

AN
ANTIDOTE
AGAINST
ARMINIANISM

OR

A TREATISE TO ENERVATE AND CONFUTE ALL FIVE POINTS OF IT

VIZ.:

PREDESTINATION GROUNDED UPON MAN'S FORESEEN WORKS –
UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION – SUFFICIENT GRACE IN ALL –
THE POWER OF MAN'S FREE-WILL IN CONVERSION –
AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TRUE SAINTS FALLING AWAY TOTALLY AND FINALLY –

WITH EXTRACTS FROM DR. JOHN GILL, DR. ISAAC WATTS, AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, JOHN NEWTON, J. HART, ETC.

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THE
EDITOR'S PREFACE
TO THIS FOURTH EDITION.

Christian Reader,

I present to you a new edition of a book, diminutive in size, yet large and exceeding ponderous in relation to the glorious foundation-truths and doctrines of the gospel, which are handled so scripturally throughout, and so luminously, that (as expressed by some very competent judges) "there is no work of the kind that can excel it."

Arminianism, that foul heresy, which may be said to be the root and core of all heretical false doctrine, is here completely stripped of its deceitful covering; and (as it were) anatomically dissected, laid open, and made bare. Free-will, the great idol of fallen man, is thrown down from its assumed eminence, and cast to the moles and the bats; and free-grace, yes, the God of all grace, is exalted, and viewed as seated on the throne of His Glory.

I would honestly tell the reader at the very onset, that he will not approve of the contents of this work, if he is the least dependent on any performances of his own, to recommend him to the notice and approval of the great I AM. The characters who eat their own bread, and who wear their own apparel (Isa. 4.1), will find no food that they can relish, and no raiment suited to clothe their self-righteous persons. There is nothing in these pages except what must ever prove obnoxious to the pride of the human heart, as unhumiliated by divine grace. So masterly proved here are the sovereignty of Jehovah; the free-love of God as displayed in the choice of the Church in Christ Jesus before time; divine Predestination in its various properties; Redemption as limited by price; the redeemed ones discovered by invincible power; and the glorious certainty of true saints persevering to the end. For,

"The feeblest saint shall win the day,
Though death and hell obstruct the way;"

Or in a word—salvation all of grace, from first to last, from election to glorification—the creature nothing, and the triune God, all in all. Yes reader, by long experience, I know that an unflinching statement of these glorious truths cannot fail to draw out the latent rancor of the unregenerate mind. But let the case be fairly stated. And in the strong and energetic language of the great Toplady, let me inquire—"

"And what indeed is Predestination, but God's determinate plan of action? And what is providence but the evolution of that plan? In his decree, God resolved within himself, what he would do, and what he would permit to be done: by his providence, this effective and permissive will, passes into external act, and has its positive accomplishment. So that the purpose of God, as it were, draws the outlines, and providence lays on the colors. What *that* designed, *this* completes; what *that* ordained, *this* executes. Predestination is analogous to the mind and intention; providence is analogous to the hand and agency of the artificer. The Lord is incapable of mistake; he knows no levity of will. He cannot be surprised with any unforeseen inconveniences. His throne is in heaven, and his kingdom rules over all. God's sovereign will is the first link, his unalterable decree is the second, and his all-active providence the third, in the great chain of causes. What his will determined, *that* his decree established, and his providence effects (either mediately or immediately). His will was the adorable spring of all; his decree marked out the channel; and his providence directs the stream. Of this I am assured: that echo does not reverberate sound so punctually, as the actual disposal of things answers to God's predetermination concerning them. This cannot be denied without dethroning providence, and setting up fortune in its place. There is no alternative. I defy all the sophistry of man, to strike out a middle way. He that made all things, either directs all things he has made, or else he has

consigned them to chance. But what is chance? A name for *nothing*. Arminianism, therefore, is atheism."

I would avail myself of the opportunity afforded me, in these my prefatory remarks, to say a few words to those Ministers of the Gospel who are continued faithful, and who are desirous of abiding faithful, even to the end.—Remember my brethren, that Israel's valiant ones are expected (especially in such a day as this) to be found surrounding the bed of Solomon (which is the Church) all of them holding swords, being expert in war; every man having his sword on his thigh, because of fear in the night. I pray you consider it as your highest honor to stand fast without wavering. "O Timothy (says Paul) keep that which is committed to your trust," 1Tim 6.20, that good thing, (that blessed *depositum*) which was committed to you, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwells in us, 2Tim. 1.14. Aim to have a full apprehension and knowledge of the Truth, and do so on its own proper grounds and principles; do not part with one grain of God's precious Truth, not for the dearest friend on earth. Have nothing to do with the *wrists* of men, care nothing for the *pulse* of their inclinations; do not fear their frowns; do not court their smiles. "Do I seek to please men? (says the apostle) If I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ," Gal. 1.10. Everything that is contrary to, and against the word of God, you must oppose. And Arminianism or free-will, is contrary to it. Do not be engaged then, in merely lopping off a few of the upper branches, but let the axe be laid to the root of the tree; for remember that Arminianism and Pelagianism (which are all one) are the very life and soul of Popery.

Holy Dr. Owen, in a Charge at the Ordination of a Minister, in 1682, only eleven months before his death; says,

"I fear there is much loss of Truth [not for lack of light, nor yet for lack of ability, but] for lack of love. I knew the contest we had for the Truths of the Gospel, before our national troubles began; and I was an early person engaged in them. I knew those godly ministers who contended for truth as for their lives and souls: and that all the opposition that was made against them, was never able to discourage them. Divine Truths are declining in our pulpits, not for lack of skill, but for lack of love. We scarcely hear one word of them now. We are almost ashamed to mention them in the Church. And he that preaches them, will be sure to expose himself to public obloquy and scorn. But we must not be ashamed of Truth. Formerly we could not meet with a godly minister, that the error of Arminianism was not looked at by him as the ruin and poison of the souls of men. Such godly men trembled at it, wrote, and disputed against it: but now it is not so. Now, though we tacitly own the doctrines of the gospel, the love of them seems greatly decayed, and the power of them almost lost. But we have gained no ground by it; we are not more holy, nor more fruitful, than we were when we preached those Truths, and attended diligently to them. They were the life of the reformation; and they were the soul and life of those who have gone home before us. They found the power and comfort of them in life, and in death also; and they now find the Truth of them in Glory!! Let us then, for the remainder of our days, buy the Truth, and not sell it."¹

Some persons would willingly persuade us that the Arminian controversy has very much changed its aspect since the days of Christopher Ness; and that when it is now agitated (which they desire for charity's sake may be as seldom as possible) it turns on other points than those contained in this book. No, no; the subtle enemy may dexterously maneuver to fight behind a masked battery; or to change in words merely, his polemical ground; but the dark aspect of Arminianism is not

¹ "The eternal Predestination of Almighty God, that fountain of all spiritual blessings, of all the effects of God's love derived to us through Christ; the demolishing of this rock of our salvation, has been the chief endeavor of all the patrons of human self-sufficiency. And this is their FIRST attempt to attain their second proposed end, namely, that of building a Tower (a Babel, Gen. 11.4), from the top of which they may mount into heaven; whose foundation is nothing but the sand of their own free-will and endeavors. Our Arminians have invented a multitude of new notions and terms to obscure the doctrine: — "Election, they say, is either legal or evangelical, general or particular, complete or incomplete, revocable or irrevocable, peremptory or not peremptory;" with I know not how many more distinctions of ONE SINGLE ETERNAL ACT of Almighty God: of which there is neither sign, nor token, in the whole Bible. Reason, Scripture, God himself, ALL must give way to any absurdities if they stand in the Arminian's way; bringing in their IDOL with shouts, and preparing his THRONE by claiming the cause of their predestination to be in themselves." — Owen's *Display of Arminianism*.

changed. And it may be said of it, as said of Amalek, "Because the hand of Amalek is against the throne of the Lord, therefore, the Lord has sworn that the Lord will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation," Exod. 17.16, *margin*.

Modern Arminianism, is but ancient Pelagianism, which reared up in the second century; and Pelagianism is Popery; and Popery is (yes all of it is) but as another name for man's free-will, in opposition to God's free-grace. 'Tis all one. We do indeed live in a day of sad declensions from the Truth. Dr. Gill, in his sermon, entitled, "Watchman, what of the night?" preached Dec. 27, 1750, more than 85 years ago, writes as in a prophetic spirit —

"A night is coming on; the shadows of the evening are stretching out apace upon us, and the signs of the even-tide are very manifest, and will shortly appear still more and more. Coldness and indifference in spiritual things; a lack of affection for God, Christ, his people, truths, and ordinances, may easily be observed. The first love has left; iniquity abounds; and the love of many waxes cold, and it will wax still colder and colder; issuing in a neglect of the ministers of the gospel, when professors will be shy of them, and carefully shun them, and will not care to own them, or speak to them, much less receive them into their houses, and still less hear them preach. As yet, it is not totally dark, or quite night; it is a sort of twilight with us, between clear and dark, between day and night."

It has been getting darker and darker, from the hour that sermon was preached. The Lord knows what is before us. But, my dear brethren in the work of the Christian ministry—

"let none of these things move you from your close adherence to the truth; strive together for the faith of it, against the common enemy. Abide by it, though the greater number of professors are against it; and those are the rich, the wise, the learned; and even though it may be attended with reproach and persecution. Be of good courage; take heart; consider that you are engaged in a good cause, and are fighting under the command of the great Captain of your salvation: you are sure of victory in the end, and the issue will be a crown of life. Keep close to the Word of God; test the doctrines, test the spirits by them, whether they are of God. The Word of the Lord is a lamp to you, and a light for you; you will do well to make good use of it. When is light so useful as in the night-season? It is so now; therefore take your lamp, or light, in your hand, and walk closely by the Word of God, to which you do well to take heed, as to a light that shines in a dark place. Blessed is that servant whom his Lord, when he comes, shall find doing so."—Gill.

Reader! Test the contents of this book, by the Lord's unerring standard—the Bible. Scripture-proofs are plentifully set before you, in every page: examine well for yourself; prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.

In my former editions I informed the reader, and I now repeat the information;—that, I have taken the liberty both to retrench, and also much enlarge in this volume, from the original by Ness. In a doctrinal point of view there is no alteration; in mutual agreement in the truth, we have walked together throughout. The phraseology and mode of expression used by Ness in 1700, needed revision and correction to render the work acceptable to readers in the year 1836. Also, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew words, and phrases, occurring in almost every page of the original, the book in its primitive dress was by no means suitable, indeed, it could not be perused with profit, so as to be fully understood by ordinary readers. My former editions have been appreciated by many of the children of God; and the Lord's glory, and his people's profit, has been before me in this edition also. O may a divine blessing accompany it, to the establishment of many souls in the truth, and to the reclaiming of others from the mazy paths of *error*.

Reader, farewell!
I am, yours in the Lord,
JOHN ANDREWS JONES.

42, Moneyers Street, Hoxton, London.
March 24, 1836.

A
SHORT ACCOUNT
OF THE
AUTHOR.

I can only present the Reader with a brief memoir of the worthy Author of this little, yet great work; as extracted from Dr. Calamy's Non-conformists' Memorial.

CHRISTOPHER NESS, M. A. of St. John's Col. Camb. was the son of *Thomas Ness*, of *North Cave*, in the East Riding of Yorkshire. He was born Dec. 26, 1621, and educated under Mr. Seaman, in grammar learning, till he was 16, when he was sent to *Cambridge*. Having spent seven years there, he retired at the age of 23 into the country, in the time of the civil wars; and preached for a while at *Cliffe Chapel*, under the inspection of his Uncle *Brearcliffe*, an eminent divine, vicar of North Cave. From there he received a call to *Holderness*; and after a few years, to Beverley where he taught school and preached occasionally. Dr. Winter, being elected provost of Trinity College, Dublin, resigned to Mr. Ness, his living of *Cottingham*, near Hull. The Lord was with him in his work, so that he was instrumental in the conversion of *many* souls: particularly Mr. Thomas Raspin, one of the most substantial persons in that Town, when grey hairs were upon him. After some years Ness was called to *Leeds*; and *there also* many had cause to bless God on his behalf, for the benefit that their souls received by his ministry.

From the year 1656 to 1660, he was lecturer to Mr. Stiles; and after his death, to Dr. Lake (afterwards Bishop of Chichester), with whom there was *much clashing*. The Doctor's setting up *free-will*, and *creature-performances* in the morning, was constantly refuted by Mr. Ness's *lifting up Christ*, and preaching *free-grace* in the afternoon. In 1662, being ejected from the Establishment for nonconformity, he preached for some time in private. Upon the five-mile act being passed, he retired to *Clayton*, and from there to *Morley*. When the times grew more favorable, he had a house at *Hunslet*, where he instructed youth and preached in private, till 1672, when the great *riding-house* at Hunslet was converted into a Meeting-house; he preached publicly there to a numerous congregation.

He was *four times excommunicated*; and upon the fourth, there was issued against him a writ "*de Excommunicato Capiendo*." To avoid it, he removed to London in 1675, and there preached to a private congregation in Fleet-street. He died on Dec. 26, 1705, aged 84 years to a day; and was buried in *Bunhill-fields*. He was upwards of sixty years in the ministry.

Mr. Ness wrote several books; the principal of which were entitled—History and Mystery of the Old and New Testaments, 4 vols, folio.—A Protestant antidote against the poison of Popery.—The crown and glory of a Christian; his walk and work on earth.—Also, a Church-history from *Adam*, and a scripture-prophecy to the end of the world.

This work of his, against Arminianism, will certainly entitle him to high rank, as a great and eminent *Casuist*. It was drawn up by him, many years before he put it to the press; it may be said to contain the *pith* of his manly understanding in all its vigor; even the understanding of a regenerated *living* man, illuminated by divine light, and given to behold *the real meaning of God in His most holy word*. At the age of four-score years, he sent out this volume as his last legacy to the Church. "This little book," he says, "has cost me great study, many ardent prayers, and many earnest wrestlings with God." I only add, may God's blessing accompany the perusal of it, to many souls, for Jesus's sake. *Amen*.

Author's Preface

Candid Reader, observe these few considerations: Although this small manual is very little in itself and in its substance, yet it should not be despised for that; for,

First. We read how the mighty angel of the Covenant had a very little book open in his hand, (Rev 10:2), yet this little book contained the *great* concerns of the Redeemer's *little, little* flock; a double diminutive as Christ calls them in Luk 12:32. And that little book was not *shut* or *sealed*, but it was open. It is the work of Antichrist to keep it shut. Yea, it must also be eaten; "take it and eat it up." (Rev 10:9); that is, it must go down and be hidden in our hearts ("Your Word I have hidden in my heart," Psa 119:11); then the simplest soul may have the right conceptions of it. "The word [is then] very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it" (Deu 30:14).

Secondly. This little book has cost me great study and labor to compose it, that it might contain the very cream and quintessence of the best Authors on this subject. Moreover, it has cost me likewise many ardent prayers to God, and many earnest wrestlings with God, that I might not be one "of those that rebel against the light" (Job 24:13); but that in His light I might see light, (Psa 36:9); and to have my eyes anointed with Christ's eye-salve, (Rev 3:18), that I might see clearly into these profound points, which has so very much puzzled the Christian world. As blessed Athanasius sighed out in his day, "The world is overrun with Arianism;" so it is the sad sigh of our present times, the Christian world is overrun, yea, overwhelmed with the flood of Arminianism; which comes, as it were, out of the mouth of the serpent, that he might cause the woman [the Church] "to be carried away with the flood" of it (Rev 12:15).

Thirdly. Lest this overflowing deluge of Arminianism should bring destruction upon us, there is great need that some servants of Christ should run to stop the further spreading of this plague and leprosy. Thus Moses stood in the gap, and prevented the destruction of Israel (Psa 105:23). Also (Num 16:48), "He stood between the dead and the living; and the plague was stayed." And the neglect of this duty the Lord complains of, that He found none of His servants to stand in the gap, etc. "O Israel, your prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. You have not gone up into the gaps, nor made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord... With lies you have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked ...by promising him life" (Eze 13:4, 5, 22). While I was considering these things, the Lord stirred up my spirit to do as is done in common conflagrations, when everyone runs with the best bucket he can get, with which to quench the devouring flames, and to stop them, that they may not lay waste all that is before them.

Fourthly. When I had completed this short compendium I showed it to Dr. John Owen, Mr. Nicholas Lockier, and Mr. George Griffith, who all unanimously approved of it and wrote an epistle commendatory to it, subscribing it with all their three hands, which is too large here to insert, but the truth of the premises I do hereby affirm.

Lastly. As a little map represents a large country at one view, which will take much time to travel over, so this book is *multum in parvo*, much in a little. Read it seriously without partiality, and the Lord give you understanding in all things.

So prays
Yours in the best of bonds,

Christopher Ness

Sept. 30, 1700.

Of Arminianism in General

It has ever been the lot of truth (like the Lord of it) to be crucified between right-hand and left-hand thieves. Truth's enemies, on all hands, are various. While some men consider the Bible to be an imposition on the world, and treat salvation by Christ as mere priestcraft and deception, there are others who tell us they have Christ, and are one with Christ, and yet with audacious effrontery cry down the ordinances of the gospel, and consider the means of grace as too burdensome for a free-born conscience, and too low and carnal for a seraphic spirit. There is as much beyond the truth as on this side of it; as much in outrunning the flock of Christ and the Lamb that leads them, as in straggling and loitering behind. Truth has evermore observed the golden mean.

The Socinians decry the divinity of Christ and His satisfaction, as if His sufferings were exemplary only, not expiatory. The Roman Catholics turn the true worship of God into will-worship, and teach their own traditions for the commandments of God, spoiling God's institutions with man's inventions. And the Arminians call the justice of God to the bar of reason; they dare confidently wade in the deep ocean of divine mysteries, and in stating the decrees of God, where blessed Paul could find no bottom, but cried out "O the depth" etc. (Rom 11:33); they dare undertake to fetch the Apostle from off his nonplus, saying, "God foresaw that Jacob would believe, and that Esau would not believe; therefore, the one was loved and the other hated." Thus Arminius' school teaches deeper divinity than what Paul learned in the third heaven. And they not only gratify the pride of man's reason with the Socinians, but also the pride of man's will, in extenuating and lessening both the guilt and filth of original sin; even as Popery, their elder sister, gratifies the pride of outward sense.

Hence Dr. Leighton calls Arminianism "the Pope's Benjamin, the last and greatest monster of the man of sin; the elixir of Anti-Christianism; the mystery of the mystery of iniquity; the Pope's cabinet; the very quintessence of equivocation." Alike to this, Mr. Rous (Master of Eton College) adds, "Arminianism is the spawn of Popery, which the warmth of favor may easily turn into frogs of the pit." And what are the new Arminians but the varnished offspring of the old Pelagians, that makes the grace of God its lackey at the foot, or rather, the will of man; that makes the sheep keep the shepherd; that puts God into the same extremity with Darius, who would gladly have saved Daniel but could not (Da 6:14)?

What else can their doctrine signify which they call a prescience or foreknowledge in God, the truth of which depends, not on the decree of God, but on the free-will of the creature? This is to make the creature have no dependence on the Creator, and to fetter Divine Providence. Thus that fatal necessity, which they would lay at our doors, unavoidably remains at theirs, and (according to their scheme) God must say thus to man, "O My poor creature. That fatal fortune which has harmed you must be endured more than bewailed, for it was from all eternity, before My providence. I could not hinder, I could not but consent to those fatal contingencies; and unavoidable Fate has, whether I will it or not, pronounced the inevitable sentence." What else is this but to overthrow all those graces of Faith, Hope, etc., to expectorate (to cast off) all vital godliness; and to pull the great Jehovah Himself out of His throne of glory, setting up dame Fortune to be worshipped in His stead?

These and many other great abominations have been discovered in the "chambers of imagery" in our days, and are nothing but measuring supernatural mysteries with the crooked metewand² of degenerate reason. "Wisdom is too high for a fool" (Pro 24:7). In these points it was once well said, "Give me a mortified reason," for, to prescribe to God's infinite understanding, and to allow Him no reasons to guide His determinations by, but what we are acquainted with, is extremely arrogant. Reason must neither be the rule to measure faith by, nor the judge of it. We may give a reason of our believing, i.e., "because it is written," but not of all things believed, such as why

² Measuring rod

Jacob was loved and Esau hated before they had done either good or evil – this was the counsel of God's own will. Touching such sublime mysteries, our faith stands upon two sure bottoms: the first being that the wisdom and power of God infinitely transcends ours; so they may reveal matters far above our reach; the second is that whatever God reveals is undoubtedly true, and it is to be believed, although the bottom of it cannot be sounded by the line of our reason; that is because man's reason is not absolute, but variously limited, perplexed with his own frailty, and defective in its own acting.

