another sickly and crippled. One is cut off in childhood, another lives to old age. One is endowed with five talents, another with but one. And in all these cases it is God the Creator who maketh one to differ from another, and "none can stay His hand." So also is it in the spiritual realm. One is born in a pious home and is brought up in the fear and abomination of the Lord; another is born of criminal parents and is reared in vice. One is the object of many prayers, the other is not prayed for at all. One hears the Gospel from early childhood, another never hears it. One sits under a Scriptural ministry, another hears nothing but error and heresy. Of those who do hear the Gospel, one has his heart opened by the Lord to receive the truth, while another is left to himself. One is "ordained to eternal life" (Acts 13:48), while another is "ordained to condemnation (Jude 4). To whom He will God shows mercy, and whom he wills He
"hardens" (Rom. 9:18). To particularize:

1. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN CREATION

With whom took He counsel in creation? Whom did He consult when He determined the various and manifold arrangements, adjustments, adaptations, relationships, equipments of His myriad creatures? Did He not do everything after the counsel of His own will? Did He not decide that birds should fly in the air, beasts roam the earth, and fishes live in the sea? Did He not decide there should be one vast gradation among the creatures of His hand, instead of making everything equal and uniform? Did He not determine to make a revolving world on the one hand, and a floating atom on the other? Did He not determine to create the exalted seraphim to stand before His throne throughout endless ages, and also to make another creature which dies the same hour it is born?" Was He not undisputed Sovereign in all His creative acts? Yea, verily, for the Three Persons of the Godhead were all alone in their solitary majesty. Why should God take counsel? Could man add to His

knowledge, or correct His errors? God sovereignly assigned His myriad creatures their various habitations, members, movements, as it pleased Him. God never consulted man about a single member of His body, or about its size, color, or capacity; instead, "God set the members everyone of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (1 Cor. 12:18). Man is as truly the product of Sovereign creation as any other of God's creatures - sovereign, we say, not arbitrary.

2. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN ADMINISTRATION

God not only created everything, but everything which He created is subject to His immediate control. God rules over the works of His hands. God governs the creatures He has made. God reigns with universal dominion. When He pleased, the sun and moon stood still (Josh. 10:12,13); and at a word from Him the sun went backward ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz (Is. 38:8). At His command the Red Sea ceased to flow, and at His command it resumed its normal course (Ex. 14). In response to the prayer of Elisha, He made iron to float on the top of the water (2 Kings 6:5). Yes, when He pleases, He reverses the order of nature, as when the fires of Nebuchadnezzar's furnace burnt not, as when the hungry lions touched not Daniel, as when the ravens, which are birds of prey, were made to minister of Elijah. At a word from Him who made it, a fish carried a coin to Peter, a tree withers suddenly (Matt. 21:4), the raging tempest becomes a calm.

So it is also with men; they, too, are ruled by God; ruled by and unseen Hand; often, unknown to themselves. Little did they know it, yet nevertheless, the sons of Jacob were but performing the pleasure of Jehovah when they sold Joseph into the hands of the Ishmaelites who carried him down into Egypt. Little was she aware of it, but when Pharaoh's daughter went to the Nile to bathe, she was being directed by God, directed there to rescue from the waters the babe Moses. Little did he know it, but in issuing the decree that all the world should be taxed (Luke 2:1) Caesar Augustus was but setting in motion a movement which caused the word and decree of God to be fulfilled. Yes, even "The King's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Pro. 21:1). And so it is with Satan himself. He, too, is the (unwitting and unwilling) servant of God. He could not touch Job without first gaining Divine permission. He could not sift the apostles till he gained consent from Christ. At a word from the Lord Jesus Satan "left" Him (Matt. 4:10,11). Of him, also, God has said, Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.

Even death, the "king of terrors," that which no arts of man can defy, is absolutely subject to the bidding of the Lord. In his sermon on Ps. 68:20,21 - "unto God the Lord belong the issues from death" - the late C. H. Spurgeon well said, "The prerogative of life or death belongs to God in a wide range of senses. First of all as to natural life, we are all dependent upon His good pleasure. We shall not die until the time which He appoints: for our death-time, like all our time, is in His hands. Our skirts may brush away the portals of the sepulchre, and yet we shall pass the iron gate unharmed if the Lord be our guard. The wolves of disease will hurt us in vain until God shall permit them to overtake us. The most desperate enemies may waylay us, but no bullet shall find its billet in any heart unless the Lord allows it. Our life does not even depend upon the care of angels, nor can our death be compassed by the malice of devils. We are immortal till our work is done, immortal till the immortal King shall call us home to the land where we shall be immortal in a still higher sense. When we are most sick, we need not despair of recovery, since the issues from death are in Almighty hands. "The Lord killeth and maketh alive: He bringeth down to the grave and

bringeth up!" When we have passed beyond the skill of the physician we have not passed beyond the succour of our God, to whom belong the issues from death."

3. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN GIVING OF THE SCRIPTURES

What part or lot did man have in the composition of the Bible? None whatever. Its very words are the words of God. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." No part of it was of human origination, "for the prophecy came not at any time by the will of man" (2 Pet. 1:21). Did not holy men of God speak "moved by the Holy Spirit"? And how did they then record what the Holy Spirit communicated to them - in words of man's selecting? Nay verily, "not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth" (1 Cor. 2:13). Balaam longed to speak otherwise than he did; but he could not. Caiaphas prophesied "not of himself" (John 11:51). Pilate was asked to make a change in the one sentence which God moved him to write, but he declared "What I have written I have written" (John 19:22). God acted sovereignly in the writing of the Scriptures as in everything else. The very words were chosen by Him; and did He not sovereignly choose? Did He take counsel with either angels or men as to the words He should select for the communicating of His thoughts? No indeed.

4. THE ABSOLUTE GODHOOD OF GOD IS SEEN IN SALVATION

God's absolute and irresistible proprietorship has been and is being displayed in the spiritual realm as manifestly as in the natural. Isaac is blessed, but Ishmael is cursed. Jacob is loved, but Esau is hated. Israel becomes God's favored people, while all other nations are suffered to remain in idolatry. Jesse's seven sons were all passed by, and David the shepherd-boy was found to be the one after God's own heart. The Saviour took on Him the "seed of Abraham" (Heb. 2:16), not the seed of Adam. His ministry was not worldward, but confined to the people chosen of God. The proud Pharisees were rejected, while publicans and harlots were sweetly compelled by sovereign grace to sit down at the Gospel feast. The rich young ruler, who from his youth up, had kept the commandments, was allowed to go away from Christ "sorrowing," even though he had sought Him with real earnestness and humility, while the fallen Samaritan woman (John 4) who sought Him not is made to rejoice in the forgiveness of her sins. Two thieves hung by Christ on the cross; they were equally guilty, equally needy, equally near to Him. One of them is moved to cry: "Lord, remember me" and is taken to Paradise, while the other is suffered to die in his sins and sink down into a hopeless eternity. Many are called, but few are chosen.

Yes, Salvation is God's sovereign work. "God does not save a man because he is a sinner, for if so He must save all men, for all are sinners. Nor because he comes to Christ, for `no man can come except the Father draw him;' nor because he repents, for `God gives repentance unto life;' nor because he believes,' for no one can believe `except it were given him from above;' nor yet because he holds out faithful to the end, for `we are kept by the power of God.' It is not because of baptism, for many are saved without it, and many are lost with it. It is not because of regeneration, for that would make the new birth a practical duty. It is not because of

morality, for the moralist is the hardeth to reach, and many of the most immoral are saved - the ground of distinguishing grace is the Sovereignty of God: `Even so Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight'" (J. B. Moody).

But is God partial? We answer, Has He not a right to be? Again we quote from Mr. Spurgeon's sermon "The Royal Prerogative" -"Spiritually, too, this prerogative is with God. We are by nature under the condemnation of the law on account of our sins, and we are like criminals tried, convicted, sentenced, and left for death. It is for God, as the great Judge, to see the sentence executed, or to issue a free pardon, according as He pleases; and He will have us know that it is upon His supreme pleasure that this matter depends. Over the head of a universe of sinners, I hear this sentence thundering. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Shut up for death, as men are by reason of their sins, it rests with God to pardon whom He may reserve: none have any claim to His favour, and it must be exercised upon mere prerogative, because He is the Lord God, merciful and gracious, and delighteth to pass by transgression and sin." How far away have the present-day admirers of Spurgeon departed from the teaching of this prince of preachers: Mark carefully the next sentences: "Our text, however, puts the prerogative upon the one sole ground of Lordship, and we prefer to come back to that. `Unto God the Lord belong the issues from death.' It is a doctrine which is very unpalatable in these days (it always has been. - A.W.P.), but one nevertheless which is to be held and taught, that God is an absolute Sovereign, and doeth as He wills. The words of Paul may not be suffered to sleep, - "Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, why hast Thou made me thus?" The Lord cannot do amiss, His perfect nature is a law unto itself. In his case Rex is Lex, the King is the Law."

