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*An antidote against Arminianism: or A treatise  
to enervate and confute all the five points thereof*

Christopher Ness

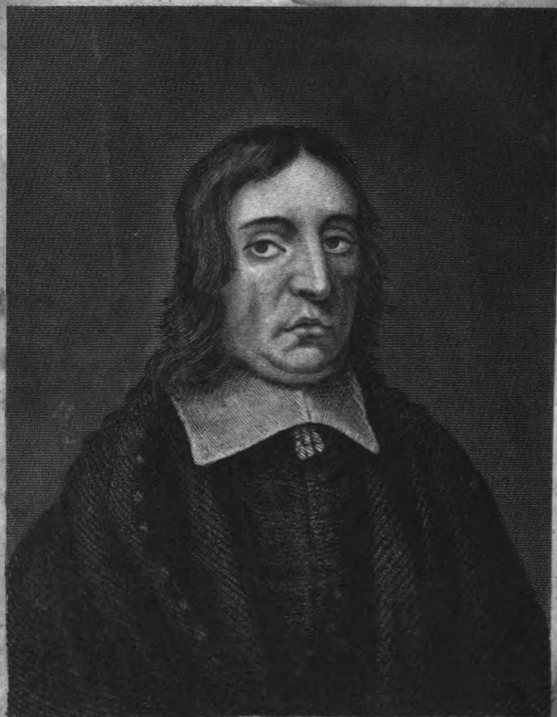
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Engraved by M<sup>r</sup> Russell, from an original

CHRISTOPHER NESS.

LATE MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL

AN  
**ANTIDOTE**  
AGAINST  
**ARMINIANISM :**  
OR  
**A TREATISE**

TO ENERVATE AND CONFUTE ALL THE FIVE POINTS  
THEREOF :

VIZ.

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

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RECOMMENDED BY DR. OWEN, AND PUBLISHED FOR PUBLIC GOOD.

**BY CHRISTOPHER NESS.**

*London : Printed in the Year 1700.*

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**FOURTH EDITION,**

BEING THE THIRD AS REVISED AND CORRECTED, WITH MANY  
ADDITIONS, NOTES, ETC.,

**BY J. A. JONES,**

*Minister of the Gospel, Mitchell-street, St Luke's.*

---

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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 here throughout handled so scripturally, and withal so luminous, that (as hath been 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*, yea, 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, provided he is, in the least, dependant on any performances of his own, to *recommend* him to the

notice and approbation of the great I AM. The characters who eat their own bread, and who wear their own apparel (Isa. iv. 1), will here find no *food* that they can relish, and no *raiment* suited to clothe their self-righteous persons. There is nothing in these pages but what must ever prove obnoxious to the pride of the human heart, as unhumbled by divine grace. 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*, here so masterly proved; *Redemption* as limited by *price*, and the redeemed ones discovered by invincible *power*; 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, as in a word—salvation all of *grace*, from first to last, from *election* to *glorification*;—the creature, *nothing*; the triune God, *all in all*;—yes, reader, by long experience, do I know, that an unflinching statement of these glorious truths cannot fail to draw forth the latent rancour 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 colours. What *that* designed, *this* completes; what *that* ordained, *this* executes. Predestination is analogous to the mind and intention; providence, 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 ruleth 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 (either mediately or immediately) effects. 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 room. 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 has consigned them over 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 upon his thigh, because of fear in the night. I pray you consider it as your highest honour to stand fast without *wavering*. “O Timothy (says Paul) *keep* that which is committed to thy trust,” 1 Tim. vi. 20, that *good* thing, (that blessed depositum) which was committed unto thee, keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us, 2 Tim. i. 14. Aim to have a *full* apprehension and knowledge of the Truth, and that upon its own proper grounds, and principles; and part not with *one grain* of God's precious Truth, no not for the dearest friend upon earth. Have nothing to do with the *wrists* of men, be careless of the *pulse* of their inclinations; fear not their frowns, court not their smiles. “Do I seek to please men? (saith the apostle) if I yet pleased men, *I should not be the servant of Christ*,” Gal. i. 10. Every thing that is contrary to, and against the word of God, you *must* oppose. And Arminianism or free-will, is contrary thereto. Be not 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 is all one) is 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 want of *light*, nor yet for want of *ability*, but,) for want of *love*. I knew the *contest* we had for the Truths of the Gospel, before our national troubles began; and was an early person engaged in them. *I knew those godly ministers, that did contend 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 want of *skill*, but for want of *love*. We scarce hear one word of them *now*. We are almost ashamed to mention them in the Church. And he that doth preach 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, but the *error of Arminianism* was looked upon by him, as the ruin and poison of the souls of men. Such godly men did tremble 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* thereof almost lost. *But we have got no ground by it*; we are not *more holy, more fruitful*, than we were when we preached those Truths, and attended diligently unto them. They were the life of the reformation; and they were the soul and life of those, who are 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 sell it not\*.”

