

THE SOVEREIGN

By

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“ALL THINGS ARE OF GOD.” (2 Cor. 5: 18)

The ancient people of God found great strength and peace in reflecting upon the Sovereignty of God. “Power belongs unto God,” sang the Psalmist (Psalm 62:11). Jesus appealed to His hearers on the basis that “With God all things are possible.”

The song of the Heavenly hosts described by John is: “We give thee thanks O Lord, God Almighty, which art and was and art to come; because thou has taken to thee the great power and has reigned” (Rev. 11:17). The apostles, after a period of understandable weakness and doubt, finally came to see clearly and to trust implicitly in the Sovereignty of God. They were convinced that all would be fulfilled “according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his will” (Eph. 1:11). Persecution, slander, hardship, torture and heartbreak could not dim their hopes nor dampen their zeal. Whatever happened, they saw in it the hand of God. He was working in them, “both to will and to work, for His .good pleasure” (Phil.2:13). Come what may, no matter how distressing it appeared to be, they lifted up praise to God, seeing that “all things are of Him, and through Him, and to Him” (Rom. 11:36).

This theme is all but lost to modern believers. We hear more of the rights, talents and works of men than the righteousness and work of God. A psychological answer must be found in every circumstance. Some preacher, teacher or director must be credited with every forward advance. Churches rely on methods and high-pressure salesmanship rather than upon the wisdom and working of the Almighty.

However, man’s failure to know of God’s sovereign power does not diminish that power. Such power existed before man was created, and man is only too anxious to forget. Somehow he reasons that the very fact that he is here, with the capacity to think and act, gives him power that even God Almighty cannot override! But God, by the right of creation, has the right to control that which He created and to do with it what He will. That right certainly extends over the human race, “seeing He himself gives to all life, and breath, and all things” (Acts 17:25).

Such power is not unqualified. The omnipotence of God does not mean that He arbitrarily acts in any variety of ways. God is essentially, totally and absolutely “good”. Scripture says that it is impossible for Him to lie (Heb. 6:18), that He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:18) and that He cannot be tempted with evil (James 1:18). He cannot do things that are contrary to His nature. His power will be exercised only in doing that which is good and right. Hence, the believer sees in His mighty power the assurance of all that is good and righteous and holy.

It follows that man is to depend upon God, to trust Him and to obey Him. He has commanded that we be subject to His Son, under whose feet He has subjected all things. (I Cor. 5:27-28). Christ has been given all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:18). Even so, "the head of Christ is God" (1Cor. 11:3). He is still subject to the Father, so that while He has been made King over all, subjection to Him is subjection to the Father.

There is no such thing as complete freedom. Man is always subject to God, either willingly or rebelliously. God is the potter and man is the clay. The clay does not mold itself; that is the prerogative of God. The Christian yields to the molding in joy and faith. Yet he has no right to say to God, "What doest thou?" (Job 9:12).

The unbeliever refuses the mold, thinking that he is free to resist God, to deny Him and even to declare that He doesn't exist. In his thinking he becomes the master of his own fate, the captain of his soul. But even so, he lives only by the Grace of Him Who "upholds all things" and who "gives to all life and breath". Physically, he is limited. He is fearfully and wonderfully made, but still, he is made by God to function a certain way. He abuses his body to his own destruction. Mentally, he cannot escape his own conscience. More than this, God is able to govern his life, even in his rebellion. God's power does not depend upon the creature's recognition of it. Finally, as a vessel "fitted for destruction," he is destroyed at Judgment. He learns only too late that in his frantic fight for freedom he has dashed himself to death against the inexorable will of the Creator.

The only freedom God offers is that we submit to His Sovereignty, He who would save his life will lose it, but whoever yields to God will find the perfect function of life as the Creator designed it. This is the closest thing to freedom there is.

