

The Biblical Doctrine of Reprobation

Taken from the 1856 and 1857 volumes of the Earthen Vessel and Christian Record

Web Editors notes: The following remarks on the doctrine of Reprobation are from two or perhaps three individuals. The first article, titled “Calvinism” is signed by “A Stripling”, taking a que from James Wells who used the pen name of “A Little One”. I think “A Stripling” is Samuel Cozens but it could be James Wells or a different minister altogether. Regardless of who the author was it gives a good foundational summary of the doctrine.

The remaining articles stem from the celebration of the second anniversary of Zoar Baptist Chapel, William Street. Poplar whose minister was R. Bowles. Bowles and some others who were present needlessly objected to an address by Samuel Cozens. Walter Banks, the editor of the Earthen Vessel, as is typical of him, took a very moderate stance and Cozens correctly felt obligated to reply in detail to set matters straight.

I have made some minor corrections and changes in English for the modern reader to better benefit from these articles.

I hope the reader may be stimulated to study this subject in more detail for the glory of our blessed God.

Richard Schadle

Note: “Calvinism” is taken from the Earthen Vessel February 1st, 1856 Volume 12, number 133: pages 29 to 33.

CALVINISM

The Almighty, foreseeing the tendency of the innate atheism of the human heart, directed his apostle to write, “That all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.” Had not such a passage been written, we can hardly calculate what would have been the resulting consequences, what heresies and schisms, what heterodoxy of sentiment, and confusion of creeds, would have desolated the world, human thought is inadequate to estimate. In this, as in all God has done, is there infinite mercy and transcendent wisdom displayed: He foresaw, and foreknew, what feebleness there was in man, how weak his faculties, how diminutive the powers of his intellect, and how unable to meet the assaults of the great adversary, he knew, that if in revealing his will, if, with that oracle of his word, he permitted anything that was tinged by creature-ship or emanated from man, to be united there-with, and become the textuary or base of doctrine, or for instruction or edification, how instantly such circumstance would have been laid hold of by man, to doubt the authority of the whole, by the unwitnessed and unattested fact, of which was God’s and which was man’s, therefore infinite wisdom and unfathomable mercy, did our God display, when in revealing his will through

the agency of man, and him only as his amanuensis, he forever (through dignifying him, as a medium) shut him out from all participation of that word and will, he placed it beyond the breath of doubt when he declared "All Scripture is by inspiration of God." This is enough for us; do we doubt it? Then we rank ourselves on the side of the foeman at once. As it is, we must receive scripture as a whole or not at all. Almighty wisdom has chained us to this alternative, it will not permit us to say this passage was inspired, and that was not, this came from God, and that from man, this as the authority of the King, that of the subject. For such to have been our condition, the only standard of revelation, would have been man's own darkened mind, and cloudy perceptions, and each then would have stamped as divine, those parts only apparently harmonizing most in accordance with the conceptions of his prejudices. But since God himself has declared, "All Scripture is given by inspiration," be it ours, to fall in prostrated homage and worshipping adoration, at a mercy so great, a gift so precious, and at the bestowal of so costly a treasure.

Such are the spontaneous thoughts, which arise upon the threshold of a subject, at once pregnant with interests, full of consolation, as well as vital in its consequences. Scripture, as the revealed mind of God, being the basis of all true doctrine, must be its first evidence as well as its last appeal, and ought of doctrine, creed, or faith which cannot bring it as the one, and rests not on it as the other, comes not from God, is unheavenly in its origin and tends only to perdition. Moreover, God being the author of scripture, it cannot teach contrary doctrine, while it propounds a variety of doctrines in detail; yet the whole is an harmonious one, none clash against each other, each have their distinctive connections in one essential whole. God abhors sin and cannot look upon it, yet before the mountains were, his delight was with the sons of men. It was declared the soul that sinned that soul should die, yet dies not the sinner, angels waft thousands to the throne of our heavenly Father. No man can see God and live, such said God himself, yet his beloved Son, our Jesus, said, whoso has seen me, has seen the Father; again it is said, "Nothing that is unclean shall inherit the kingdom of God, yet God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, and they were altogether gone out of the way, there was none which did good, no not one, and still heaven is the habitation of a countless throng, as the sands of the sea shore, numberless. Again, it is said: "Cursed is every one which continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" and yet it also says, "By the deeds of the law shall no man be justified and so might we multiply quotations ad infinitum, to show that to arrive at truth and discover the meaning of passages, we must not take them but receive them as an whole, knowing that apparent contradictory passages, such as we have a noted, require others, the light from which shows that there exists a beautiful harmony in the body. And though the Alpha of a doctrine or a truth be taught in Genesis, we will not call it less glorious, less divine, or less complete, because its Omega be in Revelation. It is in the Bible; it came from God; that is enough for us. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" and cannot clash against itself.

Let an hundred men strive to sever it in an hundred shreds, and weave therefrom an hundred doctrines; we say, "To the Word and to the testimony" let us go; and if they and theirs will not come with us, it is because they have woven that which is human with theirs, and the truth is not in them.

But beyond all, is it of infinite value to know the truth, though Scripture is truth, as God is truth; yet does not God reveal himself to all; so neither does he reveal his Scripture to all, and as by innate nature no man can find out the "Almighty to perfection," so neither can he find out his

Scripture unto perfection. To do either, however imperfectly, or in part, is of God, who gives “according to the good pleasure of his will.” May it be our blessed privilege, as it is our fervent prayer, to be lead into truth, while endeavoring to point to where the source of its beauty lies and from whence much of its glory is radiated; and may also all who profess to love the truth, be not satisfied, as many are with it, as the bold negation of error, but rather burn with a fevered zeal to value it as a positive life-springing channel, through which flows all that can give happiness here and eternal glory hereafter. This we pray, in the name and for the sake of Jesus; who has said, “Whatsoever you ask in my name, that will I do.” John 14:13.