Some persons would fain persuade us, that, the Arminian controversy hath very much changed its aspect, since the days of Christopher Ness; and, that when it is *now* agitated (which they desire for *charity* sake may be as *seldom* as possible) it turns upon *other* points, than those contained in this book. No, no; the subtil enemy may dexterously manœuvre to fight behind a *masked* battery; or, to change, in *words* merely, his polemical ground; but *the dark aspect of Arminianism is not changed*. And it may be said thereof, as of Amalek, “*Because the hand of Amalek is against the THRONE of the Lord, therefore, the*

\* “The eternal Predestination of Almighty Go<sup>d</sup>, 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, hath been the chief endeavour 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. xi. 4), from the top whereof they may mount into heaven; whose **FOUNDATION** is nothing but the **SAND** of their own **FREE-WILL** and **ENDEAVOURS**. 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: whereof there is neither sign, nor token, in the whole Bible.

Reason, Scripture, God himself, **ALL** must give place 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.

*Lord hath sworn, that the Lord will have war with Amalek, from generation to generation,"* Exod. xvii. 16, margin.

*Modern* Arminianism, is but *ancient* Pelagianism, which reared up in the *second* century; and Pelagianism is *Popery*; and Popery is (yea *all* 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 by him, 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 which will shortly appear yet more and more. Coldness and indifference in spiritual things; a want of affection to God, Christ, his people, *truths*, and *ordinances*, may easily be observed. The *first* love is left; iniquity abounds; and the love of many waxes cold, and it will wax yet colder and colder; issuing in a neglect of the ministers of the gospel, when *professors* will be shy of them, and carefully shun them, will not care to own them, or to speak to them, and 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 knoweth*



*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, the rich, the wise, the learned; and though it may be attended with reproach and persecution. Be of good courage, take heart, consider 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; try the *doctrines*, try the *spirits* thereby, whether they be 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*, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh, shall find so doing."—GILL.

Reader! try 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, nay, 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.

P. S. And must I, before I close, refer to some painful matters? I am *obliged* to do so ; but, it is most reluctantly. A gentleman holding high rank in society, and who ought to have acted very differently, has recently pirated an edition of *my* work, in which I have assuredly a legal Copyright ; *every page* of it having undergone (25 years ago) more or less, *by my hand*, [revision, correction, addition, and emendation. This said gentleman, when remonstrated with by me, for his invasion of my property, replies, in an epistle smother

than oil—"Neither Mr. G. nor myself had the most distant idea but that this work was (with the exception of *your notes*, which we *cautiously* avoided inserting) the original writing of C. Ness. Now, dear Sir, it becomes a question, what is to be *done* in this case? If this work be your copyright, and I cannot for a moment doubt it is as you say; how is the present difficulty to be overcome?" The *difficulty* was overcome in *this* way, *viz.*, by subsequently sending me the name of his legal adviser, whose instructions from him were, "simply to follow the course of the law!" His letter conveyed to me also the following notice, "It is my intention forthwith to publish one [*i.e.* Ness] from *the original edition* of 1700, &c. &c." But the Admiral found that a copy of the original was *so rare*, as not easily to be obtained; in short, it was, after much search (at that time) no where to be procured. To work goes wit; and so *a very worthy man*, Mr. Robert Stodhart, of Pell-street, *employed* doubtless for the purpose \*, made me a *friendly* call, and craved the loan for a week (under a *pretence* of desire of *perusal*) of *my old original copy*; which he immediately took to a Printer, and had an edition surreptitiously printed *from my own book!!!* I have already told the public this sad dishonourable tale; and since Mr. Stodhart has, in print, *confessed* himself as *guilty* as I have ever accused him, I need make no further reply to him, but, *submit to his abuse.*

Subsequent to all this, Admiral Pearson has also published *another* edition; but which is now *neither one thing nor the other*. It is indeed a sad cut-up work now; and not a little *craft* has been resorted to also, by some mere *verbal* alteration, here and there, where it was not desirable to *leave out my ideas exactly*; and this doubtless to avoid a prosecution. However, I am too poor to wage *war* with an *Admiral's pocket*; I can only *pocket the loss*; and close by informing the reader,

---

\* My letters and private correspondence with Admiral Pearson, were published by Mr. Stodhart. *Query.* How came he by *these*, if there was no *combination* between them?

that, all the copies of *my* work being sold; the *first* pirated edition being deficient of *all* my notes, &c. &c.; the *second* as I have described it; and Stodhart's, *ill-gotten*, 3s. volume!! of *old* Ness, not being perhaps *readable* by 99 persons out of every 100; because of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, strewed in every page; I have, at the earnest intreaty of many Christian friends, put forth this *fourth* edition, *carefully revised throughout*. And, overlooking pecuniary advantage, have directed it to be sold, in boards, with an excellent new *portrait of Ness*, engraved from the original, at the small price of fifteen pence!!!



