

ARMINIANISM VERSUS CALVINISM

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ARMINIANISM VERSUS CALVINISM

or, God's Sovereignty & Man's Responsibility

A Review of «The Sovereignty of God,»
written by Arthur W. Pink



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THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD AND THE RESPONSIBILITY OF MAN

It has been our purpose for a long time to discuss the subjects of God's sovereignty, and man's responsibility in these pages. The two subjects are often set in opposition to each other, as though they were mutually contradictory, rather than complimentary. Both are true, and they are found side by side in the Word of God. Parties and sects have been formed around each subject, while much heat and little light have been generated on both sides.

A stormy controversy arose in the latter part of the 16th century between the followers of John Calvin (1509-64) and Jacobus Arminius, whose real name was Jacob Harmensen, or Hermansz, (1560-1609). The battle between Calvinists and Arminians is still going on.

Calvin saw and taught the total ruin of man, that since Adam fell all his posterity were born in sin and possessed a will opposed to God. Thus Calvinism taught that mankind was hopelessly lost unless God stepped in and saved some, but that this He did, first by His own sovereign choice in a past eternity, and then by giving them faith in Christ when they were living on the earth.

Arminius denied that man was beyond the power to help himself, and contended that he could by exercising his own free will improve himself, and that at least he had the power to accept the good and refuse the evil, to exercise faith in Christ, or reject Him. This is generally termed the doctrine of «free will.» Whether Arminius realized it or not, his doctrine had much of the Pelagian error in it. Let us consider Pelagius and his doctrine.

PELAGIUS AND HIS ERROR

Of Pelagius's early life we know little; he probably died early in the 5th century. This much is known, that he was a monk in the great monastery at Bangor, Wales, and that his real name was Morgan. He had a close follower named Celestius, a native of Ireland. These two men went to Rome, then to Africa, and then to Jerusalem, spreading their evil doctrine. Grace to them was nothing more than a call to man to exercise his best efforts toward God. We shall quote the words of another about the Pelagian heresy:

«The fundamental error of the monk Pelagius was the denial of our total corruption by sin derived from Adam, and met only by the death and resurrection of the second Man, the last Adam. Hence he asserted liberty as now true of all men, not merely in the sense of exemption from external restraint, but of freedom within the nature as to good and evil, denying thus in the race internal bondage to sin. So he appears to have seen little more in grace, even in its Christian application, than pardon for this or that offence, not the impartation to the believer of a new nature, in

virtue of which he does not practice sin, because he is born of God. Thus no room was left in the Pelagian scheme for man's being lost now on the one side, or for the believer's being saved now on the other. In fact the race was conceived to be in an innocence like the primeval state of Adam, till each sinned and thus fell under guilt and its consequences. The Pelagians denied the imputation of Adam's sin, seeing no more than the influence of a bad example. As the moral ruin of man was thus enfeebled and the relation of the head lost, so on the other hand under grace were reckoned all the natural endowments of the human family, as well as the supernatural. Hence conscience, law, and gospel were regarded as different methods, as well as advancing stages of righteousness, in every case the means and operations of grace being effectual only according to the measure of the tendencies of the will. Again, the redemption of Christ became thus, if not an amelioration, certainly an exaltation and transfiguration of humanity. Christ Himself was but the highest pattern of righteousness, some before Him having perfectly kept the moral law, and others since being stimulated by His work, love, and example to the evangelical counsels of moral perfection beyond law."

It should be apparent to the most superficial reader of the above that Pelagius denied both the fall and utter ruin of man on the one hand, and the only way of redemption through the work of Christ for, and the operation of the Spirit in its application to man, on the other. It was a deadly error that nullified the necessity of the whole counsels and operation of the grace of God. It would have foredoomed

the creature to remain in his alienation from God, although this alienation is denied.

If man is not lost, then the Lord Jesus needed not to come «to seek and to save that which was lost» (Luke 19:10). If a man could elevate himself by the exercise of his own will, and by good thus performed, back to God, then God needed not to send His beloved Son to suffer and die. But God has faithfully told us that we were not only lost and without any strength to do anything about it, but that we were morally dead — dead toward God — that there is not one movement of our hearts toward Him. (Romans and Ephesians.) Being thus in such a plight, we needed One to rescue us, to save us — and we needed the impartation of life, an entirely new life.

ARMINIANISM AND WHERE HELD TODAY

But let us come back to Arminianism which is today held by much of Christendom, especially by large segments of evangelical bodies. Has man today such a thing as a free will morally? No! Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden by his Creator. He was perfect in innocence, for God, after creating him, looked at His creation and said it was «very good.» He was happy in relationship with his Creator, but to remain so he needed to walk in *obedience*, for that was the only right thing for a creature. He was not outwardly forced to remain in that state; and one, but only one, test was applied to him in the matter of obedience. He was to abstain from the fruit of only one tree, and God warned him of the consequences of disobedience. As soon then as he exercised his own will, he sinned. This was not all; he became a sinner with a will opposed to God. From that moment forward, all of mankind (with the single exception of the “Lord from heaven, the second Man, the last Adam”) have been disposed to evil.

Since man's will is now inclined toward evil, how can he by the exercise of it bring himself back to God?

Let us quote from another on the subject of free will:

"It is simple nonsense to talk of freedom when applied to man's actual condition, if he is already inclined to evil."

"A man being really set to choose between evil and good, is alike horrible and absurd; because it supposes the good and evil to be outside, and *himself neither*. If he is one or other in disposition, the choice is there. To have a fair choice, he must be personally indifferent; but to be in a state of indifference to good and evil is perfectly horrible. If a man has an inclination, his choice is not free; a free will is rank nonsense morally, because, if he have a will, he wills something. God can will to create. But will in moral things [in man] means either self-will, which is sin (for we ought to obey), or an inclination to something, which is really a choice *made as far as will goes*."

"To say that he [man] is not inclined to evil, is to deny all Scripture and all fact; to make him free to choose he must be as yet indifferent, indifferent to having no preference for good and evil, which is not true, for evil lusts and self-will are there, the two great elements of sin, and if it were true would be perfectly horrible."

"The doctrine of free will helps on the doctrine of the natural man's pretension not to be entirely lost, for that is really what it amounts to. All men who have never been deeply convinced of sin, all persons with whom this conviction is based upon gross and outward sins, believe more or less in

free will. You know that it is the dogma of all reasoners, of all philosophers. But this idea completely changes all the idea of Christianity and entirely perverts it.”