Having made these prefatory remarks, we at once enter upon our subject, viz., that of the doctrine of Calvinism. We want to show they are the doctrines of Scripture; that they come from God and are of God. Our early remarks will be principally on the doctrine of reprobation, as flowing out of election, the crowning glory of God’s infinite love. Let us, then, begin by observing, that we know of no doctrine by man’s name. If we attach any creature name to any doctrine, it is rather from motives of expediency than from principle; only to be understood, not by way of subscription. If, then, we write under such a heading as begins these thoughts, we do not wish it to be implied that we believe that Calvin discovered or taught any new doctrine, in anything biased by his mind, or colored by his faculties. On the contrary, we maintain and subscribe to nothing but Christianity; the Christianity of the Bible, and the Christianity of Christ We know no canon but revelation; and no creed but that of the inspired Word. But while in principle we call no man lord or master, (for One is our Head, who is in heaven), yet we are willing to be Pauline, so as to be understood; and so ranking under the banner of the sturdy reformer of Geneva, we are willing to contend, which we mean by God’s grace to do, for “the faith once delivered to the saints;” and with the Word of God in our hands, we do say that Word declares God’s everlasting love in the particular choice of his people; their calling in time and glorification in eternity; in contradistinction to the assertion that God had from all eternity thoughts of love unto all the sons of men; and that he sent his beloved Son Jesus, who died for the chosen, for they had forfeited their innocence by the transgression of Adam, and became amenable to eternal death thereby; that Jesus dying for all such, the Holy Spirit imparts grace sufficient unto them, so as to enable them to accept and lay hold of the sacrificial benefits arising from the death of Christ.

Our present point is to prove, that God has not elected all to eternal life; nor yet given unto all the means of obtaining that eternal life. And whether we take the existing condition and practical character of mankind here on earth, or his ultimate state hereafter, either is ample in illustration, for bearing on our subject. By which we mean that man does prove in his life, walk and character, the truth of non-election, and also that his final state attests it. What is the condition of mankind? The world with its peopled crowds, its teeming myriads, its vast populations, only inhabit it for a few brief years, accumulate a few small possessions, and surround themselves with friends; gratify their tastes, flatter their prejudices, and administer to the dominant biases of their minds, and then pass away and leave it all. The place which knew them knows them no more. They leave a blank, which, scarcely have their absence made a vacated and solitary spot, then another steps in and fills, unknown and uncared for by them. The same desires, emotions, affections, and prejudices, in like manner, actuate their lives also, until they in turn also pass away too.

This is the common lot and heritage of all: death is the doom passed upon all. All men know it: every child learns it as soon as consciousness dawns: it is the confessed fact, written on the brow

of every creature: the passing wind breathes it: the lightning flashes it: it is spoken in the thunder, and spelt in the waves. All nature is its alphabet, and all creation its response.

But yet, though death surrounds us, and our latter end is preached from every quarter, though man feels it, is certain of it, is conscious that, in a few years, he too will sleep the long sleep of death, how does he act the teaching lesson of his innate consciousness? How does he apply his heart to wisdom? Does he profit by it? As his days draw out, and his term wears out, is he the more fitted in the desires of his heart, in the sympathies of his soul, to enjoy the bliss, and realize the glories of that hereafter condition of perfect peace and happiness? No, it is not so. Despite the thousand lessons, the myriad tongued voice of warning that meet him at every point, he learns not from the one, and sets at nothing the other. He chooses rather to float on the rippling tide of pleasure, down the glassy stream of earthly joy and sensual gratification, so long as the ocean into which that stream rushes, is far, far beyond the sight of eye. So long as it is un-versioned by its distance, heedlessly will they float, and joyously sail. If you tell them of their danger, speak to them of the future, "they will have none of your counsel." They consider the pleasures of the today more worthy of thought than the realities of the tomorrow. Herein is folly; folly which is bound up in a all; all which thoughts are of "the earth, earthy."

This unvarnished picture of the condition of mankind attests his general and complete depravity and fall. It speaks in unequivocal language, with noon-day light, the appalling truth that man is altogether become corrupt; that his desires are vitiated: his tastes depraved; his mind darkened; his faculties, all he is and has, sunken and degraded; "and in him dwelleth no good thing."

Arrived at this point, the fallen state of mankind by nature, from a survey of his existing condition, from his life, walk and character, we are now prepared to take another step, and endeavor to realize his ultimate destiny; and though we have not brought in the aid of revelation, to show his present existing condition here, such being apparent to all, even to the sceptic and unbeliever, yet must we have resort to that blessed Word, as a testimony of evidence for what we are now about to adduce; for we desire above all things to make plain every inch of our ground. Though the lantern of the human diffuses some light, yet there is nothing like the lantern of Divine to dissipate darkness, whose beams ever shed celestial light.