CHAPTER I - OF PREDESTINATION

That the reader may have clear views of the doctrine of Predestination, I shall first state that doctrine as revealed in the Bible; second, I shall consider the Arminian's view of it, viz., that it is conditional upon the foresight of faith, works, perseverance, etc., and, thirdly, I shall answer the objections brought by the Arminians against the Scriptural doctrine of Election and Predestination.

The Doctrine of Predestination

Predestination is the decree of God, by which (according to the counsel of His own will) He foreordained some of mankind to eternal life, and refused or passed by others, for the praise of His glorious mercy and justice. Some are vessels of mercy, others are vessels of wrath. "Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel for honor, and another for dishonor? What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted for destruction; And that he might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared before for glory" (Rom 9:21-23).

In a great house are various vessels both for use and ornament; vessels of honor, and vessels of dishonor, (2Tim 2:20); and the master of the house has a right to, and can wisely use, all his vessels, even as he shall think proper. God has His use even of Pharaoh and of the church's greatest enemies, even if it is only scullion work, to brighten vessels of mercy with them. God has appointed the Elect to Glory; and He has by the eternal and most free purpose of His will foreordained all the means necessary to that end; such as redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, effectual calling and conversion, justification in the court of the conscience through saving faith in Jesus' merits, sanctification in the heart by the Spirit, producing holy living and holy walking with God and man. And these blessed participators are "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1Pet 1:5). "Whom He predestinated, He also called: and whom He called, he also justified: and whom He justified, He also glorified. What shall we then say to these things?" (Rom 8:30-31) We will say with the apostle, "God has not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation" (1Th 5:9).

It is called destination, because it comprehends a determined order of the means needed to the end; and it is called pre-destination, because God appointed this order in and with Himself before the actual existence of those things which were so ordered. The Greek word signifies fore-separated for God's special use; as Israel was separated from among all the nations of the world to be God's special inheritance. "I am the Lord your God, who has separated you from other people" (Le 20:24). "The Lord your God has chosen you to be a special people for Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6). I have separated you to become vessels of mercy, members of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, before all time, even from all eternity. As Divine prescience is sometimes largely taken for predestination, "God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew" (Rom 11:2), that is, whom He predestinated, so, in like manner, predestination is taken strictly and in part for election itself (Rom 8:30; Eph 1:5). I shall handle it accordingly in this following treatise, using the words *Election* and *Predestination* promiscuously.

Predestination is also called a Divine decree, for in the decree is the determinate counsel of God, and the counsel of His own will, in bringing to pass such ends by such and such means. "Truly, against your holy child Jesus, whom you have anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, to do whatever your hand and your counsel determined before to be done" (Act 4:27-28). "Having predestinated us ... according to the good pleasure of His will" (Eph. 1:5). "Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:11). The election and predestination of the Lord is, in Scripture phrase, termed the "hand," the "determinate counsel," the "purpose," and the "good pleasure" of God (Act 2:23; Eph 1:9).

The Divine decree of Predestination has various properties; it is eternal, unchangeable, absolute, free, discriminating, and extensive.

The First Property of the Divine Decree - It is ETERNAL

This is proved from the following reasons:

1. God's internal and immanent acts are the same as His essence: such an act is the Divine decree: and, therefore, as God's essence is eternal, so His decree must also be eternal. Now the decree is God's decreeing, because whatever is in God is God; it is God Himself by one eternal act, decreeing and determining whatever should come to pass to the praise of His own glory.
2. The second reason is deduced from the simplicity of God, which is God considered as one mere and perfect act, without any composition or succession. There can be no more a new thought, a new intent, or a new purpose in God, than there can be a new God. Whatever God thinks He ever thought, and always does and will think. Whatever God purposes He always purposed, and ever does and will purpose. He says, "I know the thoughts I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end" (Jer 29:11). As He cannot know anything new, neither can He intend anything new, for His name is, I AM. He takes no new counsels, as a man would, nor draws up new determinations.
3. The third reason is taken from Christ. If Christ was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (as He is called, Re. 13:8), then predestination to life must necessarily be before time, because Christ is the Foundation of election. We are elected in Him. "According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4); and predestinated by Him, "Having predestinated us to be adopted as children by Jesus Christ to Himself" (Eph. 1:5). Christ is the means. Now the end cannot be of a later date and determination than the means to that end; they are related to each other. And if Christ is the eternal purpose of the Father, the act of electing in Christ must necessarily be His eternal purpose also.
4. Scripture expressly proves the eternity of the decree, saying, it was "before the world began" (2Tim 1:9; Tit 1:2); and "before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4); and it was an "eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. 3:11).
5. It is the royal prerogative of the great Jehovah to order as well as appoint things that are coming and that shall come: "I appointed the ancient people, and the things that are coming and shall come" (Isa 44:7). None can appoint God the time. He says, "Who is like Me? And who will appoint Me the time?" (Jer 50:44). Hence time is said to travail with those eternal decrees of God, and time brings forth the accomplishment of them in their proper season; and the decree will bring them forth ("Before the decree bring forth," Zep 2:2). Everything is accomplished in time which was decreed to fall out from all eternity.
6. If human concerns have this encomium³ that "these are ancient things" (1Ch 4:22), how much more so the Divine decree, which is not the work of yesterday! If the negative part of

³ Warm, glowing praise. A formal expression of praise; a tribute.

predestination (the ungodly) were "of old ordained" (Jude. 4), then much more the positive. God's purpose of loving Jacob, as well as hating Esau, was before they had done "either good or evil" (Rom 9:11).

Objection. Some may object, saying, We grant God's prescience or foreknowledge to be eternal, but not His predestination; that choice or election mentioned in 1Cor 1:27-29 must be a temporal, not an eternal, election.

Answers

1. With God, the knowledge of things that shall come to pass must follow their decree; for things must first be decreed, and then foreseen in that being which they have in the decree; in this sense prescience presupposes predestination. "Known to God are all His works from the beginning of the world" (Act 15:18). God does not have an imperfect but a thorough foreknowledge of all future things; the means and the end; not only as they may be, but also as they shall be, by His Divine determination.

2. Prescience, or fore-knowledge, is taken for God's love from eternity. "Those whom He foreknew He also predestinated" (Rom 8:29); that is, "those whom He fore-loved" so Zanchius reads it.⁴ Whom He foreknew, not only with the knowledge of observation, but with the knowledge of approbation also; He foreknew them to be His. So it is predestination itself; and to grant an eternal prescience without an eternal predestination, is to break the links of that golden chain in Rom 8:29, 30. "God has not," and God will not, "cast away His people whom He foreknew" (Rom 11:2).

3. Some grant there is an eternal predestination to the elect only, but to the non-elect only a prescience or naked foresight (without any pre-ordination), lest they should make God the author of the creature's sin and ruin. But these men fear where no fear need exist; for the worst evil that was ever committed in the world, i.e., the crucifying of the Prince of glory, Jesus Christ, not only fell under the foreknowledge of God, but also under His determinate counsel, "Being delivered to you by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken him, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain him" (Act 2:23; 4:28); the taking and apprehension of Christ was not barely foreknown but unchangeably determined.

4. Even suppose it is granted that the apostle speaks of a temporal election or choice in 1Cor 1:27,⁵ etc., yet that signifies no more than our vocation or calling; and temporal reprobation intimates no more than man's obduration.⁶ The accomplishment of both these⁷ is granted to be in time, so it may not be confused with this eternal decree of God; these are only the fruits and effects of that eternal decree.

Inferences drawn from the foregoing.

1. Is God's love eternal? Then Satan cannot get beyond or between this love of God and us; for it was before the world existed, and so it was before Satan existed.

2. Augustine told a curious fool who asked what God did before the world was made, that "He made hell for such as him;" but this teaches us that God was choosing us to Himself before the world began. O wonderful!

⁴ "The opinion of Zanchius is worth a thousand others." De Courcy.

⁵ 1Cor 1:27-28 – But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And God has chosen base things of the world, and things which are despised, , yea, and things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are:

⁶ Hardening of the heart.

⁷ That is, both men's call to salvation and their reprobate condition.

3. If so, believer, then your saintship and sufferings have eternal glory wrapped up in them. All this comfort is lost in the contrary doctrine.

The Second Property of the Divine Decree of Predestination: It is UNCHANGEABLE

Hence it is compared to "mountains of brass" (Zec 6:1),⁸ and it is called, "immutability of his counsel" (Heb 6:17). This is made evident by sundry reasons, such as:

1. The Divine decree has an unchangeable fountain, i.e., the unchangeableness of God. "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?" (Job 23:13). He desires and He does it; no created being can interpose between the desire and the doing to hinder their meeting together. "God is not a man, that He should lie; nor the son of man that He should repent" (Num 23:19). "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Mal 3:6); with Him there is no "variableness nor shadow of turning" (Jas 1:17). "The counsel of the Lord stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations" (Psa 33:11). "There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord shall stand" (Pro 19:21). Man is a poor changeable creature and changes his mind oftener than his garment, both from the darkness of his understanding and the perverseness of his will. He frequently sees something that he did not see before. But there is no such imperfection in God; all things are naked before Him, dissected, or with their faces upward. "Nor is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb 4:13). He knows all His works (their natures and circumstances) as perfectly in the beginning of the world as He will at the end of it. And He abides still in one mind when His dispensations are changed, for He decreed their change from all eternity.

2. The decree of Election stands upon an unchangeable foundation, i.e., that Rock of ages, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever" (Heb 13:8). As the first Adam was the foundation stone in the decree of creation, so the last Adam, even Jesus, is the foundation stone in the decree of election. God has blessed us in Him, yea, and we shall be blessed. He has chosen us in Him; pardoned us in Him; sealed us in Him; built us up and completed us in Him; "According to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (2Tim 1:9). All those acts of grace are said to be in Christ, who has blest us in Christ (Eph. 1:3); chosen us in Him (Eph. 1:4); pardoned us; "in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins" (Eph. 1:7); "in whom also after you believed, you were sealed" (Eph. 1:13); "rooted and built up in Him" (Col 2:7): and you are "complete in Him" (Col 2:10).

Indeed, Christ Himself was under Divine ordination; He "truly was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world" (1Pet 1:20), and is called the elect stone (1Pet 2:6). Christ is the first person elected. "Behold My servant whom I uphold, my elect" (Isa 42:1; Mat 12:18). Christ was chosen as the Head, and we as His members; therefore we are said to be given to Christ. "Yours they were, and You gave them to Me" (Joh 17:6). Now, so long as this foundation stands sure, so long does the superstructure remain unchangeable. The temple stood firmly upon those two pillars, Jachin and Boza, i.e., stability and strength; so the decree of election stands sure upon Christ the Foundation; and none can pluck an elect soul off this Foundation. None can pluck any of Christ's out of His hands. Christ will lose none that are given to him; He will fulfill His Father's will by taking care of them all. "And this is the Father's will who has sent Me, that of all which He has given Me I should lose none, but should raise him up again at the last day" (Joh 6:39). "They shall never perish" (Joh 10:28).

3. It is unchangeable, because it is a decree written in Heaven, and so it is above the reach of either angry men or enraged devils to cancel it. "The Lord knows those who are His" (2Tim 2:19), they are "the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in Heaven" (Heb 12:23).

⁸ Zech. 6.1. "By the brazen mountains are meant the eternal counsel and providence of God; whereby he has from before all eternity, decreed what shall come to pass, and that which neither Satan nor all the world can alter." Beza.

Thus it is called "the Lamb's book of life," which contains a catalog of the elect, determined by the unalterable counsel of God; the number of which can neither be increased nor diminished. This is to be rejoiced in above dominion over devils; "rather rejoice, because your names are in Heaven" (Luk 10:20); which, if our names may be written in Heaven today and blotted out tomorrow, there would be no such basis for joy. If the decrees of the Medes and Persians, which were but earthly writings, were unalterable (Da 6:8), how much more the decrees of the great God, written in Heaven, must be unchangeable. May Pilate say, "What I have written I have written" (Joh 19:22); that is to say, "my writing shall not be altered," and shall God not say so much more? "I know (says Solomon) that, whatever God does, it shall be forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it" (Ecc 3:14). "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure ...I have spoken it, and I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, and I will also do it" (Isa 46:10-11). The sun may sooner be stopped in his course than God hindered in His work or in His will. Nature, angels, devils, men, may all be resisted, and so miss their design; not so God: for "who has resisted His will?" All those chariots of human occurrences and dispensations come forth from between those mountains of brass, the unalterable decrees of God (Zec 6:1); and should it be granted that one soul may be blotted out of this book of life (this writing in Heaven) then it is possible that all may be so; and, by consequence, it may be supposed that that book may become empty, and useless as waste paper; and that Christ may be a head without a body.

4. It is unchangeable, for the decree concerning the end includes the means to that end, and binds them altogether with an irrefragable chain, which can never be broken. The predestinated, called, justified, glorified ones, are the same (Rom 8:30). Therefore the purpose of God according to election must stand (Rom 9:11). God does not decree the end without the means, nor the means without the end, but both together. Just as a purpose for building includes the hewing of stone, and squaring of timber, and all other materials for building-work; and just as a decree for war implies arms, horses, ammunition, and all warlike provisions; so here, all who are elected to salvation are elected to sanctification also. God ordains the means as well as the end. "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Act 13:48). God has ordained that we should walk in good works (Eph. 2:10). We are elected to obedience through the "sanctification of the Spirit" (1Pet 1:2); therefore God has promised to sanctify those whom He purposed to save. We teach along with Augustine that, "Election is an ordaining to grace as well as to glory." In pre-destination, therefore, the means of salvation are no less absolutely decreed than salvation itself. We may not conceive that God's decree runs after this form, "I will predestinate Peter to salvation, if it should so happen that he believes and perseveres;" but rather thus, "I predestinate Peter to salvation; so that he may infallibly obtain it, I will give him both faith and perseverance." Were it otherwise, the foundation would not stand sure; yea, and God's gifts would not be without repentance, if God did not absolutely decree to give and bestow faith and perseverance to His elected ones. The covenant of grace runs in this tenure, "I will be your God, and you shall be my people" that is, I will make you so.

Inferences drawn from the foregoing.

1. A name written in Heaven, where no thief, no rust, no moth comes to destroy it, is better than to be enrolled in princely courts; it is a name better than sons and daughters, to be a free citizen of Heaven.
2. Though we are changeable creatures, yet there is an unchangeable love towards us that keeps faster hold of us than we do of it.
3. It is infinite condescension that the great God should hold a poor lump of clay so fast in His Almighty hands, as to secure our interest to all eternity (Joh 10:28-29; 1Pet 1:4-5).

The Third Property of the Divine Decree: It is ABSOLUTE

It is absolute in respect to the efficient impulsive cause which cannot be anything outside of God, as the following reasons evince.

1. If the Divine decree is eternal it must be absolute; for nothing can be assigned before an eternal act as its efficient cause. There cannot be a cause of the will of God outside of God. Predestination is an immanent act of the Divine will; and so it is not only the cause, but also the first cause of all created beings; and therefore it cannot (in any good sense) be said to depend on foreseen transient acts in the creature; so, by consequence, it must be an absolute act, unless we make the volitions of God come behind the created and temporary volitions of man, which is grossly absurd. This goes to a denial of God being the first cause of all things.

2. **First**, if God is God; if He is an almighty, all wise, all free, and an all-disposing God, then His decree of Election must be absolute; for a conditional decree makes a conditional God, and plainly ungodly Him, by ascribing such imperfections to Him as are unworthy of His majesty, and below His Divine being; such as, first, it opposes His omnipotence – if some conditions are antecedent to the will of God, then the same conditions are also antecedent to the power of God. **Second**, it takes away the glory of the Divine wisdom in ordering all things; for if Peter must be willing to believe before the event of God's decree concerning Peter, then Divine wisdom does not determine anything concerning the order of things. **Thirdly**, it takes away the glory of God's absolute liberty and independence; for if Peter's believing and Judas's not believing are antecedent to the decree of God concerning them, then Peter and Judas make *themselves* the objects of election and non-election, and God does not have an absolute dominion over His own creatures. The potter does not have freedom to make this lump of clay a vessel of honor and that a vessel of dishonor, and the difference will arise more from the quality of the clay than the will of the potter; and God's will must be dependent on the will of man for its determinations. This plainly overthrows the independency of God. **Fourth**, it takes away the glory of His all-disposing providence. If the decree is not absolute, how can God be said to wholly dispose of lots that are cast into the lap, as in Pro 16:33? Shall we say that the lot of the apostleship fell to Matthias by chance? (Act 1:26); was it not rather absolutely ordained and ordered by the Lord to whom the Apostles prayed, as in Act 1:24, saying, "You, Lord, who knows the hearts of all men, show whether (or which) of these two You have chosen ... And they gave forth their lots; and the lot fell upon Matthias" (Act 1:24-26)? Thus by the disposal of lots in the lap Achan was discovered to be Israel's curse, and Saul was appointed to be Israel's king (Jos 7:14-18; 1Sa 10:19-21). Man purposes, but God disposes; because God by an absolute decree has foreordained all things that come to pass. They do not fall out casually and beyond God's intention; thus it is said, "It behoved Christ to suffer" (Luk 24:46).

3. If the will of the potter is an absolute will over his pots, much more so is the will of God an absolute will over mankind. It is God's own comparison (Rom 9:20, 21). God does not compare Himself to a goldsmith, because a goldsmith has costly materials, such as silver and gold, which lays some obligation on him to make honorable vessels with them. But He compares Himself to a potter, because first, the materials of a potter are vile and sordid, i.e., clay, so it is more akin to fallen mankind, out of which God makes His choice. We are not only clay (Job 4:19), but *sinful* clay through the fall. Second, the potter does not make this difference among his pots for any foreseen inherent goodness in his clay (for the whole lump before him is of an equal temper and quality), but from the pleasure of His own will. Thus the potter's power over his materials is clearer from exception than that of the goldsmith, and illustrates more the absoluteness of God's will in His choice both in vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. Again, the distance between the clay and potter is a finite distance, the distance only between one creature and another, animate and inanimate; but the distance between God and mankind is infinite, not only the natural distance between God and us, as we are creatures, but also the moral distance between us, as we are sinners. The potter also must have his clay made for his hand; he cannot make his own clay,

though he may temper it for his work when he has found it; but the great God creates His own clay. He created the earth out of which man was formed. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gen 1:1). "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen 2:7). It follows then, if the potter by an absolute will disposes of his pots, much more so has God a right concerning His creatures.

Inferences drawn from the preceding.

1. If the absolute will of God is the universal cause of all things, then no event can fall beyond or beside God's will; and fortune (in the world's sense of it) is only the devil's blasphemous spit upon Divine providence.
2. God's absolute will cannot be resisted; as He has willed, so shall it come to pass; and there is no hindering its execution. "The Lord of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand" (Isa 14:24). "Our God is in the Heavens: He has done whatever He has pleased" (Psa 115:3), "I know that You can do everything" (Job 42:2).
3. Then let us learn submission to the will of God. Proud, yet brittle clay, will be knocking their sides against the absolute will of God, till they break in pieces; so did Adonijah when Solomon must rule; compare 1Ki 1:5 with 1Ch 22:9, and mark the end of it, 1Ki 2:23-25. O for the grace of humility to enable us to adopt the language of the prophet, "Now, O Lord, You are our Father; we are the clay, and You our Potter, and we all are the work of your hand" (Isa 64:8).

The Fourth Property of the Divine Decree: It is FREE

Just as the Divine decree is not conditional but absolute, so it is not given of necessity but freely, as flowing only from the pleasure of God's will. God is a free agent and cannot fall under any obligation so as to obligate Him in any of His emanations to the creature; but He is graciously pleased of His own free love to oblige Himself.

1. The first argument to prove the freeness of the Divine decree is this: such a decree that passes without any obligation to necessitate its passing, must necessarily have the property of freeness; and so it was with the divine decree. If there is any obligation, it must be in respect to objects, acts, or motives; but God was not obliged in any of these respects.

First. He was not obliged in respect to objects, for God was under no obligation to have any elect or any reprobate. He was happy in Himself from all eternity; he would have been happy forever without either of these; and to affirm that God stood in need of any such objects is to deny the perfections of God. If it is called humbling Himself to look down on things in Heaven, then much more so to look down on things on earth.

