

Reprobation

“And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient” (Romans 1:28).

The Lord met with us that night in mighty power. He warmed our hearts in the time of prayer; He blessed in the singing; He enabled me in the preaching; He gave liberty in our worship. The testimony time at the end of the meeting was the overflow of our time in His presence. Some praised the Lord for His saving grace in their lives and others praised Him for what He had done in their hearts that night. It was all very appropriate for the hour.

One of the statements that a brother made in his testimony, however, somewhat jolted me. Among his exclamations, He said, “I was an old reprobate when God saved me!” Please understand, I was grateful for his praise and thanksgiving. And I really did not expect a doctrinal sermon or treatise in the moments of praise. But the biblical truth is: God doesn’t save reprobates; He judges them in hell.

This unusual truth is vividly set forth in the chapter before us. First, we are told that “God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves” (1:24). The startling subject continues as we read, “God gave them up unto vile affections” (1:26). And now, as we come to our text, the message is: “God gave them over to a reprobate mind” (1:28).

In this scriptural setting we have the evidence for reprobation! God does reprobate people! While the revelations contained in these verses (1:17-32) refer to the ancient Gentiles, the fact is that “God gave them over to a reprobate mind.” Rather than coming to them, He walked away from them. Instead of dealing with them, He left them to themselves. Instead of wooing them with His tenderness, He hardened them with His justice.

In this scriptural setting we have the entanglement of reprobation! Reprobates are in a quagmire of sin, a world of wickedness, a dungeon of evil from which there is no deliverance. Their lives are dominated with unrighteousness (see 1:29). They are “haters of God” and “proud,” selfish, rebels against His truth (see 1:30, 31). Just as much as they hate God and righteousness, they love sins of every kind and find their “pleasure” in them (see 1:32).

In this scriptural setting we have the exception to reprobation! While we tremble to think of those around us who may be reprobates, we must remember that God saves sinners. Even in the beginning of this chapter, Paul greeted “the called of Jesus Christ” (1:6). While it is sadly true that many will be judged in hell forever, many are “called . . . justified . . . glorified” in Christ! (Rom. 8:30). May we rejoice that He has saved us and trust Him to save others!