Then to the Word and to the testimony, as an unerring guide, do we resort, to learn what will be the condition of the world's destiny hereafter. Revelation speaks in this way: "And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works; and death and hell were cast in to the lake of fire." Revelation 20:13, 14. "Then shall he say unto them on the left hand, depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Matthew 25:41. "The rich man also died and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment." Luke 16:22,23. "The Son of Man shall send forth his angels; and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." Matthew 8:41,42. "And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Isaiah 65:6. "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leads to destruction, and many there be which go therein." Matthew 7:13. "And he opened the bottomless pit, and there arose a great smoke out of the pit, as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun and the air was darkened

by reason of the smoke of the pit.” Revelation 9:3. “Wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever.” Jude 13. “If any man worships the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his fore-head the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation, and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascended up for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night.” Revelation 14:9-11. “Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matthew 12:13. Such are the testimonial evidence of inspiration on the ultimate destiny of apostate man; the bare realities of an hell of intense penal infliction, infinite agony and unmitigated suffering, portrayed in living words on the inspired page, would be enough to rack the strongest mind, and palsy the most powerful heart. The fear of enduring pain so exquisite, torments so intense, and despair so poignant, would be enough to destroy reason and annihilate understanding. But it is not so. Man sentinel the avenues of time, that eternity shall not vision itself to his mind, or disturb his thoughts. He cultivates the solitudes of earth, chaunts her glory, and sings hosannas to her praise; while eternity, mantling itself around him, has not a thought, an anxiety, or a care.

But why is this? Why is man so thoughtless of hereafter, so sensual, so debased, so feeble, so earthly and time serving? Why shall his destiny be the “darkness of blackness forever,” where there is weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth? Is he responsible for all these sins, all this negligence, all this depravity? In short, is he responsible for his condition here, and his destiny here after? For on this hangs the whole question, this is the center of all that has ever been said or written upon the subject from the days of Augustine to our own. We freely and fearlessly admit that darkness surrounds the subject, that it is curtained in mystery, and canopied by secrecy; yet, nevertheless, revelation pours much light on it. Undoubtedly man is a responsible being, otherwise, his being, as he is, the subject of punishment, would be an injustice, he is a free agent in some points, or criminality could not be laid to his charge: he has conscience in him sufficient to make him amenable to the law, otherwise the justice of God could not be vindicated in punishing him for the violation of that law. But then the position of man is double, while, on the one hand he is a responsible being, he is also, on the other hand, an irresponsible being; while a free agent, yet he has no power to lift up his hand to heaven, or his thoughts to the Most High. In all things he is sustained by infinite power, and upheld by merciful interposition: he has not innate strength in himself to perform the feeblest act: all which he has is derived from the Giver or every good and perfect gift Analogy bears out this: he cannot control the circumstances of his birth, his being, or his condition, inheriting a fallen condition by federal relation to Adam, he had no control thereon; God’s justice could not, therefore, reprobate him for any such; no man is eternally shut out from God’s presence, and doomed to eternal perdition on account of sins which are not his own: such is neither scripture or reason, and if any man says that such is Calvinism, we reply that it is the Calvinism of his own imagination, the perverted doctrine of a misunderstood and much abused creed. Christianity teaches, and teaches absolutely and dearly, that hell will be peopled by the guilty, be inhabited by the workers of iniquity, mark these words, “workers of iniquity,” implying that it is those who have been the individual, identical workers of sin, they who have pampered to their lust, cultivated a depraved nature, and fostered debased habits in the face of warnings and the admonition of conscience; these are the sinners who are the workers of iniquity, to such is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. It nowhere says in Scripture, that men are eternally doomed for a mother’s sin, or a father’s vice, but it does say, “the soul which sins it shall die.” It does say,

“every man shall be judged according to his works.” It does say, that “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof at the day of judgment; for by your words shall you be justified, and by your words shall you be condemned.”

This is the only Scriptural doctrine of reprobation, and it is dearly a reprobation of evil works. It is not a reprobation of individuals, abstractedly considered.

Also, yet further, it is again said, “That the wages of sin is death;” clearly inferring, that death or eternal damnation is the allotted punishment, the merited and deserved award of sin. That the sinner is being punished for his sins, is but receiving the remunerative award thereof; which is the idea brought out by the term “wages;” a correlative receipt for a corresponding labor or deed. Had God have reprobated the sinner apart from his sins, he would indeed have had cause to upbraid his Maker with injustice and partiality; but when he stands enlarged with crime, as on him, the guilt of sin, he cannot but confess that punishment is his reward, and damnation the just sentence of outraged virtue.

But if it be objected that even this view makes God unjust, in not giving to all men the means of repentance, and facilities of escape from the wrath to come, as to those who are intended in the covenant of election, we answer, all men are given sufficient light to know right from wrong; all men have a sense of duty; all are cognizant of the demands which virtue and right have upon them: even heathens have such, (see Romans 2:14,15). Conscience is implanted in them for this purpose; it is the monarch faculty of the mind, which sits in judgment on what is right and what is wrong. Its privilege is as lofty as its responsibility is grave. If it severs from its instinctive functions, and permit the mind to sin, that is often for punishment and retribution. God has implanted sufficient light in man for him to judge what is his duty, and to enable him to do it. But if he choose the paths of open sin, to walk therein, do not let him be so mean or ungenerous as to charge God with his sin, or say it was his fault to permit these paths to be there at all, or to have allurements, whereby he might be tempted. Rather let him speak the honest dictates of conscience, and lay the charge to himself. Man is responsible for sin! Scripture teaches it; reason attests it, and God declares it. But while accountability is the law of his being, and the canon of his existence in reference to sin, and acting guilt pertaining to the individual yet, in reference to that sinful condition by inherent relationship and generic association to Adam, that fallen, lapsed, and peccable nature; all men receive and are born into the world in, in no way is man eternally responsible for. Had he no such nature, perfection of works must necessarily be the result of perfection of being, inasmuch as a perfect being must produce perfect works. And thence, he would have had no need of a Savior, an atonement or a justification; which would have impugned the Office-character, of Second Person of the ever-blessed and Holy Trinity. “Nor does that text, “By the works of the law shall no flesh living be justified,” at all militate against this view; and that because no law would ever have been given, seeing no sin existed. Restraining law is an adjunct associated only with guilt, and is not necessary in a state of innocence, being incorruptible therewith. Law is a terror to the wicked; but if there were no wicked, it is clear there would have been no necessity for law, as indeed there would not have been.