If natural man could by the exercise of his own will bring himself into favour with God, then it is not true that «They that are in the flesh *cannot* please God,” but God’s Word is true. It would likewise negate the positive declaration, “Ye *must* be born again.” Why did the Lord say, “No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him”? Because man’s heart is so far estranged from God that if man be left to himself he would never come. It is true, as in the parable, that when the invitation reaches needy sinners, “They all with one consent [begin] to make excuse.” They not only have a nature disposed toward evil, but they are not disposed to accept God’s gracious invitation, no, not even with God’s beseeching them to come. If it were not for sovereign grace that drew any of us to Christ, none would have partaken of God’s free gift. As the poet has so aptly said,

*“Why was I made to hear His voice,
And enter while there’s room,
When thousands make a wretched choice,
And rather starve than come?”*

*‘Twas the same love that spread the feast,
That sweetly forced me in,
Else I had still refused to taste,
And perished in my sin.”*

Scripture completely sets aside any good in man, as our Lord said, “Ye *will* not come to Me,” not even when He was graciously seeking them, The will was at fault. But the Lord said to His own, “Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you.” How completely that sets aside our doing, even in coming to Christ! Again we read of His own, «Which were born, not of blood, nor of the *will of the flesh*, nor of the *will of man*, but of God” (John 1:13). And in James 1:18, “Of *His own will* begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures.” Even the faith to believe in Him is not of ourselves, but “is the gift of God” (Eph. 2:8). When the redeemed ones in glory render praise and worship to the Lamb who saved them (Rev. 5), there will be no one present who was saved by exercising his own will, or apart from the constraining of divine grace. Not one will be there who will mar that new song by taking any credit to himself, not even for his faith. Every one there will be there as the evident trophy of God’s grace, even as Mephibosheth in David’s House was visible evidence of David’s goodness (2 Sam. 9).

Arminius may not have realized how much he borrowed from the fatal scheme of Pelagius, nor how much he taught that which is one of the most natural weeds to grow in the human heart — that which in substance exalts the first man and sets aside the second Man, the Lord from heaven. (All was lost and condemned in the first man, and the believer in Christ is now seen in the second Man — he is a new creature in Christ.) Arminius may have been actuated largely from a desire to refute the excesses of Calvinism, and there are many. These we purpose, the Lord willing, to bring before

our readers. In turning now to the errors of Calvinism, it is not our purpose to examine the works of John Calvin; we will instead take a fairly recent book of this persuasion which has had a large sale, and which has turned many from positive truth into by-paths of error. It is entitled, "The Sovereignty of God," and was written by Arthur W. Pink, an author who died in 1952.

ERRORS OF CALVINISM

It is obviously impossible for us to review Mr. Pink's book in minute detail in our limited space, for it is a work of 320 pages. This, however, is not necessary, for if it can be proved to be built upon false premises, and permeated with erroneous teachings, then it will be evident that it is not trustworthy. This we purpose to do, without rancor or malice, but solely in the interest of the truth of God's Word, and for the help and edification of His children.

LIMITED ATONEMENT

We will select for our first consideration author Pink's teaching of a *limited atonement*; that is, that Christ died on the cross for certain ones whom God in His sovereignty chose in a past eternity, but in no way for any others.

To prove that he taught this, we quote a few excerpts from his book: "Surely the Lord Jesus had some *absolute determination* before Him when He went to the cross. If He had, then it necessarily follows that the *extent* of that purpose was *limited*, because an *absolute* determination or purpose *must be effected*" (p. 72). On another page (123) he says, "From it [Adam's fallen race] God purposed to save a few as the monuments of His grace; the others He determined to destroy."

Therefore, according to Mr. Pink, Christ came and died for «a few» of fallen men. Truly his *ideas* of the atonement *are limited*. He also seeks to bolster his "limited atonement" doctrine by misuse of portions of Isaiah 53 as he attempts to prove that the Father in a past eternity made certain

promises to the Son in respect to the limited number for whom He would die. We say at the outset, these ideas are the work of the *finite* mind trying to confine the *infinite* within its own exceedingly “limited” apprehension. Who has been able to comprehend the extent of the heavens that declare the glory of God in creation? Or who shall rightly declare the moral glory of God in redemption? Shall mortal man limit the excelling glory of God in the work of the atonement? — that inestimable work that has glorified God in His very nature, character, and all His attributes. The Apostle Paul speaks of God’s ways being “past finding out,” but this writer seems to feel that he has found them out. Another has said about trying to comprehend God by the mind: “He would not be God if human understanding could measure Him.”

THE TWO GOATS OF LEVITICUS 16

The “limited atonement” doctrine is built upon a premise that lacks understanding of the two views of the cross of Christ as regards His work, that is, propitiation and substitution. The types used on the day of atonement in Leviticus 16 are set aside in deference to a theory, a doctrine of men (be they good men or bad is not the point). On that memorable day, which occurred once a year in Israel’s history, there were, among other similitudes two goats — one called the Lord’s lot, and the other the people’s. The goat of the Lord’s lot was killed and its blood taken inside of the veil by the high priest, where he sprinkled the blood once upon the mercy seat and seven times on the desert sand before it. It was there above the mercy seat that God dwelt among the people, and as they were sinners He must needs have the evidence of death presented before Him — the blood was sprinkled there. This was propitiation: a satisfaction rendered to God whereby He could act in grace toward a sinful people. On the head of the other goat, the sins of the people were confessed by the

high priest, and it was led into a land not inhabited, so that their sins were removed. This was substitution.

In a sense, both goats are one in the matter of sin — the one being slain and its blood presented before God, and the other bearing the sins away to be remembered no more — for without the blood of the one goat there could be no bearing away of sins on the other. Let us notice the words of another:

DENIAL OF SUBSTITUTION

“There is a continual tendency in the different classes, even of believers in Christendom, to ignore one or other of these truths. Take for instance those zealous that the gospel go out to every creature. It is notorious that most of these deny God’s special favour to the elect. They overlook or pare down any positive difference on God’s part toward His own children. They hold that a man throughout his course may be a child of God today and not tomorrow. This destroys substitution [seen in the live goat led away]. They hold propitiation [seen in the blood of the other goat as presented before God], and there they are right, and quite justified in preaching the gospel unrestrictedly to every creature, as the Lord indeed enjoined. But how their one-sidedness enfeebles the proper portion of the saints!”

DENIAL OF PROPITIATION

«But look for a moment at the opposite side [Mr. Pink's], which holds that all God has done and reveals is in view of the elect only, and that all He has wrought in Christ Jesus is in effect for the Church, and that He does not care about the world, except to judge it at the last day. This may be put rather bluntly, for I do not present such grievous narrowness toward man and dishonour of God and His Son in as polished terms as those might desire who cherish notions so unsavoury and unsound. But it is true that a certain respectable class around us do see nothing but the elect as the object of God. Their doctrine supposes only the second goat, or the people's lot. They see the all-importance of substitution, but Jehovah's lot has no place as distinct.»

«How came the two contending parties of religionists not to see both goats? The Word of God reveals both. Plainly there are two goats. The goat of propitiation is to provide in the fullest manner for the glory of God, even where sin is before Him. In fulfilling it, what was the consequence? Christ was forsaken of God that the believer should never be

forsaken. He bore the judgment of sin that God's glory might be immutably established in righteousness. Thus grace in the freest way can and does now go out to every creature here below."