Second. He was not obliged by acts, because acts are necessary by a moral obligation. God was under no moral obligation to man. He would have done man no wrong if He had never willed man to exist, much less to be holy and happy. God was not bound to any of His actions concerning man. He cannot be a debtor in any way other than as He makes Himself a debtor of His own good pleasure. As in His promises, His love moved Him to make them, and His truth binds Him to perform them; otherwise those actions would be actions of debt and not acts of grace, contrary to the tenor of Scripture which makes the whole work of man's salvation flow wholly from the free grace of God.

Third. He was not obliged in respect to motives either in the creature or in Christ. Not in the creature, for the existence of the creature (much more so the faith and good works of the creature) was the effect of the decree of God; so it could not be the motive of the creature which obligated the decree. Nor could the Lord foresee repentance, faith, love, etc. in the creature, antecedent to His own purpose in giving them to the creature. Nor is Christ Himself the moving cause of the

Divine decree; for Christ is the *effect* of God's eternal love, not the *cause* of it. "God so loved the world that He gave His Son" (Joh 3:16). God's love gives Christ. Therefore we are said to be elected in Christ, but we are never said to be elected for Christ; for Christ is an elect Himself, as was shown before.⁹ Christ was first chosen, then the members. The love of God comes from Himself to me as immediately as it does to Christ; and He was foreordained to be our Head, and we were foreordained to be His members. Thus we are Christ's; and Christ is God's as the effect of His love to His elect from all eternity (1Cor 3:22).

2. The second argument to prove the freeness of Divine decree is taken from the testimony of the Word of God (the Bible) in which it is affirmed to be a free act, an act of grace and not of debt, an act of love and special favor, founded upon the mere good pleasure of God. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in your sight" (Mat 11:26), "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luk 12:32). It was a gracious purpose in God from all eternity (2Tim 1:9; Eph 1:5, 9, 11). Paul's repeated exclamation is, "the pleasure of His own will," or "the counsel of His own will." But in Rom 9:13, 16 he more fully exemplifies this truth in Jacob and Esau. "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated ... It is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God who shows mercy." Both Malachi the Prophet (Mal 1:3), and Paul the Apostle, make this instance of Jacob and Esau the fullest exemplification of free election. For they lay together in the same womb, and were born at the same time (for Jacob took hold of Esau's heel), so the contrary disposal of these two more illustrates the free predestination of God than any other two passages whatever. Of Jacob there came a distinguished people from all the world, even a Church unto God; and of Esau there sprang forth a persecuting seed. God has no regard for faith in the one, or infidelity in the other. When God's oracle passed upon them, they were both in their mother's womb, conceived in sin; and, if there were any pre-eminence, Esau had it, being the first-born. What then cast the balance? Nothing but the good pleasure of God. God will "have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens" (Rom 9:18). Now, in opposition to this, our carnal reason says, "It was because God foresaw what they would be." No. God loved them because He loved them (Deut. 7:7-8). It was choosing-love that He bore to them, and that is the best kind. That is the favor which God bears to His people: He loved them, and chose them for His own.

3. The third reason to prove the freeness of the Divine decree is this: God has in all ages given us examples of His freely receiving some of mankind and rejecting others; this is plain from Scripture history. Of Adam's three sons, Cain, Abel, and Seth, the eldest was rejected. Of Noah's three, Japheth, Shem and Ham, the youngest was rejected. Of Terah's three, Abraham, Nahor, and Haran, the middlemost was rejected; for Nahor was an idolater, and Laban swore by Nahor's idol (compare Gen 31:53 with Jos 24:2). Now why this picking and choosing, this receiving and rejecting; eldest at one time, youngest at another time, and middlemost at a third time? What is all this but to show that neither birth nor age, nor anything foreseen or existing in the creature, can produce any claim; but it all lies in the free election of God! We can give no reason, save the good pleasure of God, why Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar had different dispensations of Heaven upon them (both engaged in the same warfare against Israel, the church of God); the one was hardened and the other humbled; why Pharaoh's baker was hanged and his butler restored to his office again; why two men shall be in one bed, the one taken, the other left; why two women shall be grinding at one mill, the one taken, the other left; why of all twelve rods, only Aaron's blossomed.

4. If the fruits of the Divine decree are free, then the decree itself must be free. This assumption is clear, for **first**, our calling is from free love. Christ freely, and of His own sovereign will, called James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, and left their father uncalled with the hired servants (Mark 1:20). "He called to Himself whomever He willed" (Mark 3:13). "It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven, but it is not given to them" (Mat 13:11). "We know that

⁹ See page 8, bottom, section 2.

the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may know Him who is true" (1Joh 5:20). "You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father: for it seemed good in your sight" (Mat 11:26). **Second**, our sanctification is from free grace. Of His own will He begat us (Jas 1:18). The sanctifying grace breathes where it lists; and the wind at sea is as much at our command as the fresh gales of this renewing Spirit. **Third**, our glorification is free. Eternal life is the gift of God (Rom 6:23); He does not sell it for foreseen faith or works, but He freely gives it. Now if all these fruits of election are free, then election itself to these fruits must also be free. If faith is the free gift of God (Eph. 2:8), then predestination to faith must of necessity also be free; for God works all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11).

Christian believer, there is much comfort and establishment to be drawn from a view of the freeness of the grace of God; then:

1. Admire free grace in this decree of predestination; and cry, "How is it, Lord, that You manifest Yourself and your love to me, and not to the world?" (Joh 14:22)
2. You do not make yourself to differ from others, but free grace does it for you. You are a lump of clay in the hands of the potter, no better than others; indeed, you are pressed down to hell by Adam's fall; be thankful that God would lift you up to Heaven.
3. Rejoice in the Lord, sing to the honor of His great name, and live to His praise and glory. Did David dance before the Lord with all his might? Did he say to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me before your father, to appoint me ruler over ... Israel; therefore I will play before the Lord" (2Sa 6:14, 21)? David's appointment, at that time, was only to an earthly kingdom; you are freely chosen to inherit a Heavenly kingdom: therefore I say *rejoice!*

The Fifth Property of the Divine Decree: It is DISCRIMINATING

That it is discriminating and particular, and not universal or general, may be proved from the following arguments:

1. The very word used, *Election*, confutes the universality of it. There can be no choice made, where all are taken, and none left. What is equally extended to every individual cannot be called election. One does not elect who does not prefer some over others. God did not choose all thirty-two thousand Israelites that were with Gideon to save Israel out of the hand of Midian, but only the three hundred that lapped; and these were chosen out of the thirty-two thousand (Jud 7:3-7). God did not choose all the nations, but only Israel, to be a special people to Himself, "Your God has chosen you ... above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6). Election must therefore be discriminating, making some to differ from others.
2. Scripture expressly states that few are chosen, though many are called (Mat 20:16). It is only a little flock (Luk 12:32), and only one of a city and two of a family that are brought to Zion (Jer 3:14). "I have chosen you out of the world," says Christ (Joh 15:19); and the Lord calls Paul a chosen vessel to Him (Act 9:15; 22:14). How ill it sounds in the ears of a gospel-spirit to say that Pharaoh and Judas were elected as well as Paul and Barnabas; and that Simon Magus was elected as well as Simon Peter; all of which a general election necessarily asserts, which is the Arminian hypothesis.¹⁰ How can these "reprobate silver" pieces be termed chosen vessels in a gospel sense (as Paul was), so as to know God's will, and to see the Just One (Act 22:14)?
3. If election is general, and conditioned on believing, then Pilate, Caiaphas, and Judas were elected under that condition; and so God is made to speak in this way: "I have appointed to save

¹⁰ Actually, Arminians assert a universal atonement, not a universal election. But Ness points out that if Christ died for all, and all are objects of God's love in sending Christ to the cross for them, then Arminians necessarily assert universal election, regardless of their assertions to the contrary. Arminians limit the application of Christ's atoning sacrifice to those who believe, who are elect. This is conditional election, with the condition being faith. In the next paragraph, Ness assaults the idea of conditional grace.

Pilate, Caiaphas and Judas if they will believe in the death of Christ;¹¹ but, if they believe, Christ shall not be crucified, for those are the very men appointed by My determinate counsel to put Christ to death" (see Act 2:23; 4:28). Had these men believed (and they have believed according to the Arminians' views), then God's decree concerning Christ's death would not have been absolute, but it would have depended upon a condition which those men might have fulfilled (i.e., believing in Christ's death). If they had believed, then they believed in what then would never have come to pass. Thus carnal reason bespatters Divine wisdom!

4. How can it be safely said that God ever intended the salvation of any besides those who are or will be effectually saved? This would frustrate the will of God, even His will of intention; and it would be contrary to the following scriptures, "Our God ... has done whatever He has pleased" (Psa 115:3). "I know that You can do everything, and that no thought can be withheld from You" (Job 42:2). And no man can resist the will of God, for He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens. And, if after all, O vain man! you will still object, and say, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" the only answer for you is, "No, but O man, who are you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, 'Why have you made me thus?'" (Rom 9:19). Thus it was according to the sovereign will of Jehovah that Jacob and Esau were discriminated one from the other.

5. The apostle shows that there is this discriminating difference between man and man: that some are chosen to life and therefore shall most certainly obtain it! Others are refused and left in a perishing condition which they shall certainly not escape. "The elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Rom 11:7). The difference is made by God according to the purpose of election; it is not made by Him who foresees faith or works, but by Him who gives both of these.

We may learn from the preceding:

1. It is distinguishing love that our Potter has made us what we are, men and women. All creatures, even toads and other obnoxious animals, were formed of the same dust with man. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground" (Gen 2:7); "and out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast" (Gen 2:19).

2. It is the will of God that some are poor and others rich; so it is here, that some are vessels of honor, and others are vessels of dishonor.

3. Christ did not raise up all who were dead, but Lazarus, etc.; nor all that were born blind, but the one mentioned in John 9. Bless God for raising you up from your death of sin, and healing *your* blindness and not others! You were alike, undeserving along with them! You were, and you still are, in yourself, a sinner! And if you are taught by grace, the last accents on your faltering tongue will be the publican's prayer. "God be merciful to me a sinner."

The Sixth and last Property of the Divine Decree: It is EXTENSIVE

The Divine decree of God's electing and predestinating love, although discriminating and particular, is nevertheless very extensive. "I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb ... and cried with a loud voice, saying Salvation" (Rev. 7:9). There is a general decree that relates to all created beings, both animate and inanimate, celestial and terrestrial; and it extends itself to every individual in the whole creation of God. For as it gave being to all things, so it preserves them in that being while they continue in the world; and the work of Providence, which extends itself from angels to worms, succeeds the work of creation. Now although this

¹¹ This is a very strange definition of saving faith ("believe in his death"). Believing in his resurrection and believing that he is the promised Messiah is what saves our soul. Perhaps Ness means "atoning death." Even so, he appears to be constructing a straw-man argument here. He presupposes that their belief must precede Christ's death, which was not true even of the apostles. "When I am raised up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself." Joh 12:32 And not before...

special Divine decree of predestination does not extend (as the general decree does) to every individual, it is nevertheless very extensive, even to all ranks, sexes, ages, nations, and generations.

1. To all ranks. To all sorts and ranks of men, to princes and peasants, to high and low, to rich and poor, to bond and free. It extends itself to kings, for God has His chosen vessels among them - - His Davids, His Solomons, His Hezekiahs, His Mannassehs. Though the Scriptures say (1Cor 1:26) "Not many mighty, not many noble, are called," yet it does not say, not *any*; for God has had some great ones to own His ways in all ages.¹² It extends to servants also (Tit 2:9-11), for God bestows His love on those in rags as well as those in robes. The poor have the gospel preached to them (Mat 11:5), and God is no respecter of persons.

2. To all sexes. The decree is extended to both sexes, to male and female. God has His elect ladies. "The elder to the elect lady and her children, whom I love in the truth;" and "The children of your elect sister, greet you" (2Joh 1:13), and both male and female are one in Christ Jesus (Ga 3:28) "I entreat you also, true yoke-fellow, help those women who labored with me in the gospel... whose names are in the book of life" (Phm 4:3).

3. To all ages. To young and old, to children, and to those of riper years; yes, tiny infants lay in the womb of the eternal decree, before they ever came out of their mother's womb. "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you; and I ordained you a prophet to the nations:" (Jer 1:5). John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost even from the womb (Luk 1:15); and it is probable David believed that his child belonged to the election of grace, and that its soul was bound up in the bundle of life; for he comforted himself thus; "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2Sa 12:23). David's going to it in the grave could yield him little comfort.¹³

4. To all nations. Grace is not immured within the walls of one nation only, but is extended to Jew and Gentile, to those of the circumcision and those of the uncircumcision, to Barbarian and Scythian, bond and free (Col 3:11), to some of every nation under Heaven (Act 2:5). The partition wall, which was between Jew and Gentile, is thrown down. Our Lord says, "and other sheep I have which are not of this (the Jewish) fold; them I must also bring" (Joh 10:16). This predestinating love effectually calls its chosen ones from all quarters. "I loved you; therefore, I will bring your seed from the east, and gather you from the west; I will say to the north, Give them up: and to the south, Do not keep them back; bring My sons from afar, and My daughters from the ends of the earth; Everyone who is called by My name" (Isa 43:4-7).

5. To all generations. Predestinating love is like a river that runs under ground, and breaks out in certain places above the earth. To this river, this ocean of everlasting love, Moses had his eye when he said of Joseph, "Blessed by the Lord be his land ... for the deep that crouches beneath" (Deut. 33:13). So fresh veins of election break forth, sometimes in one generation, and sometimes in another. It is not bound by time – whether before the law, or under the law, or after the law; but, in every generation God has His Church visible on the earth, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. Just as God is no respecter of persons, He is no respecter of places, nations, or generations; but He has had, and He will have, His hidden ones to the world's end.

O believer! There is ground for much rejoicing and strong consolation in having a view of the extensiveness of God's everlasting love.

¹² That great woman, the late Countess of Huntingdon, who was raised up of the Lord for eminent usefulness in the Church of Christ, used to exclaim, "O bless the Lord for the letter M, in 1Cor. 1.26, that it is not said, not any, but, not many noble, called: and especially bless him, that, through grace, MY soul is among the number of the highly favored few."

¹³ That is, David wasn't saying he was going to the child in the grave but in heaven – hence he considered the child to be elect.

1. If predestinating love extends itself to all degrees, then, those who are poor of wealth may be rich in faith, and a master's servant may be the Lord's freeman.
2. If to both sexes, then the weaker vessel may be a chosen vessel, and an heir of the grace of life.
3. If to all ages, then believing parents may have hope of their dying children; they may belong to the election of grace; they may be bound up in the swaddling bands of the covenant of grace; so they are not without hope for them.
4. If to all nations, then the ends of the earth may look towards Christ (as He is lifted up on the pole of the everlasting Gospel) and be saved (Isa 45:22).
5. If to all generations, then predestinating love is an inexhaustible *fountain* crying always, "Is there yet anyone of the house of the Lord among mankind to whom I may show the kindness of God (2Sa 9:3)?"

Of Conditional Predestination

Having stated the doctrine of Divine predestination as revealed in the Scriptures, and having, from the same source, proved that it is possessed of various distinguishing properties, such as being eternal, unchangeable, absolute, free, discriminating, and extensive; I come now, secondly, to consider the Arminians' view of it, viz.: "That it is conditioned on foreseeing our faith, works, perseverance," etc.

To this I answer that predestination cannot be conditioned upon foreseeing man's faith, works, or perseverance, etc., because of the twelve following reasons:

1. Whatever the Scriptures declare to be the cause and ground of our election, and only that, must be the cause and ground of it.

The good pleasure of God is the only cause and ground of our election, not any foresight of our faith, etc. That the Scriptures declare this appears plainly from Eph 1:5; "According to the good pleasure of His will," and from Eph 1:9 "Having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure;" and, "predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will." Also, from Mat 11:25-26: "You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes." But why? "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in your sight." Again the Scriptures fully declare the same truth in Rom 9:11-15, and Rom 11:5; and in 2Tim 1:9; our salvation and calling is stated to be, "not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began." The time would fail me in enumerating more passages of Scripture, for the whole Bible as with one voice cries aloud, election is of sovereign grace and not of works; flowing only from the absolute will and good pleasure of God.

2. Whatever makes election an act of debt should be rejected; and the conditional decree does this.

An act of grace and an act of debt are contradictory terms. If election is an act of grace (and the whole work of salvation has been proved to be wholly and solely from free grace), then making it an act of debt is abominable, and it is to be rejected. If the decree is conditional (upon foreseen faith and perseverance), then is it an act of debt and not of grace, an act of justice and not of mercy. For a decree giving glory to believers who persevere, as their reward for it, can be nothing else but remunerative justice.

3. Whatever makes God go outside of Himself in His immanent and eternal acts should be rejected; and the conditional decree does so.

It makes God look at this or that in the creature, and these then become the basis upon which the will of God is determined; thus man is the author of his own salvation, and God is *not* the author

of it. The doctrine of the conditional decree sets God upon His watch-tower of foreknowledge to espy what men will do, whether they will believe or not, obey or not, persevere or not. And according to His observation of their actions, He accordingly determines His will concerning them; thus the perfection both of the Divine knowledge and the Divine will is denied with one breath.

4. No temporal thing can be the efficient cause of our eternal election; yet faith, obedience, etc., are temporal things, the former being worked in us, and the latter being performed by us, in their appointed times.

What is this but to prefer time before eternity, and to set up post-destination instead of pre-destination?

5. Whatever is the fruit and effect of the Divine decree cannot be the cause of it; and faith, perseverance, etc., are only the fruits and effects of electing love.

Those who are given to Christ in the decree of election, do come to Christ, or believe in him; others do not come and do not believe; and the assigned cause is because they are not of His sheep, because they are not given to Him. "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me" (Joh 6:37). Coming to Christ is believing on Him. "You do not believe, because you are not My sheep" (Joh 10:26). "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (Act 13:48).¹⁴ We may not read it (as the Arminian would), "as many as believed were ordained to life;" for this would be setting the cart before the horse, as if the means were ordained before the end. We are predestinated that we should be holy, not because we are holy (Eph. 1:4). We are foreordained to walk in good works, not because we do so (Eph. 2:10). We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ, not because we are so (Rom 8:29). It is election that obtains faith, and not faith that obtains election (Rom 11:7). And the Apostle, in 2Tim 1:9, excludes all works (both foreseen and existing), showing that God's gracious purpose is the original of all. Indeed, Paul himself was chosen so that he might know the will of God, not because he was foreseen to do so (Act 22:14); and he tells the Thessalonians, "God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2Th 2:13). We may not make that which is an antecedent to election the consequence of it. "I have chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit" (Joh 15:16).

6. Whatever sets up an inferior cause before a superior cause, should be rejected; and the conditional decree does so.

God is the cause of causes, and the first cause of all things. Nothing exists except from Him, and there can be nothing before Him. "Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things" (Rom 11:36). "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Act 17:28). O Lord, "You have created all things, and for your pleasure they are and were created" (Rev. 4:11). God is the chief efficient cause, and the ultimate end of all beings; but if any being is antecedent to the determinations of God's will, this would take away the dignity of the supreme cause, and make an act of man superior to that of God.

7. Whatever takes away the certainty and unchangeableness of the Divine decree should be rejected; and the conditional decree does so.

If anything in man moves God to choose man, then the purpose of God cannot remain firm; it must depend on some contingent act in man, whether it is faith, works or perseverance. If it depends on our persevering in faith, it cannot be firm and certain, according to the Arminian doctrine of falling away. For the Arminian hypothesis states the decree of God in this changeable

¹⁴ Acts, 13.48, "Therefore either all were not appointed to everlasting life, or else all should have believed; but because that is not so, it follows that some certain were ordained: and therefore God not only foreknew, but also fore-ordained, that neither faith, nor the effects of faith should be the cause of his ordaining or appointment, but his ordaining should be the cause of faith."—Beza.

garb: "I will save all if they will obey Me; but I see they will sin. I must permit them, but I will condemn them all; yet this decree of condemnation will not be peremptory. I will send Christ to redeem all, to save all again, if they will believe; but I see they will not. I will decree to save those I foresee will believe, and who will persevere in believing." Oh what a changeable picture of an unchangeable God!

8. Whatever makes us choose God before God chooses us, should be rejected; and the conditional decree based upon foreseen faith does so.