But sin being in the world, man having derived contamination therefrom, pollution having passed on the whole species, he is unable to perform ought which is perfect, right or good in an essential sense; his best works, works of duty and conscience, are marred and stained by a sinful and a

lapsed, and fallen condition of being; hence he is unable to perform absolute good. God does not demand that from him, knowing he cannot render it. And when Christ said to his disciples, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect," he never intended to teach that they should be absolutely as perfect as God himself was: this were impossible. Relative perfection is what is meant; perfection as commensurate as the condition (fallen as it is) of man would permit: this is taught all through Scripture (men gather not figs from a thistle, nor does a corrupt fountain send forth pure water): this is all the requirement of God from the unregenerate, according to their abilities and talents does God demand of them, "Where much is given much is required he that has one talent, of him is required one talent; he that has two, of him is required two, and so forth. The unregenerate inheriting a sinful nature, a nature by which they never can by any possibility perform absolute good works, works pleasing to God, or that can or shall effect their eternal salvation: hence they are not condemned, for this their incapacity, for not being saved, for inheriting such a nature; but for not putting out the one talent committed to their charge to usury, and rendering the due that as a natural subject they owed to their Lord. Here, then, is responsibility and irresponsibility. If any man doubts it, let him read Scripture; and, if guided by the Spirit, he will see it marked on every page.

True and scriptural, which is the only real Calvinism, knows nothing of that cold and heartless dogma, that God reprobated man abstractedly. He reprobated sin; and if men are clothed in sin, if willful sin becomes part of their nature, and as punished will be their sins, they also must necessarily be punished with them, they having become part and parcel of their very being. If a man steeps his clothes in inflammable matter and then fastens them on him so as to be nimble to take them off, it is a law of sequence, that should they become ignited, he also must perish with them.

Depend upon it, God's justice is only maintained and his equity vindicated, by this scriptural view of the reprobation of sin. God hates nothing which he has made; but sin being his opposite, and he not being the author of it, he can, as he does, hate it, with an infinite and eternal hatred: while it is quite true, that God in his sovereignty has not chosen or seen fit to exonerate all men from the effects of sin by Christ becoming their substitute, or by electing them to be among that glorious number, called "a remnant according to the election of grace;" "a peculiar people;" "vessels of honor," and so forth. It was the right of God to choose who he would; and in electing some sinners, so long as he punished their sins, he was just. This he did in the Person of his dear Son. It was also equally just of him to leave the others to work out their own reprobation. That reprobation, based on their own responsibility of action; God not requiring or demanding perfection of works from them.

Divine justice is manifested in Divine sovereignty: God is glorified as much in the punishment of the wicked, and the reprobation of sin, as he is in the reward of the righteous, and glorification of the elect. God, as a Sovereign had a right So long as man is only punished for his sins, the non-elect cannot charge God with their damnation, inasmuch as justice and sovereignty are the correlative attributes of Jehovah.

God willing, we shall again revert to this much misunderstood doctrine of reprobation, and endeavor to show the fallacy and hollowness of the objections to it, and then devote a page or two to that ever-glorious and eternally blessed doctrine of unconditional election.

Jan. 17, 1856. A STRIPLING

Note: This part is from the E.V. July 1st 1857 pages 161 to 162 under the heading "Our British Baptist Churches"

POPLAR – Anniversary Meeting of the Zoar Chapel.

The second anniversary of Zoar Baptist Chapel, William Street. Poplar, was held on Sunday, May 31st: brother Banks preached in the morning from Psalm 45:4; the majesty of the Person, work, offices, and relationship of Zion's King were largely and blessedly declared. Brother Chivers in the afternoon from Revelation 3:21. The pastor, Mr. Bowles, in the evening from Micha 4: 4-7. On the following Tuesday, brother Wells preached from Deuteronomy 4:4; wherein he showed what it was to cleave unto the Lord; also, what it was not to cleave unto him; who they were that did cleave unto him ; and where it is that we can-not cleave unto him, &c. It was a great exposition of vital godliness. A large number sat down to tea; so many were present that several were obliged to be accommodated in the chapel yard; and when the public meeting commenced, many could not gain admittance, Mr. R. Bowles presided, and spoke of the peace and prosperity they were enjoying both in the church and congregation; God had blessed them, and were blessing them and owning the proclamation of his truth. Brother Wells then spoke upon the subject of "Divine Fore-knowledge." He said that the Divine fore-knowledge of God embraced every event, both in the church and the world: the entrance of sin; the fall of man; hell's defeat and heaven's triumph; all were foreknown to him who from everlasting had chosen a people to show forth his praises. Brother Banks was to have spoken upon "Sovereign Predestination." But preaching and a church meeting at his own place prevented; he expressed his regret at not being able to continue with us, and pre-vailed upon brother Wells to give us a few thoughts on the subject: who proved that God decreed everything that was good: permitted everything that was evil; but was by no means the author of sin. That if it was possible to make God the author of sin, it would make him one with sin, and one with the devil and hereby rob him of his essential holiness. Brother S. Cozens then spoke on "Effectual Calling;" and after having described the nature of the "call," he illustrated the effectuality in his own case; when God called him by his grace, he strove by swearing, drinking, and plunging into sin, to stifle the same; but by effectual, all-conquering grace, the rebel was brought down, and made willing in the day of his power." (See note.) Brother Chivers spoke upon "Heavenly Conformity." The subject had evidently warmed his heart, and fired his tongue. He showed us where this conformity was to be found; and that predestination secures conformity to the heavenly image. Brother Palmer (of Homerton,) next addressed the meeting on "Complete Redemption giving us the various and the legitimate meaning of the term redemption; and that its completeness or perfection consisted in the end being secured by the means; the debt paid; the law honored; justice satisfied; the church exonerated; the claims of truth and equity established. That a redemption was affected by the Church's Head for the church, and for the church only. (We regret that we cannot give more of this interesting speech.) Mr. Butterfield spoke on "Certain Glorification." His remarks were to the point, and delivered with decision.