«But there is much more. Besides opening the sluices that divine love might flow out freely everywhere, we also find another line of truth altogether: the fullest and nicest care that those who are His children should be kept in peace and blessing. God took care, not only to vindicate His own glory and nature, but to give them knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins. The sins are all out to be borne away.»

«Even the type demonstrates that we require these two distinct truths to maintain the balance of God's truth. They are admirably held together; they compose God's truth. It is quite true that in the first goat God has secured His majesty, and His righteous title to send forth His message of love to every creature. Again, in the second goat He has equally cared for the assurance of His people, that all their sins, transgressions, and iniquities, are completely borne away. How could the truth of atonement be more admirably shown by types beforehand?»

Before leaving this part of the subject, let us refer to the words of another servant of God: "Christ is both high priest and victim, has confessed all the sins of His people as His own, and borne our sins in His own body on the tree. The two goats are but one Christ; but there is the double aspect of His sacrifice — Godward, and bearing our sins. The blood is the witness of the accomplishing of all, and He is entered in not without blood. He is the propitiation for our sins."

But Mr. Pink says: *“What then was the purpose of the Father and the design of the Son? We answer, Christ died for ‘God’s elect’”* (p. 72). This is plainly error which limits the scope and value of the sacrifice to the limit of substitution — to the scape goat. Then he adds on page 73, “Christ died for the elect only.” This is a flat denial of the Word of God.

DENIAL OF A RANSOM FOR ALL

Let us notice what Mr. Pink further says: “On the cross the Lord Jesus gave Himself a ransom, and that it was accepted by God was attested by the open grave three days later; the question we would here raise is, *For whom* was this ransom offered? If it was offered for all mankind then the debt incurred by every man has been cancelled” (p. 75).

This is just so much human reasoning, which sets aside the plain and emphatic statements of Scripture, but it all turns on Mr. Pink’s not seeing, or being unwilling to see, the difference in the two goats, and what they signify. We are cognizant of the fact that Mr. Pink uses the words *propitiation* and *substitution*, and speaks of their being Godward and manward (p. 75), but he makes them co-extensive and limits the work of Christ to bearing the sins of the elect. Words in themselves mean nothing unless that which is signified by them is admitted.

Hebrews 9:26 also suffers from the same muddling at the hand of this author, for he makes: “Hath He appeared to put away *sin* by the sacrifice of Himself;” to mean, to put away the *sins* of the elect. He connects the same error with John 1:29: “The Lamb of God, which taketh away the *sin* of the world”, and makes both scriptures apply to the actual *guilt* of the elect *only*. But this is very far short of the truth and shows how restricted his theology really is. Both of these verses contemplate the final and complete removal of sin and all its effects from God’s creation. It certainly is not so now, but the work on which it will be accomplished is *finished*. At present the believer knows his sins forgiven — in the Millennium there will be a greater display of the efficacy of that wondrous work, but only in the eternal state will its full meaning be known. To lose sight of the important truth taught by the goat of the Lord’s lot is to narrow one’s apprehension of Christ’s work to only one phase of it, and be guilty of disparaging His mighty work. It is sad indeed for one who does this, and worse still for those who teach others this human limitation of an infinite work. (Substitution is taught in verse 28 of Hebrews 9: “So Christ was once offered to bear the *sins of many*.”)

Mr. Pink’s dedication to defend an unscriptural idea brought him into trouble with 2 Corinthians 5:14,15 and 1 Timothy 2:5,6. The former says, “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for *all*, then were *all* dead: and that He died for *all*, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” Now Mr. Pink labours to prove that these ‘*alls*’ mean only ‘*all the elect*’. And then

to bolster that point he makes “all were dead” to mean the elect believers died with Christ.

This is not only far-fetched, but it is wrong from the very context. The *all* were in the place of death; that was the portion of all mankind because of sin. Then in grace the Lord Jesus came down and went into death for *all* — it is again the general thought as seen in propitiation. But the verse adds, “that *they which live*” might henceforth live “unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” There is a contrast between the *all* being morally in the place of death, and death their allotted portion, and the “*they which live*” (not now all, but the saved who have life in Christ) who should now “live unto Him.”

Here are the words of another: “Christ’s death for all is the proof that it was all over for mankind. If He went down in grace to the grave, it was just because men were already there, and none otherwise could be delivered. There is then life in Him risen, and this not in Him only, but for those who believe. He is our life. And such is the meaning of ‘those who live’; not merely those alive on earth (though this be implied, of course), but living of His life, in contrast with ‘all dead.’

After going into the meaning of the Greek words, this writer adds concerning those who live: “It is not as including all for whom He died, but as of some out of all, ‘those that live’ in contradistinction to all dead. The reader will observe that Christ’s resurrection is associated only with ‘those who live.’ This again confirms the special class of the living, as only included in, and not identical with, all for whom He died. Those who would narrow the all for whom He died to the

elect lose the first truth” — the judgment of death seen written on all, so that Christ’s death becomes the ground of deliverance.

We will not take time or space to elaborate on Mr. Pink’s justifying his same error in connection with 1 Timothy 2:5,6. The “ransom for all” is what it says: “*for all.*” The Apostle by the Spirit had just stated that the mediator between God and men was the Man Christ Jesus — but man is reluctant to believe in God’s grace to him even when One died and rose for his deliverance; “it is ‘a ransom for all,’ whoever may bow and reap the blessing; which those do who, renouncing their own proud will for God’s mercy in Christ, repent and believe the gospel.” Simply believing what God says, the way He says it, is very much better than raising objections to conform to a pre-determined scheme, and then having to explain away what the Word says.

We may well say with Mr. Pink’s concluding statement, “The Atonement is no failure” (p. 320). It certainly is not, but it is of far greater import and value than Mr. Pink ever imagined. It has so thoroughly glorified God’s character and nature — light and love — that He is glorified in the vastness of Christ’s work, so that He is justified in offering salvation, pardon, and eternal life to *all* without limit. It has also proved that God was righteous in having passed over the sins of those who in Old Testament times had faith in Himself (see Rom. 3:25 and Heb. 9:15).

DENIAL OF GOD'S LOVE

A concomitant error to Mr. Pink's doctrine of a limited atonement, with its denial of the real truth of propitiation, is the Calvinistic denial of the elementary and basic truth that "*God is love.*" This is seen in Mr. Pink's handling of John 3:16: "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He goes to great lengths to prove that God does not love the world (mankind) and this precious verse suffers much at his hands. Everything must conform to his predetermined scheme; hence he says it is not the world as such that God loves, but only "the world of the godly" or "the world of God's people." But where was "the world of the godly" or of "God's people" when He sent and gave His beloved Son?

On this subject, Mr. Pink further says: "No matter how a man may live — in open defiance of Heaven, with no concern for his soul's eternal interests, still less for God's glory... notwithstanding, God loves him, we are told" (p. 246).

