

CLARKE, HENRY, CALVIN, AND OTHERS ON DIVINE SOVEREIGNTY
Follow-up to Manifold Wisdom

Commentator Adam Clarke vexes himself considerably in his efforts to destroy the significance of the most explicit Sovereignty Scriptures in the Bible, and clearly lays an implicit charge of unrighteousness against the eternal Sovereign if he did immutably fore-ordain his elect unto eternal life, especially in the quotation of Wesley contained in the comments on 1Pet. 1:2. In particular such vexation can be observed in his discourse on Acts 2:47 and its relative Acts 13:48.

Commentator Frank Stagg states thus on pg. 67 of his work; "THE BOOK OF ACTS" concerning Acts 2:47. Quote, The Revised Standard Version is correct in the translation, "And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved" (2:47). The Authorized Version unfortunately has a mistranslation, "such as should be saved." The idea of predestination is completely foreign to the text, appearing only in the inexcusable mistranslation, unquote. Clarke launches out to prove this same viewpoint, even going so far as to say that the KJV rendering "such as should be saved" is *improper and insupportable*. All this should make it very clear that in order to shoot down Sovereign election and predestination Acts 2:47 absolutely must be regarded as *improper and insupportable*. We say that in this verse of Scripture, (also Eph. 1:4 & 2:10) the word "should" carries the same theological import as the word "shall". Study these verses closely as they relate to Heb. 1:14 last clause.

This same commentator (Stagg) says absolutely nothing in regards to Acts 13:48, (which relates so vitally to Acts 2:47) but passes over it as if its not even there. Acts chap. 13 verse 48 makes it very clear (Scriptural commentary on Scripture) that "such as should be saved" is right for Acts 2:47, and the RSV rendering "those who were being saved" is therefore (we say) a false "mistranslation".

The interpreters Bible says of Acts 2:47 that it "has given much difficulty, as is evidenced by the confusion in the text." This work also calls Acts 2:47 "awkward" and like Stagg and Clarke speaks of a "mistranslation". It also suggest that Luke may have been ignorant of a certain "Judean dialect" which ignorance supposedly could have been responsible for the alleged theological error in "the text". Neither Henry nor The Wycliffe utter any such doubtful expressions as do Stagg and Clarke.

It should also be noted that the KJV reading "such as should be saved" is not a translative clarification but the actual wording of the textus receptus. It is also evident that Mr. Clarke would have liked to have excised Acts 13:48 from the Bible or at least to have altered the wording. In this verse also please note that there are no words in italics.

Adam Clarke says this, see comments on Jn. 6:37, "Judas was given to Christ by the Father--but Judas sinned and perished." Clarke says also concerning the Salvation of souls, "God may will a thing to be, without willing that it shall be." We ourselves however, say very plainly, that *God has willed (Sovereignly) the eternal Salvation of his elect with immutable decree which the gates of hell will not subvert*. We say also on the authority of Gods word, that Judas Iscariot was not "ordained to eternal life" and if we attempt to say that he was we do most desperately confuse the divine counsel.

We ourselves now say this; The fact that the Salvation of the elect was locked in, on the cross of Calvary, does not in any way infer that the others were not included under a Salvation provisory.

Mr. Clarke inadvertently seeks to destroy the eternal foundation, for sovereign election (we say) of individual persons unto eternal Salvation, is the focal point of "the eternal purpose which was purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" which purpose (we say) is the foundation. Toward this end (the creation of a bride) all the other elements in this great eternal purpose work together.

According to Adam Clarke (and with his endorsement), J. Wesley lays these criminal charges against the Creator on the grounds that he (the Creator) did sovereignly elect and predestine individuals to eternal life and glory. The charges are these; "It is cruel respect of persons", "an unjust regard for one, and an unjust disregard for another", "it is mere creature partiality and not infinite justice", see comments on 1Pet. 1:2.