"Praise God from whom all blessings flow" was sung. Brother Fermin engaged in prayer; and this happy meeting terminated.

Note. In the course of brother Cozens's observations, he remarked, "That man was placed in a medium state, between a palace and a dungeon; and that the palace might be secured and the dungeon avoided; and that if the ungodly were lost it was their own fault." The chairman seeking an explanation, asked if this was his real sentiment, he replied in the affirmative, and that his Scripture for it was Hosea 8:9, "Israel, you have destroyed yourself, but in me is your help." The above remark has caused considerable excitement; several who were at the meeting have enquired, "What did Mr. Cozens mean, and how could he make it lay straight with effectual calling?" And for my part, I have been deeply afflicted by it in my own soul, coming from a brother who in his own soul knows the power of Divine truth. Now if we admit this we lay aside, 1st, the eternal purpose of God the Father, as recorded in Romans 9. 11., 12; 13; 2nd, the infinite perfection of the Savior's work, as in Hebrews 9 and 10:2; also, the gracious and efficacious operations of God the Holy Ghost, as in Psalm 110:3, and a multitude of other Scriptures. R. Bowles. [**We feel certain brother Cozens will correct this misunderstanding. Ed.**]

Note: "Explanation" is from the E.V. August 1st 1857 pages 181 to 182

EXPLANATION:

By Mister Samuel Cozens

Dear Sir,

I find on page 162 of this month's Vessel, an Editorial foot note reading in this way, "**We feel certain brother Cozens will correct this misunderstanding.**" For one, I can always make an allowance for mis-belief in the face of heterogeneous statements; but, I have no charity for disbelief in the teeth of infallible and unmistakable evidence: so I think there is a great difference between mis-understanding, and dis-understanding, there is certainly every excuse to be made for those who can't understand; but we have no bowels of mercy for those who won't understand. In R. Bowles's note there is not a particle of truth; and, therefore, I cannot for one moment form an apology from your Editorial suggestion, via., a "misunderstanding." My observations were so simple, that any tyro in theology could not mis-understand me.

I would say, Mr. Editor, that I do not believe in unconditional reprobation to damnation (which, I fear, is the highest point of the faith of some supposed orthodox ministers with whom I hope you will not associate my name, without permission). Unconditional reprobation is a Bible fact; but, unconditional reprobation to damnation is not: reprobation no more damns, than abstract election saves: salvation is not comprehended in election, nor is damnation comprised in reprobation. Salvation is procured, not by election, but by a righteous performance, even by the meritorious work of Christ; his finished work is the procuring cause of salvation: damnation is procured not by reprobation, but by an evil performance, damnation is the consequent of sin. "The wages of sin is death." Sin is, therefore, the procuring cause of damnation. Salvation is a gratuitous benefaction through blood, but damnation is a punishment, and so has relation to a fault.

Some think it impossible to hold the doctrines of grace without making God the Author of man's damnation: but, we ask, What have the doctrines of grace to do with damnation? No, more, what has the doctrine of Divine law to do with man's damnation? Are the laws of this country made to fill our prisons with prisoners? No! What fills them? Transgression. Neither the law, nor the prison, will injure any, but those who sin against law. Man's punishment is from God, as a judge; but his damnation is from himself as a sinner.

Having made these few observations, I will now tell you what I said at the service referred to. Mr. James Wells asserted that he did not believe that all things are decreed. Thinking I understood Mr. Well's meaning, when I rose after him to address the audience, I stated that Mr. Wells had brought to my remembrance a question once put to me; viz., "Is it a man's fault if he be damned?" We ask, in the name of all that is holy, just, and good, whose fault it is if not the sinner's? I remarked, that as a civilian, I occupy a mid-position, between the palace and the prison: no obedience of mine to civil law, will entitle me to Her Majesty's favor, and give me a place in the palace; but, though I have no power to get into the palace, I have only to violate the laws of the land to get accommodated in "durance vile." Hence it is a man's fault if he goes to prison, but, not his fault if he does not go into the palace. When the Almighty made man, he placed him on the earth, between heaven and hell; but he did not promise him heaven for his obedience, though he threatened him with hell, or death, in case of disobedience. The advantage of his obedience would have been only a continuance in paradise; the consequence of disobedience, the exposure of himself and posterity to the just indignation and wrath of Almighty God. Was it, forsooth, no fault to pluck the forbidden fruit? "O yes, say some, certainly, but it is not my fault." Indeed! do you give up federal relation? Is not the fault of the representative the fault of the constituents? If you give up federal relation you ignore federal fault: and you may put a lasting seal upon your Bible, and never read it more: for, I demand that if federal relation be dispensed with in the first Adam, that it be also dismissed in the second Adam! and then, we may laugh at destruction, there being no fault to damn; and neglect salvation, there being no merit to save. We are lost in the first Adam in whom all have sinned (Romans 5): our actual sins are the fruits of original sin, and all our actual sins were comprehended in, and grew out of Adam's sin: as the cause is more considerable than the effect, so original, is greater than actual sin. As we are condemned in Adam the first, so we are justified in Adam the second, by virtue of federal union; give up that relation, and then no fault can be imputed to our charge, and no favor (from Christ) can be conferred to our benefit.