Here is serious heresy, for this of necessity makes God's love to man to depend on something in man. If Mr. Pink could restrict God's love to His own elect, will he say that they until conversion were otherwise than those whom he pictures as being unlovable? undeserving? Were God's elect in anywise different from all mankind? Instead of extolling

God's sovereignty, Mr. Pink here makes God's love descend on the worthy only! If God does not love those who live "in open defiance of Heaven," and those who have "no concern" for their "soul's eternal interests" or for "God's glory," who then would be saved? If these are prerequisites for God's loving us, our case is hopeless indeed. If God loves any on this basis, it would strike a fatal blow at the very thing — God's sovereignty — for which Mr. Pink says he is contending.

Mr. Pink says, "One of the most popular beliefs of the day is that God loves everybody, and the very fact that it is so *popular* with all classes ought to be enough to arouse the suspicions of those who are subject to the Word of Truth. God's Love toward *all* His creatures is the fundamental and favourite tenet of Universalists, Unitarians, Theosophists, Christian Scientists, Spiritualists, Russellites, etc. » (pp. 245, 246).

Here he treads on dangerous ground; for he assumes that God's love for His creatures is a fable simply because some false doctrines make His love a blind love that will wink at sin. God's love is real, in spite of Calvinism; but it is holy and will not tolerate sin, in spite of Universalism, and of all who would make God a party to sin. Even John 3:16 shows that God's love is not the kind that Mr. Pink would portray as being preached today, for He sent His only begotten Son into the world that whosoever believes in Him should not perish. Justice must be satisfied or all would have perished — «the Son of man» must «be lifted up.»

To show the folly of Mr. Pink's contention that John 3:16 only means that God loved His own elect and no one else, let us

ask those of his persuasion: What then is the purpose of the word «whosoever» in the rest of the verse? Absolutely none whatever, unless «that *whosoever* believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” should mean that because God loved the world and gave His Son, any or all who will may come and be saved through Him. “Whosoever” has no meaning if it does not signify the scope of the offer. It is without limit or restriction. Would God make an offer that was not real? God did love the world and gave His Son; now all may come.

Author Pink remarks: “To tell the Christ-rejector that God loves him is to cauterize his conscience, as well as afford him a sense of security in his sins. The fact is, that the love of God, is a truth for saints only” (p. 246). Was it to a believer that the Lord spoke John 3:16? No, Nicodemus was not so then. He still needed to be born again, as the Lord told him. Will Mr. Pink impugn the wisdom of the Lord Himself in quoting that verse to him?

Listen to the words of a more sober strain: “The love of God, and even His love announced in forgiveness through the work of Christ, may, through the power of the Holy Ghost, awaken the sense of need: still having the forgiveness is another thing. That love, brought home to the soul through grace, produces confidence, not peace; but it does produce confidence. Hence we come into the light. God is light and God is love. Christ in the world was the light of the world, and He was there divine love. When God reveals Himself, He must be both light and love. The love draws and produces confidence; as with the woman in the city who was a sinner

(Luke 7), the prodigal (Luke 15), Peter in the boat (Luke 5). The law may by grace reach the conscience and make us feel our guilt, but it does not reveal God in love. If conscience only were reached, it would drive man into hiding from God, as Adam did in the Garden; but it is the thought that there is goodness in the heart of God that draws anyone to Him. It was the sense of goodness in the father's heart and house that led the prodigal to return."

Little did Mr. Pink think of it, but his denial that God is love is closely akin to the devil's lie when he libeled God to Eve, for he insinuated that God was not good — not love — that He was arbitrarily keeping back something from the creature which would have been for his good. What a solemn thing to echo a false accusation against God! To believe Mr. Pink, one would have to come to the conclusion that God is neither love nor good. This the devil propagated among the heathen, so that they sought to appease an angry God. At present there is generally another form of his old lie in the garden, which in substance says: If God would put the sinner in hell, He would not be good or love. But be it remembered that a good and loving God can punish sin without any impairment of His goodness; a holy God *must* punish sin. A loving earthly father can punish a disobedient child without foregoing his natural love. Mr. Pink is on dangerous ground in his assumptions that God has no love toward the sinner; they strike at the very root of God's nature, for He is love.

Mr. Pink says, «It has been customary to say God loves the sinner, though He hates his sin. But this is a meaningless distinction. What is there in a sinner but sin?» (p. 246).

Ah, Mr. Pink, there is in the sinner a soul that will live on and on and on, either in bliss or in woe. Your statement will not bear scrutiny. God does love the sinner.

It would be amusing, if it were not so serious, to watch the way Mr. Pink twists Scripture to his own ends. When it comes to the rich young ruler in Mark 10, whom Jesus loved, Mr. Pink clears up the difficulty for himself by saying: «We fully believe that he was one of God's elect, and was 'saved' sometime after his interview with the Lord» (p. 247). This is only his bare assumption without any support.

DISTINCTION BETWEEN GOD'S LOVE AND THE FATHER'S LOVE

Notice the following foolish error in the book we are reviewing: "Why say 'he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father' if the Father loves *everybody*?" (p. 248).

Who said that *the Father* loves everybody? Let us keep with the very words of divine inspiration, and say, "*God* so loved the world that He gave." It is *God* that loves the world, *not the Father*. Furthermore, there is a special love of complacency in the *Father* for those who love His Son — "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father." Mr. Pink attacks such a differentiation, but it is there nonetheless. He misuses Hebrews 12:6 in the same way when quoting "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth," saying that God's love is restricted to members of His own family (p. 248). Does it need to be said, that this again is not God's love to the world, the world of mankind? It is the *children* in the family who are

disciplined in love by the *Father*. He also confuses Ephesians 5:25 with John 3:16 — but let it be noted that “*Christ* loved the Church, and gave Himself for it,” but *God* loved the world. It does not say that Christ loved the world, nor that God loved the Church. Why cannot men quote Scripture as it is given, and revel in its perfect exactitude as evidence of divine inspiration?

Mr. Pink becomes rather daring in the following:

“God so loved *the world*. Many suppose that this means the entire human race. But the entire human race includes all mankind from Adam to the close of Earth’s history: it reaches backward as well as forward! Consider, then, the history of mankind *before* Christ was born. Unnumbered millions lived and died before the Saviour came to the earth, lived here ‘having no hope and without God in the world,’ and therefore passed out into an eternity of woe. If God ‘loved’ *them*, where is the slightest proof thereof?” (pp. 248, 249).

This almost savours of replying “against God.” Let such as endorse Mr. Pink’s grave error read Romans 1 and hold their peace. In that chapter we are told that at one time the human race knew God — “that, when they knew God” — all who came out of the ark had the knowledge of God, and the long lives of the Patriarchs from the flood to the tower of Babel made it possible for men to learn of God through their ancestors. Shem, Noah’s son, was still living when Isaac was past fifty years of age, although Isaac was born about 500 years after the flood. But they did not like to retain that knowledge. They gave up God, and God gave them up to uncleanness. They had also the testimony of God

in creation: "Because that which may be known of God is manifest in [rather, to] them; for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse." Here is the right answer. God never left man without a testimony of Himself, and men at all times were responsible for whatever revelation He was pleased to give them. The infidel today inquires about the heathen, asking what God will do with them, but Mr. Pink disposes of that question by an assumption of his own, that God designed to cast them *all* into hell. This in our judgment is *very* serious. Who gave Mr. Pink the right to speak for God?

