

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

The Sovereignty of Grace as Seen in Romans 8:28-30

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1

Nowhere is the sovereign grace of God seen more clearly than in the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, verses twenty-eight, twenty-nine, and thirty. In these three verses there is given in one majestic sweep the whole plan of God in redemption from the counsels of the past eternity into the never-ending future. The language is breathtaking in its import, giving to the Christian the fullest assurance of both his present welfare and his eternal salvation.

God is absolutely sovereign in the exercise of His grace. He is dependent upon nothing outside Himself and is responsible to no one. A God who was not sovereign would be no God at all. Were He limited in His purpose and actions by sin or by the free will of man or by any other cause, He would be impotent in His own universe, vainly trying to bring to pass plans which could never be accomplished—or at best only might be. In short He would be the finite God advocated by J. S. Mill, William James, H. G. Wells, and other philosophers. Arminian theology, with its doctrine of absolute free will and its practical denial of the sovereignty of God, leads in this dangerous direction; it is only a step from Arminianism to finite-godism.

The problem of sin is really not a problem with God. Nor does the human will stand as a barrier to the carrying out of His purposes. In His own holy and infinitely wise plan He has been pleased to permit sin, overruling it for His own glory. The will of man is likewise a part of His all-inclusive decree.

In the passage of Scripture which is being considered nothing is said concerning the human responsibility in salvation. In fact, nothing at all is said of the human attitude except in the brief phrase, “to them that love God.” This is immediately explained as being coextensive with the phrase, “to them who are the called according to his purpose.” The apostle John expresses the thought similarly: “We love him, because he first loved us” (1 John 4:19).

It is God’s purpose which is under consideration; hence the almost complete lack of reference to the human element. Many other passages of Scripture combine to show that there is a human element—the element of faith, but that does not enter into the present

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

study. Salvation is here being considered from the divine side, and is shown to be entirely a work of God for man.

The statement of verse twenty-eight would be absolutely impossible if God were not sovereign. If there were the slightest element of chance in the universe, or if any creature could commit the smallest act outside the decree of God, then there could be no assurance that *all* things would work together for good to those who are mentioned. In order for all things to work thus, God must be in absolute control. When one thinks of the world-encircling results of one small act or word, one can readily see the disastrous effects which would follow if God's sovereignty were relaxed for even a moment.

The Scripture does not say that all things work together for good to everyone, but only to a certain class of people who are described in two ways: those "that love God" and those "who are the called according to his purpose." Nor is the assertion made that every event in itself is good, but only all things as they work together. One must have God's point of view, as it is presented in the Scriptures, in order to appreciate the glory of the universe.

The explanation of the bold statement of verse twenty-eight is given in that which follows. How is it that this can be true? How is it that absolutely all things do work together for good to these favored people? It is true because God has an eternal purpose concerning them. Nothing can possibly defeat that purpose. It is a sovereign purpose; consequently it will be perfectly accomplished.

Five elements of God's eternal purpose are listed in verses twenty-nine and thirty: foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification. Of these Dr. H. A. Ironside says, "Every link was forged in heaven, and not one can ever be broken. This blessed portion is not for theologians to wrangle over but for the saints to rejoice in."¹

Truly the saints can rejoice in these truths. Yet, in spite of Dr. Ironside's warning, it seems profitable to consider carefully the terms used here, not indeed in a spirit of wrangling, but with a true desire to delve into some of the problems which naturally have arisen.

Two questions especially are worthy of study. The one concerns the connection of the five terms; the other, their precise meanings. These two questions are vitally related, as the subsequent pages will show.

There is considerable difference of opinion among theologians and Bible expositors concerning the connection of the five elements of God's purpose mentioned in these verses.

¹ H. A. Ironside, *Lectures on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 106.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

Is there a logical order intended in the use of the words? There are those who reply that no particular significance attaches to the order in which the words occur. The argument is that only the coextensiveness of the five terms is in view. Those whom God foreknew are the same ones whom He predestinated, called, justified, and glorified. Not one will be lost on the way, but His purpose will carry through perfectly to the end.