Is God partial? Certainly He is. And has He not the right to be? Shall He not dispense His favours as He wills, and bestow His gifts on whom He pleases? But it is reasonable to suppose that God who is Love has created millions of creatures to be lost? seeing that His elect constitute but a "remnant." a "few," in comparison with the great multitudes who die unsaved? We reply, it is not a question of reason but of revelation. There are many things revealed in Scripture which are contrary to reason. Is it reasonable to think that God would give His only begotten Son to die for sinners? Ah, reason is ruled out entirely here. And so in many other things. If it lay within the power of the reader, would you suffer your worst enemy to be eternally tormented? And if you are honest, you will promptly answer, No! But God will deal thus with His enemies, and the sentence will be a righteous one, whether we can now discern its justice or not, for the Judge of all the earth will do right. How far asunder then is carnal reasoning from the teaching of Holy Writ concerning Eternal Punishment! Once more: would the reader "laugh at" and "mock" his worst enemy if that enemy was being severely punished before him and was entirely helpless to deliver himself from that punishment? Yet Scripture explicitly declares that God will "laugh" at the calamity of His enemies and "mock" when their fear cometh (see Ps. 2:4; Prov. 1:26). Can your reason harmonize this with your knowledge of God? And again we say, If you are honest you must reply, No! Then why prate so loudly and blatantly about the unreasonableness of Reprobation and of God's absolute Sovereignty in salvation? Once more: here is Satan, the age-long enemy of God and many, the one who has wrought incalculable evil, securely imprisoned at last in the bottomless pit. There he remains chained for a thousand years. Now would you, my reader, suggest for a moment that the Devil be released from that prison after the earth had been freed for a thousand years from his vile presence? Certainly you would not, and yet this is precisely what Divine revelation declares shall come to pass. The Scriptures of Truth make known how that God will cause the Serpent to be "loosed" for a little season, that God will suffer this even though He

knows beforehand that the consequences will be the most dreadful revolt on the part of men, under Satan, revolt against God, which this earth has ever witnessed. Truly God's ways are different, very different from ours. Learn then the utter folly of man attempting to pronounce upon the reasonableness or unreasonableness of the doings and dealings of the Most High God. And now a few words by way of exhortation and we must conclude.

One of the most flagrant sins of this age is irreverence. By irreverence I am not now thinking of open blasphemy, or the taking of God's name in vain. Irreverence is, also, failure to ascribe the glory which is due the great and dreadful majesty of the Almighty. It is the limiting of His power and actions by our degrading conceptions: it is the bringing of the Lord God down to our level. There are multitudes of those who do not profess to be Christians who deny that God is the omnipotent Creator, and there are multitudes of professing Christians who deny that God is absolute Sovereign. Men boast of their free will, prate of their power, and are proud of their achievements. They know not that their lives are at the sovereign disposal of the Divine Despot. They know not that they have no more power to thwart His secret counsel than a worm has to resist the tread of an elephant. They know not that God is the Potter, and they the clay.

Ah, my reader, this is the first great lesson we have to learn: that God is the Creator, we the creature; that He is the Potter, we the clay. This is the harvest of all life's lessons, and when we think we have learnt them, we soon discover that we have need to re-learn them. God is God and has the right to dispose of me as He sees fit. It is for Him to say where I shall live - whether in America or Africa. It is for Him to say under what circumstances I shall live - whether amid riches or poverty, whether in health or in sickness. It is for Him to say how long I shall live - whether I shall be cut down in youth, like the flower of the field, or whether I shall live unto old age. Yes, and it is for Him to say where I shall spend eternity.

The first sin of man was the refusal to be clay in the Potter's hand; Adam wanted to be something more - "Ye shall be as God's was the bait which the Tempter used to hurl him to his destruction.

One of the profoundest mysteries of the Incarnation is that "the mighty God" descended from highest heaven and took upon Him the nature of the creature and came down here to show us how to wear it. That which differentiated the Life of Christ from all other lives, was His absolute and joyous submission to the Father's will - "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me" struck the keynote of the thirty-three years that He tabernacled among men. Have you profited by the example left us by the Beloved of the Father? Has Divine grace shown you how to wear your creature nature? Only if you live not in self-assertion, but in self-renunciation. Only if in the school of Christ you have been taught to say, "Not my will, but Thine be done." O may Divine grace so subdue our rebellious hearts that more and more we can say:

"I bow me to Thy will, O God,
And all Thy ways adore!
And every day I live I'd seek
To please Thee more and more.

Thy will, the good, the blessed rule
Of Jesus' toil and tears:
Thy will the passion of His heart
Those three and thirty years.

I love to kiss each print where Christ
Did set His pilgrim feet:
Nor can I fear that blessed path,

Whose traces are so sweet.

When obstacles and trials seem
Like prison walls to be,
I do the little I can do,
And leave the rest to Thee.

I know not what it is to doubt,
My heart is ever gay;
I run no risk, for, come what will,
Thou always hast Thy way."