We cannot but think of Job's friends when we read Mr. Pink's book. They did not speak right about God: "And it was so, that after the LORD had spoken these words unto Job, the LORD said to Eliphaz the Temanite, My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for *ye have not spoken of Me the thing that is right*, as My servant Job hath" (Job 42:7). Job had been through a hard school, and had learned about himself; but he had not said things that misrepresented God, as his friends had, and which we are persuaded Mr. Pink has done.

Again, Mr. Pink argues that God could not have loved the world as representing the whole human race, for half of the human race "was already in hell when Christ came" (p. 251). What does he mean, "in hell"? There are none in hell yet, for the first two men who will go there will be the Roman

beast and the false prophet in Jerusalem, and that has not happened.

If he means those that died without faith are lost, we grant it. But how does he know how many in old times had faith in God? The Old Testament mentions individuals here and there who were not Jews who evidently had faith. Was not Job one of these? When he says, “The objects of *God’s* love in John 3:16 are precisely the same objects of *Christ’s* love in John 13:1,” he is sadly mistaken. Why does he not make “His own” in John 1:11 the same as “His own” in John 13:1? It would be just as reasonable and just as wrong. The former were the Jews as a people, the latter the Jews who had faith in Him.

When Mr. Pink asks, «Is it conceivable that God will love the damned in the Lake of Fire? Yet, if He loves them now He will do so then, seeing that His love knows no change — He is ‘*without variableness or shadow of turning!*’” (p. 248). This is just plain sophistry. Wrath and judgment, the just deserts of sin, are not incompatible with love.

THE GOSPEL NOT AN OFFER?

If any reader doubts the absurd lengths to which Pinkism goes, let him notice this quotation: “There is far too much presenting of Christ to sinners today (by those sound in the faith)” (p. 247).

Did not Philip go down to Samaria and preach “Christ”? (Acts 8). Did not Paul preach at Corinth, Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection (1 Cor. 15:3)? Of course man’s need should be presented, for if a man has no need, there is no need of the gospel. But preaching only wrath and ruin will not draw a soul to God. Mr. Pink says, “The Gospel is not an ‘offer’ to be bandied around by evangelical peddlers” (p. 257), but Paul rejoiced that *Christ* was preached, even if not sincerely. Mr. Pink did not agree with Paul.

Another bit of sophistry is to be found on the subject of God’s love: “God does not love everybody; if He did, He would love the devil.” What semblance of authority has he for such a baseless conclusion? Does John 3:16 embrace infernal beings? A similar bit of reasoning is found on the

same page (p. 30), “In the final analysis, the exercise of God’s love *must* be traced back to His sovereignty, or, otherwise, He would *love* by rule; and if He loved by rule, then He is under a *law of love*, and if He is under a *law* of love then is He not supreme, but is Himself ruled by law.» The author of this has not considered that love is God’s very nature. God cannot deny Himself, or act other than He is — He is *love* and will always be so; and judgment is “His strange work.”

A sober servant of Christ has written: “The first part of what the Lord says in John 3 is: ‘And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up.’ The Son of man, He who represented man, must be lifted up — die on the cross, and where was such a lamb to be found? ‘God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.’ The ‘Son of man’ must be lifted up, the ‘Son of God’ was given, the same blessed Person: but ‘Son of man,’ to die for man’s need, standing for man before God; ‘Son of God,’ vessel and proof of God’s sovereign love.” And again, “God loved us while we were sinners, and this is the characteristic of His love, His saving love.” And, “God loved us while we were sinners; He loves us without any change when we are cleansed.... He loved us when we were in our sins.”

What poor, unworthy thoughts of God, Mr. Pink had! and he would engender the same in all his followers, but it will not be to his credit, nor for the good of those who follow him.

Let us rather sing:

*“Oh the glory of the grace,
Shining in the Saviour’s face,
Telling sinners from above,
‘God is light,’ and ‘God is love.’”*

DOES GOD HATE UNBELIEVERS?

Mr. Pink does not stop at denying God's love to the world — to mankind — but he actually goes so far as to teach that God *hates* those whom He does not love. Notice this: “He loves one and hates another. He exercises mercy toward some and hardens others, without reference to anything save His own sovereign will” (p. 111).

In speaking about God's hating Esau, Mr. Pink goes so far as to indicate that this was so *before* he was born thus: “Go back to Romans 9:11-13: did Esau *fit* himself to be an object of God's hatred, or was he not such before he was born?” (p. 118). (Although this is put in the form of a question, there can be no doubt from the context that he is here teaching that Esau was hated before he was born.) Here is a more definite statement of Mr. Pink's: “If then God loved Jacob and hated Esau, and that before they were born or had done either good or evil, then the *reason* for His love was not in them, but in Himself” (p. 30).

Let us notice what one, from whom we have previously quoted, says on the subject: "If God 'despiset not any' (Job 36:5), we may be perfectly sure He hates not any. Such an idea could not enter a mind which was nurtured in the Word of God, apart from the reasonings of men. I say not this because of the smallest affinity with what is commonly called Arminianism; for I have just as little affinity for Calvinism. I believe the one to be as derogatory to God's glory as the other, though in very different ways — the one by exalting man most unduly, and the other by prescribing for God, and consequently not saying the thing that is right of Him."

Mr. Pink speaks of God's wrath upon one as though it might be synonymous with God's hatred, but this "confounds hatred with judicial anger. There is no hatred in God to man assuredly. Yet God is a righteous judge, and God is angry every day, and ought to be so." But Mr. Pink asks, "Can God 'love' the one on whom His 'wrath' abides?" (p. 248). Our answer to this is "Yes," for God's wrath against the sinner because of his sin is not inconsistent with infinite and sovereign love. Thus Christ in the synagogue looked upon them with anger, being grieved at the hardness of their hearts. The grief was love, the anger was His righteous estimate of their sin.

REPROBATION

The consideration of Jacob and Esau brings us to Mr. Pink's affirmation of the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation, but this must be left for another issue. It is far too important to pass over quickly, even for those who have never had to face it.

Before we take up the subject of *reprobation*, we should probably first state what it is, and then examine whether it has scriptural soundness or not. Reprobation is a dogma of Calvinism which can be expressed in the words of Arthur W. Pink as illustrative of its proposition — hence we quote: “God’s decree of Reprobation contemplated Adam’s race as fallen, sinful, corrupt, guilty. From it God purposed to save a few as the monuments of His sovereign grace; *the others He determined to destroy as the exemplification of His justice and severity*» (p. 123). «The case of Pharaoh is introduced [in Romans 9] to prove the *doctrine of Reprobation as the counterpart of the doctrine of Election*” (p. 111). “If God actually reprobated Pharaoh, we may justly conclude that He reprobates all others whom He did not predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son” (p. 110).