There is no reason to disagree with this last statement, for it is obvious that the five elements are coextensive. Yet there is some evidence of order in the terms.

Take, for example, the last three of the five elements. Can anyone deny that there is order in these? Clearly calling comes logically before justification and justification comes logically before glorification. If it is not equally as clear, may it not be conceded as likely that the other elements are also in logical order?

It should be noted that no contention is made for a chronological order, although the last three elements will lend themselves to that also if they are taken as the actual historical accomplishment of the purpose of God. It is not necessary, however, to complicate the present study by bringing in this question. Things which are altogether in the mind of God, such as foreknowledge and predestination, must of necessity be eternal, and consequently are not subject to any chronological order. Moreover all the elements are seen as parts of the purpose of God, and as such are viewed as already accomplished, since God is the one who "calleth those things which be not as though they were" (Rom. 4:17).

The main reason which has been advanced for denying a logical order in the five elements is the need for avoiding a conflict with other passages of Scripture, such as, for example, Acts 2:23: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." This apparent conflict will be obviated shortly in the discussion of the precise meanings of the terms.

Among those who hold to a logical order in the five terms, there are two large divisions of interpretation. The difference arises largely over the meaning of the word *foreknew*. Consequently it is necessary at this point to give consideration to the second question proposed in this study.

The two views, for convenience, may be classified as the Arminian and the Calvinistic. This serves to show the historical background of the controversy, but, of course, settles nothing. The word *foreknew*, as well as the other terms, must be examined from the Scripture itself, in order that the meaning may be seen.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

The Arminian view takes the word *foreknew* in its most common sense: “to have knowledge of beforehand.” Foreknowledge, then, according to this view, is mere prescience. This immediately raises another question—What is the nature of the knowledge which God has of those included in the statement?

Several answers are given. The following quotation contains a common Arminian reply: “Those whom God foreknew would love him; or, in other words, fulfill the condition of salvation—that is, have faith. God evidently knew from eternity that some human beings would be saved, and that in order to be saved they would comply with the condition of salvation.”²

This quotation shows the weakness of the position taken by the Arminians. A universe is postulated in which “God evidently knew from eternity that some human beings would be saved...” The inference is that, although He knew it—and even that is stated rather doubtfully—He could do nothing about it until these people had believed. God is rendered helpless by finite man!

Since God knows that certain ones will believe, He proceeds to predestinate them. This is clearly a travesty on predestination. If such were the case, there would really be no such thing as predestination, because a God who merely decrees a thing which He already knows will come to pass anyway, certainly is not sovereign.

Charles Hodge has aptly evaluated the interpretation which is now being considered: “As the literal meaning of the word *to foreknow* gives no adequate sense, inasmuch as all men are the objects of the divine prescience, whereas the apostle evidently designed to express by the word something that can be asserted only of a particular class; those who adopt this meaning here supply something to make the sense complete. *Who he foreknew would repent and believe, or who would not resist his divine influence, or some such idea.*”³

This clearly is adding something to the text which is not there. But even this objection goes not yet to the heart of the matter. What is there for God to know? How can He know that certain ones will believe? What principle would make certain the fact that anyone would believe?

A distinction needs to be made between omniscience and foreknowledge, as these terms are used in theology. Omniscience is God’s foreknowledge of everything, including that which is possible as well as that which is actual. Foreknowledge, on the other hand, refers only to those things which are certain to occur in the future. But nothing would be certain

² R. V. Foster, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 247.

³ Charles Hodge, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 466.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

to occur in the future if it were not *made* certain. If all were the result of chance or accidental forces there could be no foreknowledge, since knowledge must be based upon fact. In other words, God had to decree things, to make them certain, before He could know them as certainly future. He could have omniscience without a decree, but foreknowledge, in the sense which has been defined, would be impossible.