Mr. Wesley goes on to say considerably more, all of which reveals that he (in harmony with almost all Holiness preachers and laymen) had no concept whatever of that which is commonly called divine sovereignty. Neither does he nor the others understand that what they are actually teaching is a works based Salvation, which thing the Scriptures explicitly refute. We say therefore that if Mr. Wesley (through the precious blood of Jesus) is able to stand in the rewards assessment judgment of the elect, see 1Cor. 3:13-15, he will no doubt have quite a time explaining himself to the great sovereign elector and predestinator concerning these derogatory statements which he committed to the written record with the express intent of influencing his followers henceforth as long as the present world shall stand.

It would appear that one of the mainline purposes that Mr. Clarke had for the compilation of his commentary was an attempted destruction of the Scriptural doctrine of sovereign election and predestination. This effort was probably prompted by the extreme Calvinist doctrine which holds that conviction passes over those whom God has not elected to eternal life and glory. We ourselves here state plainly, that if there is no conviction (and if Christ died not for them) then there can be no vessel "of wrath fitted to destruction". Nevertheless Mr. Clarke leans over backward in the opposite direction and embraces the errant doctrines of arminianism.

We ourselves now state plainly, that if we fail to comprehend the concept of Sovereign causality, we then will never fill out our eternal reward to that which it could otherwise be, the primary reason being, that we will never (in this life) render to the Sovereign master 100% of the credit (which he certainly is due) for our souls Salvation. In the glorious hereafter, however, we will (as the elect of God) ascribe unto him 100% of said credit. We sometimes sing a hymn titled, "God holds the future in his hand", and very likely do not understand the all-encompassing significance of what we're singing. When we thus say that "God holds the future in his hands" (that is if we mean 100% of the future) this necessarily entails and encompasses the eternal destiny of every human being as well as all other events. The saying that we commonly hear to the effect that man holds his own destiny "in his own hands" is as blatantly erroneous as its possible to be. There will (we say) be nobody standing on the street corners of glory singing, "I'm so glad that I got in". Over>>>

We say also, that the Fathers deepest desire was to be fulfilled only by the manifestation of his Love in a Salvation plan for a fallen human creation, for this to be possible creation had to fall. He therefore set them in a place where they could fall, knowing that they would fall. The divine fore-ordination of the fall is revealed in the absolute fore-ordination of "the death of the cross" even without mention of the prefiguration of the Lords obedience in the disobedience of Adam.

We say also that the prophetic terminology "mighty to save" necessarily entails the ability (and the resolve) of the Lord Jesus, in the subjugation of the will of the one who is to be saved, Saul of Tarsus being set forth as the most prominent example, see 1Tim.1:16. We say also that all of this (touching the subjugation of the will of Gods elect) is theologically intrinsic to that troublesome passage of Scripture enshrined in Acts 2:47.

Please reference back to our piece which was printed in the Faith & Truth (12-07) under the title; HIS BODY THE CHURCH, HIS CHURCH THE BRIDE for more on the significance of the wording of Acts 2:47 which significance (and the distinction between the body of Christ, and the building of God) we have found no commentary able to deal with.

We say that John Calvin in his commentary on Rom. 11:2 reveals to the understanding reader a large area of spiritual blindness relative to divine Sovereignty by this statement. Quote, "For though God invites all people indiscriminately to himself, yet he does not inwardly draw any but those whom he knows to be his people, and whom he has given to his Son, and of whom also he will be the faithful keeper to the end." As we have said elsewhere so we say again in somewhat briefer wording. NO CONVICTION, NO VESSEL OF WRATH FITTED TO DESTRUCTION. We will however give him (Calvin) this. From what we have observed it seems that most commentators view Acts 18:10 as referring to persons who had not yet been brought into grace, which is also our own judgment. Strictly by virtue of election, the elect belongs to Christ from the foundation of the world, give a diligent, comparative study of Mt.25:34, Rev.13:8 and Rev.17:8. We say that Rom.8:9 last clause puts divine ownership of the individual in an entirely different context, being that of the Spirits seal upon us, which thing of course will be so very easily overlooked by those who are intent on putting the Arminian emphasis upon these Scriptures, ho Clarke.