If God does not choose us until faith is foreseen in us, then it necessarily follows that we choose God before He chooses us, and we love Him before He loves us, which is contrary to these scriptures, "You have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you" (Joh 15:16). "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1Joh 4:19). But the Arminians go further still, for they say, "We must be foreseen, not only to believe, but also to persevere in believing;" that is, foreseen not only to choose God for our God, but also to continue in that choice to the last moment of our existence before we can be fit objects of God's choice or election!

9. Whatever takes away the mysteriousness of the Divine decree should be rejected, and this doctrine of foreseen faith does so.

It is a dangerous presumption for men to take upon themselves, with unwashed hands, to unriddle the deep mysteries ¹⁵ of God with their carnal reason. Where the great apostle stands agaze, crying, "O the depth, how unsearchable!" and "Who knows the mind of the Lord!" Had Paul been of the Arminian persuasion he would have answered, "Those who are foreseen to believe and persevere are elected!" This answer would not have been hard to understand even by the unlearned (that is, the carnal) men of the world, who "wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction" (2Pet 3:16). But Paul was ignorant, and these men are wiser than the Holy Ghost; for he tells us that our election proceeds from the will of the Elector, and not from anything in the elected. The sovereign will of God is the supreme rule of all righteousness; He will have "mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardens" (Rom 9:18). Had foreseen faith and perseverance been the causes and conditions of election, there would have been no mystery in it.

10. The election which is shadowed in God's love for Jacob (both the person and the nation) is election according to the truth; but that election was not based upon foreseen faith or works.

First, Jacob the person. He was under electing love; all foresight of his faith and works were excluded. "Jacob have I loved" (Rom 9:12-13). To love Jacob is to will the greatest good to him, especially everlasting salvation and all things which accompany it. And this was before there was any difference between him and Esau; for they were both alike in the womb, both conceived in sin. "For *the children* not having been born yet, nor having done any good or evil – so that the purpose of God according to election might stand; not of works, but of him that calls – it was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger" (Rom 9:11-12).

Second, Jacob, the nation. Our Election is typified by God's election of Israel, which plainly appears not to be an election based upon his foresight of any worthiness in Israel; "Not for your

¹⁵ Dear reader! If you are a child of God! I then desire you to pause, with me, at this word, Mysteries. The mystery of his will! The wisdom of God in a mystery! The great mystery of godliness! Truly, truly (as Master Ness has here observed), it is a dangerous presumption for men, to take upon them with unwashed hands to unriddle the deep mysteries of God, with their carnal reason. Alas! Proud man is oftentimes vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, disdaining to remain ignorant of that, concerning the Infinite Jehovah himself, which it is impossible, in the nature of things he should ever attain to the knowledge of, in this world. Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt, Job, 11.12. It is said, the Lord knows vain men (ver. 11.) He indeed knows them. He knows that they and theirs are vanity. They would in the strength of their own wisdom, and of their own carnal search, find out-God; yet are too proud to take the Scriptures of Truth for their guide. Listen, vain man, listen to the challenges, and the all-important questions of the infinite Jehovah to the worm Job (chapters 38, 39, 40, 41), and may the Lord enable you to wrap your face in the mantle of your own nothingness; and, taking up Job's reply, to say, "I have uttered what I did not understand; things too wonderful for me, which I do not know. I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You, therefore I ABHOR MYSELF, and repent in dust and ashes."

righteousness, or for the uprightness of your heart ... Understand therefore, that the Lord your God does not give you this good land to possess because of your righteousness; for you are a stiff-necked people" (Deut. 9:5-6). All works and worthiness are excluded; and the assigned reason is, "Because the Lord loved you" (Deut. 7:8).

11. Whatever sets up the rotten Dagon of man's free-will before or above the ark of God's special predestinating grace should be rejected; and the conditional decree does so.

The conditional decree is grounded upon foreseeing that we will receive or reject God's proposed grace; and so man's will is made the first mover; it is advanced above God's will. And the act of predestination is put under the will and the power of the predestinated, and not under that of the Divine Predestination. Hereby the power of ordering man's salvation is wrested (as it were) out of God's hands, and put into the hands of our free-will. Then salvation is the work of the saved, and not of the saver; and to will and to do is not of God's good pleasure (Php 2:13). Thus men wickedly think that God is someone like themselves (Psa 50:21), wavering and fluctuating in His counsels and hanging in pendulous suspense; indeed, he is thought to be taking up new consultations as if dependent on the will of men, and upon the contingent acts which flow from them.

12. Whatever infers a succession of acts in God should be rejected; and election based upon foresight does so.

God is one act, and in Him there can be no succession, for then He would not be "I AM." Foresight of our faith necessarily presupposes a foregoing decree concerning the existence of that faith which is foreseen. For, first, God must decree that faith to be; second, He foresees that faith; third, he then decrees to save us based upon that foresight. So this foresight necessarily comes between two other decrees.¹⁶

Much more might be added, such as – foreseen faith can have no place in dying infants,¹⁷ yet of such is the kingdom of Heaven, and their names are written in the book of life (see Re 20:12). But to sum up the whole in one sentence: A conditional decree makes a conditional God, since the decree is God Himself decreeing. Therefore it must be rejected.

"May not the Sovereign Lord on high
Dispense His favors as He will;
Choose some to life, while others die,
And yet be just and gracious still?

Shall man reply against the Lord,
And call his Maker's ways unjust?
The thunder of whose dreadful word
Can crush a thousand worlds to dust.

But, O my soul, if truths so bright
Should dazzle and confound your sight,
Yet still His written will obey,
And wait the great decisive day!"

Objections Against the Absolute Decree of Predestination Answered

I have stated and proved the doctrine of absolute Divine Predestination. I have also considered, and, I trust, scripturally refuted the Arminian's notion that it is conditional. I shall now, thirdly,

¹⁶ An interesting argument, but it presupposes – just as in the accusation he levels against the Arminians – that God is somehow bound to do things in ordinal fashion; that he cannot foresee the consequent actions of his creatures as he has designed them and so include them in the single decree that Ness describes. Of course, if God did that, then he would necessarily predestine those consequent actions (by design); the effect would be indistinguishable from foreordination. Either way, the Arminian argument falls.

¹⁷ This is the most telling argument of all, and one which the Arminian with his adult "believer's baptism" cannot answer.

answer a few of the principal objections brought by them against this Divine absolute decree of unconditional predestination.

The Arminians deal with this doctrine as the heathen emperors did with primitive Christians in the first ten persecutions, who wrapped them up in the skins of beasts, and then exposed them to be torn to pieces by their fierce ban-dogs; this is what the Arminians do with this great truth. They first dress it up in an ugly shape, with their own false glosses upon it, and then they let fly one cynical sarcasm after another at it, saying, "This doctrine of absolute predestination accuses God, and charges him with injustice, dissimulation, hypocrisy," etc. etc.

Objection 1. Of injustice, in giving to equal persons unequal things; contrary to what scripture says, "that God is no respecter of persons" (Act 10:34).

Ans. 1. This was objected to Paul's doctrine, "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness (is there injustice) with God? God forbid" (Rom 9:14). And seeing the apostle brings it in as the cavil of carnal reason against God's decree, we therefore have sufficient ground to reject it. God must not lose the honor of His righteousness because the reason for it is not apparent to our shallow understandings. We may not reprehend what we cannot comprehend. The justice of God must not be measured by the standard of our reason; what is this but speaking wickedly of God, and talking deceitfully about Him (Job 13:7), and plainly robbing Him of all righteousness that is not consonant with our model. The work of God, and the wisdom of God, must always be viewed as inseparably united.

Ans. 2. God is righteousness itself; and darkness may sooner come from the sun (which is the fountain and source of light) than any unrighteous act of God. God's ways are always equal, though men think otherwise of them. "Yet you say, the way of the Lord is not equal. Hear now, O house of Israel; Is not My way equal? Are not your ways unequal?" (Eze 18:25); and though they are sometimes secret and past finding out (Rom 11:33), yet are they always just. God's will is the rule ruling; but not as regulated by man's depraved reason. God is the origin of all good; He is also the Foundation of justice and equity. God is too kind to do us harm, and too just to do us wrong.

Ans. 3. Jacob and Esau were equal in the womb, yet they had an unequal dispositional decree concerning them; this was God's right and power to do. This the apostle demonstrates, first, from Moses' testimony, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you, and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy" (Ex 33:19). It is His right to do so. And, secondly, from the example of the potter who has power over his pots, yet he has less power than God does over His creatures. Now what the pot cannot do with the potter, man may not do with his Maker. But the pot (supposing it could speak) could not accuse the potter of injustice in appointing equal lumps of clay to unequal ends.

Ans. 4. God's decree is not an act of injustice, but of lordship and sovereignty. Justice always presupposes debt; but God (who was perfect in Himself from all eternity) could not be a debtor to man who had received everything from God; the decree is not a matter of right and wrong, but of free favor. Grace is God's own. He may do with it what He will. "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with my own? Is your eye evil, because I am good?" (Mat 20:15). If He gives grace to some and not to others, there can be nothing wrong in Him when he is not bound to give anything to anyone.

Ans. 5. God is not a respecter of persons, because He does not choose men for their works' sake. It was before Jacob and Esau had done either good or evil. He finds all alike, and nothing to cast the balance of His choice except His own mere good pleasure. God is a free agent, and under no law in giving grace.

Objection 2. Of cruelty; as if God were worse to His creatures than tigers are to their young: or than rat-catchers are who stop up all the holes and then hunt the rats with their dogs, etc. etc.¹⁸

Ans. 1. This is charging God foolishly, seeing that no act of God can be a means to damn men. Men's own acts are the cause of their damnation; i.e., fulfilling their own lusts. Just as reprobation does not give a grace that will infallibly make men better, so it works nothing in them to make them worse.

Ans. 2. It is a mere fallacy: as if the decree of non-election was the procuring cause of man's damnation. *Sin* is the cause of damnation, but reprobation is *not* the cause of sin. David's order to Solomon concerning Joab and Shimei did not cause either one to come to an untimely end; it was treason against Solomon in Joab, and running from Jerusalem in Shimei, which caused their deaths (see 1Ki 2:5, 28, 40, 42).

Ans. 3. It is a false hypothesis to suppose that God, in the decree of reprobation, intends by an effectual means to bring men to damnation, as he does in the decree of election to bring others to salvation: for salvation is a favor that is not owed to anyone; so God may absolutely give or deny it; but damnation is a punishment, so it related to a fault. Means to salvation is the gift of free grace, but damnation comes of man's own voluntary sin, and it is the fruit or wages of it. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23). It is God who fits Peter for salvation; but it is Judas who fits himself for damnation.

Ans. 4. Were God to constrain the creature to sin, and then damn him for it, He would delight in the destruction of His creature, which is contrary to Eze 13:23 and 23:11. God did not thrust Adam into his sin, as He thrust him out of Paradise after he had willingly sinned. Man's punishment is from God as a judge; but man's destruction is from himself as a sinner. Let it be repeated, and again repeated, that man's sin came freely from himself.

Objection 3. It makes God guilty of dissimulation in calling upon those who are under the negative part of his absolute decree to repent, etc. It is just as if God had bid men whose eyes He had closed to judge colors; or as if He had bid those whose feet He had bound to rise up and walk.

Ans. 1. The non-elect's unrepentance is not only from want of power ["No man can come to Me, unless the Father ... draws him" (Joh 6:44)]; but also from lack of will, "You *will* not come to Me, that you might have life" (Joh 5:40). None are damned because they *can* do no better, but because they *will* do no better. If there were no will, there would be no hell: and this will be the very hell of hells, that men have been *felo de se*, self destroyers [*lit. felon of himself*].

Ans. 2. Man had a power in Adam. God gave him knowledge in his understanding, rectitude in his will, and purity in his affections: these were all lost by the Fall. God must not lose His authority to command simply because man by reason of his sin has lost his ability to obey.

Ans. 3. May it not more truly be said that it is the Arminians who charge God with folly and dissimulation, by representing Him as disappointed in his purpose, and by portraying Him as speaking thus: "I do indeed earnestly desire to save you, but you so hinder me that I cannot do what I desire; I would, if you would: therefore, since I am frustrated in My intention by you, I will change My purpose of saving you, and My resulting will shall be the determination to destroy

¹⁸ There was a favorite objection usually urged by the late Mr. Wesley, against the Sovereignty of God, who compared the doctrine of absolute Predestination, to that of casting a man bound into the midst of a house, setting that house on fire, and then calling out to the man to escape for his life: "I would gladly, but cannot, cries the man, for I am bound." Is not this specious argument completely answered in the replies to objections 2 and 3? Dear Reader! May the Lord give you well to ponder on these replies. May the Lord anoint your eyes with eye salve! The doctrine of the freedom of the will is an all-important point. It appears to ME, that these pages (48 to 56) contain, as it were, the CREAM, yes, the very marrow of the Book. Here it all hinges. It is—who shall be the Lord and Master! God or man. Who shall be on the throne? God or man. O the folly, the folly of abominable and filthy man, who drinks iniquity like water, to stretch out his hand against God; to strengthen himself against the Almighty: to run upon Him, even on his neck, upon the thick bosses of His bucklers, Job, 15.26.

you." So said Vorstius the Arminian, "Things may happen that may bring God to grief, having tried all things in vain!"

Ans. 4. But there is another view to be taken here. When God commands spiritual acts, He also grants the power to obey them. So it was when Christ bid the man to stretch out his withered arm, and Lazarus to come forth out of the grave. The call and the command of God is the conduit-pipe of strength and ability.

Objection 4. God's decree cannot be absolute and infallible, because it might have been frustrated by the possibility of Adam's standing.¹⁹

Ans. 1. Adam's standing was possible in respect to himself, but not in respect to God. To say that Adam might not have sinned is a categorical and simple proposition, and it will hold good considering Adam as clothed in himself with the freedom of his will. And to say it was inevitable that Adam would sin is equally true, considering that Adam was subordinate to the decree of God, and God's decree determined what Adam would do out of the freedom of his own will.

Ans. 2. As it respects man, Adam might have stood as well as fallen; for God not only gave His creature a law, but he also furnished him with sufficient power to keep that law if he wanted to. If man had not been mutable, he would have been God and not man. But Man is mutable; God alone is immutable. In this, the Lord is distinguished from all created beings. Yet as it respects God, it was not possible that man would stand; for in God's decree it was certain that man, being left to the mutability of his own will (upon Satan's tempting and God's permitting), would voluntarily incline to evil. Therefore Adam sinned freely in respect to himself, but necessarily in respect to God. He acted as freely in that as if there had been no decree, and yet as infallibly as if there had been no liberty. God's decree did not take away man's liberty; man in the Fall, while fulfilling the decree of God, still freely exercised the proper motions of his will.

Ans. 3. Thus then God, by decreeing Adam's sin, did not subtract from Adam any grace that he had; for He decreed that he would sin voluntarily. He did not diminish that power with which Adam was endued; He simply did not superadd that grace by which Adam would infallibly have stood; that grace was in no way owed to man, nor was God bound to bestow it on him. Thus Adam might stand in respect to himself; yet he must certainly fall in respect to God. The Jews might have broken Christ's bones in respect to their own free-will in such actions; yet was it not possible for them to do so; for "A bone of Him shall not be broken" (Joh 19:36). It was possible, in a sense, that Christ might be delivered from His passion by legions of angels (Mat 26:53), "But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" (Mat 26:54). It was possible in respect to redemption that God might have pardoned sinners without a Christ; but it was impossible inasmuch as God had decreed Christ to be the ransom. To argue on the Arminian hypothesis of free-will, it is possible that none may be saved or none may be lost; and then either Heaven or hell would be superfluous.

The difference between Supra and Sub-lapsarianism:

Objection 5. The predestinarians cannot agree about stating their decree; some stating that it comes before the Fall, as the supra-lapsarians do, and others have it after the Fall, as the sub-lapsarians do.

Ans. 1. Some Arminians, by the law of retaliation, may be called sub-mortuarians, for they hold that there is no full election till men die; and others are post-destinarians, for they place the eternal decree behind the final race of man's life. Surely when believers die they are the subjects

¹⁹ That is, Adam's standing in righteousness, rather than falling into sin. If it was truly possible that Adam might NOT have sinned, then God's decree was dependent on Adam's choice. Otherwise, God must have decreed Adam's fall as part of his free will, or else Adam never had free will – in Romans, Paul tells us that Adam was free prior to the Fall. Therefore God decreed Adam's fall, which is found in each of Ness's answers to God's dependency.

of glorification, not of election. Christ should have said to the penitent thief (based on this hypothesis), "This day you shall be fully elected," not, "You shall be with me in Paradise." And they may also be called re-lapsarians, for they say that the elect may totally and finally fall away; and that someone who is a child of God today may be a child of the devil tomorrow.

Ans. 2. Those notions of sub and supra are merely human conceptions of the order of the Divine decree. However, it so far transcends our understanding that our weak capacities cannot comprehend it except in the way of men. Those several states of man, before and after the Fall, do not exist in the Divine understanding as they do in ours; they are not a succession of acts, one after another; rather, God by one single act orders all things; the Divine idea in the decree represents all those states at once. They are not sub-*ordinanda* but co-*ordinanda*; they are not this after that, but altogether in one instant of eternity.²⁰

Objection 6. Absolute election makes men remiss in their duty by saying, "What need or use is there of good works? Let me live as I am inclined to do; if I am elected to salvation I shall certainly be saved."

Ans. 1. God's decree establishes means; it not only ordains the end, but the means to that end; and the one is never separated from the other. God decrees that the earth shall be fruitful; this does not exclude that the sun must shine upon it, showers must water it, and the husbandman must till it as his God instructs him (Isa 28:26). God decrees that fifteen years shall be added to Hezekiah's life; this made him neither careless of his health nor negligent of his food; he did not say, "Though I run into fire, or into the water, or drink poison, I shall nevertheless live that long." But natural providence, in the due use of God's means, co-worked so as to bring Hezekiah onward to that period of time which was pre-ordained for him. Man's industry is subservient to God's decree; it is called "the life of your hand" (Isa 57:10). We may not tempt the Lord our God.

Ans. 2. The golden chain has so linked the means to the end, and sanctification in its order to salvation, that God infallibly stirs up the elect to use the means, as well as bring them to their end

²⁰ Supra-lapsarians and Sub-lapsarians.—It has been a question in the Church, "Whether men were considered, in the mind of God, in the decree of election, as fallen or unfallen; as in the corrupt mass, through the fall; or in the pure mass of creatureship, previous to it, and as to be created. There are some that think the latter, so considered, were the objects of election in the divine mind; who are called supra-lapsarians: On the other hand there are those, whose minds lead them to adopt the former, who are styled sublapsarians, and these are for men being considered as created and fallen, in the decree of election. The arguments used on both sides are many; but the difference is not so great as may be thought at first sight; for BOTH AGREE in the MAIN, AND MATERIAL THINGS, IN THE DOCTRINE OF Election. As—1. That it is personal and particular; is of persons by name, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.—2. That it is absolute and unconditional, not depending on the will of -men, nor on anything to be done by the creature. —3. That it is wholly owing to the will and pleasure of God; and not to the faith, holiness, obedience, and good works of men; nor to a foresight of all or any of these.—4. That both elect and non-elect, are considered alike, and are upon an equal footing in the decree of Predestination; as those that are for the corrupt mass, they suppose that they were both considered in it equally alike; so that there was nothing in the one, that was not in the other, which was a reason why the one should be chosen, and the other left: so those that are for the pure mass, suppose both to be considered in the same, and as not yet born, and having done neither good nor evil.—5. That it is an eternal act in God, and not temporal; or which commenced in time, but from all eternity. For it is not the opinion of the sublapsarians, that God passed the decree of election, after men were actually created and fallen; only, that they were considered in the divine mind, from all eternity, in the decree of election, as if they were created and fallen.