This is well expressed by Haldane, who says: "God's foreknowledge cannot in itself be the cause of any event; but events must be produced by His decree and ordination. It is not because God foresees a thing that it is decreed; but He foresees it because it is ordained by Him to happen in the order of His providence. Therefore His foreknowledge and decrees cannot be separated; for the one implies the other. When He decrees that a thing *shall* be, He foresees that it *will* be. There is nothing known as what will be, which is not certainly to be; and there is nothing certainly to be, unless it is ordained that it shall be. All the foreknowledge of future events, then, is founded on the decree of God; consequently He determined with Himself from eternity everything He executes in time, Acts 15:18."⁴

Since it has been shown that there is at least a very strong presumption, if not conclusive evidence, for taking the five elements—foreknowledge, predestination, calling, justification, and glorification—as being given in a logical order; and since the ordinary meaning of the term *foreknowledge* will not stand the test, then some other meaning of the term must be sought.

The interpretation of foreknowledge which has just been considered can be attacked on other grounds, as well; and these will be taken up immediately. Before proceeding, however, it should be remarked that the term *foreknowledge* is used correctly in theology to mean *prescience*, as has been indicated above. There is no quarrel about this. The argument of this thesis does not concern the meaning of the theological term *foreknowledge* or the meaning of the term in the Scriptures generally, but the meaning of the word *foreknew* in this particular passage.

To resume the argument: from numerous references in the Scriptures it can be shown that salvation is entirely by grace. There can be no doubt of this, for such passages as Ephesians 2:8–9, Romans 4:4–5, Titus 3:5, 2 Timothy 1:9, and many others are conclusive. If God saves those who He foreknows will believe, as the contention is, then by that very fact their belief becomes a meritorious act—in short, a work. But salvation is not by works, whether such works have actually been done or are only foreseen as being done in the future. Faith is never presented in the Scriptures as a meritorious act, but only as a channel of salvation. This is seen in the precise use of the preposition *διὰ* in such passages

⁴ R. Haldane, *Exposition of the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 396.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

as Ephesians 2:8. When this preposition is used with the noun πίστις (“faith”), the genitive case is always used; the expression is always διὰ πίστεως (“through faith”), never διὰ πίστιν (“on account of faith”).

Perhaps the most telling argument against the interpretation which makes the word *foreknew* in this passage refer to mere prescience is the actual statement of the passage itself without any interpolations. It needs to be emphasized that the Scripture does not say that certain facts were foreknown about these people; it says that certain *people* were foreknown by God. It is evident that knowledge of fact is a very different thing from knowledge of a person.

This cannot be made too strong. The interpretation which has been considered accepts the statement as though it said that God knew something about the people in question, whereas it really says that God foreknew the people themselves.

But does not God know all people? Does he not *foreknow* all people? The answer is that He does in the sense that He has a perfect knowledge of and acquaintance with all people who have been, or ever will be, in existence.

How then can it be said that He foreknew only certain ones? This question makes it clear that the Arminian interpretation is entirely inadequate. A different meaning must be assigned to the word *foreknew* in the passage. There surely is a basis for giving it some other than the superficial meaning.

Hodge states the problem clearly: “As the words *to know* and *foreknow* are used in three different senses, applicable to the present passage, there is considerable diversity of opinion which should be preferred. The word may express *prescience* simply, according to its literal meaning; or, as *to know* is often *to approve* and *love*, it may express the idea of peculiar affection in this case; or it may mean *to select* or *determine* upon.... The second and third interpretations do not essentially differ. The one is but a modification of the other; for whom God peculiarly loves, he does thereby distinguish from others, which is in itself a selecting or choosing of them from among others. The usage of the word is favourable to either modification of the general idea of *preferring*.... The idea, therefore, obviously is, that those whom God peculiarly loved, and by thus loving, distinguished or selected from the rest of mankind; or to express both ideas in one word, those whom he *elects* he predestined, &c.”⁵

The Greek word used in this verse is προγινώσκω. It is, of course, a compound of the verb γινώσκω. The usage of the word which is being advocated in this thesis is not the

⁵ Charles Hodge, *op. cit.*, pp. 446–447.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

classical one, but is undoubtedly brought over from the Hebrew. Speaking of the simplex form, Shedd says, "This is the Hebraistic and Biblical use of the word."⁶