Furthermore and in relation to the Manifold Wisdom write-up we also say that Mt.26:53 clearly implies that the Father would still have thrown the human race away if the Lord Jesus Christ had opted out of "the death of the cross". We say then, that there would have been no eternal damnation of souls, but rather annihilation.

It also appears that annihilation, spirit, soul and body, (as original sins full and proper wages) of those to whom the promises had been made, would have eliminated the obligation of the promises without spotting the integrity of him who had made the promises. Nevertheless we also believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, being (as it were) God "in the flesh" was totally above the possibility of failure

We ourselves cannot interpret Rom.8:32 1st clause, (which has even lately caused some degree of astonishment to our spirit) to the effect that "the death of the cross" was mandatory, for if so then Love is ruled out as the chief motivation. We believe that the garden prayer is likely on the mind of Paul as he wrote such strong and intense words. We feel that the hidden essence underlying the words of the Lord Jesus, "if it be possible" was thus; *can there be another way found to save mankind*, to which the answer of the Father was, *there is no other way*. Therefore the prospect with which the Lord Jesus was faced was, to go through with it or else we (the Godhead) have to throw them away, which thing of course, the Lord (strictly because of Love) could not consent to.

When dealing with the fully mature element of the Lords Church (as my own ministry does), free-will should be properly acknowledged, but not emphasized in the manner that it should when dealing with the lost and the Christian babes. Nothing other (we say), than the divine wisdom will suffice in the application of emphasis to the various elements of the divine counsel as it is directed to the various echelons of maturity in the Lords spiritual body. To put it in simpler terminology, only in the wisdom of God will we ever apply appropriate measure of emphasis to the gospel message in its graduating senses.

Concerning Daniel Parker (whom we referred to in the Manifold Wisdom article) and his explicit predestinarian teachings, which teachings reportedly caused considerable degrees of consternation among his followers, we say that these followers probably needed to hear some of the kind of preaching which we hear week in and week out. On the other hand, many of our own people may need to hear some of the kind of preaching which Daniel Parkers followers were compelled to endure in their day. I'm saying this on the grounds that you can't hardly have a ten minute altar service nowadays and some don't even come to the altar.

One will come closer to getting the truth of these things from Mr. Henry than from Mr. Clarke. I first learned something of this from Bro. Irvin Stone around twenty years ago. Bro. Stone said to me concerning

Matthew Henry, "he believes in the election of grace". In order to learn something of what Mr. Henry believed concerning "the election of grace" see his comments on Rom.11:5, Rom. Nine and other Scriptures. Although Matthew Henry himself, in references to certain passages seems to acknowledge total sovereignty, even making some very strong affirmative statements, yet in reference to other Scriptures he seems to lunge against the ropes, as though seeking to escape absolute reality as it settles upon the total sovereignty concept. To read one of his most forthright acknowledgments of absolute sovereign election and predestination, see comments on 1 Pet.1:2.

We ourselves sometimes actually begin to wonder if there's really any need for such rigorous emphasis upon divine sovereignty as that which we place upon it in our writings. A very real need does exist however, which is to prevent our fellow ministers of the gospel from decimating their eternal reward by totally disallowing the sovereignty of God, as we certainly seem inclined to do. We now say this; We are sure there will be plenty of preachers saved who by their ministry destroyed the sovereignty of God in the area of human Salvation. These we say, will "suffer loss" of part (if not all), of their eternal reward, and that without regard to the number of souls which were won through their efforts, for they give not the Lord a full measure of glory in that which is accomplished, Over>>>>

CLARKE, HENRY, CALVIN, cont...

We ourselves now say this. We are all "by nature" born the children of wrath. However, the wrath of God is incurred (in the children of wrath) only by the rejection of the truth as it is presented to the heart by the spirit of conviction.