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 thence 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 he was called to *Leeds*; and *there also* many had cause to bless God on his behalf, for the benefit 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*; as the Doctor's settings up of *free-will*, and *creature-performances* in the morning, was as constantly refuted by Mr.

Ness's *lifting up Christ*, and preaching *free-grace*, in the afternoon. Being, in 1662, 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 thence to *Morley*. When the times grew more favourable, he had a house at *Hunslet*, where he instructed youth, and preached in private, till 1672, when the great *riding-house* at Hunslet, being 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 out against him a writ "*de Excommunicato Capiendo*," to avoid which, 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; and 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 *Casulist*. 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 the vigour thereof; 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 forth this volume, as his last legacy to the Church. “This little book, saith he, hath 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.*

## PREFACE.

---

CANDID READER,

OBSERVE these few considerations: although this small manual be very little in itself and substance, yet ought it not therefore to be despised; for,

*First*,—We read how the mighty angel of the Covenant had a very little book open in his hand, Rev. x. 2; yet this little book contained the *great* concerns of the Redeemer's *little, little* flock; a double diminutive as Christ calls them in Luke, xii. 32. And that little book was not *shut* nor *sealed*, but it was *open*. 'Tis the work of Antichrist to keep it shut. Yea, it must also be eaten, *take it and eat it up*, Rev. x. 10; that is, it must go down and be hid in our hearts (*thy word have I hid in mine heart*, Psalm cxix. 11); then the simplest soul may have right conceptions of it, *The word [is then] very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it*, Deut. xxx. 14.

*Secondly*,—This little book hath cost me great study and labour to compose it, that it might contain the very *cream* and *quintessence* of the best Authors on this subject. Moreover, it hath 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, xxiv. 13; but *that in His light I might see light*, Psalm xxxvi. 9; and to have *mine eyes anointed with Christ's eye-salve*, Rev. iii. 18, that I might see clearly into these profound points, which hath so very much puzzled the christian world. As blessed Athanasius sighed out in his day, "*The world is overrun with Arianism*;" so 'tis the sad sigh of our present times, *the christian world is overrun, yea, overwhelmed with the flood of Arminianism*: which cometh, as it were, out of the mouth of the Serpent, that he might cause the woman [*the Church*] to be carried away of the flood thereof, Rev. xii. 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, Psalm cvi. 23. Also Num. xvi. 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*, &c. *O Israel thy Prophets are like the foxes in the deserts. Ye have not gone up into the gaps, neither made up the hedge for the house of Israel to stand in the battle in the day of the Lord. With lies ye 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*, Ezek. xiii. 5, 22. While I was considering

these things, the Lord stirred up *my* spirit, to do as is done in common *conflagrations*, when every one runs with the best bucket he can get, wherewith to quench the devouring flames, and to stop them, that they may not lay waste all before them.

*Fourthly*,—When I had completed this short Compendium, I shewed 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 doth represent 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 prayeth

Yours in the best Bonds,

*Christo. Ness.*

Sept. 30, 1700.



AN  
ANTIDOTE  
AGAINST  
ARMINIANISM.

---

OF ARMINIANISM IN GENERAL.

IT hath 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 *burthensome* 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* thereof: as much in *outrunning* the flock of Christ, and the Lamb that leads them; as in straggling and loitering *behind*. Truth hath 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 do 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!* &c. Rom. xi. 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's school teacheth *deeper* divinity, than what Paul learned in the *third heaven*. And they do not only, with the *Socinians*, gratify the pride of man's *reason*, 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, doth gratify 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 hereunto Mr. Rous (master of Eton College) addeth, saying, "Arminianism is the *spawn* of Popery, which the *warmth of favour* may easily turn into frogs of the bottomless pit." And what are the *new Arminians*, but the varnished offspring of the *old Pelagians*; that makes the grace of God to *lacquey* it at the *foot*, or rather, the *will* of man. That makes the *sheep*, to keep the *shepherd*. That