The Hebrew word meaning "to know" (יָדַע) is often used with the meanings stated by Charles Hodge in the above quotation. It is therefore important that some Scripture passages be examined which will bear out this interpretation. First a few passages from the Old Testament will be cited. The list is not intended to be exhaustive. "For I have known him, to the end that he may command his children and his household after him, that they may keep the way of Jehovah, to do righteousness, and justice; to the end that Jehovah may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Gen. 19:19, A.S.V.); "For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish" (Ps. 1:6); "Lord, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! or the son of man, that thou makest account of him!" (Ps. 144:3); "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities" (Amos 3:2); "The Lord is good, a stronghold in the day of trouble; and he knoweth them that trust in him" (Nah. 1:7).

The following are some passages from the New Testament in which the verb γινώσκω is used: "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23); "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:14); "But if any man love God, the same is known of him" (1 Cor. 8:3); "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

The verb προγινώσκω occurs five times in the New Testament. In two of these it is used in the ordinary sense of *knowing beforehand* (Acts 26:5; 2 Pet. 3:17). A third use is in the present passage. The other two passages read as follows: "God hath not cast away his people which he foreknew. Wot ye not what the scripture saith of Elias? how he maketh intercession to God against Israel....?" (Rom. 11:2); "Who verily was foreordained [A.S.V., foreknown] before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you" (1 Pet. 1:20).

It seems clear that in these two passages the word has the meaning which is advocated by this thesis for Romans 8:29. The English translators evidently understood this interpretation of the word in their translation of 1 Peter 1:20. Dr. Shedd has this to say: "It is to be carefully observed, that foreknowledge in the Hebraistic sense of 'election' means a foreknowledge of the *person* simply; not of the *actions* of the person. 'Whom he foreknew,' Rom. 8:29, does not mean 'Whose acts he foreknew,' but, 'Whose person he

⁶ W. G. T. Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, p. 197.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

foreknew.' It signifies that God fixes his eye upon a particular sinful man, and selects him as an individual to be predestinated to holiness in effectual calling. This is proved by the remainder of the verse: 'Whom he foreknew, he also did predestinate *to be conformed to the image of his Son.*' "⁷

When this meaning of the word is seen, then there is no longer any reason for denying a logical order in the use of the terms. Each falls into its proper place, and the five elements really form a chain of which "every link was forged in heaven," as Dr. Ironside has observed.

Now that the meaning of the first term has been seen, the next step is to determine the meaning of the second. In this also there is further argument against the Arminian theory of foreknowledge and in favor of the interpretation adopted in this thesis.

The predestination mentioned in this verse is not a general foreordination of everything in the universe. The term is sometimes correctly used in theology to signify just that. In this passage, however, the predestination is strictly limited; it is to a specific end: the conformity of the elect to the image of the Son of God. The second term—*predestinated*—does not refer to the decree to elect; that has been shown to be comprehended in the first term—*foreknew*. The predestination mentioned here is the carrying out of election to a prearranged goal: the conformity of all the elect to Christ, in order that He might receive the glory of being the "firstborn among many brethren." The electing decree must not be confused with the predestinating decree.

Haldane sums up in one sentence what this thesis has spent many words to demonstrate: "Foreknowledge and predestination are distinguished. The one is the choice of persons, the other the destination of those persons to the blessings for which they are designed." He goes on to say: "To predestinate signifies to appoint beforehand to some particular end.... As the term is here used, it respects not all men, but only those on whom God has placed His love from eternity, and on whom He purposes to bestow life through Jesus Christ. As, then, it is absolute and complete, so it is definite; and the number who are thus predestinated can neither be increased nor diminished. It is not that God had foreseen us as being in Christ Jesus by faith, and on that account had elected us, but that Jesus Christ, being the Mediator between God and man, God had predestinated us to salvation only in Him. For as the union which we have with Him is the foundation of all the good which we receive from God, so we must be elected in Him; that is to say, that God gives us to Him to be His members, and to partake in the good things to which God predestinates