The election of grace is completely separate from and independent of every other form or state of election. God elected (under one particular order of divine sovereignty) to use Pharoah in making his name known throughout the earth. We know by the Scriptures that Pharoah tried to humble himself at times, but each time was (according to the divine purpose) hardened again by the sovereign hand of God. Looking at these things we therefore say, that Pharoah, whenever he saw his end in the waters of the red sea could (for all we know), have called on the Master and obtained mercy upon his soul. This would have depended strictly upon whether the mercy of God was there as stated in Rom.9:18.

The saying of the Scripture, that Pharoah would "be cut off from the earth" does not necessarily infer that his soul was to be lost, for the very same language was used concerning Christ, see Dan. 9:26. Although we feel only very slight hope of Pharoah's Salvation, it is still not at all for us to judge, for the extreme resort alluded to in 1Cor.5:5 will be implemented solely at the discretion of the eternal Sovereign, and the life which the individual lived has nothing to do with whether or not such measures are used. Although Paul was endowed with the apostolic authority to deliver "unto Satan" we know that he was not endowed with the authority to save souls and neither was the Corinthian church. Some may feel that individuals concerning whom the Scriptures record a termination of life under the Sovereign hand of Gods judgment (Pharoah and Ahab for example), are intended to be known by the Church as lost souls. We say that such an element of doctrine (if it exists) needs to be reconsidered with great diligence, see again 1Cor.5:5.

Besides Judas Iscariot, the rich man of Mt.16 appears to be the only individual whom the Scriptures reveal their ultimate perdition, although the case of King Saul of Israel looks mighty bleak. The case of Ahab, is in one manner very similar to the case of Pharoah. Ahab had in time humbled himself at the word of the Lord, and there is none who can know that he might not have prayed (and obtained mercy), in his dying hour as he stayed up in his chariot. If such was the case (with either Pharoah or Ahab) it was not in the divine purpose for the Church to have knowledge of it otherwise it would have been recorded in the Scriptures.

We send these writings (dealing with sovereign election and predestination) out with a prayer that none will, second handedly attempt to preach or otherwise expound these things to the people, without a direct unction from the great sovereign elector and predestinator, for these things are not intended for the spiritually immature and potentially could be very harmful if presented to them without the said unction of the Spirit.

The arminian mindset will likely cause an individual (especially a minister) to fall far short of a complete acknowledgment of the truth, concerning such things as, the difference between the divine will and the divine purpose, the ultimate divine will being the Salvation of every soul and the ultimate divine purpose being, the Salvation of Gods elect.

If the Lord Jesus was crucified from the foundation of the world, then Judas also betrayed him from the foundation of the world, Pilate judged him from the foundation of the world, and the chief priest and elders condemned him from the foundation of the world. It remains also that the elect received him (and he them) from the foundation of the world and the non-elect rejected him from the foundation of the world. If we attempt to say that the crucifixion was fore-ordained and yet deny that there was any fore-ordained increase (harvest) in relation to it, this is desperate confusion.

In retro-reference to Wesley's tirade concerning sovereign election and predestination and to all others who have spoken so foolishly, we still do acknowledge that many of the Lords elect will (through non-imputative grace, see Rom.4:8) yet be saved, even in spite of such bold and rash judgments upon the divine character.

Dear friends, most of you better hope I know what I'm talking about.

R. Corn 2010

P. S. Seeing as some of our people seem to put fairly heavy stock in the more popular commentators, we ourselves think it fit to deal with them from a standpoint of spiritual enlightenment rather than of formal education which we drastically lack. We ourselves hold no Ph.D's, G. E. D's or any other such propaganda paraphernalia. We actually ceased from our academic labors somewhere around the mid-cycle of the first grade, when we discovered experientially the Biblical truth that much study is a weariness of the flesh.

P. S. We are not totally negative on Mr. Clarke (far from it). We fully agree with him on the "man of sin" as do "the general run of Protestant writers" see his afterword to the second of 11 Thess. We also agree with him closely on "the mark of the beast".

P. S. We do not endorse the two seed doctrine of the Parkerites, the Branhamites or any other ites and we will oppose any who do. We maintain absolutely that Adam was the biological Father of every child mothered by Eve, including Cain.