

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

IN ONE of his letters to Erasmus, Luther¹ said, “Your thoughts of God are too human.” Probably that renowned scholar resented such a rebuke, the more so since it proceeded from a miner’s son—nevertheless, it was thoroughly deserved. We too, though having no standing among the religious leaders of this degenerate age, prefer² the same charge against the majority of the preachers of our day, and against those who, instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves, lazily accept the teaching of others. The most dishonouring and degrading conceptions of the rule and reign of the Almighty are now held almost everywhere. To countless thousands, even among those professing to be Christians, the God of the Scriptures is quite unknown.

Of old, God complained to an apostate Israel, “Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself” (Psa 50:21). Such must now be His indictment against an apostate Christendom. Men imagine that the Most High is moved by sentiment, rather than actuated by principle. They suppose that His omnipotence is such an idle fiction that Satan is thwarting His designs on every side. They think that if He has formed any plan or purpose at all, then it must be like theirs: constantly subject to change. They openly declare that whatever power He possesses must be restricted, lest He invade the citadel of man’s “free will” and reduce him to a “machine.” They lower the all-efficacious Atonement, which has actually redeemed everyone for whom it was made, to a mere “remedy” that sin-sick souls may use if they feel disposed to. And they enervate³ the invincible work of the Holy Spirit to an “offer” of the gospel that sinners may accept or reject as they please.

The “god” of this twentieth century no more resembles the Supreme Sovereign of Holy Writ than does the dim flickering of a candle the glory of the midday sun. The “god” who is now talked about in the average pulpit, spoken of in the ordinary Sunday School, mentioned in much of the religious literature of the day, and preached in most of the so-called Bible conferences, is the figment of human imagination, an invention of maudlin⁴ sentimentality. The heathen outside the pale⁵ of Christendom form “gods” out of wood and stone, while the millions of heathen inside Christendom manufacture a “god” out of their own carnal mind. In reality, they are but atheists, for there is no other possible alternative between an absolutely supreme God, and no God at all. A “god” whose will is

¹ **Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam** (c. 1466-1536) – Dutch Renaissance humanist and Roman Catholic theologian, recognized as the “Prince of the Humanists,” a leading biblical scholar, and a powerful advocate of church reform.

Martin Luther (1483-1546) – German monk, priest, professor of theology, and a leader during the Protestant Reformation—restoring to the Church the doctrine of justification through faith alone.

² **prefer** – present a charge against a defendant before a court.

³ **enervate** – weaken.

⁴ **maudlin** – weakly emotional.

⁵ **pale** – enclosed area within a park, in which the deer are safe.

resisted, whose designs are frustrated, whose purpose is checkmated, possesses no title to Deity—and so far from being a fit object of worship, merits nought but contempt.

The supremacy of the true and living God might well be argued from the infinite distance that separates the mightiest creatures from the almighty Creator. He is the Potter, they are but the clay in His hands; to be molded into vessels of honour or to be dashed into pieces (Psa 2:9; Rom 9:21) as He pleases. Were all the denizens⁶ of heaven and all the inhabitants of the earth to combine in revolt against Him, it would occasion Him no uneasiness, and would have less effect upon His eternal and unassailable throne than has the spray of the Mediterranean's waves upon the towering rocks of Gibraltar—so puerile⁷ and powerless is the creature to affect the Most High. Scripture itself tells us that when the Gentile heads unite with apostate Israel to defy Jehovah and His Christ, "He that sitteth in the heavens shall *laugh*" (Psa 2:4).

The absolute and universal supremacy of God is plainly and positively affirmed in many Scriptures. "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all...and thou reignest over all (1Ch 29:11-12)—note: "reignest" now, not "will do so in the millennium." "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?" (2Ch 20:6). Before Him presidents and popes, kings and emperors, are less than grasshoppers.

"But he is in one mind, and who can turn him? and what his soul desireth, *even that* he doeth" (Job 23:13). Ah, my reader, the God of Scripture is no make-believe monarch, no mere imaginary sovereign, but King of kings and Lord of lords. "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that *no* thought can be withholden from thee" (Job 42:2)—that is, "no thought of thine can be hindered" (margin⁸); or as another translator renders it, "no purpose of thine can be frustrated." All that He has designed He does. All that He has decreed He performs. "But our God is in the heavens: he hath done *whatsoever* he hath pleased" (Psa 115:3). And why has He? Because "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Pro 21:30).

God's supremacy over the works of His hands is vividly depicted in Scripture. Inanimate matter and irrational creatures all perform their Maker's bidding. At His pleasure the Red Sea divided and its waters stood up as walls (Exo 14); the earth opened her mouth and guilty rebels went down alive into the pit (Num 16). When He so ordered, the sun stood still (Jos 10); and on another occasion went *backward* ten degrees on the dial of Ahaz (Isa 38:8). To exemplify His supremacy, He made ravens carry food to Elijah (1Ki 17), iron to swim on top of the waters (2Ki 6:5), lions to be tame when Daniel was cast into their den (Dan 6), and fire to burn not when the three Hebrews were flung into its flames (Dan 3).

⁶ **denizens** – inhabitants; citizens.

⁷ **puerile** – immature, especially in being silly or trivial; childish; juvenile.

⁸ **margin** – In early editions of the King James Version, the translators gave alternate readings in marginal notes.

Thus “Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Psa 135:6).

God’s supremacy is also demonstrated in His perfect rule over the *wills* of men. Ponder carefully Exodus 34:24. Three times in the year all the males of Israel were required to leave their homes and go up to Jerusalem. They lived in the midst of hostile people, who hated them for having appropriated their lands. What then was to hinder the Canaanites from seizing their opportunity, and during the absence of the men, slaying the women and children and taking possession of their farms? If the hand of the Almighty was not upon the wills even of wicked men, how could He make this promise beforehand, that none should so much as “desire” their lands? Ah, “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).

But it may be objected: Do we not read again and again in Scripture how that men defied God, resisted His will, broke His commandments, disregarded His warnings, and turned a deaf ear to all His exhortations? Certainly we do. And does this nullify all that we have said above? If it does, then the Bible plainly contradicts itself—but that cannot be! What the objector refers to is simply the wickedness of man against the *external* Word of God, whereas what we have mentioned above is what God has *purposed in Himself*. The rule of conduct He has given us to walk by is perfectly fulfilled by none of us; His own eternal “counsels” are accomplished to their minutest details.⁹

The absolute and universal supremacy of God is affirmed with equal plainness and positiveness in the New Testament. There we are told that God “worketh *all* things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph 1:11)—the Greek for “worketh” means “to work effectually.” For this reason we read, “For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen” (Rom 11:36). Men may boast that they are free agents with a will of their own and are at liberty to do as they please, but Scripture says to those who boast, “we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell...Ye ought to say, *If the Lord* will” (Jam 4:13, 15)!

Here then is a sure resting-place for the heart. Our lives are neither the product of blind fate nor the result of capricious¹⁰ chance, but every detail of them was ordained from all eternity, and is now ordered by the living and reigning God. Not a hair of our heads can be touched without His permission. “A man’s heart deviseth his way: *but the LORD directeth his steps*” (Pro 16:9). What assurance, what strength, what comfort this should give the real Christian! “My times are in *thy* hand” (Psa 31:15). Then let me “rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him” (Psa 37:7). ❧

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⁹ See “The Will of God” by A. W. Pink, available from CHAPEL LIBRARY.

¹⁰ **capricious** – acting on whim; impulsive; unpredictable.

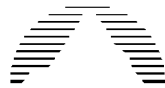
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