⁷ W. G. T. Shedd, *Dogmatic Theology*, Vol. I, p. 416.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

us. So that Jesus Christ has been the first predestinated and appointed to be the Mediator, in order that God should bless us with all spiritual blessings in Him.”⁸

As one considers the truths contained in these two great words, one can only express unbounded amazement at the matchless grace of God. One tries in imagination to go back, back, back to the past eternity and to think of God as He exercised His electing love, when He foreknew those who are included in this passage. There never was a time, of course, when He did not foreknow them, because His foreknowledge is as eternal as His own person. Furthermore, His foreknowledge comprehended individuals as such. It was not a general, but a particular, foreknowledge. He saw that great multitude in His infinite and eternal mind, and loved each one with an everlasting love. The ground of His electing love was not in any foreseen merit—for they had none—but in Himself alone.

Because the decree of predestination cannot be separated from that of election, one must also think further of the end to which God has predestinated His elect: conformity to the image of Christ. The apostle John gives a similar thought: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:1–2).

To be like Christ! Could any destiny be more glorious? That is God’s purpose for every one of His elect ones; and God’s purpose will be perfectly accomplished.

This teaching of the Word of God is vastly different from the ideas of men, who vainly imagine that salvation is something to be attained by their own efforts. The marvelous passage which forms the basis of this study lifts men above the muddled reasonings of humanity and gives them an insight into the workings of God Himself in sovereign grace.

There are still three more links in the chain to be considered: calling, justification, and glorification. It is outside the purpose of the present thesis to discuss all the connotations of these terms. The primary object has been to show the sovereignty of God’s grace by setting forth that which is included in the term *foreknowledge*. How well that has been accomplished only the reader can judge properly.

Something needs to be said, however, about the third term: calling. The calling described is not a mere external or general call, but that which is spoken of in theological terminology as *effectual calling*, or *irresistible grace*. There can be no failure in the divine program; hence there can be no failure on the part of any to respond to such a call as is

⁸ R. Haldane, *op. cit.*, pp. 397–398.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

mentioned here. All the foreknown are predestinated and all the predestinated are effectually called. Haldane comments as follows: "All who are elected are in due time effectually called, and all who are effectually called have been from all eternity elected and ordained to eternal salvation. Effectual calling, then, is the proper and necessary consequence and effect of election, and the means to glorification. As those whom God hath predestinated He hath called, so He hath effectually called none besides. These words before us, therefore, are to be taken not only as emphatical, but as exclusive.... In this effectual calling the final perseverance of the saints is also secured, since it stands connected on the one hand with election and predestination, and on the other hand with sanctification [justification] and glorification. 'The gifts and calling of God are without repentance.' Calling, as the effect of predestination, must be irresistible, or rather invincible, and also irreversible."⁹

The following are some other passages from the New Testament which use the term *calling* in a manner similar to this passage: "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord" (1 Cor. 1:9); "But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24); "Is any man called being circumcised? let him not become uncircumcised. Is any called in uncircumcision? let him not be circumcised" (1 Cor. 7:18); "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15); "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling" (Eph. 4:4); "That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (1 Thess. 2:12); "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Heb. 3:1); "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began...." (2 Tim. 1:9).

This calling is brought about by the reproofing or enlightening ministry of the Holy Spirit; which is described by the Lord Jesus in John 16:8–11. It is not coercion of the human will, but "infinite persuasion" brought to bear in such a way that the person who is called willingly and joyfully heeds the call.

Calling is the outward proof of God's secret electing and predestinating decrees. The morbid and unreasonable theories of some hyper-Calvinists of a past day have little in common with this sublime teaching of the Word of God. Some of these extremists taught that one could never know whether he was among the elect; the Scripture shows that the

⁹ R. Haldane, *op. cit.*, p. 403.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

fact that a person believes is proof of his election. Nor does the doctrine of election discourage the preaching of the Gospel, as some would have us believe. A distinction must be made between the general call which is extended to all men as the Gospel is preached to them, and the effectual call which is the work of God alone. The Lord Jesus spoke of this effectual call in His discourse to the Jews on the day after He fed the five thousand: "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out. For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.... No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:37-40, 44).

