

we take great joy and find peace and rest in the thought of his sovereignty, but God has also constituted our ~~minds~~ minds so that we are obliged to believe that what we do through his grace in this historical world is of eternal significance. In other words, the Bible teaches in the strongest possible language that the message of the grace of God is to be proclaimed to all people throughout the world that we are to endeavor by every possible means to persuade men to put their faith and trust in the crucified risen Saviour; that whoever of all the races of men does believe in Christ will be saved. "Whosoever" believes in the Lord Jesus Christ shall not perish but shall inherit eternal life. Whosoever does not believe in the Lord Jesus Christ is held responsible for his unbelief according to the decrees of God. "The wrath of God abideth him." "Because he hath not ~~kk~~ believed on the name of the only begotten Son of God." (John 3:18) How are we to reconcile the view of ~~sk~~ salvation in these two systems of reality? The answer probably is that our minds are not capable of this reconciliation but our minds are capable of ~~ksd~~ receiving enough of the truth of God so that we can perceive that there is no contradiction.

Some have argued that election is based upon and caused by God's foreknowledge of the fact that the elect out of the goodness of their hearts would believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. Such an explanation is not a harmonizing of the decrees of God and the ~~kk~~ significance of this temporal world. It is in effect a denial of the decrees of God. If man can out of his own nature bring forth the good act of believing in Christ, then man can save himself, and salvation is not of grace, but of human merit.

On the other hand, some have gone to the extreme of stating that the offer of salvation to all the world has no genuine significance. In the light of all the Scriptures we must flatly reject any such idea. Paul's ambassadorship, his constant enduring of perils in order to persuade men and to win some, was not a mere effort to keep up appearances.

Another attempt to harmonize the doctrine of the decrees of God with the significance of the gospel propaganda, is the view that although man in his sinful state is utterly incapable of any act of cooperation in partly saving himself, yet the common grace of God, including the supernatural conviction brought about by the Holy Spirit, (John 16:8), and including his energizing of the willing as well as the doing of his good pleasure, (Philippians 2:13), might be construed as lifting the natural man at the moment of decision to a point analogous to that occupied by Adam before the fall, at which point the irresistible grace of God saves the elect but thereafter the individual who rejects Christ is responsible for his unbelief not only as originally in Adam but now in himself and by his own rebellion.

This explanation sometimes seems to me quite logical and significant, though some regard its logic as extremely attenuated.

Certainly the phrase "elect according to the foreknowledge of God" (I Peter 1:1,2) forbids us to argue that God's foreknowledge is nothing other than his decree of election. "But Scripture nowhere declares what it is in the divine foreknowledge which determines the divine election and predestination. The foreknown are elected, and the elect are predestinated, and this election is certain to every believer by the mere fact that he believes." (Scofield Reference note on I Peter 1:20) The harmonization of the decrees of God in election and the genuineness of the offer of salvation, and man's *being held* responsible before God if he rejects this offer, all of this may be inscrutable to the human mind.

But the fact that we may not be able to rationalize or harmonize the two systems of reality at the present limited state of our knowledge, must not be allowed for one moment to deprive us of the benefits of any portion of the Scripture. God has commanded us not only to understand his truth but to preach it and to endeavor to persuade men to accept it. Paul in the jail at Philippi was not unmindful of the decrees of God, and was not compromising with ~~tk~~ his theological views when he said to