Therefore, though they differ in the consideration of the object of election, as, thus and thus diversified, yet they agree in the thing itself. And wherein they differ, they agree to differ, as they should, and not charge one another with unsoundness and heterodoxy; for which there is no reason. Calvin was for the corrupt mass; Beza, who was co-pastor with him in the church at Geneva, and also his successor, was for the pure mass; and yet they both lived in great peace, love, and harmony. The contra-remonstrants in Holland, when Arminianism first appeared among them, were not agreed in this point; some took one side of the question, and some the other; but they both united against the COMMON ADVERSARY, THE ARMINIANS. Dr. Twiss, who was as great a supralapsarian as perhaps ever was, and carried things as high as any man ever did, and as closely studied the point, and as well understood it, and perhaps better than anyone did; and yet he confesses that it was only *apex logicus*, a point in logic: and that the difference only lay in the ordering and ranging the decrees of God. For my own part, I think BOTH may be taken in; that in the decree of the end, the ultimate end, the glory of God, for which He does all things, men might be considered in the divine mind, as creatable, not yet created and fallen; and that in the decree of the means, which, among other things, takes in the mediation of Christ, redemption by him, and the sanctification of the Spirit; they might be considered as created, fallen, and sinful; which these things imply. Nor does this suppose separate acts, or decrees, in God; or any priority, or posteriority, in them; which, in God, are but one and together; but, our finite minds are obliged to consider them, one after another, not being able to take them in together, and at once." — *Extract from Dr. Gill's Body of Divinity, book 2, chap. 2, on Election.*

by those means. "Brethren beloved of the Lord, God has from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth" (2Th 2:13). "I will also give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes; and you shall keep My judgments, and do them... Then you will remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations" (Eze 36:25-31). Let those in whom the Lord has put His spirit live as they are inclined to do, and I am very sure they will live godly lives.

Ans. 3. The Arminian eternal prescience infers just as absolute a certainty and necessity of events as our predestination does; for things must be foreordained to occur before they can be foreseen to occur. Men may argue in this way from their point of view, "If I am eternally foreseen to believe, I shall believe and be saved." And yet on the contrary they teach men to say, "I can repent whenever I want; I may be elected whenever I please, even though at present I am living in lewdness; for I have a free-will to repent even on my deathbed, so that I may be saved if I think it proper." *This* is the doctrine that will make men remiss in their duty! But by the operation of the Holy Spirit, an elect soul reads the heart of his covenant God towards him as loving him everlastingly, absolutely, and particularly; and as a consequence of God's everlasting unchangeable love, he sees God bestowing on him and giving for him His greatest and His best gift, which is Jesus Christ. Let him live as he is inclined to do. This will be his language and his practice, as it was Paul's: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." I love You because You first loved me; I am constrained to this by the all-powerful influences of your grace; this fleeting world can now afford nothing satisfactory to me. I shall never be satisfied till I am absent from the body and present with the Lord, till I awake with your likeness (Php 1:21; 1Joh 4:19; 2Cor 5:14-15; Psa 17:15.)

Objection 7. The doctrine of absolute reprobation makes men desperate; "Let me do what I can; if I am to be damned then I shall be damned: I am under a fatal necessity."

Ans. 1. This is like sucking poison out of a sweet flower; to dash oneself against the Rock of ages; to stumble at the Word of God for which they were also appointed (1Pet 2:8). Why has God ordered all things by an absolute decree forever? It is "that men should fear before Him" (Ecc 3:14). God acts freely, as the first cause; and man acts freely, as the second cause – in concurrence and not by constraint.

Ans. 2. This objection is well answered in the 17th Article of the Church of England: "Curious and carnal persons who understand the spirit of Christ as holding continually before their eyes the sentence of God's predestination, embark on a most dangerous downfall; the devil thrusts them either into desperation [of being lost], or into the wretchedness of most unclean living, which is no less perilous than desperation."

Ans. 3. No man may judge himself a reprobate in this life and thus grow desperate; for final disobedience (the only infallible evidence of reprobation) cannot be discovered till death. We are not to question the secret will of God, but to pay attention to His revealed will.²¹

Ans. 4. The Arminian doctrine [i.e. God foresaw what good courses I would take of my own free-will, so he elected me] is miserable comfort to one whose heart is privy to myriads of departures from God. It was well-said by the Psalmist, "Who can understand his errors?" Who can tell how often he offends?" "Cleanse me from my secret faults" (Psa 19:12).

Arminians tell men they may be justified, and sanctified, and be God's children, and be all but glorified, and yet, after all this, they may still become reprobates and be damned in the end. This

²¹ Martin Luther in *Bondage of the Will*: "The secret things belong to the Lord, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children." ...Speculating about one's predestination was ...tantamount to trespassing into God's secret chambers, whereas focusing on Christ and finding one's election in him was resting in the revealed things of God." From Shane Rosenthal, *Am I Predestined?*

is desperate doctrine indeed. Truly theirs is the desperate doctrine; whereas our doctrine is only liable to false inferences from carnal persons – for such persons also drew false conclusions from our Lord's words, and said, "Who then can be saved?" (Luk 18:26). Such inferences are not fairly deduced; instead, they are corrupt conclusions drawn from good premises.

"God's ways are just, His counsels wise,
No darkness can prevent His eyes;
No thought can fly, nor thing can move,
Unknown to Him that sits above.

He in the thickest darkness dwells,
Performs His work, the cause conceals,
But though His methods are unknown,
Judgment and Truth support His throne.

In Heaven, and earth, and air, and seas,
He executes His firm decrees;
And by His saints it stands confess'd,
That what He does is ever best.

Wait then, my soul, submissive wait,
Prostrate before His awful seat,
And, midst the terrors of His rod,
Trust in a wise and gracious God."

CHAPTER II - OF UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION

Universal redemption, or asserting that Christ died for all men, cannot be a Gospel truth because of the following arguments and reasons.

1. God the Father's election, God the Son's redemption, and God the Holy Ghost's sanctification, must all have equal extent and latitude;²² but universal redemption, in the Arminian sense of it, makes these operations unequal.

This is clear; for as the Father, Word, and Spirit are One in essence, so are they One in willing, working, and witnessing the redemption of sinners. Just as there are Three who bear witness on earth (the Spirit, the water, and the blood), so there are Three who bear record in Heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; "and these Three agree in one" (1Joh 5:6-8). Those whom the Father elects, the Son redeems, and the Holy Ghost sanctifies. If then there is a universal redemption there must be a universal election, and a universal sanctification as well. And so, by consequence, there must be a universal salvation.

It is evident from two scriptures that the Son redeems no more than the Father elects. The **first** is John 5:23, which declares that the Son must be honored as equal with the Father; but, to say that the Son redeemed all, and the Father elected only a few, is to give greater honor to the One than to the Other, and to create an inequality in Their operations. The **second** scripture is John 17:9-10: "All yours are Mine and all Mine are yours," etc. They were the Father's by electing love, and they became the Son's by gift and redemption: "Yours they were, and You gave them Me" (Joh 17:6). Christ redeems only those whom the Father gave to Him. Hence God's "book of life" in which the number of the elect is recorded, is also called the "Lamb's book of life," intimating that the number of those elected by the Father is commensurate with those redeemed by the Son.

²² That is, those the Father has chosen must be those the son saves and those the Spirit sanctifies. The Arminian would ask, "Why? Is it not possible that the Father has chosen fewer than the son has redeemed? How do you limit Christ's infinite sacrifice?" And so Ness goes on to explain the necessity of a correspondence theory of redemption (one to one to one correspondence, as in math).

It is evident from 1Joh 5:6-7 that Christ redeems no greater number than the Spirit sanctifies; there must be water to sanctify where there is blood to redeem. Christ's oblation is no larger in extent than the Spirit's operation. Thus it is most apparent that all three Persons in the Trinity have one object and one design of love. They are equal in essence, equal in honor, and equal in operation.

2. The benefits of Christ's death and resurrection are of equal extent as to their objects; but the benefit of Christ's resurrection is not extended to all.

It is acknowledged even by the Arminians that the benefit of Christ's resurrection is not extended to all and everyone alike, but is specifically extended to believers. It is evident from Rom 8:33-34 (they are both put together) that the death and resurrection of Christ are equally extended to their objects. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect," those for whom Christ died? Who can condemn those for whom Christ was raised? Those for whom Christ died and rose again cannot be condemned. "[Christ] was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Rom 4:25). Those that have the fruit of Christ's battle have the fruit of His victory also; but this cannot be said of all men, for the wrath of God abides on some (Joh 3:36).

3. The benefit of Christ's death and intercession are of equal extent as to their objects; but Christ does not intercede for all.

This is expressly declared in Scripture: "I do not pray for the world, but for those whom You have given Me; for they are yours" (Joh 17:9). "They are not of the world" (Joh 17:14). Christ's intercession is "not for the world" at large, but only for those whom His Father has given Him. And reason confirms this, for if Christ interceded for Judas, Pilate, etc., then He would have been repulsed, and was not always heard of the Father; contrary to John 11:42. Again, Christ is a High Priest. The two parts of His priestly office, oblation and presentation, cannot be separated: and what has a part in the former has part in the latter also. For the presentation necessarily implies the oblation, and it gives a perpetual force to it in the sight of God (Heb 9:12). Christ must intercede on behalf of those whom He has reconciled to God by His death; and His intercession is a personal presenting of Himself to His Father on behalf of those whom He personated [*represented*] on the Cross. We cannot say that there are some for whom Christ offered Himself upon earth but for whom he does not intercede in Heaven; this would make Christ only a half-priest to some, and therefore not a faithful High Priest, contrary to a number of scriptures, Isa 53:11-12; 1Joh 2:1-2; Heb 9:11-12, and Heb 10:19-21.

4. Those for whom Christ died have Christ for their surety; but all do not have Christ for a surety.

All are sinners: and every sinner must die, either by himself or by his Surety, for "the wages of sin is death." And the suretyship of Christ consists of this, that He died for us (Rom 6:23). He was "made a curse for us," that is, in our stead (Gal 3:13; 2Cor 5:21). Judah was surety for Benjamin's safety (Gen 44:32), and Christ is the surety of the new covenant (Heb 7:22); He took upon Himself our sins in His death (Isa 53:4-8; 1Pet 2:24). If Christ was a surety for all, then He offered up a satisfaction for all in becoming sin, and bearing the curse and wrath of God in their stead. But this is not done for all; for Christ does not know workers of iniquity; of them He says, "I never knew you" (Mat 7:23); yet He knows His sheep, and He laid down His life for them (Joh 10:11-15).

5. If the covenant of grace does not extend to all, then Christ did not die for all.

Christ's blood is called "the blood of the covenant" (Heb 9:20), and "the blood of the New Testament" (Mat 26:28). It is evident that the covenant of grace is not extended to all, for it is made with the house of Israel only. "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days; says the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jer 31:33). The covenant is only with those in whose hearts the conditions are effectually worked, i.e., putting God's fear in them, and writing His law in their minds, which only the election obtains. None dare say that God entered

into a covenant of grace with the "seed" of the serpent, but only with those whose "heel" the serpent hurts (Gen 3:15).

6. If Christ died for His sheep, His friends, and His church only, then He did not die for all.

This is plain from several scriptures. "The good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep ... (I) know My sheep, and am known by My sheep ... and I lay down My life for My sheep" (Joh 10:11-15). "Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends" (Joh 5:13, 14). "Feed the church, which He has purchased with His own blood" (Act 20:28). "Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (Eph. 5:25). Christ died for such as were Paul and Titus, not for such as were Pharaoh and Judas, who were "goats" and not "sheep" (Mat 25:33). He died to save "His people from their sins," and therefore His name was called Jesus (Mat 1:21); who are called the "redeemed of the Lord" (Psa 107:2). Now since those for whom Christ died are those who "hear His voice and follow Him," to whom He "gives eternal life" (Joh 10:27-28), those He sanctifies and cleanses, and presents to Himself "without spot or wrinkle" (Eph. 5:27), and those He has "redeemed from all iniquity, to purify to Himself a special people" (Tit 2:14). Such are His people, His chosen, His children. It cannot be intended for all unless we say that Pharaoh, Judas, etc., were of the sheep, friends, and church of Christ. It is true, He died for enemies (Rom 5:10), but it was to reconcile them to God; such were the believing Romans, who being Gentiles, Christ called "other sheep," not of the Jewish fold.

7. It must be applied to those for whom Christ's death was intended; but it is not applied to all, therefore it was not intended for all.

The end and the design cannot be severed from the action needed to accomplish that end. Christ's aim is to bestow what he obtains; He obtains nothing that is not applied. He Himself speaks of some from whom the gospel was hidden, and of others to whom it was revealed or made known. "You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes" (Mat 11:25). The sum total of the intercession of Christ is that what He has obtained may be applied to those for whom he intercedes, (see John 17 throughout).

8. If Christ died for all, then must all be reconciled to God; but all are not reconciled.

Sin hinders reconciliation; and Christ's death is a propitiation for sin (Rom 3:25). So all for whom Christ died must be reconciled to God; the death of Christ is the cause, and reconciliation is the effect following the cause. If all are reconciled, then all must be saved, and nothing can be laid to the charge of anyone. Take away the sin, and you acquit the sinner. But to grant such an acquittance and reconciliation to all brings in many absurdities; for upon this hypothesis it follows, 1st that Cain, Pharaoh etc., were reconciled to God by Christ's death when they were (at the time of Christ's dying) in the torments of hell, and never to be delivered from there. 2nd, that God damns reconciled persons. 3rd, that God takes double-pay for one fault, in punishing both the Surety and the debtor. 4th, that Christ's reconciling of some is ineffectual, etc. But these things are not so; for repentance is granted to those for whom Christ died, and remission of sins (Act 5:31); to them is given freedom from the slavery of sin, and regeneration to newness of life (Rom 6:6; Heb 2:14-15); on them is bestowed purifying grace, "purifying their hearts by faith" (Act 15:9); they have the blood of Christ to purge their conscience from dead works, so that they may serve the living God (Heb 9:14), and theirs is life eternal: "I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish" (Joh 10:28). All these fruits are evidences of our reconciliation by Christ's death.

9. What Scripture does not affirm anywhere cannot be a truth; and it nowhere asserts that Christ died for all men, much less for every man individually; therefore it is not a truth.

It is true Christ is said to "give His life a ransom for all:" but not for all men, or for every man individually; the Scripture is the best expounder of itself, and the "all" is rendered "many in Mat 20:28, and Mark 10:45: "The Son of man came to give His life a ransom for many." "My blood is shed for many, for the remission of sins" (Mat 26:28). And it is so frequently restrained to His

sheep, friends, church, believers, chosen, and those who are given to Christ, that it must mean some of all sorts; which, in equivalent terms, is clearly expressed in Re 5:9-10: "You have redeemed us out of every kindred and tongue, and people and nation." Therefore the word "all" must be taken for all the elect, all His church, all His children that the Father has given Him, etc., not all men universally, and not every man individually.

10. Whatever opposes the attributes of God ought to be rejected; and universal redemption does so.

First, it opposes His justice. If Christ redeemed Pharaoh and Judas, then redeemed souls are unjustly damned; this hypothesis sets the death of Christ in direct opposition to God's justice. And how could Christ die for Judas' sin when Christ's death was his very sin?

Second, it opposes His wisdom. As if God should love and hate the same person at the same time; Esau must be loved if Christ is given to die for him, yet hated, as being ordained to death from all eternity.

Third, it opposes His power. If Christ died intentionally for all, then God's intentions are frustrated since all are not saved. God is not omnipotent if His designs are crossed by the work of His own hands. And to say that freedom was obtained by Christ's death for those who are not set free is ridiculous; it makes a laughing stock of religion.

The Extent of the Atonement

God imposed his wrath, and Christ underwent the pains of hell either for,

1. All of the sins of all men,
2. All of the sins of some men, or
3. Some of the sins of all men.

In which case it may be said:

- a. That if the **last** is true, then all men have some sins to answer for, and so none are saved.
- b. That if the **second** is true, then Christ suffered in their stead for all of the sins of all of the elect in the whole world – and *this* is the truth.
- c. But if the **first** is the case, then why are not all men free from the punishment due for their sins?

You will say, "Because of unbelief; they will not believe." But this unbelief, is it a sin or is it not? If it is not a sin, then why should they be punished for it? If it is a sin, then Christ underwent the punishment for that sin or he did not. If he did, then why must *that* sin hinder them from partaking of the fruit of his death more than their other sins for which he died? If he did not die for it, then he did not die for all their sins. (John Owen).

Objections Against Particular Redemption Answered

Objection 1. What everyone is required to believe [about Christ] must be true, and it is the duty of all men to believe it; therefore Christ must have died for all men [or they would not be required to believe it].

Ans. 1. Suppose we grant this position; would not the doctrine of discriminating love²³ be destroyed by it? Would it not be poor comfort for a distressed soul to believe that Christ died for him no more than he died for Judas and all those who are damned in hell?

²³ "Discriminating love" is interchangeable with *particular redemption* and *sovereign grace*. Samuel Rutherford writes in *Christ Dying*: "...no Doctrine so endears Christ to a Soul as this of particular redemption and free grace that separates one from another, Psalm 147:12 – "Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem." And, among many bases for it, here is one in verse 19, "He shows his Word to Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments to Israel"; in verse 20, "He has not dealt this way with any other Nation." ...Christ esteems this Flower

Ans. 2. Those to whom the Gospel never came and who have never heard of the death of Christ are not bound to believe that Christ died for them. What God *reveals* is true; but God nowhere reveals that it is His intention that Judas should believe, or that all shall believe.

Ans. 3. All do not have the Gospel preached to them; and many to whom it is preached only hear the sound of it with the outward ear: they come and go attending to it in the same way as a door swings on its hinges, in a way of mere formality. They are not impressed with a sight and sense of their state as sinners. They are not weary and heavy laden because of sin. The proclamation by the gospel trumpet of redemption for sin through Christ's blood is not a joyful sound to them; they do not know their need of it. Evangelical repentance is the gift of free grace; faith is the gift of God. What is God's, as a gift to bestow, cannot be man's duty to perform, as a condition of salvation. Those who are invited to look to Christ, and to come to Him for salvation, are very minutely described: they are the weary and heavy laden with sin, the penitent, the hungry and thirsty soul, etc.; *these* are the characters invited to come to and believe in Christ, and not all men (Mat 11:28; Isa 55:1; Mark 2:17).

Objection 2. The words "all" and "every," often used in Scripture, must be taken universally.²⁴

Ans. 1. "All" and "every" must not be taken for a universal affirmative collectively, nor for every man individually, in the commonly quoted scriptures; rather it is to be taken distributively, as in Mat 9:35, where we are told that Christ went about healing every sickness and every disease among the people: that is, any and every kind of disease; for Christ did not heal every disease individually. This is also true in Col 1:28, where the word "every" is to be taken distributively, three times over, and must be restricted to those to whom Paul preached.²⁵

Ans. 2. "All" in 1Tim 2:4,²⁶ cannot be taken for every man individually, since it is not the will of God that all men in this large sense should be saved: for it is His will that some men should be damned, and justly so, for their sins and transgressions. To some men it will be said, "Depart, you cursed, into everlasting fire." If God wills all men to be saved, then all men *will* be saved, for "He (God) does according to His will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth" (Da 4:35). God does not fail; He cannot be disappointed in His own will; for He works all things after the counsel of that will.²⁷ Again, in Heb 2:9, Jesus is said to "taste death for every [man];" in the very next verse it is restricted to "sons brought to glory," and in Heb 2:11, it is restricted to "sanctified" ones. 1Tim 2:6 ("who gave Himself a ransom for all") is rendered in the parallel text in Tit 2:14, "who gave Himself for us." Now, who are the persons called "us" in this text? Are they

of Grace... and blesses his Father for it in *Matt. 11:25* – "*I bless you, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to Babes.*" [And in verse] 27, "*No man knows the Son except the Father; nor does any man know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son will reveal him.*"

²⁴ The popular evangelical phrase, "all means all," is catchy but untrue; it is unworthy of a good student of Scripture, as Ness shows.

²⁵ Col 1:28 - admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ;

²⁶ 1Tim 2:4 - who would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth.

²⁷ "I rather think that by all men, in 1Tim. 2.4, are meant the Gentiles, who are sometimes called the world, the whole world, and every creature, Rom 11.12, 15; 1Joh, 2.2; Mark, 16.15; which is the sense, I apprehend, in which it is used in verse 1, where the apostle exhorts, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanks, be made for all men, for kings, and for all in authority; which was contrary to a notion that obtained among the Jews (of whom there were many in the primitive churches) that they should not pray for Heathens and heathen magistrates. The apostle enforces this exhortation from the advantage which would accrue to themselves, 'that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty;' besides, says he, 'this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who will have all men (Gentiles as well as Jews) to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and therefore has sent his ministers to preach the gospel among them- For there is one God of Jews and Gentiles ; who by his gospel, has taken out of the latter a people for his name and glory. Seeing, then, there are some Jewish notions pointed at, in the context, and the whole is adapted to the state and case of the Gentiles, under the gospel dispensation, there is a good deal of reason to conclude that they are designed here: whereby another principle of the Jews is confuted, which is, that the Gentiles should receive no benefit by the Messiah, when he came ; and is the true reason of MOST, if not of all, those universal expressions, relating to the death of Christ, we meet with in scripture."— Dr. Gill on 1Tim. 2.4, in his "Cause of God and Truth." A great work, rightly entitled, and is surely a death's blow at the root of Arminianism.

not particularized as "redeemed from all iniquity, purified, and made a special people?" Christ gave Himself as a ransom for "all" those described, and for no one else.