The hue and cry for "Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood" does not originate in Christian faith, but rather from a sin-orientated ambition which would subject God to the arbitrary decisions of man. This motto, "Freedom, Equality, Brotherhood," was the cry of the atheistic French revolutionaries, as well as the Fabian Socialists of England, from whence come the modern revolutionaries. It is the motto of modern Jews and other unbelievers who deny God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Materialistic evolution is a denial of the Sovereignty of God. His sinful desire to be free from the Sovereignty of God ceaselessly drives man to search for some means other than Clod by which he arrived in this world. Some of the most notorious advocates of the theory of evolution have admitted that they grasped the theory, not out of scientific research, but as the alternative to accepting responsibility to a Sovereign Creator.

It is amazing that Christians usually fail to see the connection between the breakdown in morality and this rejection of God's Sovereignty, from the school house to the Supreme Court. Men who do not believe Christ do not believe in God "He that rejects me, rejects Him that sent me" (Luke 10:16). To the Jews Jesus said, "If you had believed Moses, you would have believed me: for he wrote of me" (John 5:46). The rejection of Christ, the barring of Him from almost every facet of life, means the rejection of God as Ruler. In

His place now stand the substitutes of scientism, education, socialism and collectivism. Satan appealed to Eve on the basis that she must take the initiative and do what she wants; she must decide for herself and become the judge of good and evil.

This is exactly what is being presented today under the banner of freedom, equality and brotherhood. The socialist insists that man must create and maintain a system which is not, dependent upon God's law, the Bible. He must create a society with man at the center and source of all things. Research committees must break through the ancient rules (of God) and determine for themselves what is good and evil. And then from their ivory tower of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, or some other Federal Bureau, tell the rest of us what is good for us.

What many do NOT realize is that the research committees and the government departments and the educational groups writing the "guidelines" are for the most part either people whose religion is OPPOSED to Christ, or who are committed to the idea of equality and brotherhood, exclusive of God's laws,

But God is unmoved. What if "the nations rage and the people mediate a vain thing?" What if "the kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against Jehovah and against His anointed?" (Psalm 2:2). Indeed they are falling over themselves in the attempt to "break their bonds asunder (do away with God's laws) and cast away their cords" (Psalm 2:3). God has the answer: "He that sits in the heavens will laugh: the Lord will have them in derision" (Psalm 2:4). He will "break them with a rod of iron" and "dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel" (Psalm 2:9).

God is Almighty! (Gen. 17:1, 28:3; Is. 13:6; Joel 1:15). Paul prayed that Christians might know "...what the exceeding greatness of His power to us who believe, according to that working of the strength of His might which he wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and made Him to sit at His right hand in the heavenly places" (Eph. 1:19-20). Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom" (Luke 12:32). "Know you that Yahweh, he is God; it is He that has made us, and we are His" (Psalm 100:3).

The Sovereignty of Almighty God is ground for these applications:

(1) The worldwide upheaval of evil powers now in process is not outside God's dominion; it is all part of the unfolding of the plan by which God brings to consummation His eternal purpose: the elect to be saved and glorified and the rest to be destroyed in Judgment. The present chaos only appears to be such from our temporal earthly point of view. From God's point of view it may indicate the final step in the working of His overall purpose.

(2) The work of God through His church must be something quite different from what is generally portrayed as church work. The average concept of a church program holds that the work that God would do is subject to the cleverness of His servants; hence, the frenzied activity of ministers and their associates to find new methods, new gimmicks,

tantalizing bait and activities which are “relevant” to the pagan world. The attitude prevails that unless we find better methods and skill ourselves in worldly techniques by which to hold the church together and build it up, God will fail. The work becomes man’s work with God depending upon man. But the church is Christ’s and Christ is God’s. Christ will build His church: it is man’s task to proclaim God’s word and to be faithful to Him, that the church may yield fully to His sovereign will.

(3) The believer may have perfect peace and perpetual assurance in spite of the distressing circumstances that surround him. Whatever happens, however tragic as viewed in the world, it cannot be otherwise than profitable in the overall plan. The Christian is totally under the Sovereign Power of God. “The very hairs of your head are numbered” (Matt. 10:30).

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