

Roger Breiley

Sovereign Reign of Grace

Conceit of knowledge makes man unteachable, and hard hearted; as a man that sits on high, looks down to the dungeon, can see nothing there; but sitting in the dungeon, looking up, sees the light of sun; so a man, sitting above and looking down to the Gospel, as a thing under him, sees nothing; but he that sits in the darkness of his own heart, and looks up to the Son of Righteousness, sees everything, waiting the beams of Christ's light to shine; and though a man know all the mysteries of life to be in Christ; yet without Christ he knows nothing that he dare trust to. Objection: To what end then should man labor for knowledge? Answer: This condemns not knowledge, but that a man should seek it at Christ, and enjoy it in Him alone, in whom it is hid from the flesh in all the treasures thereof; but not that man should store it up, thereby to comprehend God; but to know, that when he thinks he knows all, he knows nothing, as he ought to know. Where then are the wise? Where is the scribe? All the wisdom of this world is but foolishness; and yet these count the Truth of God foolishness; these all think most basely of the Gospel. Be content therefore to be counted a fool with those that consider themselves the wise of the world. Well worth low and childlike minds, that dare not trust their own wit or strength, but wait upon the Father. "It is so O Father, because thy pleasure was such." {Mt.11:25-26} Here he shows the ground and prime cause that babes, and not wise men understand the Gospel. Not any power or worth in man, but the good will of God, which is not only his absolute will, but also the free love and good will of God toward man, without any respect of his worth; so that, the good will of God, and his good pleasure is the only cause of all good to man. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth." {James 1:18} Our election is from this ground, that God hath chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world was laid, who hath predestinated us to be adopted in Christ Jesus, according to the good pleasure of his will, not according to our works, but according to his grace he saved us. {Eph.1:3-12} So he chose Israel. "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people; but because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." {Deut.7:7,8} Who can give a reason in himself why God doth any good to man, but his good will and pleasure alone. For it is God that moves man, and sets him a working, not man God. Hereby does he take away all boasting from man, and lays him low to depend upon Another, and live by sheer grace. For he is absolute Lord over all; and there is no resisting of his will, to which man is ever brought into subjection thereto. Thus from the Doctrine of free mercy, doth the kingdom of God thrive in man, and grow vigorous. Nothing brings down but this, and for lack of subjection and believing of this good pleasure of God, man still seeks a cause in himself, as this and that good quality, and so never trusts his good pleasure. Man would still know a reason of his good will, which he will not suffer; for Christ doth not here curiously seek out a reason of the Father's will, {"Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight,"} but gives thanks that God hath revealed it by the Gospel, to teach us, that we do not rashly presume to search his councils, but wait upon his good pleasure in his Word. What place then hath free will, which depends only on God's good pleasure, and not on thy right use of free will. For there is no more willingness in thee than in others that never obeyed the Truth; but it was only his good pleasure to thee; for by nature, man fights against God, and would have rest any way rather than this; and averse to commit himself to his good pleasure, but still would have a hand in his own safety, and to share in the glory. But Christ takes all boasting away,

that faith may live, and man thereby; that God's pleasure may stand, and man subject thereto, that his grace may be communicated, and man praise his goodness. But this doctrine of free will destroys faith, sets his pleasure aside and binds God; lifts up man in pride and presumption, and makes secure in a few faint endeavors of his own. This is the continual exercise under the cross, in patience not to fret, and lust and strive, seeing that the will of the Father orders all things; and herein is our happiness, that it is his good will toward all little ones that are subject as children, for the meek and lowly shall find his good will towards them. This good will of God is not to be comprehended by man, for it rests in the Word of God, and there to be made known in time, and only to be believed. For all the works of God are never known until they be wrought, only to be believed before. For to our carnal reason, many times God seems to be a severe Tyrant, nay his Word a fable, which speaks of great privileges, and they seem in their own sense to be forsaken in affliction, but God gives them a Word that will stand, and his good will shall be revealed in time. In the meantime sit still. "Be still, and know that I am God...I will be exalted." Ps.46:10. Roger Breiley {Bundle of Soul Convincing, Directing & Comforting Truths, 1676}