The prophet David says, "All men are liars;" if we take the word "all" strictly, then the one who said it must also be a liar.²⁸

Objection 3. In John 3:16, and in 1Joh 2:2, it is declared that God gave Christ for the "world," and for the sins of the "whole world;" which must be taken literally.

Ans. 1. The word "world" has various meanings. A decree went out that "all the world should be taxed" (Luk 2:1); that is, it went out to all the Roman empire and those countries in subjection to it. The faith of the church of Rome was "spoken of throughout the whole world" (Rom 1:8); that is, it was spoken of throughout all the churches, and among all the saints in the world. When the Pharisees said to Christ, "Behold, the world has gone after Him" (Joh 12:19), by reference we find that they meant "many people" went out of Jerusalem to meet Jesus, crying, "Hosanna" (Joh 12:12-13). The Pharisees themselves, who so said, had not gone after Christ; therefore the whole world had not gone after him. So John 3:16: "God so loved the world" cannot be understood to mean the whole world in a strict sense, for birds, beasts, fishes, and all inanimate things are comprehended in that world, and these cannot have everlasting life. Nor can it be the whole world of men, except in the sense that God is the Preserver of both man and beast (Psa 31:6). There is God's love to creatures, His love to men, and His love to good men. God's love was the cause of His sending Christ, and the word "whosoever" (in the verse) restrains this love of God to some and not to others. It must therefore be properly God's love to *good* men, the third love; it does not refer to those He found to be good, but to those He made so.

Ans. 2. *There is a world of believers* (Rev. 5:9); just as manna was only for Israel, so Christ, the true manna, the Bread from Heaven, gives life only to the world of believers (Joh 6:33). Christ was believed in only in the world of believers (1Tim 3:16); the reconciled world (2Cor 5:19); and "all men do not have faith" (2Th 3:2). *There is also the world of unbelievers.* "All the world wondered after the beast. And "they worshipped the dragon" (Rev. 13:3-4). "The whole world lies in wickedness" (1Joh 5:19). The believing world is a world *in* the world ("these are in the world," John 17:11); and they are taken and chosen out of the world. They are in the world, and they sojourn among its inhabitants as strangers and pilgrims, because this is not their rest, their home; their desires are set towards a better country (Heb 11:13-16). It is clear from John 15:19 that they are taken and chosen out of the world and given to Christ: "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore, the world hates you." Also from John 17:6-9: "I have manifested your Name to the men You gave Me out of the world ... I pray for them; I pray do not for the world."

"Zion's garden wall'd around,
Chosen and made special ground;
A little spot, enclosed by grace,
Out of the world's wide wilderness."

Ans. 3. It is granted that God has a respect for all mankind. "We trust," says Paul, "in the living God, who is the Savior," i.e., the Preserver, "of all men, especially of those who believe" (1Tim 4:10). "The Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Psa 145:9). "He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sends rain on the just and on the unjust" (Mat 5:45). This only implies temporal providence and preservation, not eternal preservation; for otherwise the wages of sin would have been paid at the birth of it all, and the world (through

²⁸ A nice argument, but it presupposes that liars never tell the truth – which isn't true.

confusion by sin) would have fallen about Adam's ears, if Christ had not been the glorious undertaker.²⁹

All that are redeemed are redeemed by Christ; but only the elect are given to Him; they alone have an interest in Him, and are redeemed by Him, and they shall be glorified with Him.

Ans. 4. The word "world" is sometimes in Scripture to indicate Gentiles in opposition to Jews, and it is used this way in 1Joh 2:2. John wrote to the Jews, and ministered to those of the circumcision (see Ga 2:9). He says to them, "Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world," that is, not only for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. The Jewish nation considered themselves to be the special people of God; and so they were, for to them "pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises." And Christ was a Jew, "who came according to the flesh" (Rom 9:4-5). The Jews were always taught to appropriate the Messiah exclusively to themselves, to the utter rejection of the Gentiles whom they called "strangers," "uncircumcised," "common," "unclean," "dogs," etc. It was unlawful for a Jew to keep company or have any dealings with a Gentile (see Mat 10:5; Mark 7:17; Act 10:28, and Act 11:3). The salvation of the Gentiles in various parts of Scripture is called a "mystery," "hidden mystery;" the "mystery of Christ which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men ... that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs" (Eph. 3:4-6; Col 1:27). But when this mystery was revealed and made fully known by the divine mission given to Paul, who was sent by Christ to preach to the Gentiles (Act 26:17-18), and when it was declared in Peter's vision of the unclean beasts and by the Lord's consequent commission to Peter (Act 10:9-15, 20), then the contentions of the circumcision ceased (Act 11:2-3). They found "the middle wall of partition" between Jew and Gentile was "broken down;" the latter, who before were "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise," were now being "brought near by the blood of Christ." They glorified God saying, "Then God has also granted repentance unto life to the Gentiles." Jesus Christ is not only the propitiation for the sins of us Jews, but for the Gentiles also (Eph. 2:11-18).

Ans. 5. The foregoing is proved from Rom 11:12, where the two words, "world" and "Gentiles," are both used as signifying one and the same thing. "If the fall of them (Jews) are the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them are the riches of the Gentiles, then how much more their fullness?"

"It was a controversy agitated among the Jewish doctors whether, when the Messiah came, the Gentiles, (the 'world') should have any benefit by Him. The majority was exceedingly large on the negative side of the question; only some few, such as old Simeon and others, knew that He should be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles,' as well as 'the glory of His people of Israel.' The rest concluded that the most severe judgments and dreadful calamities would befall the Gentiles; in fact, that they would be cast into hell in place of the Israelites" (Dr. John Gill).

Objection 4. Surely Christ has as much efficacy to save as to damn (see Rom 5:17).³⁰

Ans. 1. There is a difference between a necessary extension and a voluntary one. Adam's sin was a necessary extension, but salvation by Christ is of free grace, wholly of God's pleasure, and it is therefore called the "free gift" (Rom 5:15).

²⁹ This isn't referring to Christ as a funeral director, but to the One who undertook the task of redeeming us. If God were not the Preserver of all men, and of all creation, then sin would have destroyed the world at the moment of Adam's sin. But God preserved the world despite the Fall, so that the Son might redeem it eternally – the Son undertook that task in the *Redemptive Covenant* that surely was made between the Father and the Son (Joh 17:4).

³⁰ Rom 5:17 – "For if, by the trespass of the one, death reigned through the one; much more shall they that receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one, *even* Jesus Christ." The logic is that if all are condemned in Adam, then all must be potentially salvable through Christ.

Ans. 2. Nowhere is Christ compared to Adam in the extent of the object [of his atonement], but only in the efficacy of His obedience. All and everyone are not radically in Christ as they were in Adam; all are not given to Christ; only "as many (says Christ) as You have given Me" (Joh 17:2). Just as all the offspring of Adam fell by Adam's sin, so all who belong to Christ are saved by Christ's death; just as all who are in Adam die, so all who are in Christ are made alive (1Cor 15:22).

Ans. 3. So that the apostle might not be misunderstood, and so that the word "all" in Rom 5:18 will not be taken universally, the term which defines the object is varied in the following verse; and thus "all" is rendered "many": "By the obedience of one, *many* shall be made righteous."³¹

Objection 5. In Rom 14:15, it is said, "do not destroy him for whom Christ died." And in 2Pet 2:1, persons are described as "denying the Lord who bought them."³²

Ans. 1. Everlasting destruction cannot be meant by the word "destroy" in Rom 14:15, and the context shows this; for the apostle, throughout the chapter, is exhorting the *believing* Romans not to condemn one another on account of things that are indifferent; nor to destroy the weak *believer's* peace of mind by doing anything (which although it is indifferent and not evil in itself) may yet prove a stumbling-block to him. I "am persuaded," says Paul, "that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him that esteems anything unclean, to him it is unclean. If your brother is grieved with your eating meat, then you are not walking charitably. *Do not destroy*" (by your conduct in eating meat considered by your brother to be unclean) the peace of mind of one of the weaklings of that flock "for whom Christ died." Do not put a stumbling-block, or an occasion of falling or offence in your weak brother's way (Rom 14:13-15). "Therefore, whether you eat, or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. Give no one offense" (1Cor 10:31-32). 1Corinthians 8 is written for the same purpose throughout.

Ans. 2. The persons spoken of in 2Pet 2:1, as "denying the Lord who bought them," are described by the apostle as "false teachers" – these are hypocritical professors, tares among the wheat (Mat 13:25, 38), those in whom the root of the matter was not present; they were not bought and redeemed by Christ from eternal death, but had merely escaped or abstained from the pollutions of the world through a theoretical knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (2Pet 2:20). To answer certain purposes, they made an outward profession of the gospel, which obliged them for a time to be outwardly moral; they associated with the people of God and insinuated themselves into churches.³³ They secretly introduced damnable heresies into the churches. Many followed their pernicious ways, causing evil to be spoken of the way of truth; and they made merchandise of true believers. They continued thus for a while, and then either their sheep's clothing was stripped off them, or they threw it off themselves, and returned again into the world. All this while they were "goats" and not "sheep;" ravening wolves and not gentle lambs. And Peter closes the chapter concerning them by saying, "It has happened to them according to the true proverb. The dog has returned to its own vomit, and the sow that was washed has returned to her wallowing in the mire" (2Pet 2:1-3, 17-22).

Ans. 3. The apostle (2Pet 2:1) does not appear to be speaking there concerning the purchase by the Redeemer's blood. The name or title "Lord" (Greek *depotes*) is nowhere else applied to Christ in the New Testament, except to the Father, as it is in Luk 2:29; Act 4:24; 2Tim 2:22; and this is especially true in Jude 4, where "the only Lord God" is distinguished from "our Lord Jesus Christ." And even though it could be proved to apply to Christ in the above text, it may be explained upon the principle that it is not an unusual thing with the inspired writers to speak of things not as they

³¹ The Arminian rebuttal is that many and not all are made righteous because some willingly reject Christ's work, not because Christ failed to atone for them.

³² 2Pet 2:1 – "But there arose false prophets also among the people, as among you also there shall be false teachers, who shall secretly bring in destructive heresies, denying even the Lord who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction."

³³ "There are many in the church, who notwithstanding are not of the church, and therefore at length shall be cast out: But the full and perfect cleansing of them is deferred to the last day." Beza.

actually are, but only according to the profession of the party involved. Thus, for instance, (Mat 13:12): "Whoever has, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whoever does not have, from him shall be taken away even what he has;" that is, "what he *seems* to have," as explained in Luk 8:18.³⁴ Thus apostates are said to be "twice dead," which would seem to imply that they had been spiritually alive, though in fact that was never the case; it was merely what they professed to be.

Ans. 4. So, even if we grant the premises, it only follows that those who think themselves redeemed, or are thought to be redeemed by others, may blaspheme and perish; yet this does not make all the world redeemed; this can by no means establish the doctrine of Universal Redemption.

CHAPTER III - OF FREE-WILL IN THE FALLEN STATE

AND OF EFFECTUAL VOCATION OR CONVERSION TO GOD

How Free is the Free-Will of Man?

The Arminians not only deny that election is an eternal, particular, unconditional, and irreversible act of God; and not only assert that Christ died equally and indiscriminately for every individual of mankind (for those who perish no less than for those who are saved); but they also aver that saving grace is offered for every man's acceptance; and every man may or may not accept this offer, just as he pleases.³⁵ This is such that the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit in conversion is not invincible but is suspended, or it depends for its efficacy on the will of man. Notwithstanding Christ's death, it was possible (in respect to man's free-will) that all might perish; and now, by His death for all, true grace is given to all; and all may use it profitably, hold fast to it, and be saved; or they may despise, neglect, or cast it away and be lost!

The will of man is naturally a self-determining power and principle. But since the Fall, it has the strong bias of sin upon it. Freedom is radically and originally in the will, not in the understanding; and it is an essential property of the will, so that the will cannot be compelled by any created external agent in its own free choice. Now it is no wonder that many mistakes arise about this great engine of the Almighty, since the soul only knows itself by reflection; and though we know the qualities and operations of the will, yet we do not know its essence.

Man is considered in a fourfold state:

1. The State Of Creation, in which he had free-will either to do good or evil, but was necessitated³⁶ to neither.
2. The State Of Degeneration, in which he is a servant to sin, and necessitated to evil.
3. The State Of Regeneration, in which he is freed from the slavery and dominion of sin, and from the love of sin, although he is not at present freed from the inbred corruptions and indwelling of sin.

³⁴ Luk 8:18 – "Take heed therefore how you hear: for whoever has, to him shall be given; and whoever does not have, from him shall be taken away even what he *thinks* he has." [or *seems* to have]

³⁵ "I came forward, in the name of God, to remove the thick darkness with which many have covered the sacred writings; and to show that such a salvation as it becomes God to give, and such as man needs to receive, is *WITHIN THE GRASP OF EVERY HUMAN SOUL*."!!! Adam Clarke, LL.D. – Alas, poor Adam Clarke! You came forward, and attempted that which you were unable to accomplish. It was not within your grasp!

³⁶ That is, he didn't need to do good or evil, but was completely free to do either one. "Necessitated" means what man does is a necessary consequence of his nature. In the Garden, man's nature was free to do good or evil; in degeneration, man's nature is sinful – nothing he does is pleasing in God's sight (it does *not* mean he is incapable of moral choices!); in regeneration, man's nature is no longer sinful (i.e. it is not *necessarily* inclined to sin), but it is still corrupted (i.e. believers still sin, but they are being progressively cleansed from it); in glorification, man's nature is holy, and so he is necessarily inclined to do only good – it will be his nature to be good and pleasing in God's sight – and he will know that his glorified nature is in stark contrast to his earthly nature.

4. The State Of Glorification, in which man is both freely and necessarily good, perfect, and happy.

In the first estate, man is free; in the second, he is a slave; in the third, he is set free; and in the fourth, he has a glorious liberty.

The controversy concerns the second state, in which we say that man is under a necessity of sinning, yet free from coercion; he is free to do evil, but not to do good. This is apparent by the following arguments:

1. It is proved from the Fall itself that there is no free-will to do good in the fallen estate; if man, in the Fall, lost his free-will to do good, then it cannot be found in the fallen estate.

The Fall implies the loss of that original righteousness and perfection in which man was created. If the other faculties of the soul became depraved, and were stripped of their primitive luster by the Fall, then the will must also share in that depravation. Now the depravity of the will is proved by considering the good it has lost, and the evil it has gained, through Adam's sin. The good it has lost is six-fold: it has lost power, order, stability, prudence, obedience, and liberty. The evil it has gained is a three-fold rebellion:

- (a.) Against the counsel of the mind,
- (b.) Against the controls of conscience, and
- (c.) Against the commands of God.

This king of the Isle of Man (the will), when he first came out of God's mint, was a curious silver-piece, and it shone most gloriously; but now, having fallen among thieves, it is robbed of everything; it has ashes for beauty and is a tyrant upon a dunghill; indeed, it is free from righteousness, but a slave to sin (Rom 6:17-20). Before the Fall, the will had liberty both to good or evil, to do or not to do; but since the Fall, the will is evil, only evil, and continually evil (Gen 6:5). The whole heart is now extensively evil, intensively only evil, and continually adding evil.

2. If conversion is a new creation, then fallen man does not have a free-will towards good. A convert is called a "new creature," or a "new creation" in Ga 6:15, and 2Cor 5:17. Creation is producing something out of nothing; but if there is a free-will to do good in man before conversion, then there is something of its own nature that is spiritually good towards the work of conversion in unconverted man; so it cannot be called a new creature after conversion. I am sure that every experienced soul finds the contrary to be true in that work of conversion; the whole frame is out of frame in the unconverted state, and man is a confused chaos, a vast emptiness when this creating power comes upon him. In fact, a greater power is required to *re*-create this little world than was required to create the greater world at first; for in this work, there is no pre-existing good matter to work with, and yet there is resisting evil matter present. The creation of the greater world was the work of God's Word (Psa 33:6); of His fingers (Psa 8:3); or of His hands (Psa 102:25). But to restore (the little world) man, requires God's arm (Luk 1:51); no, Christ set His sides to it (Luk 22:44); it cost Him tears and agony and blood. New qualities and operations are created in us; the will to will what is good, and the power to do what is good, are ascribed to this creative almighty power in the effectual conversion of souls to God. "It is God who works in you, both to will and to do His good pleasure" (Php 2:13).

3. If conversion is a new-birth, or re-generation, then fallen man has no free-will to do what is good.

Generation is the movement toward being, and proceeding into being; it presupposes that there is no being beforehand; for we are not, we are nothing, before we are begotten; as it holds true in generation, so it is in regeneration: "Of His own will He birthed us" (Jas 1:18).³⁷ It is not said that

³⁷ I have somewhere read of a simile used by the late Mr. John Wesley, namely, "That a sinner may cherish or hatch grace, though he cannot beget it." If this is fact, if a sinner has this power, of his own free-will, then Dr. Young was right in his "Centaur not Fabulous,"

God birthed us of our wills (yet this would be said if there were a free-will in us to do good) but of God's own will; and till then we do not exist (1Cor 1:28).³⁸

Unconverted men are nothing creatures. (a.) A *natural* nothing; for what is the great womb from which all things come into being, but nothing? (b.) A *moral* nothing; we are morally worse than nothing, and that is miserable; "Man is vanity," or as in Hebrew, Adam is Abel, that is, vanity (Psa 39:5); "and a lie" (Psa 62:9). "The heart of the wicked has little worth" (Pro 10:20); neither for use nor for service; as a shadow is not useful for war, nor a statue for prayer, so fallen man is unfit to serve God, for his best actions are sinful. All this shows that we are nothing, and we do not have a free-will to do good, till we are begotten of God.

4. If conversion is a new birth, then fallen man has no free-will to do good.

We cannot give birth to ourselves; a babe cannot be born of itself; nothing can have its original from itself, for it would then be before and after itself; it would be and it would not be, at the same time. Thus we are taught to look above ourselves for our new birth. "Unless a man is born again," or from above (Joh 3:3). We are born not of the flesh, "but of the Spirit" (Joh 3:6). Our first birth is of the earth; it is earthy; our second birth is from the Lord; it is Heavenly; we are "born of God" (1Joh 3:9).

5. If conversion makes someone alive who was dead in sin, then fallen man has no free-will to do good.

This is proved from Eph 2:1: "He has made alive You who were dead" etc. He does not say half-dead, like the man who fell among thieves (Luk 10:30); but he is wholly dead as to spiritual life. There is no manner of good in us (Rom 7:18). And "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think" a good thought till Christ quickens us (2Cor 3:5). "Without Him we can do nothing" (Joh 15:5). From Him our fruit is found (Ho 14:8); both the bud of good desires, the blossom of good purposes, and the fruit of good actions. Aaron's rod (a dry stick without a root) is a fit emblem; it budded, blossomed, and brought forth almonds; this was not done by any inward principle or power of nature; it was solely and wholly the work of God. So Ezekiel's dry bones were made to live; nothing of that life came from themselves, but all from God. Thus it is in this spiritual life; we can contribute nothing by which to dispose ourselves to will what is truly good; we cannot so much as call Christ Lord, except by the Spirit (1Cor 12:3). If there is no life except through union with Christ, then until we are grafted into that blessed and bleeding vine, we cannot produce fruit to God. No natural power or principle in us can graft us into Christ,³⁹ for faith is the grafting grace, and that faith is "the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8), the grace by which the just shall live (Hab 2:4), and by which Christ dwells in our hearts (Eph. 3:17). Till then we are dead, and have no free-will to do good.

who, addressing himself to man, says—"Is your consent necessary to finish what is begun? Yes; it is in you to grant or deny the request of the Almighty. Heaven intends, decrees, labours, and works miracles, for your welfare. It presses you, it importunately presses you to comply. Consider how you are courted; and by whom: by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, your FELLOW-LABORERS for your good. So glad all heaven; assert, rescue, ennoble, and with bliss eternal, CROWN yourself. For without you, in the constituted order of things, heaven is unable to do it. Without you, you amazing being, there is impotence in heaven. Heaven's desires are at your mercy."!!!

