

FATALISM

(A Warning)

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FATALISM is by no means a new theory; its origin is pagan. Yet, none the less, it is being used by Satan with subtle skill, using the circumstances of the present time to exploit its soul-destroying principles, as the nations are locked in this deadly conflict, bringing home to our very doors the evidences of devastation and death. Homes and houses wrecked, businesses gone, family circles broken, loved ones hale and hearty yesterday lying cold and silent in death to-day.

With such pressure and anxiety burdening our minds, the arch-enemy of our souls is not slow to make full use of the opportunity these conditions afford. Thus he fosters and encourages those who are ignorant of God to accept what appears a logical conclusion, "the final determination of our life as a decree of fate."

As to his unhappy ignorance of God, there can be no excuse. All the dreadful happenings cannot be pleaded as extenuating circumstances, for to continue groping in the darkness which envelopes the natural mind, as seeking enlightenment, without taking God into account. Enlightenment is to be found, not however, in the exploitation of pagan and mythical ideas, but as divinely unfolded to us in the inspired pages of the Holy Scripture, where the simple unlettered or uneducated, as well as the most highly developed

mind of the scholar, can find only too clearly revealed the issues of both life and death, and with it also the true position of men of every decade disclosed. Thus faith as resting solely on the sure Word of God refuses all these devices of the devil, with which he is seeking to snare the unwary, "We are not ignorant of his devices" (2 Cor. 2. 11), as even believing children "have an unction from the Holy One and know all things" (1 John 2. 20).

So if the ignorance and darkness is so rapidly increasing, and we are bound to admit sorrowfully that it is, then we avow it is the foul work of the devil, as the god of this world. "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine upon them" (2 Cor. 4. 4). Having thus blinded the mind he sets about using the present distress to instil his poison in the varied foul methods he has of keeping the soul in ignorance of the true God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Atheism, agnosticism, infidelity, spiritism, etc., make rapid progress, claiming fresh adherents; and to this can be added fatalism, not perhaps so blatantly opposed to the recognition of God, but only a stepping stone towards that unhappy termination. The devil knows this, and with fearful rapidity this baneful theory is finding many to embrace it. Like all other omissions from the pit, it does not bring any settled peace, satisfaction, happiness, or anything to depend on in this life, and not a shred of hope for the future. It may

appear a very logical solution "that what is to be, will be"—easy to accept and believe, *but it is not true*, as it entirely disposes of God, excluding Him entirely from our responsible history, and is thus subversive to the recognition of the divine ordering of all our ways. This is what the enemy of our souls is working for with such tireless diligence.

How often do we hear to-day, spoken with bravado or unbecoming flippancy, "If my number is on the bomb, I'm for it," or, "If my time is up, I'll have to go, so that's that." Very reasonable, some may be inclined to aver, but, if persisted in it will undermine all faith and confidence in God, leaving no ground in the soul to recognize His unerring hand, who alone can direct our ways and order our end. His hand controls our ways, our breath, and our end (*see Dan. 5. 23*). Fatalism ignores this, yet it can give you no explanation of the fact of death, and as a consequence will not allow the wonderful way in which God Himself has met this great question, and how He has wrought for the salvation of the soul, the vital part which lives on in eternity, and will exist as long as God lives. A body may be shattered and destroyed, but not so the soul, it lives on. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (*Luke 12. 4-5*). A solemn warning; and remember, "No man is sure of life!" (*Job 24. 22*). Accept this. It means the

rejection of every fatalistic thought and opens for you the way to all the blessing of the gospel.

God's Word declares that "in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17. 28). We will, then, accept that God is behind and over every movement; and even if nations are locked in mortal combat, He is restraining things. So instead of challenging God as to what He in His wisdom is pleased to allow, we would be devoutly thankful for the restraint He is exercising of the selfwill and arrogance of man, limiting, as He alone can, the display of violence and hatred to its present proportions. "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us" (Acts 17. 25-27). This at once and for ever shatters the specious lie of fatalism, for in seeking and finding the Lord, we shall have the solution to that which appears incapable of explanation, as accepting the divine ordering of all our ways; and we will have perfect confidence and faith in the One who has absolute control of all our ways, not doubting or questioning the wisdom with which He is surely bringing about the consummation of His own plans, the utter overthrow of Satanic dominance, and the establishment of what is in accordance with His own will and pleasure.

Fatalism may chatter about luck, chance, fortune, etc., entirely ignorant that not a sparrow may die except through the divine ordering of our heavenly Father, for even the fall of the withered leaf from a tree is as much the subject of His ordering as the rush of the mighty avalanche which tears its downward track on the mountain side. So with our life—the divinely ordered end, death, the facts of either and the explanation of each can be found nowhere else but in Scripture, for we get the origin of life and the reason of death. Believing this, for it is God's account, we do not dare either to question His power or doubt His veracity, but we become restful and content in our confidence in such a God, made known to us.

And death—what is the great secret that it holds for us? Again we are enlightened, for it is God's judgment which in perfect righteousness He was compelled to pass against man as having sinned (*see* Gen. 2. 7-17). Thus unpalatable as it may be, we know that "the wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6. 23). That is unanswerable. Death is here because of sin. "Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5. 12). When sin will have been finally dealt with by God, death too will cease.

So our present position is this, that being a sinner, born one, and readily taking to sin, becoming its servant, sooner or later we must come under God's irrevocable judgment. "We must needs all die."

Then what about eternity? What answer has fatalism to this? None! Satan has great power and

he is using it as he always has done in destruction. Thus we can attribute all the wanton devastation and woe to its right source.

But what about God? Where is He in all this? He, too, is engaged in using the present circumstances in His wisdom, and with infinite skill to work out in accordance with His will. Does the devil start a great European conflagration? God will use it as a rod to chastise the nations for their infidelity, godlessness, and impiety. One great nation, the home of the reformation, in mortal combat with another where the light and liberty of Christianity has shone in such lustre, and where God was pleased to light the beacon of great revival during the early years of the last century. Can either of these nations claim to have been faithful to the precious heritage conferred upon them? No; sorrowfully we have to own both have been marked by shameless departure, and thus the devil finds ready material which he ignites, and which God permits within prescribed limits. Fatalism refuses this, for it refuses God both His power and His rights. No power has ever diverted God from the complete effectuation of His will, and whatever may be taking place to-day, disastrous as at times it may appear, we are assured He is in supreme control, and chance or fatalism has no place whatever. When our life is to cease, who is it that dares to challenge God's prerogative as to the manner or means He may adopt to recall the spirit to Himself? Whatever the cause may be "Then shall the spirit return to God who gave it" (Eccles. 12. 7).

What about your soul, in view of death and the endless eternity beyond ? Fatalism is, of course, silent. God is not. His word is clear : " For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved " (Rom. 10. 13). No uncertainty about this statement. No fatalism here. No ; nothing but the glorious blessing of Christianity with its accompaniment—the knowledge of God. We rest implicitly on the finished work of Jesus. Salvation is secured, and whether in the heat of battle or as a result of bomb, mine, accident, or natural causes we receive our call, for Christians it is as accepting His perfect and blessed disposition, knowing that whatever the manner of our decease, it will be " to depart and to be with Christ ; which is far better " (Phil. 1. 23). " Absent from the body, present with the Lord " (2 Cor. 5. 8).

Safe in Christ the weakest child
Stands in all God's favour ;
All in Christ are reconciled
Through that only Saviour.

Liverpool.

J. G. MATHISON.

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