Again, as I stand in eternal union to one of two heads! so, I stand in everlasting relation to one of two covenants: the covenant of works, or the covenant of grace: if in the former, I am forever damned, because I am a transgressor; if in the latter, I am forever saved, because all the conditions of this, as well as the conditions of that have been fulfilled for me.

I hope the optics of R. Bowles will be so clear when he reads this paper, that he may not misunderstand, but, understand and not mis, the idea of your servant,

S. Cozens. 12, Queen-street, Camden-town.

Note: This part is from the Earthen Vessel September 1st 1857 pages 213 to 214

MISTER BOWLES'S REPLY
To Mister S. Cozens

Dear Brother.

Justice to myself and the church at Zoar, Poplar, claims the insertion of the following remarks. In the Vessel for August there is, from the pen of S. Cozens, what is termed an "Explanation;" but what ought to have been designated by another term. "Dullness of the optics, disbelief," &c., &c., ascribed to me by him, I freely lay claim to; I was born so; but when we meet with such a startling declaration as the following, "In R. Bowles's note there is not a particle of truth," I feel constrained to adopt the words of Job, "Also now, behold, my witness is in heaven, and my record is on high. And if it be so now, who shall make me a liar?"

I shall not attempt to lay open the mode of reasoning adopted by him, neither do I wish to follow in his steps. I am free to confess that his "Explanation" is past my comprehension. When a man roundly denies the doctrine of reprobation, he is understood; his idea is not missed; but when we are told that "unconditional reprobation is a Bible fact; but unconditional reprobation to damnation is not," there is something so unmeaning in this that I must be an "F.R.S."¹ before I can fathom this modern dogma.

Again, we are told that it is the fault of the ungodly that they are lost (this, then, is the "particle" that he denies uttering); and yet here they are again, viz? "We ask, in the name of all that is holy, just, and good, whose fault it is if it is not the sinner's?" Now, Sir. how are we to understand this? In eternal election they are passed by; in redemption they are passed by; in vocation they are passed by; DIVINE SOVEREIGNY walks through the earth, having mercy upon whom he will, compassion upon whom he will, and whom he will he hardens, taking one here and another there, and constraining them with heart-felt emotion to exclaim, "For God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." And yet, in the teeth of this infallible and unmistakable evidence, the ungodly are to be told, that, because their names are left out of the Lamb's Book of Life, because for them no atonement, was made, because the Holy Ghost, who quickens whom he will, has not communicated unto them the Divine nature, still, it is their fault they are not saved; or in other words, they are lost. For my part, I can only attach one meaning to both assertions: if a man is not saved, he is lost. How is it Mr. Cozens has not given us in the "Explanation" the Scripture he quoted at Poplar, which he told us supported his idea? (Hosea 13:9). Perhaps he has discovered by this time that he missed "the idea" in that portion. As regards his remarks about "the civilian," my Bible contains no such dark and unmeaning figures, but speaks out in bold and unmistakable language: "For the children being not yet born, neither having done good or evil (no merit attributed to the one, or fault to the other), that the purpose of God according to election might stand, it was said unto him, The elder shall serve the younger; and it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." So then, by the eternal purpose of Jehovah. Jacob is

¹ I believe this is a reference to the title of "Fellow of the Royal Society"

constituted an object of his everlasting love, and Esau of his everlasting hatred. Between these two a great gulf is fixed. Bless the Lord! I am not ashamed of these everlasting truths, nor do I want to soften them down.

May it be ours to realize the blessedness of Jerimiah. 31:3, "Yes, I have loved you with an everlasting love, therefore with loving, kindness have I drawn you." So, prays yours in a yea and amen gospel.

Chapel House, Poplar, R. Bowles.

July 11.

[We think the difference between Mr. Bowles and Mr. Cozens is more in words than in principles. There are some gospel points need a clearer elucidation; but here let this matter end. -Ed.]

Note: This part is from the Earthen Vessel Oct. 1st 1857 pages 217 to 219

REPROBATION: WHAT IT IS NOT; WHAT IT IS
BY Mister SAMUEL COZENS,

Minister of Beulah Chapel, Somers Town

To the editor of the Earthen Vessel

Sir, For the cause of truth, for the good of souls, for the glory of God, I demand space in your Vessel, to reply to the illogical, illusive, and anti-theological rejoinder of your friend Bowles. And, allow me to say, sir, that there is as much "difference between the principles of Mr. Cozens and Mr. Bowles," as there is between the principles of truth and error; at least, I judge so, if the letter you have inserted be a fair sample of his orthodoxy, alias, heterodoxy. And I am confident, sir, that you will concur with me, when I say, that men should study the rules of logic before they assume a polemical attitude: and most assuredly they ought to know things that differ in theology ere they presume to discuss the "deep things of God." I write thus, because, it is obvious, that your friend knows not how to distinguish negative from positive reprobation, knows not how to distinguish God's will of purpose, from his will of precept: and I infer from a certain quotation and remark that he knows not how to distinguish natural, from acquired; and acquired from judicial hardness, and of consequence, "there is something so unmeaning" in that passage of mine, vis: unconditional reprobation is a Bible fact; but unconditional reprobation to damnation is not. Now, sir, I am not going to recant, or recall, or revise that passage; I neither am I going to "deny the doctrine of reprobation; nor shall I attempt to "soften down the truth;" but, I will endeavor by God's help to enlighten his optics upon the subject.