Here it is, briefly stated; that is, it is “the counterpart of the doctrine of Election.” This is a false premise based on the assumption that because God chose some in the past eternity as objects of His mercy that He necessarily thereby designed to consign all the rest to hell; that He decreed before the world was that most of His creatures should go to hell. This, we say, is definitely without scriptural warrant. There is no place where there is a “Thus saith the Lord” for the doctrine of reprobation. It is arrived at by conjecture, assumption, deduction, and human reasoning.

To show that such is the case, let us quote just a few excerpts from Mr. Pink’s chapter on Reprobation: “*it would unavoidably follow. . . . Every choice, evidently and necessarily implies a refusal (p. 100) then it is clear He designed and ordained that that person should be eternally lost.... it must be because.... no escape from these conclusions (p. 101).... Now are we not obliged to conclude? . . . it must have been His will (p. 102) we assuredly gather that it was His everlasting determination to do so; and consequently that He reprobated some from before the foundation of the world.... in addition to the above conclusions (p. 103),» etc., etc. Italics ours.*

No man should dare to presume to thus speak for God, for His Word plainly says, «Add thou not unto His words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar» (Prov. 30:6). Where the Word of God is silent, men should forbear to speak. Years ago a faithful servant of the Lord was confronted by some persons of reasoning habits who contended that because the Word of God says of certain ones that He would not blot

out their names from the «book of life,» there were others who would lose their salvation and God would blot out their names. The faithful man replied, «Never put a positive statement where God puts a negative one.» If God speaks, we can speak with assurance; but when He is silent, we should be silent also. If this simple rule had been followed, we would not have the one-sided doctrine of reprobation.

JACOB AND ESAU

Let us take the case of Jacob and Esau which is a cardinal point with these extreme Calvinists. They contend that “God loved Jacob and hated Esau, and that before they were born” (p. 30), but this is *not* stated in Scripture. This is another case of overstepping what is written, and adding to God’s Word. Let us read Romans 9:11,12: “(For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth;) it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.” Surely it was before the children were born that God said to their mother, “The elder shall serve the younger” (Gen. 25:23). What was wrong with that? God had chosen Abraham as the depository of His promises and blessings, and then said that “in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Next He chose Jacob to continue the line of earthly blessing, and the seed through which the Messiah was to come.

But let the dedicated followers of Mr. Pink search the Scriptures for one inkling that God hated Esau before he

was born. Not until the last book of the Old Testament — Malachi — did God say that He loved Jacob and hated Esau; and then it is not merely Esau that He hated, but Esau’s posterity. Note carefully the language of Malachi 1:3,4: “And I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste for the dragons of the wilderness. Whereas Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places,” etc. It is “his mountains” and “his heritage” and “Edom”, the descendants of Esau, they say: We will build what God has destroyed.

Is it not abundantly clear that Mr. Pink has overstepped more than propriety in adding to what God actually said? Furthermore, Esau had shown himself to be “a profane person” by despising “his birthright” which was in fact a divine title to the land of Canaan. God’s choice of Jacob for the pre-eminent place over the elder brother Esau, who had it by nature according to birth, did not make him profane.

We quote the words of another on the subject: “It must be carefully observed that this [in Malachi] is not an appeal to God’s sovereignty in His choice of Jacob as in Romans 9, where the Apostle indeed cites this passage (after he has recalled the scripture [Gen. 25:21-23] which announced the divine purpose respecting Esau and Jacob) to show, not only that Israel was entirely indebted to grace for the difference God had put between themselves and Esau. The evidence here given is drawn wholly, not from God’s action toward Esau himself, but from God’s judgment upon his posterity — ‘I laid his mountains and his heritage waste,’ etc. And in other scriptures we find (see especially Obadiah) that

these judgments were visited upon them because of their irreconcilable hatred of Israel, and their triumph over, and their vengeance upon, them in the day of their calamity. God had chosen Jacob — let not this truth be ignored, albeit Esau despised his birthright; but the scripture before us concerns the ways rather than the sovereignty of God.”

And still another has written: “God withholds the sentence of hatred till it is evidently justified by the conduct and ways of Esau, more particularly towards Jacob, but indeed towards Himself. In short, it would be quite true to say that God loved Jacob from the first, but that He never pronounced hatred until that was manifested which utterly repels and rejects Himself with contempt, deliberately going on in pursuit of its own way and will in despisal of God. Then only does He say, ‘I hated Esau.’ Along with this He draws attention to the fact that He ‘laid his mountains and his heritage waste. When God says, ‘Esau have I hated,’ He waits till the last moment, till Esau has shown what he is. He is patient in the execution of judgment. Long-suffering belongs to God, and is inseparable from His moral nature, while He delays to execute judgment on evil. Yet Esau’s ill conduct to Jacob was not the only or worst element of evil which comes into judgment. He was profane Godward, despising everything done on God’s part, save that which brought sensibly before him the greater dignity to which his brother was promoted. He had no confidence in God: beyond this life no thought, no desire. Why should he seek more than to enjoy present life?”

We will also quote from another book: “In short then not only not Paul but no other inspired writer ever speaks of ‘eternal

reprobation'; it is merely a dream of a certain school. So the curse of God follows, instead of causing, the impious ways of men. Arminianism is wholly astray no doubt in reducing God's election to a mere foresight of good in some creatures; but Calvinism is no less erroneous in imputing the evil lot of the first Adam race to God's decree. They both spring from analogous roots of unbelief: Calvinism reasoning, contrary to Scripture, from the truth of election to the error of eternal reprobation; Arminianism rightly rejecting that reprobation but wrongly reasoning against election. Like other systems they are in part true and in part false — true in what they believe of Scripture, false in yielding to human thoughts outside Scripture. Happy those who are content as Christians with the truth of God and refuse to be partisans on either side of men! Our wisdom is to have our minds open to all Scripture, refusing to go a hairbreadth farther."

THE CASE OF PHARAOH

Another stone in the conjectured arch of reprobation is the case of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Let us notice a few remarks from the pages of Mr. Pink's book:

“The case of Pharaoh *establishes* the principle and illustrates the doctrine of Reprobation. If God actually reprobated Pharaoh, we may justly conclude that He reprobates all others whom He did not predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son. This inference the apostle Paul manifestly draws from the fate of Pharaoh, for in Romans 9, after referring to God's purpose in raising up Pharaoh, he continues, ‘therefore.’ The case of Pharaoh is introduced to prove the doctrine of Reprobation as the counterpart of the doctrine of Election» (pp. 110, 111).

Note how much conjecture is here. Mr. Pink will not allow that God hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he could not let the people go *only after* Pharaoh had proved himself the inveterate enemy of God and His people. He insists that God

hardened his heart arbitrarily before Pharaoh had displayed his wicked intentions to God's people.