Fullness of Grace in Christ

"All things are given to me of my Father." Here he sheweth how this good pleasure is conveyed to man; namely in Christ, for he hath given all things to him. So that, God the Father hath given and stored up in Jesus Christ a treasure of all wisdom, goodness, &c., and whatsoever appertains unto the perfecting of his Kingdom, that in Himself, the Father may be glorified and man abundantly supplied. So by promise, he gave him strength to crush the serpent's head, and to Abraham, that in him all people should be blessed. In his birth he was to be called Wonderful, Counselor, &c., and a light to the Gentiles, and the glory of Israel, the Deliverer of his people out of prison, a giver of light to the blind. He was the Vine that had the sap in himself; yea, the treasure of wisdom; yea, the fullness of the Godhead; yea, all judgment was committed unto him; yea, in conclusion, all power in heaven and in earth, and victory over hell and all enemies. This was manifested in his Word that was with authority; and never man spake like him; and in his miracles, hath it been seen, that any man opened the eyes of the blind and raised the dead? This the Father did by an eternal purpose for his glory, and this hath been done for the good and salvation of man, that man that was not capable by his fleshly wisdom of God's ways, yet should have one in flesh like himself; in whom, and by whom, he would convey all things needful, because we cannot ascend to heaven, therefore we might have a God on earth. Where then is that power and ability in man, or in any other creature for guiding or preserving himself, which the wit and pride of man so boasts of? Hath the sparrow power to fall without his Providence? Then, what power in man towards this great work. Whatever then man desires, in Christ he must have it; for it is not elsewhere to be had; whether peace, forgiveness, assurance, comfort or rest. Here it is laid up, and given to the needy; for he hath always to deal with such, and none else. Happy then he that lives by faith in Him, and whose eyes are still towards him, that waits at his posts, and listens to his Word; let all things else pass, work righteousness and live holily, but look for life in none but Him. And yet how loath is man to attend here, but he would have all in his own keeping, because he would not depend on him; and yet were we then most miserable, if our life depended on our own care and keeping. Roger Breiley {Bundle of Soul Convincing, Directing & Comforting Truths, 1676}

Fullness of Grace in Christ

The Father hath hid all the treasures of wisdom in him, hidden from the world; found, not by curious searching, but by humble crying and believing; and found not in man, but in Christ, and there to be enjoyed; for he is made our wisdom, righteousness, sanctification

and redemption. Adam had thought to have known God and the creatures, and himself, and the evil also without God; but knew no good, until God revealed Christ in the Promise; so until we be brought by the truth of Christ, to know no good in anything, but in God, nor no evil in anything, but in ourselves, we know nothing at all; but we seek to see a good in everything, and in ourselves especially; and would see no evil, and so are lifted up, and know nothing as we ought. And for this Christ prays, that the elect may know that thou art in me, and I in thee; and that thou hast sent me; and that I speak not of myself, but these are the words of my Father that sent me, for of myself I can do nothing. {John Chapter 17} And note, that this great mystery was revealed after Christ's death; for then he sent the Comforter to lead into all truth and not until then. Before this, the disciples had a thousand imaginations of Christ, but now they knew that he was the Son of the Father, and Head of the Church; so we have a world of fancies touching God and Christ, but never truly know him, until the cross reveal him; for until then, we only think him to be such and such, and another thought crosses that. But this makes our weakness and vanity to appear; for every man's work shall be revealed by fire. How wonderful are the blind conceits that man hath of God and Christ; as, when we still needs comprehend God without Christ in his essence, properties, attributes, eternity, omnipotence, &c., What a foolishness is this, to think to compass in our thoughts omnipotence! Others that frame a knowledge of Christ, in comprehending the story of his life and death, works, &c. Thus we know him by relation, as we do other countries where we never were; but never walk on foot with him in his death and sufferings. None know him, whose miserable heart is not delivered from death by him; who believes his truth above all, then this truth makes free. We see then that all knowledge comes by faith and that Christ is both God and Man. A man, in whom the fullness of the Godhead dwells, to whom all is given; that knows the mind of the Father, and reveals it to us. This is the only God on earth, that man's mind may be fixed here, and not fly abroad; neither ascend into heaven, nor descend down into hell. Roger Breiley {Bundle of Soul Convincing, Directing & Comforting Truths, 1676}