³⁸ 1Cor 1:28 – "God has chosen the base things of the world, and things which are despised, *indeed*, things which are not, to bring to nothing things that are:"

³⁹ These, and similar expressions, militate nothing against the doctrine of eternal secret union to Christ:—God's people were one with Christ from everlasting; and it is because they ARE Sons (not to make them Sons) that the Spirit is sent into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father, Gal. 4.6. Before effectual calling, the elect cannot be distinguished from the reprobate, neither by themselves nor others. It is by grace we are saved, but it is through faith being wrought in our hearts that we have a knowledge of that salvation, Eph. 2.8; therefore faith may be said to "engraft into Christ," t. e. manifests our union with him, Rom 9.24-25. Paul could say of himself and others, we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. 1.4, but Paul gave no evidence, either to himself or to others, of belonging to Christ, when he assisted at the stoning of Stephen, Acts, 7.58, and when he went to the High Priest for letters to Damascus, Acts 9.1-2; he was then dead in sins; but soon after, when that light which is above the brightness of the Sun, shone into his heart, he became alive to God, through Jesus Christ his Lord.

6. If regeneration, or recovery from the state of degeneration, is a resurrection, then fallen man has no free-will to do good.

It is obvious that regeneration is a resurrection from the following scriptures: "Verily, verily, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now has come, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and those who hear shall live" (Joh 5:25). "When we were dead in sins, (He) made us alive us together with Christ" and "has raised us up" etc. (Eph. 2:5-6). It requires as much power to raise, quicken, and make alive a sinner who is dead in trespasses and sins as it does to raise Christ from the dead (Eph. 1:19-20). To raise up Christ, and to work faith in us, requires "the exceeding greatness of His power" (Eph. 1:19). Here are three gradations: power, greatness of power, and as if that were too little, the apostle adds, "according to the working of His mighty power." The original words imply not only a working, but an effectual force at work; such strength as may be found in the arms of valiant men who can do great exploits. No, it is more; it is beyond all this, it implies a power that can do all things, an *omnipotent* power. Surely, had there been an internal principle in us toward this great work, or any free-will in us to do good, then Paul would not have used those gradations, nor such emphatic, and significant expressions. This work of regeneration would not then have required the effectual, forcible power of the valiant arm of God; it is the same power that raised Christ from the dead, and by which He was declared to be the Son of God (Rom 1:4).

7. If moral persuasion is altogether insufficient of itself to recover man from his fallen state, then fallen man has no free-will to do good.

If moral persuasion could recover man, then faith would be an easy work, and it would not require such mighty power as has just been proved. Christ did more to raise Lazarus than morally persuade him to come out of the grave; when Christ said, "Lazarus, come forth" (Joh 11:43) a mighty power went along with the command, which gave effect to it. It is not enough to persuade a prisoner to come forth; his chains must be struck off, and the prison doors must be opened (Act 12:6, 7, 10); and man is more than a mere prisoner; he is *dead* in sin, and so he must have a grace that makes him alive; which moral persuasion can never accomplish.

8. If Christ is All in all (Col 3:11) in matters of salvation, then man is nothing at all as to that work, and he does not have in himself a free-will to do good.

(a.) Christ's work is to open the ear, because it is stopped up like the deaf adder's ear is to the voice of the charmer (Psa 58:4-5). Christ gives us the understanding ear; "He opens also their ear to discipline, and commands that they return from iniquity" (Job 36:10). See Psa 40:6, and Isa 50:4; these passages, although spoken of Christ, are also good concerning His people.

(b.) Christ opens not only the ear, but also the heart (Act 16:14). The Lord opened the heart of Lydia, she did not open her own heart; which she might have done if she had a free-will to do good. The key of the heart hangs at Christ's belt. "He who opens and no man shuts; and shuts and no man opens" (Rev. 3:7). Moral persuasion will never prove effectual to open the heart of man.

(c.) Besides Christ there is no Savior (Isa 43:11; Ho 13:4); but free-will Arminianism makes man a co-savior with Christ, as if the task was split between the grace of Christ and the will of man, and the latter divides the spoil with the former; indeed, as if the will of man deserved the greater share: for if Christ is only a monitor, and persuades us to do good, then man's own will is the principal author of its own goodness; and he is the one who makes himself to differ from others, and who has something that he did not receive at conversion, something of which to boast before God. "Who makes you to differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did receive it, why do you glory, as if you had not received it?" (1Cor 4:7). Persuasion leaves the admonished will to its own indifference, not changing it at all; so man becomes his own savior, or at least Christ is not the only Savior; how then is Christ All in all?

9. If fallen man must be drawn to goodness, then has he no free-will to do good.

It is proved from John 6:44 that moral persuasion will not bring a soul to Christ; that man cannot come of himself, but must be drawn: "No man can come to Me, except the Father which has sent Me draws him." Drawing is what brings anything out of its course and channel by an external influence, and not from an innate power or internal principle. In So 1:4,⁴⁰ the word is not "lead" but "draw;" in drawing there is less will and more power than in leading; and though God draws us strongly, yet He does it sweetly. As we are drawn, we do not have a free-will to do good, or else man only fell in his understanding, not in his will; yet are we volunteers (Psa 110:3), a willing people; it is not that Christ *finds* us so, but he *makes* us so "in the day of His power," and when He speaks to us with a strong hand (Isa 8:11). We are naturally haters of God, and at enmity with Him (Rom 1:30; 8:7). But the Spirit gives a new power to the soul, and then he acts and influences that power to do good; and so he draws a God-hater to love Him. This is more than a bare persuasion to a stone to be warm, for God takes away the "heart of stone," and gives a "heart of flesh" (Eze 36:26). God the Spirit gives us the inclination to come, and he gives us the very power to come to Christ; and Christ finds nothing good in us (Rom 7:18).

10. If the soul of man is passive in effectual calling, then there is no free-will to do good in fallen man.

The spirit of grace is compared to a precious liquor that is infused in us; and the called and chosen of God are called vessels of mercy. "I will pour upon the house of David ... the spirit of grace" etc. (Zec 12:10); "the vessels of mercy prepared for glory" (Rom 9:23). Now a vessel is a passive receiver of liquor that is poured into it. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Rom 5:5); that is, it is poured out and infused into God's vessels of mercy. The atmosphere is passive when it receives light, and Adam's body was passive when God inspired it with life. Although it was formed and organized, yet it was lifeless and breathless (Gen 2:7). So the will of man (in respect to this first reception of grace) has neither concurrence nor cooperation active; the Lord is alone in that work. Apart from the influences of Divine grace, it is hell for anyone to be brought from hell; though it is also hell for us to stay there after God has opened our eyes and changed our hearts. Our corrupt nature neither can nor will contribute anything to destroy its own corruptions. In the first work of being made alive, the will does not move itself, but is moved by God. The will, as a creature, *must* obey its Creator; yet as a sinful depraved will, it does not willingly obey until it is "*made* willing" (Psa 110:3). Man, and the will of man, while in an unregenerate state, may be compared to the tied-up colt in Mark 11:2 (tied and bound with sin's chain). But when "the Lord has need of him," and the "day of His power" has come, the sinner must then be loosed and let go.

11. Denying that grace, *irresistible* grace, *special* grace, is active in our conversion, is abominable; and the doctrine of free-will is a denial of this.

The advocates for free-will say, "If a man improves his naturals, God is bound to give him spirituals." What is this but turning grace into debt? Saying that the reason one believes and another does not arises from the co-operation of the free-will of the one who believes, is to deny that special irresistible grace is specific to the elect. All of this is contrary to these scriptures: John 6:37, 45; Rom 8:14; 1Cor 1:23-24; 1Joh 4:13,⁴¹ and very many others. God's dispensations towards His people are all of free grace. He enlivens whom He will (Joh 5:21). The heart of one sinner is

⁴⁰ So 1:4 - Draw me, we will run after you: the king has brought me into his chambers: we will be glad and rejoice in you, we will remember your love more than wine: the upright love you.

⁴¹ Joh 6:37 All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and the one who comes to me I will in no way cast out. Joh 6:45 It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall be all taught of God.' Every man therefore who has heard, and has learned from the Father, comes to me. Rom 8:14 those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 1Cor 1:23-24 But we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, and to the Greeks foolishness; ²⁴ But to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God. 1 Joh 4:13 We know that we live in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit.

caused to melt like wax before the fire and receive God's seal, while the heart of another remains as immovable as marble, like a the rock that cannot be shaken; this is the work of God's gracious dispensation. "He has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and he hardens whom He will harden" (Rom 9:18). The Spirit blows where it intends (Joh 3:8). God may bestow grace even with the first breath of life, and regenerate a babe as soon as it is born; this is what he did with John the Baptist who was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb (Luk 1:15). Others He may cast into the womb of the new birth at the very moment of leaving the world, at the eleventh, indeed, at the twelfth hour, just as he did with the thief on the cross. Oh, who can order the ways of grace, and set bounds to the spirit of God in its breathings on man!

12. Free-will brings with it so many absurdities that it cannot be accepted.

(a.) It makes man the cause of his own salvation.

(b.) It puts grace under man's own power, not man's will under the power of grace.

(c.) It robs God of the honor of making one man differ from another, and it ascribes it to man.

(d.) It allows man the liberty of boasting to God, saying, "God, I thank You that You gave me the power to will (yet You gave it to Judas as well as to me), but I thank myself for the act of my own willingness, since I receive from You no more than Judas did."

(e.) It exempts the creature from the power of God, as if man, spider-like, could spin a thread out of his own bowels upon which to climb to Heaven.

(f.) It makes man the cause for why God wills this or that; so God must attend to the will of man, and not be infallible in His own decrees, or work all things according to the counsel of His own will (Eph. 1:11 Psa 115:3).

(g.) Then the apostle James lied in saying that "every good gift" is from God (Jas 1:17); and Paul was also mistaken in Rom 9:11. He should have said, "It is of man who wills and runs," and not, "Of God who shows mercy."

Objections in Favor of Free-Will Answered

Objection 1. There is a law written in the hearts of fallen mankind (Rom 2:15).

Ans. 1. This is conscience bearing witness of right and wrong (see the same verse, Rom 2:15). Impotency is in the will.

Ans. 2. Adam had a son "in his own image" (Gen 5:3), not only in his image as a man, but as a sinner. "What is born of the flesh is flesh" (Joh 3:6). "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean thing? No one" (Job 14:4). While we are Christless, we are without strength (Rom 5:6).

Ans. 3. The devils have more light than men, yet they are altogether dead in sin, even though they believe and tremble (Jas 2:19), and even though they confess Christ (Luk 4:34; Mark 1:24). They sin freely, yet they cannot avoid it, but *must* sin.

Objection 2. Why is man blamed for resisting the Spirit if there is no free-will (Act 7:51; Matt 23:37).

Ans. 1. They resisted the preaching of the Gospel (which is the outward means of grace) by persecuting its ministers. The word "resist" in that passage of Scripture signifies a rushing against, and falling upon in a rude and hostile manner, and it fitly expresses their ill-treatment of Christ and His ministers by falling upon them and putting them to death. That is the resistance specifically intended here; see also Act 7:52. The *inward* work of the Spirit *cannot* be resisted; as the creature can neither hinder nor further his own creation, nor the dead their own resurrection, so neither can fallen man hinder or further his own conversion.

Ans. 2. Mat 23:37.⁴² This scripture, so common in the mouths of Arminians and so frequently found in their writings, and so readily produced by them on almost every occasion against the doctrines of grace – this scripture, taken in its context, will give them no advantage. "How often I would have gathered," etc., "but you *would* not." This gathering does not describe an internal gathering of Jews to Christ by the Spirit and grace of God; but an external gathering to hear Him preach, so that they might be brought to assent to Him as the Messiah.

This reception of Christ would not have been saving faith, but it would have preserved them from that temporal ruin which is threatened in the following verse (Mat 23:38). This scripture therefore, just as in Act 7:51, only concerns a resistance to Christ's outward ministry. Jerusalem, i.e., her rulers, did not receive Him (Joh 7:48), therefore their house is to be desolated (Mat 23:38); the city is one thing and her children another. Here is temporal destruction threatened for neglecting temporal visitations (Luk 19:44). Nationally considered, Jerusalem would have been preserved in its peace had the people, under the rational opportunity afforded them for receiving the Messiah, accepted Christ under that character.

Objection 3. Why does God say, "What more could I do to My vineyard?" (Isa 5:4).⁴³

Ans. 1. This is not spoken of grace, that God gives to particular men specially; but of great things done for Israel as a *nation* (Psa 147:19-20). God did not deal so with other nations. "These words are part of a parable, representing the state and condition of the people of the Jews; and the purpose of it is to show the ingratitude of the Jews in the midst of many favors bestowed on them, and the patience and long-suffering of God towards them, and to vindicate His justice in their ruin as a nation" (Dr. John Gill).

Ans. 2. God did enough in making man upright; and if man has lost his uprightness, he must thank himself, and not blame God who is not bound to restore it. Grace is the Lord's own; he gives it to whom He will.

Objection 4. Man is a rational creature; his will cannot be determined by anything from outside, because it is a self-determining principle.

Ans. 1. Irresistible grace takes not away that natural liberty which the will has by creation, but only the depravity of it; it knocks off its fetters, but it does not destroy its nature. We never enjoy our will so much as when God's will overrules ours. If man can determine his own will, and destroy its liberty, then much more can God who is its maker.

Ans. 2. To will is from nature, but to will well is from grace; spiritual fruit must spring from a spiritual root.

"Not all the outward forms on earth,
Nor rites that God has given,
Not will of man, nor blood, nor birth,
Can raise a soul to Heaven.

The sovereign will of God alone,
Creates us heirs of grace;
Both in the image of His Son,
A new peculiar race.

Thus quicken'd souls awake and rise
From the long sleep of death;

⁴² Matt 23:37-38 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate.

⁴³ Isa 5:4 "What more could have been done for my vineyard than I have done for it? When I looked for good grapes, why did it yield only bad?" In other words, God has no control over our free-will response to his implorings and provisions.

On Heavenly things they fix their eyes,
And praise employs their breath."

CHAPTER IV OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE

The fifth and last point of Arminianism implies that saving grace is not an abiding principle, but that those who are loved of God, ransomed by Christ, and born again of the Spirit, may throw it all away (no matter how God may wish and strive ever so much to the contrary), and perish eternally at last.

The doctrine of the perseverance of the saints will therefore be considered in this last chapter; and the position to be defended is this: That true and saving grace cannot be totally and finally lost.

To better understand this, I shall enquire:

First, What is saving grace?

Second, What does it mean to fall totally and finally?

Third, What arguments can be assigned, or reasons given, to evidence that this special saving grace cannot be totally and finally lost?

First Inquiry. What is saving Grace?

Negatively

1. It is not the grace of nature or *natural* grace, which is two-fold:

(a.) *In the pure estate*, it is the gift of original knowledge and righteousness which was infused into the soul as soon as it came into being in bare nature.

(b.) *In the fallen estate*. The Gentiles do by nature the things contained in the law, their conscience bearing them witness, and their thoughts accusing or excusing them, according as they do well or ill (see Rom 2:14-15).

2. Nor is it *supernatural* or *common* grace, which is called supernatural grace because it is not attainable by the power of nature or free-will; and it is called common grace, because it is given both to the elect and non-elect. It refers to our dexterity in our callings, such as that given by the Spirit to Bezaleel and Aholiab: "I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship" etc. (Ex 31:2-6). It refers to our ministerial gifts, of which Judas was a partaker. It is our delight in hearing the Word, but only such as the hearer described as stony ground (Mat 13:20); and it also refers to Herod, who did many things, and who heard John preach gladly (Mark 6:20). These tastes of Heavenly things are given to servants as well as to sons, and they differ from saving grace in its subject, origination, efficacy, property, duration, event, and final issue.

(a.) In its *subject*. Saving grace is specific to the elect only, and is no wider than election itself.

(b.) In its *origination*. Common grace flows from Christ as a Redeemer, but not as their personal Redeemer; and from the Spirit of Christ assisting them, but not indwelling them.

(c.) In its *efficacy*. Common grace may qualify as a common profession, but there is only a "form of knowledge" (Rom 2:20), and a "form of godliness" (2Tim 3:5), which neither renews the heart, nor raises it above a common frame; yet those with such grace may do much for God (as with the stony ground) and they may suffer much for God (as with the thorny ground) and yet it will still not be special grace "which the world cannot receive" (Joh 14:17), and which lives, revives, and reigns, so that sin cannot have dominion over it (Rom 6:14). *Gifts are but as dead graces, but graces are living gifts.*

(d.) In its *property* or nature. Common grace is only the ornament, not the substance of a Christian; *gifts, indeed, may beautify grace, but only grace sanctifies gifts*, just as the gold beautified the temple, but it was the temple that sanctified the gold (Mat 23:17). For the eminence of gifts and the prevalence of sin, a form of godliness and the power of sin, may dwell and exist together.

(e.) In its *duration*. We acknowledge that common grace may wither away; it is a gift that God may repent of, unlike the gift of effectual calling (Rom 11:29). *The greatest flood of spiritual gifts may decay to less than a drop, whereas the least drop of saving grace shall increase to a river*. Thus the Spirit (in gifts of prowess and government) departed from Saul (1Sa 16:14), and ministerial gifts (such as the right arm and right eye, Zec 11:17)⁴⁴ may fail and be withered up.⁴⁵

(f.) In its *event* and in its *final issue*. Common grace aggravates condemnation. Just as with a sinking ship, the more it is laden with gold, the deeper it sinks; so too with men, the more they are laden with gifts without grace, the deeper they sink into hell. Just as a harlot may have children but receive no credit or comfort from them because they are bastards; so bastard graces, such as false hope, faith, love, etc. (if we are not one with Christ and married to Him) never end in joy. We may bless ourselves with thoughts of embracing beautiful Rachel (as Jacob did), when in the morning of the resurrection it proves to be only bleary-eyed Leah.

Positively

3. And now positively, supernatural *saving* grace is the *sanctification of the Spirit*; it is His renewing the image of God in us, and guiding and strengthening us *to* obedience and *in* obedience, even to the end. It is His almighty effectual working on the hearts of the elect, giving them a certain continued connection of all spiritual blessings, and this manages them onward even to a state of glory. "Those whom He predestinated, He also called; and those whom He called, He also justified; and those whom He justified, He also glorified" (Rom 8:30). He "has made us fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light" (Col 1:12). The effects of sanctification accompany salvation; it is permanent in its effects both *on* the soul in justification and adoption, and *in* the soul in its calling, sanctification, and perseverance to glorification. This grace does not differ from glory in kind, but only in degree; *grace is glory militant, just as glory is grace triumphant*. Therefore it is called "the riches of His grace" (Eph. 1:7), and "the riches of His glory" (Rom 9:23). This is that grace which cannot be totally and finally lost. "The water that I give to him shall in him be a well of water, springing up into everlasting life" (Joh 4:14).

Second Inquiry. What is it to fall totally and finally?

Ans. 1. To fall totally is to have grace altogether dead in us, both in the actions of it and in the habit of it; it has no life either in its branches, bole, or root; no seed remains in us, nor any root of the matter.

⁴⁴ Zech 11:17 "Woe to the worthless shepherd who leaves the flock! A sword shall be against his arm and against his right eye; His arm shall completely wither, and his right eye shall be totally blinded."

⁴⁵ Alas, alas, that we live in a day, in which it too often appears that a gifted ministry, is more eagerly sought after than a GRACIOUS one! And, after all, what are gifts? Have not wicked men gifts? "Madam (said Mr. Grimshaw to a Lady, who was admiring a minister for his great talents and gifts), I am glad you have never seen the Devil, for he has greater talents than all the men in the world; and I am fearful, was you to see him, you would fall in love with him, you seem so highly to regard talents and gifts." I fully coincide with good Mr. Newton, that—"the ground of a minister's popularity ought not to convey to him any solid satisfaction; for even to Simon Magus, all gave heed from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' Neither can he ground his satisfaction on the exercise of enlarged talents, for even Balaam had extraordinary endowments. Nor yet on success; for many shall say, 'Have we not done many wonderful works, and cast out Devils in your name?' But a minister's satisfaction must be grounded on A FAITHFUL DISCHARGE OF HIS OFFICE IN THE DELIVERY OF HIS MESSAGE. Then, no scorn, no reproach that may be cast on him, can take away his rest. 'His witness is in heaven, his record is on high,' Job 16:19. That was a great character given of one of the old Non-conformists, 'He was a man of primitive piety and good works; zealous both for TRUTH and DUTY; and of unwearied diligence in his work.'"

Ans. 2. To finally fall is to never rise up again, never to recover by repentance; but instead to die in sin that is unrepented and unpardoned.