"Whom he called, them he also justified. This step follows logically from the preceding one. Throughout this epistle to the Romans Paul has been writing of justification by faith: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...." (Rom. 3:24). All of those who are in the eternal purpose of God have God's righteousness imputed to them and are accounted righteous, justified, each one at the moment he believes.

The last step, glorification, has not yet been accomplished historically, but it is placed in the past tense with the rest because it too is in the eternal plan of God. Dr. Shedd comments thus: "The future glorification of the believer is designated by the aorist, as his justification, calling, predestination, and election have been; because all of these divine acts are eternal, and therefore simultaneous for the divine mind. All are equally certain."¹⁰

Is it any wonder that after writing of such glories as these the apostle appears for a moment to be speechless? "What shall we then say to these things?" he asks; and can only answer by further questions. The sovereignty of God's grace is a subject which never can be fully understood by the finite mind; but it can be appreciated and enjoyed. Only those who are fully aware of the sovereignty of God can fully rejoice in the salvation which He has given them.

Haldane, in his discussion of this passage, writes a splendid conclusion which ably sums up the teaching concerning sovereign grace. Only a part can be quoted: "The plan of salvation is here set before us in its commencement, in the immediate steps of its progress, and in its consummation. Its commencement is laid in the eternal purpose of God, and its consummation in the eternal glory of the elect.... The opponents of the doctrine

¹⁰ W. G. T. Shedd, *A Critical and Doctrinal Commentary upon the Epistle of St. Paul to the Romans*, p. 266.

Lion and Lamb Apologetics'

contained in this passage distort the whole plan of salvation. They deny that there is any indissoluble connection between those successive steps of grace, which are here united by the Apostle, and that these different expressions relate to the same individuals. They suppose that God may have foreknown and predestinated to life some whom He does not call, and that He effectually calls some whom He does not justify, and that He justifies others whom He does not glorify. This contradicts the express language of this passage, which declares that *those* whom He foreknew He predestinated, that *those* whom He predestinated them He also called, that *those* whom He called *them* He also justified, and that *those* whom He justified *them* He also glorified. It is impossible to find words which could more forcibly and precisely express the indissoluble connection that subsists between all the parts of this series, or show that they are the same individuals that are spoken of throughout.... In the passage before us, we see that all the links of that chain by which man is drawn up to heaven, are inseparable. In the whole of it there is *nothing but grace*, whether we contemplate its beginning, its middle, or its end."¹¹

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When we have formed our highest conception of God, the angel sees a perfection of which we have not the remotest glimpse. The more we study the Bible, the more startling becomes the distance between our ideas and the truth. The highest point to which we climb with toilsome steps, only reveals inaccessible summits that are lost in the depths of heaven. If we pry with searching curiosity into those depths, we can only catch a ray here and there which comes from the edge of some unknown horizon. The Gospel is yet a mystery, except to its Author, and it will ever remain so to any created faculty. So it is with all the works of God.... 'Every rock in the desert, every boulder on the plain, every pebble by the brookside, every grain of sand on the seashore, every dry leaf, is fraught with lessons of incomprehensible wisdom.' Precisely so, yet transcendently greater, is it with the Gospel.... When, therefore, our hearts sicken within us, at the might of some stupendous depravity, of some most ingenious specimen of cunning or of cruelty, we are not to indulge in despair or in indignation, but we are to remember that there are powers of help and transformation that can reach even this unutterable iniquity, and that when the recovery is accomplished, the Gospel is not robbed of one of its resources, but remains in undiminished vigor." — *Bibliotheca Sacra*, October, 1853.¹²

¹¹ R. Haldane, *op. cit.*, pp. 406–407.

¹² Martin, A. (1942). "The Sovereignty of Grace as Seen in Romans 8:28–30." *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 99, 453–468.