

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY Part 3: Authority in Christian Practice Chapter 9 THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

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Transcript

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY

Part 3: Authority in Christian Practice

Chapter 9

THE SUPREMACY OF GOD

In one of his letters to Erasmus, Luther 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, prefer the same charge against the vast majority of the preachers of our day, and against those who, instead of searching the Scriptures for themselves, lazily accept their teachings. The most dishonoring 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 Scripture is quite unknown. Of old, God complained to an apostate Israel, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether as thyself" (Ps. 50:21). Such must now be His indictment against the apostate Christendom. Men imagine that the Most High is moved by sentiment, rather than actuated by principle. They suppose that His omnipotency 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," which sin-sick souls may use if they feel disposed to; and then enervate the invincible work of the Holy Spirit to an "offer" of the Gospel which sinners may accept or reject as they please. The supremacy of the true and living God might well be argued from the infinite distance which 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 (Ps. 2:9) as He pleases. Were all the denizens of heaven and all the inhabitants of earth to combine in open 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 rock of Gibraltar. So puerile (?) and powerless is the creature to affect the Most High that 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 "(Ps. 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" (1 Chron. 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 [not even the Devil himself] is able to withstand Thee?" (2 Chron. 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 of Thine can be hindered" (Job 42:2, margin), or, as another translator, "no purpose of Thine can be frustrated." All that He has designed He does. All that He has decreed He perfects. All that He has promised He performs. "But our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Ps. 115:3). And why has He? Because "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord" (Prov. 21:30). God's supremacy over the works of His hands is vividly depicted in Scripture. Inanimate matter, irrational creatures, all perform their Maker's bidding. At His pleasure, the Red Sea divided and its waters stood up as walls (Ex. 14); the earth opened her mouth, and guilty rebels went down alive into the pit (Num. 14). When He so ordered, the sun stood still (Joshua 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 (1 Kings 17), iron to swim on top of the waters (2 Kings 6:5), lions to be tame when Daniel was cast into their den, fire to burn not when the three Hebrews were flung into its flames. Thus "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places" (Ps. 135:6). 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 wills 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" (James 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 capricious 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" (Prov. 16:9). What assurance, what strength, what comfort this should give the real Christian! "My times are in Thy hand" (Ps. 31:15). Then let me "rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him" (Ps. 37:7).

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