That Mr. Pink held this, we prove from the following: "It is not judicial hardening which is in view (that is, hardening because of previous rejection of the truth), but *sovereign* 'hardening' of a fallen sinful creature for no other reason than that which inheres in the sovereign will of God" (p. 114).

But let us notice words of another vein: "The king of Egypt was a thoroughly selfish, cruel, and profane man when God first sent him a message by Moses and Aaron. The effect of the summons on such a spirit was to bring out his blasphemy against Jehovah and more savage oppression of Israel. God made a most striking example of Pharaoh, not a mere exposure of his malice, but His own power on that background, so that His name might be thus told abroad in all the earth. Never does God make a man bad; but the bad man Pharaoh, made yet worse by his resistance of the most striking divine appeals, He made manifest, raised up as he was from among men to such a height, that his downfall might tell on consciences far and wide throughout the world. Hard at first, God sealed him up at length in a judicial hardening. If it were true, as Calvin says, that those who perish were destined to destruction by the will of God, the case were hard indeed. But Scripture never really speaks thus, and the language of the texts usually cited in support of such a decree, when closely as well as fairly examined, invariably avoids such a thought, however near it may seem to approximate."

Verses 22 and 23 of Romans 9 have also furnished Mr. Pink and Calvinism with opportunities to twist them enough to furnish ground for their own devices: "What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering 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 are used by this school to declare that God prepared these vessels to destruction on the one hand and to glory on the other. Thus Mr. Pink says: The Apostle "intimates here, that before they are born they are destined to their lot" (p. 120).

This is to falsify what the Apostle said, for he did no such thing as is here alleged. A careful examination of these verses will show that it is not said that God fitted such vessels to destruction, but that He prepared the vessels of mercy unto glory. To say more than is here said, is to add to God's Word. Furthermore, instead of saying that He prepared the vessels of wrath for destruction "before they were born," it is said that He "endured with much long-suffering" these vessels. Not a word about His preparing them, but about His forbearance with them.

We shall again quote from a more sober author: «Sinful men thus living in enmity against God are here styled 'vessels of wrath,' on the one hand; as those who believe are designated, vessels of mercy' on the other. But there is a shade of difference as distinct as it is refined and profoundly true which no reader should overlook. The vessels of wrath are said to be 'fitted for destruction.' But it is neither said

nor implied here, or anywhere else, that God fitted them for it. They were fitted by their sins, and most of all by their unbelief and rebelliousness against God. But when we hear of the faithful, the phrase is altogether different, ‘vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory.’ The evil is man’s, and in no case is it of God — the good is His and not our own. Not the saints, but God prepared the vessels of mercy for glory. More strictly, He prepared them beforehand with a view to glory.... Thus lost man will in the end be compelled to justify God and to take the entire blame on his own shoulders, who preferred to trust Satan as his friend and adviser rather than God; while the saved, however dwelling in bliss, will know and make known all as the riches of His glory, themselves debtors to His unfailing and unfathomable mercy.»

And from the same writer: «To me I confess it looks like the blinding influence of falsehood when men overlook the difference of vessels of wrath fitted on the one hand to destruction, and vessels of mercy which *He* on the other hand before made ready for glory.»

We will quote from still another source: “While it is true that Christians are ‘chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world’ (Eph. 1:4), it would never be right to say that lost sinners were in a parallel way elected to reprobation. In the case of the wicked, so far from being elected to eternal misery, we find that God endures them [while on earth] — vessels of wrath — with much longsuffering, fitted not by Him but by their own deeds for destruction. The word

*katartizo*¹ (Rom. 9:22) means to correct, repair, mend; then in its participial form, fitted, prepared. The word does not suppose a decree of God, but a work of man.” Nevertheless, Mr. Pink says, “He fits the non-elect unto destruction by His fore-ordaining decrees” (p. 118).

Pharaoh was a cruel despot long before Moses and Aaron were sent to him with a demand from God that he let Israel go. Even before Moses was born, a previous Pharaoh had issued the decree that all the male children should be drowned in the Nile, and Moses was delivered from that fate by the providential intervention of God. Pharaoh was hardened in his cruel course of exterminating God’s chosen earthly people, long before God began to work to deliver them from under his power. God may justly have cut him off in his sin against Him at that time, but He endured the wicked king, and finally hardened his heart in His government so that Pharaoh rushed on headlong into the jaws of death in a way calculated to demonstrate God’s power.

But Mr. Pink speculates, and says that Moses when grown up in Pharaoh’s house was “a powerful check upon the king’s wickedness and tyranny,” and so God “designed by removing this restraint, to give Pharaoh full opportunity to fill up the measure of his sins” (pp. 108, 109). There is not the slightest hint in all Scripture that such was the case; it is just human speculation.

1 *STRONG’S GREEK DICTIONARY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT: to complete thoroughly; i.e., repair (lit. or fig.) or adjust: fit, frame, mend, (make) perfectly join together), prepare, restore.

A young scoffer once accosted a faithful servant of Christ about God's hardening Pharaoh's heart, but he received a stern rebuke in the words, "Beware, young man, lest God harden your heart." And in like manner, Christendom, which is largely rejecting God's grace today, is going to be given a lie to believe, so that those who will not have the truth may perish in their deception (See 2 Thess. 2:9-12). "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). God is patient and long-suffering, but when grace is despised, He will act in judgment. It is dangerous for one to resist the overtures of grace; he may then be blinded as his just desert.

DID GOD DECREE ADAM'S FALL?

Another grave error of the system under review is that God had decreed beforehand that Adam should take of the forbidden fruit and so sin. Take the following quotation from Mr. Pink:

“Before He formed him [Adam] out of the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, God knew exactly how the appointed test would terminate.... But we must go further: not only had God a perfect knowledge of the outcome of Adam’s trial, not only did His omniscient eye see Adam eating of the forbidden fruit, but He *decreed* beforehand that he *should* do so.... If God had foreordained before the foundation of the world that Christ should, in due time, be offered as a sacrifice for sin, then it is unmistakably evident that God had foreordained sin should enter the world, and if so, that Adam should transgress and fall” (pp. 305, 306).

Here we see the same human reasoning that departs from what God has said, simply in devotion to a predetermined scheme. Why is it “unmistakably evident” that God decreed that sin should enter the world? It is not evident at all. God placed Adam and Eve here in perfect innocence only and, in order that His creatures should be intelligent, He gave them specific instructions and warned them of the consequences of disobedience. To leave man as an intelligent and responsible being, God had to leave the entrance of sin a distinct possibility. We admit that God foreknew how it would be resolved, but we affirm with decision that this does not involve God’s eternal decree that man had to sin. Away with such a thought! for hedge about his teaching as Mr. Pink will, it cannot but reduce if not remove man’s responsibility.

Let us notice some more of his rash boldness:

“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 [and well it may]; 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” (p. 308).