Be it known, therefore, to Mr. Bowles, that negative reprobation is founded in God's will of purpose; and that is unconditional reprobation: positive reprobation is connected with God's will

of precept: and that is conditional (that is to say, is in consequence of sin) reprobation to damnation: negative reprobation is irrespective of sin; positive reprobation to damnation is for sin: negative reprobation leaves the creature out of the bounds of election; positive reprobation is to appoint to everlasting destruction: negative reprobation respects God's sovereignty; positive reprobation respects his justice. Sovereignty according to purpose leaves the reprobate where it found the elect; but justice according to precept (violated) sends the reprobate to hell. God appoints no man to damnation, merely from sovereignty, but by the rules of justice. Reprobation makes no man personally a sinner, neither does election make any man personally righteous. It was the transgression of the law that made man a sinner; and it is the imputation of righteousness that makes a man righteous. Hence, the meritorious cause of damnation is sin; as the meritorious cause of salvation is righteousness. And this, sir, is not "a modern dogma;" it is as old as Gill, who said "Negative reprobation is the act of preterition, or God passing by, leaving, taking no notice of some, while he chose others. Now the objects of this act are to be considered either in the pure mass of creature-ship, or in the corrupt mass; if in the pure mass of creature-ship no injustice is done by this act, for as it found them, it left them; it put nothing into them, no evil in them, nor appointed them to any, of any kind; man after, and notwithstanding this act, came into the world an upright creature, and became sinful, not by virtue of this act, but by their own inventions; or, if considered in the corrupt mass as fallen creatures, sunk in sin and misery, which is the case of all mankind; since God was not obliged to save any of the sinful race of man, whose destruction was of themselves, it could be no injustice to pass by some in this condition, when he chose others; for it would have been no injustice to have condemned all, as he did the angels that sinned, whom he spared not.

"Positive reprobation is the decree, or appointment to damnation: now, as God damns no man but for sin, so he had decreed to damn no man but for sin; and if it is no unrighteousness in him to damn men for sin, so it can be no unrighteousness in him to decree to damn any for it. God did not make man wicked; he made man upright, and he has made himself wicked, and being so, God may justly appoint him to damnation for his wickedness." Indeed, I could show this "dogma" is as old as old father Bunyan, Ness, Origen, and many other giant minds; whose acquaintance, I fear, Mr. B. has not made, or, he would not have given me the credit of the "dogma."

In paragraph the third; Mr. Bowles asks, "Now, sir, how can we understand this?" "This", what? If he means that which goes before; viz, the fault of the ungodly? I answer, by an authority he will respect I should hope more than mine. "The soul that sins it shall die." Is sin a fault? If so, then death is for a fault. Sin is not the cause of the decree of reprobation, but of the thing decreed, eternal damnation. Thus, Sir, un-conditional reprobation is a Bible fact, but un-conditional reprobation to damnation is not. He may tell me that "God has made the wicked for the day of evil." True: but notice it is the "wicked." He may quote "For this purpose have I raised you up" but, observe, it is not for this purpose have I made you. God did not make Pharaoh what he was, or he had not been accountable for what he did.

If by "This," I am to understand what follows; viz, "In eternal election they are passed by." Well, what of that? Who said they were not? Did that damn them? No! say emphatically, No! Election in the ark passed by the inhabitants of the old world; but, was that the cause of their destruction? He may reply, if they had been in the ark, they would have been saved; that is what we term bagging the question: they were drowned (irrespective of the ark, and would have been destroyed

if there had been no ark) for sin. In Lot's choice, the Sodomites were passed by; but, Was that the cause of their damnation? No; there sin would have destroyed them if there had been no Lot to choose, and save. The doctrine of election has nothing at all to do with the question at issue. Election is no more the cause of damnation, than Prince Albert's union to our beloved Lady the Queen, is the cause of the prostitution in this populous city; or, than the treasures in the Bank of England is the cause of filling the Queen's Bench with debtors; or, than the deed securing an estate to the heir is the cause of others wandering as fugitives in the earth; or, than the recipe in the physician's prescription-book is the cause of mortality.

Again, Mr. B. says "In redemption they are passed by." Truly! But, What of that? Did that damn them? The blood of the pass-over-lamb passed by the Egyptians, but Did that destroy them? No. What did? the sword of justice. What for? their sin. The Israelites passed through the Red Sea. Did that destroy their enemies? No! What did? their presumption.

Again, Mr. B. says "In vocation they are passed by." Most undoubtedly: but, What of that! Abram was called out of Ur; but, Did that make the Chaldeans idolaters! Certainly not. Is her Majesty's selection of a certain number of counsellors the reason why there are so many fools in the kingdom? Of course not.