Third Inquiry. What evidence is there that saving grace cannot be lost?

What scriptural arguments can be assigned, or reasons given, to evidence that this special saving grace cannot be totally and finally lost?

Answer: The following are the arguments and reasons assigned why the chosen of God cannot totally and finally fall away from grace.

1. The first argument is taken from God the Father in His electing love. If the love of the Father to His chosen ones is an unchangeable love (Jer 31:3); and if with Him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning, (Jas 1:17); and if none can pluck us out of the Father's hand (Joh 10:29), then His chosen ones cannot totally and finally fall away. Neither the force nor the fraud of hell can prevail against the Father's electing love which runs parallel with eternity. "God is love" (1Joh 4:8); everlasting love must necessarily flow from an everlasting God. He looks on His own, and says to them, "Yes, I loved you with an everlasting love" and, therefore, as the effect of it, "I have drawn you with the cords of loving kindness" (Jer 31:3). It is to be declared of the Lord, and from the Lord, to the Church, that

"The Lord your God in the midst of you is mighty;
He will save, He will rejoice over you with joy;
He will rest in His love,
He will joy over you with singing" (Zep 3:17).

Hence Paul, having spoken of some apostates falling away, comforts the minds of believers, saying that their own standing is firm because of election, or rather because of electing love (2Tim 2:19). He compares this to a foundation and a seal, two things of the greatest validity and security. Believers stand as if upon a stable rock, and they are placed as if upon a mountain of brass, so they cannot totally and finally fall; for the Father is not inconstant in his love; He does not love today and hate tomorrow.

2. The second argument is taken from God the Son in His redeeming love, which is unalterable.

Thereby all the members of Christ are united to their Head. Neither principalities nor powers shall be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ (Rom 8:38-39). And the gates of hell cannot prevail against His Church (Mat 16:18). If one member may be broken off from Christ, then all may be broken off; one has no more privilege than another in respect of their state and standing. If this hypothesis of being able to fall away is true, then we may suppose Christ to be a head without a body or members, and to have died in vain; both of which are grossly absurd. Christ prayed for perseverance for His own; he prayed that Peter's faith should not fail (Luk 22:32), and that His disciples should be kept from evil (Joh 17:15), indeed, and he prayed for all believers (Joh 17:20-25). And as to what Christ prays for, He is always heard (Joh 11:41-42). Christ also promises perseverance to His own. "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me" (Joh 6:37). He will not utterly withdraw His mercy from them under their severest correction (Psa 89:31-33). "Having loved His own who were in the world, He loves them to the end" (Joh 13:1), and he does not lose one of them (Joh 6:39). He is a Savior to all the parts of the body (Eph. 5:23). The saints are in Christ's hands (Deut. 33:3), and it is as easy to pluck a star out of Heaven as to pluck a saint out of Christ's hands (Joh 10:28); they are all kept, and they shall all be kept, by the power of God, through faith, unto eternal salvation. "Sanctified (set apart) by God the Father, preserved in Jesus Christ, and called" (Jude. 1:1 1Pet 1:5).

3. The third argument is taken from God the Holy Ghost, in His sanctification love. If the operation of the Spirit on the hearts of believers be a sure and certain operation, then true believers cannot totally and finally fall away.

The truth of this will be apparent in that the Spirit's operation is compared in Scripture,

- (1.) To an earnest,
- (2.) To a seal, and
- (3.) To a witness.

(1.) To an *earnest*. "God has given to us the earnest of the Spirit" (2Cor 5:5). It is the earnest penny of our salvation, not the pawn or pledge, which is to be returned again. The earnest is a part of the bargain, and the first fruits of Heaven. Now the earnest would be lost if the bargain of salvation did not stand; and whoever had the earnest would not be saved; and if such a person is damned, then he would carry the earnest of the Spirit along with him into hell, which is necessarily absurd.

"But Christ's to the end shall endure,
As sure as the earnest is given;
More happy, but not more secure,
The glorified spirits in Heaven."

(2.) To a *seal*. Faith is our seal; assurance of faith is God's seal. One who believes has set to his seal that God is true (Joh 3:33). "After you believed you were sealed" (Eph. 1:13). They first believed and then they were sealed, i.e., fully assured. God honors our sealing to His truth by His sealing with His Spirit; just as the earnest makes the bargain, so the seal ratifies and confirms it. And the broad seal of Heaven is necessarily unalterable, more than that of the Medes and Persians.

(3.) To a *witness*. "One who believes has the witness in himself" (1Joh 5:10). And there can be no exceptions taken to this witness who abides forever in the elect, and who is called the Spirit of truth (Joh 14:17); he "teaches you all things, and is truth, and is no lie" (1Joh 2:27); he is the eternal Spirit (Heb 9:14), a witness that can neither die nor lie. So believers, whose bodies are called "the temple of the Holy Ghost" (1Cor 6:19), may not become a habitation of devils. It would make Satan rejoice and exult over God (as if Satan were stronger than He) if he could so dispossess God, as he himself is dispossessed by God (Luk 11:21-22).

4. The fourth argument in defense of final perseverance respects spiritual enemies. If no spiritual enemy can totally and finally prevail against a true believer, then a true believer cannot totally and finally fall away.

(a.) Satan cannot prevail over true believers, for that wicked one cannot touch them with any of his deadly touches (1Joh 5:18); but instead God treads him under their feet (Rom 16:20). The seed of the serpent may nibble at the heels of the seed of the woman, but it cannot mortally wound the heart; for his armor is taken away (Luk 11:21), and his works are destroyed (Heb 2:14). Christ in them (believers), the hope of glory, is stronger than he that is in the world (1Joh 4:4).

(b.) The world cannot prevail over true believers, for Christ gives them faith to conquer the world (1Joh 5:4); indeed, He Himself has overcome the world for them (Joh 16:33). He makes them higher-region men, who are above all storms (Pro 15:24); they are made kings to God; they have a royal spirit to live above the frown [i.e. disapproval] and the flatteries of the world; and the world, including all sub-lunary things, are beneath believers, and under their feet.

(c.) Their fleshly lusts cannot prevail over true believers; these lusts have no dominion over those who are under grace (Rom 6:14). Though all real Shulamites find the presence of the two armies (So 6:13),⁴⁶ the flesh lusting against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh (Ga 5:17),

⁴⁶ So 6:13 - Return, return, O Shulamite; return, return, that we may look upon you. What will you see in the Shulamite? As it were, a dance of two armies.

so that they cannot be as they want to be (Rom 7:23); yet the outcome of the contest is not doubtful. A troop may for a time overcome Gad, coming upon him like bees (as David phrases it in Psa 118:12); yet Gad shall overcome in the end (Gen 49:19). Believers are more than conquerors, even triumphers, over all their spiritual enemies, through Christ who loves them; and no created power can prevail against them (Rom 8:35-39). Then "thanks be to God who always causes us to triumph in Christ" (2Cor 2:14).

5. Then the nature of saint-ship proves final perseverance; if saint-ship is a service, subjection, sonship, and marriage, then saints cannot fall away totally and finally.

(a.) It is a *service*. The service of God transcends all other services; men take a servant for a year, and an apprentice for seven years, but our Heavenly master takes a servant for life. We are to serve God in holiness and righteousness all the days of our lives (Luk 1:74-75). A servant of God is like the Jewish servant that was bored through the ear in token of perpetual servitude (Deut. 15:17). Religion is a perpetual obligation.

(b.) It is *subjection*. It sets up God to be our King, and our allegiance is for life; it cannot be disclaimed (Mat 19:27). We are born of God by the grace of God; and, if we are born into the kingdom as subjects of this gracious Lord and King, then we must die His subjects; there is no alienation.

(c.) It is a *sonship*. And this goes beyond the two former similitudes; a servant may be at liberty when his time is expired; a subject may change his earthly sovereign by moving out of his native country; yet a son cannot change his father, and he abides in the house forever (Joh 8:35). Now, God has begotten us of His own will by the Spirit of regeneration, causing us to come to him with weeping, and leading us with supplications, because he is our Father (Jer 31:9); and because of the relationship subsisting between Him and us, He makes His Abba-love known to our souls (Ga 3:26). Therefore we shall persevere, for God is our Father, and we are called the children of God.

(d.) It is a state of *marriage*, and that is for life too (Ho 2:19; Isa 54:5; Re 19:7; Rom 7:1-4); and in this state, God hates putting away [i.e. divorce] (Mal 2:16).

6. In respect to *saintship*, the names of the saints are written in Heaven; they are kept for Heaven, just as Heaven is kept for them; and they are compared to things that neither fade nor fail; therefore they cannot totally and finally fall.

(a.) Their names are written in Heaven (Php 4:3; Da 12:1). "Rejoice because your names are written in Heaven" (Luk 10:20). To be enrolled in the book of life necessarily holds our perseverance, for there is no blotting or blurring of that book; Satan cannot blot it out, for it is above his reach; and God will not blot it out, for then his work would not be perfect and glorious.⁴⁷

(b.) Saints are kept as if in a double garrison, or with a guard; Heaven is for them, and they are for Heaven; they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (1Pet 1:4-5). Christ is their Lord and their keeper, and if God had intended the loss of one saint, He would not have invested Christ with all power in Heaven and earth to undertake his commission for God's children, and to save them to the very uttermost (Mat 11:27; Heb 7:25).⁴⁸

(c.) Saints are compared to a tree that does not fade (Psa 1:3); to a cedar in Lebanon (Psa 92:12; Ho 14:5); to Mount Zion that cannot be moved but abides forever (Psa 125:1); and to a house built on a rock (Mat 7:24). Though they fall, God raises them up (Psa 37:24; Pro 24:16). The

⁴⁷ It would appear to be a mistake that needed correction; and God is not a man that he should lie or change his mind Num 23:19.

⁴⁸ Heb 7:25 Therefore he is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through him, because he always lives to intercede for them.

Lord is with them in their old age (Isa 46:4), and he is their guide even to death (Psa 48:14), so that they cannot totally and finally be lost.

7. The final perseverance of the saints may be argued, seventhly, from the unchangeableness of the covenant of grace.

What stands upon two unchangeable persons, and is ratified before an unchangeable witness, must be unchangeable itself; and the covenant of grace is such.

(a.) It stands upon two unchangeable bases, which are the Word and the oath of God. When God made a promise to Abraham, He swore by Himself. He was "willing more abundantly to show to the heirs of the promise the immutability of His counsel, and confirmed it by an oath" so that "we might have a strong consolation" (Heb 6:17-18). God's Word is like purified gold which loses nothing of its weight, even though it is cast a thousand times into the fire. We commonly say that the bare word of an honest man is as good as a bond. How much more so is the Word of the God of truth who cannot lie? And this Word is confirmed with an oath when God swears by His holiness that He will not alter the thing that has gone out of His lips.

(b.) It is made between two unchangeable persons (Mal 3:6; Heb 13:8).⁴⁹ In this covenant there is a mutual stipulation. The Father, by covenant, gave to Christ a people (Joh 17:6; 9, 12, 24).⁵⁰ The Son confederates to take man's nature upon Him in the fullness of time; and in that nature to obey, magnify, and make honorable the law, and to answer the demands of Justice in our place and stead, by shedding His own most precious blood (Psa 40:6-7; Heb 10:5-7; Eph 5:26-27). Hence it is called the blood of the everlasting covenant (Heb 13:20).⁵¹

(c.) It is ratified before an unchangeable witness, which is the Holy Ghost. Indeed, the Father and the Son are their own Witnesses (Joh 5:32, 36, 37).⁵² Yet the Holy Ghost is the Witness of that covenant and of the agreement and stipulation which was between them. Just as Christ has a greater witness than that of man, so does the covenant, which is the witness of the eternal Spirit. Thus the covenant is called "everlasting" (Heb 13:20; Isa 54:8, 10; Jer 32:40), and "the sure mercies of David" (Isa 55:3). They are sure on God's part who cannot fail in His good will toward the elect; and they are also sure on the part of the elect who shall have no will to depart from God. The latter is equally covenanted with the former; therefore, though the covenant permits a fall of the elect, yet it always ensures their repentance after the fall, as it did with David and Peter, etc. The covenant absolutely promises the grace of perseverance, and it promises all things that accompany the salvation of the elect, even to the end of their lives.

8. If saving grace is of a permanent nature, and it is not subject to corruption, then the elect cannot fall from it totally and finally.

Saving grace is called a "seed" which remains in those who are born of God (1Joh 3:9); it is an "incorruptible seed" (1Pet 1:23). Grace never differs from itself, even though a gracious man may differ from himself. Saving grace cannot be lost, even though in respect to its acts and operations it may not always be exercised; but the degrees and measures of grace (those formerly attained

⁴⁹ Mal 3:6 For I am the Lord, I change not; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed. Heb 13:8 Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.

⁵⁰ Joh 17:6 – I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Joh 17:9 I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. John 17:12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost... Joh 17:24 Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am...

⁵¹ That is, the Redemptive Covenant between Father and Son, witnessed by the Holy Spirit.

⁵² Joh 5:31-32, 36-37 If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true ... ³⁶ But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish — the very works that I do — bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me.

to) may be lost. "You have left your first love" (Rev. 2:4); this is not the habit of grace that is lost, nor wholly the exercise of love, but only the vigor and heat that appeared at first.

9. The Israelites, who were a type of God's spiritual Israel, could not alienate their inheritance in the land of promise (Le 25:23-24; 1Ki 21:3); if this was so in the type, then it must also hold true in the anti-type.

A true Christian cannot alienate his inheritance in Heaven, for the deeds concerning this inheritance are written and sealed, and part possession is given to the believer in this life (Jer 32:40). "I will put My fear in their hearts [present gracious possession] so that they shall not depart from Me" [perseverance to glorification]. Christ is able to keep the deposit committed to Him against that day (2Tim 1:12). He is not only our goal, our near Kinsman, who has redeemed our mortgaged inheritance for us; but He is also our trustee, keeping Heaven for us and us for Heaven; and He remains faithful (2Tim 2:13) both in drawing us, so that we will come to Him, and in keeping us, so that we will not depart from Him. Even now He is seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding on our behalf, and saying, "Father, I desire that those also whom You have given Me, be with me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me" (Joh 17:24).

"His powerful blood did once atone,
And now it pleads before the throne."

10. If those who fall totally and finally are not (nor ever were) true believers, then it follows that true believers cannot do so.

The truth of this appears from John 8:31 – only those who continue in His word are Christ's disciples; and those who wholly fall away have only the flash of a temporary faith, which like a land flood, inundates the countryside, yet in the end it comes to nothing. "They went out from us because they were not of us" (1Joh 2:19). All true believers continue to the end (Heb 3:6, 14); those are of God's house and partakers of Christ indeed, and only those.

11. The eleventh argument is taken from the subject of prayer.

Whatever true believers ask of the father in the name of Christ, according to His will, shall assuredly be obtained (Joh 14:13-14; 1Joh 5:14-15); and true believers pray for grace of perseverance. The church is represented as coming up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved (So 8:5); the church is convinced of her own weakness, and so she leans on the Strength of Israel (Psa 84:5) "Hold You me up, and I shall be safe" (Psa 119:117). "My soul cleaves to the dust: You make me alive" (Psa 119:25). "I am yours; *save me*" (Psa 119:94) – *cause me to persevere*. These are the petitions of the believing soul who is convinced that his strength is perfect in weakness, his wisdom is folly in the abstract, and he is not safe from falling one moment unless supported by the arm of Omnipotence. Believers pray for perseverance, and it is said that they never seek the Lord in vain (Isa 45:19).

12. The last argument for the final perseverance of the saints is taken from the whole concurrent voice of Scripture testimony. "The word of the Lord shall stand forever" (Isa 40:8).

Dr. Moulin and others have computed six hundred texts of Scripture which declare the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance. The twelve following texts may, however, suffice (merely as a sample) to establish it as a gospel truth: Rom 11:29; Joh 10:28, 29; Luk 22:32; Rom 8:30, 38, 39; 1Joh 2:19, 27; 2Cor 1:21-22; Php 1:6; 2Tim 2:19; Mal 3:6; Joh 14:19; Jer 32:40; 1Pet 1:3-5.

"The Mount Zion of the Lord (Psalm 125) is immoveable. They cannot be removed from the love of God in which they are rooted and grounded; nor can they be removed from the covenant of grace; nor can any pluck them out of the hands of Christ; nor can they be moved off Christ who is the foundation on which they are laid, a sure and everlasting foundation; nor can they be taken out of a state of grace in which they stand; nor out of sanctification, which is connected with life

everlasting; nor yet out of justification, for those who have passed from death to life shall never enter into condemnation. These elect, like Mount Zion, abide forever. They abide on the heart of God, and in the hands of Christ; they abide in the house of God, and among the family of His people. The Lord surrounds them with His love, encompasses them with His favors, guards them by His special providence, watches over them night and day, and keeps them by His power (as in a garrison) through faith unto salvation." (Dr. John Gill).

Now if all these things are true, as they most certainly are, then the whole Church shall finally persevere in grace, and shall be eternally saved.

"How oft have sin and Satan strove
To rend my soul from You, my God,
But everlasting is your love,
And Jesus seals it with His blood,
Hallelujah.

The gospel bears my spirit up;
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation of my hope,
In oaths, and promises, and blood.
Hallelujah."

Objection 2. It is said that some have made a shipwreck of their faith (1Tim 1:19),⁵³ and that falling from grace may be proved from Heb 6:5,⁵⁴ etc.

Ans. 1. It will be granted that making a shipwreck of faith, so as to blaspheme the doctrines of the Gospel which these persons once professed, is to fall from the profession of the *faith*; but then, to fall from the doctrine of the Gospel and a profession of that doctrine, and to fall from the *grace* and *favor* of God, or from the *grace* of faith, are very different things indeed. The reasons given for making shipwreck of faith are shown in 1Joh 2:19. The hearers on the stony ground endure "only for a while" having no root (Mat 13:21); by and by they are offended; they fall away; and they are said to give up or make a shipwreck of what they never possessed except in appearance (Luk 8:18). Some are savingly enlightened by the Spirit of God to see their lost state and condition, and to recognize their need of salvation by Christ and their interest in it; these shall never perish. But there are others who are enlightened only into the scheme of the doctrines of the Gospel; and some of these persons are enlightened to such a degree as to be able to preach them to others, and yet they are entirely destitute of the grace of God themselves. When such persons fall away, they are not proofs or instances of the final apostasy of real saints.

Ans. 2. This is true in Heb 6:5 as well, which speaks of those who only taste, but do not digest; those who have their minds informed, but not their hearts; they are sanctified in their profession of the faith, but not in its power. And the apostle was persuaded this was not true of these Hebrews to whom he wrote; he was convinced that their faith was not just an historical one, but it was of the operation of God (Col 2:12),⁵⁵ as evidenced by their fruits, (Heb 6:9-10; 1Th 1:5).

⁵³ 1 Tim 1:19 having faith and a good conscience, which some having rejected, concerning the faith have suffered shipwreck...

⁵⁴ Heb 6:4-6 For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, 5 and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, 6 if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

⁵⁵ Col 2:11-14 In Him you were also circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with Him in baptism, in which you also were raised with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.

Ans. 3. Objections may be multiplied by those who impugn the doctrines of grace, and very conclusive and scriptural replies may be made to those doctrines. Yet, the final perseverance of true saints, of the Father's beloved sons, the Son's redeemed ones, and the Spirit's sanctified ones, is fixed. Just as Christ once dead dies no more, so too in His members, the life of grace cannot totally die (Rom 6:8, 9).⁵⁶ Faith is given once to the saints; just as we are born but once [in the flesh], so we are born but once again [in the Spirit]. "This is the Father's will who has sent Me, that of all whom He has given Me I should lose none ... that everyone who sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day" (Joh 6:39-40).

"Not as the world, the Saviour gives:
He is no fickle friend;
Whom once He loves, He never leaves,
But loves him to the end.

Though thousand snares enclose his feet,
Not one shall hold him fast;
Whatever dangers he may meet,
He shall get safe at last.

The spirit that would this truth withstand
Would pull God's temple down,
Wrest Jesus' sceptre from His hand,
And spoil Him of his crown.

Satan might then full victory boast,
The Church might wholly fall;
If one believer may be lost,
It follows, so may all.

But Christ, in every age, has prov'd,
His purchase firm and true;
If this foundation be removed,
What shall the righteous do?"

⁵⁶ Rom 6:8-9 "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from the dead, dies no more. Death no longer has dominion over Him." Being eternally united with Christ, death has no dominion over us either.