

MAN'S DEVICES AND THE LORD'S COUNSEL

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“There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.”

Proverbs 19:21.

DIVINE sovereignty is stamped upon every page of the Scriptures. I do not mean that *the doctrine* of divine sovereignty is stated in every chapter of God’s Word, but that we shall not find a chapter in which divine sovereignty may not, more or less, be traced. If we open, for instance, the prophecies, divine sovereignty is the basis of them all. If we read the historical books of the Old Testament, divine sovereignty is to be traced in the actions which are there recorded. If we look at the promises which are made to God’s people, divine sovereignty is stamped upon them, for they all rest on the immutability of God’s counsel; and therefore we may take almost any chapter of the Scriptures at random, and we shall find divine sovereignty engraved upon it.

But divine sovereignty is not merely a matter of *inference*—not merely a doctrine to be gathered from the prophecies and their fulfilment, from the lives of the patriarchs, or from the promises that God has given, and has accomplished to His people. If divine sovereignty were a matter of mere inference, the enemies of God’s truth might challenge us to bring forward *direct* passages of Scripture, where the sovereignty of God is set forth; and, therefore, besides the general current of the Scriptures, we have express texts, so as to leave the enemies of God’s truth without excuse, and to afford us power to answer their challenge, when they demand of us something more positive than inference. Thus we read, that the Lord will “fulfil all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power” (2 Thess. 1:11); that He “worketh all things after the counsel of His own will” (Eph. 1:11); that “He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest Thou?” (Dan. 4:35). And in the verse which I have just read, and from which I hope, with God’s blessing, to deliver a few thoughts, we have the same doctrine