Will Mr. Bowles inform us, Who is to tell the ungodly, that, because, their names are not in the Book of Life, etc., etc., it is their fault they are not saved; or, in other words, they are lost! Is this logical? Is this argumentative? According to Mr. B.'s logic they are lost, because "In election they were passed by; because in redemption they were passed by; because in vocation they are passed by." Fie! Fie!² Mr. Bowles. I say without fear of successful contradiction, that it is not their fault that their names are not in heaven, that they are not redeemed, that they are not called, that they are not saved; but it is for their faults that they are damned. That is all I have contended; that is all I am contending for, "Damnation comes of man's own voluntary sin, and is the wages thereof. Should God constrain the creature to sin, and then damn him for it, he would then delight in the destruction of his creatures, contrary to Ezekiel 18:31 and 33:11. God did not thrust Adam into sin, as after he had sinned he thrust him out of Eden for sin."

As to Jacob and Esau, they have nothing to do with the subject of discussion. They are merely brought forward by the Apostle to illustrate the doctrine of divine sovereignty in the election of some, and the rejection of others, a doctrine I hold as "roundly" as Mr. B. If the words read like this "Jacob have I saved, but Esau have I damned," there would be some propriety in the quotation; but the passage states this: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Yes, and this was true before they had done anything either to merit or forfeit his favor: and, hence Mr. B.'s parenthesis argues nothing because I have not contended for personal merit, because the point in dispute is not innocence, not sinlessness, but sinfulness, guiltiness. Let Mr. B. read the text again and ask, Are salvation and damnation in the passage? or, Are election and reprobation? Election and reprobation to be sure. And let me inform your worthy friend, that, God's loving Jacob, did not save him. Jacob was not saved by love, but by blood, by the work of that God-angel, who redeemed him from all evil. Hence, if there was no evil when Jacob was loved, there was some after, and blood must remove that evil; for without shedding of blood there is no remission. And therefore, it was not by love, but by blood, his sins were remitted, and his soul was saved. We know love prompted the

² "fie" is an old English expression meaning mild disgust or disapproval.

act, but we must distinguish between the affection and the action. Allow me to suppose a case, You are incarcerated for debt; I may love you sincerely, I may go to your ward and solemnly say, "I do love you", but that won't release you from your obligations to your creditor, nor deliver you from your prison: but, if I were to discharge your liabilities, then I should save you from the dungeon. You may say God's love secured that. Granted; but pray make a distinction between that, and that which it secures. Disputants ought to know how to distinguish moving from meritorious causes; or impulsive from instrumental causes. We must go into God for the moving, and into Christ for the meritorious cause of salvation. And let Mr. B. know, that salvation, though originating in the moving cause, could not have been secured without the meritorious cause. And so, we argue that God's hating Esau did not damn him; it only left him; and this is the palpable meaning of the apostle "That the purpose of God according to election might stand."

Now it is quite clear from Mr. B.'s own showing, that there was no evil when this sovereign act passed upon the two brothers; then it follows, that Esau was faultless when left: so that God did him no injury. Now, sir, if Esau was damned, he was not damned because he was left, because he was faultless when the act of reprobation passed upon him. I am not now disputing the certainty of his damnation, but I maintain that God's leaving him, though it issued in, was not the cause of his damnation.

Need I say more than request Mr. Bowles to consult his own experience? To ask him-self, Was I ever convinced of sin? What were my views and feelings then? Did I charge my faults upon God, or upon myself? Did I tremble under the terrors of his law? Did I fear that hell would be my deserved abode? Did I not acknowledge that God would be just in consigning me to "everlasting burnings?" Did I not see that my sins were enough to damn a thousand souls? Did I find mercy through blood? Answer these questions, I sincerely hope he can; in doing which, he will experimentally understand the meaning of Hosea 8:9; and he will have the conclusion of the whole matter confirmed in his own soul; for he must confess that if God had damned him it would have been for his own faults.

One would suppose, from the concluding remarks of your friend, that the writer of these lines was ashamed of the truth, and could not endorse the everlasting gospel; but allow me to say that I hold the doctrine of divine sovereignty as firmly and as cordially as any man: my published works, and my preaching being witness. Yes, sir. I believe in, hold fast of, and fearlessly proclaim unconditional, personal, eternal, and irrevocable election, issuing in glorification, through mediatorial accomplishments, &c. And I argue, in spite of the quibbles of Mr. B., that election had not issued, cannot issue in glorification without mediation on the Son's part; without sanctification on the Spirit's part. Election travels through vocation (or the work of the Spirit, by whom we are called) and justification (or the work of Christ by which we are justified) into glorification! Romans 8:30. And, by a parity of reason, we conclude that as election does not issue in salvation but by merit, so reprobation does not issue in damnation but by sin; and hence, I again say, reprobation to damnation is for a fault.

And, as to the everlasting gospel, I love it, 1st, because it tells me of everlasting love; 2ndly, because it is a copy of the everlasting covenant; 3rdly, because it is the record of everlasting mercy; 4thly, because it reveals everlasting righteousness; fifthly, because it is the document of everlasting redemption; 6thly, because it proclaims everlasting salvation; 7thly, because it points out the

everlasting way; 8thly, because it is the lamp of everlasting light; 9thly, because it is the instrument of everlasting life; 10thly, because it inspires the everlasting song; 11thly, because it conducts into the everlasting kingdom; 12thly, because it crowns with everlasting glory. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ;" but I am ashamed of those who abuse the gospel to any purpose contrary to its legitimate design, as the power of God to salvation.

The only apology, Mr. Editor, I can make for this long letter, is the importance of the subject; and I feel zealous for the honor of Him whose decrees are composed, regulated, and brought to conclusion, according to the reign of grace, and the rights of justice. I am, sir. your obedient servant, S. Cozens.

12, Queen-street, Camden Town.