His conclusions are wrong, and the attempt to speak for God thus, is revolting. God does restrain “the remainder of wrath” and set limits beyond which He will not allow rebellious man to go; but to make God the designer and governor of sin is preposterous. He endures with much long-suffering men

who boldly sin, and that against His grace. When God saw the wickedness in the antediluvian earth, "it grieved Him at His heart" (Gen. 6:6). We may well ask, Did God design and order the sin, and then be grieved about it? The thought is the boldest presumption and is rashly irreverent. In the days of Israel's great breakdown, it is said that God "had compassion on His people" and sent messenger after messenger to have them turn from their evil ways. Mr. Pink would in substance have us believe that this was not so, for He had marked out their sin beforehand so that they could not depart from it (See 2 Chron. 36). Did the Lord Jesus weep over Jerusalem's sinful activities in their rejection of Him, and yet dictate their course so that they could not do otherwise? To make such an affirmation can only be evil. Time and time again throughout the Holy Word of God, it can be seen that God bore in patience with that which grieved Him. What is so blind as dedication to a theory, especially in theology!

Mr. Pink takes such a verse as this: "Woe unto the world because of offences! for it *must needs be* that offences come" and then adds, "because God has foreordained them" (p. 309). Is not this blind obsession with his own scheme? Who gave him or any other the right to interpolate those words into the text, or context?

Mr. Pink rejects the verse that says that God "wills all men to be saved," because Calvinism has already settled it that God has no desire that all men be saved; for according to it He has settled the issue by an eternal decree that they be damned. Mr. Pink recognizes no difference between God's

will of desire that is in keeping with His nature, love, and His will of command, which orders and it comes to pass (p. 127).

APPROBATION AND LOVE

Another error of Pinkism is to make God's foreknowledge of certain ones His "approbation and love." This he argues at some length and says that those to whom He will yet say, "I never knew you," were not the objects of His approbation (pp. 70, 105).

Now just what does such an argument prove? Does not approbation mean (according to Webster), "act of approving; approval; sanction; commendation"? If God back in eternity had approbation for those whom He chose, then election goes for nothing; for the word indicates only the approval of the thing chosen, and not supreme sovereignty at all.

On page 121, 1 Peter 2:8 is forced to say that the Israelites who rejected Christ were appointed to be disobedient, whereas a careful examination will show that they, *being disobedient, were appointed to stumble*.

Election, which is God's sovereign choice, we believe, is often confused in Mr. Pink's book with *predestination*. These two things are not the same, for the latter is always spoken of as

to something; as, to “be conformed to the image of His Son.” Election is His choice of individuals, and not predestination; the latter is the thing to which He has appointed them, but neither is ever used to designate the doom of the wicked.

Mr. Pink’s chapter on *God’s Sovereignty and Man’s Responsibility* is a pitiable attempt to reconcile his doctrine with any offer of the gospel to the sinner. In one place he says that men are commanded to search the Scriptures, but he should know better than that. In John 5, where the verse is found, it is a challenge to the Jewish leaders, for the Lord really said to them: «YE search the scriptures, for ye think that in them ye have eternal life, and they it is which bear witness concerning Me, and ye will not come to Me that ye might have life» (vv. 39,40; J.N.D. Trans). They were guilty of willful rejection of Him, for they searched the Old Testament, and it gave ample evidence to His Person and work; but they would not come to Him.

In another place, Mr. Pink approvingly quotes the Puritan Manton: «Let us do our duty, and refer the success to God, Whose ordinary practice it is to meet with the creature that seeketh after Him» (p. 196). What is this but a gospel of works? And did not God say: «there is none that seeketh after God»? (Rom. 3:11). Is not this setting aside of man’s total ruin? which Calvinism is supposed to set forth.

THE GOSPEL IS LOST

The same thing is advanced on page 199: “His [man’s] second duty is to *cry* to God for His enabling power — to ask God in mercy to overcome his enmity, and ‘draw’ him to Christ — to bestow upon him the gift of repentance and faith. If *he will* do so, sincerely from the heart, then most surely God *will* respond to his appeal.”

Can any man apart from the Holy Spirit’s work in him draw nigh to God in this manner? for in coming to God thus, the man must have faith — “He that cometh to God must believe that He is.” Is not this asking man to take the first step to salvation on his own strength, when he is “without strength”? How can a man in nature “sincerely from the heart” approach God, for his heart is incurably bad (Jer. 17:9).

Other remarks on the preaching of the gospel are indeed strange: “God suffers the Gospel to fall on the ears of the non-elect. . . . The preaching of the Gospel to the non-elect is made an admirable *test* of their characters.” What strange language! Is God using His precious gospel concerning His

Son just to test characters? Man was proved bad long before, according to Romans 3. His trial was over then, for it ended in the cross.

When Mr. Pink says (p. 234), “God has to *put* His laws in *our* minds, and *write* them in *our* hearts (Heb. 8:10),” he is applying to us what strictly belongs to the houses of Israel and Judah in the Millennium — see Jeremiah 31:31-34. Christ in our hearts and occupation with Him in glory are the safeguards of our conduct, not the law given to Israel-of-old being in our hearts. To say this is to lower the whole standard of Christian living.

Mr. Pink is guilty of using the language of Scripture very carelessly. This is seen in many places, but on page 72 he says: “It surely does not need arguing that the Father had an express purpose in giving Him to die, or that God the Son had a definite design before Him in laying down His life.”

Did God the Son die? Could God die? To be specific, He was rejected and suffered as the Son of man, a title first mentioned in Psalm 8, and that in connection with His rejection and His coming reign. The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross, and the Son of man had to be lifted up, but carelessness in use of words is dangerous and can lead to serious error, as is witnessed in Mr. Pink’s statement.

On page 75, Mr. Pink makes a remark about substitution, which says: “The persons for whom He acts, whose sins He bears, whose legal obligations He discharges.” This is sad, for to make Christ merely discharge our legal obligations is to remove grace and God’s forgiveness. If He merely discharged

our legal obligations, then nothing needs to be forgiven; but Scripture teaches God's forgiveness, and in such a way that God remains just while justifying the ungodly (Rom. 3:26).

We must now bring our review of Mr. Pink's book which sets forth the Calvinistic line of teaching to a close. Much more might be said, but we leave with our readers the challenges we have made and commend them to the Word of God — «prove all things; hold fast that which is good» (1 Thess. 5:21).

In closing, however, we wish to again affirm that we stand squarely on the fact of man's total ruin and helplessness, and maintain that besides the work of Christ on the cross for the glory of God and for the putting away of the sins of all who believe, the work of the Spirit of God in the soul producing new birth is an absolute essential in the saving of souls.

We close with the words of the poet Cowper:

*“Of all the gifts Thy love bestows,
Thou Giver of all good!
Not heaven itself a richer knows
Than the Redeemer’s blood.*

*Faith, too, that trusts the blood through grace,
From that same love we gain;
Else, sweetly, as it suits our case,
The gift had been in vain.*

*We praise Thee, and would praise Thee more,
To Thee our all we owe;
The precious Saviour, and the power
That makes Him precious too.»*

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