puts God into the same extremity with Darius, who would gladly have saved Daniel; but *could not*. Dan. vi. 14. What else can their doctrine signify, which they call a *prescience* or foreknowledge in God; the truth whereof depends, not on the *decree* of God, but on the *free-will* of the Creature? This is to make the Creature have no dependance 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* unto man, “O my poor creature! that fatal fortune which hath 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 hath, *whether I will or no*, pronounced the inevitable sentence.” What else is this but to overthrow all those graces of Faith, Hope, &c. 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 *metewand* of degenerate reason. *Wisdom is too high for a fool*, Prov. xxiv. 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 thereof. We may give a reason *of* our believing, to wit, "because it is written," but *not of all things believed*, as, *why* 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 is—that the being, wisdom, and power of God, doth infinitely transcend ours; so may reveal matters far above our reach: the second is—that whatsoever God reveals is undoubtedly true, and to be believed, although the *bottom* of it cannot be *sounded* by the line of our reason: because man's reason is not absolute, but variously limited, perplexed with its own frailty, and defective in its own actings.

## CHAPTER I.

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### 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*, consider the Arminian's view thereof, viz. *That it is conditional, upon the foresight of faith, works, perseverance, &c.* and, *thirdly*, 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, whereby (according to the counsel of his own will) he fore-ordained 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. *Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of his mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory? Rom. ix. 22, 23.*

In a great house are various vessels both for use and ornament ; vessels of *honour*, and vessels of *dishonour*, 2 Tim. ii. 20 ; and the master of the house hath a right to, and can wisely use, all his vessels, even as he shall think proper. God hath his use even of Pharaoh, and of the church's greatest enemies ; if it be but *scullion-work*, to brighten vessels of mercy by them. God hath appointed the Elect unto glory ; and he hath by the eternal and most free purpose of his will, fore-ordained *all the means thereunto* ; such as, redemption by Christ, regeneration by the Holy Ghost, effectual calling and conversion, justification in the court of conscience by saving faith in Jesu's 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, 1 Pet. i. 5. Whom he did predestinate, *them* he also called ; and whom he called, *them* he also justified ; and whom he justified, *them* he also *glorified*. What shall we then say to these things ? We will say with the Apostle, *God hath not appointed US to wrath, but to obtain salvation*, 1 Thes. v. 9.

It is called *destination*, as it comprehends a determined order, of the *means* to the *end* ; and *Pre-destination*, because God appointed this order in and with himself, *before* the actual existence of those things so ordered. The Greek word signifies a *fore-separating* for God's special use ; as Israel was separated from among all the nations of the world, to be God's peculiar inheritance. *I am the Lord your God, which*

*have separated you from other people. The Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth, Levit. xx. 24, Deut. vii. 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, Rom. xi. 9, *God hath not cast away his people, which he foreknew, that is whom he did predestinate*; so in like manner, predestination is taken strictly and in part for Election itself, Rom. viii. 30, Eph. i. 5. I shall handle it accordingly in this following treatise, using the words Election and Predestination promiscuously. Predestination is also called a *divine decree*, because it contains in it the determinate counsel of God, and the counsel of his own will, in bringing to pass such and such *ends*, by such and such means. *Of a truth against thy holy child Jesus; Herod, &c. were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done, Acts, iv. 28. Having predestinated us—according to the good pleasure of his will, Eph. i. 5. Being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, ver. 11.* The election and predestination of the Lord, is, in scripture phrase, termed the *hand*, the *determinate counsel*, the *purpose*, the *good pleasure* of God, Acts, ii. 23; Eph. i. 9.

This divine decree of Predestination, hath 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 with his essence: such an act is the divine decree; and therefore, as God's essence is eternal, so his decree must be eternal also. 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 whatsoever should come to pass, unto 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 doth and will think. Whatever God purposes, he always purposed; and ever doth and will purpose. He saith, *I know the thoughts I think concerning you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end*, Jer. xxix. 11. As he cannot *know* any thing *new*, neither can he *intend* any thing *new*; for his name is, I AM. He takes not new counsels, as man, neither 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, Rev. xiii. 8), then predestination to life must needs be *before* time; because Christ is the foundation of election. We are elected *in* him. *According as he hath chosen us in him before the foun-*

*dation of the world*, Eph. i. 4; and predestinated by him, *Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself*, Eph. i. 5. Christ is the *means*.—Now the *end* cannot be of a *later* date and determination than the *means* to that end; they have relation to each other. And if Christ be the eternal purpose of the Father, the act of electing in Christ must needs be his eternal purpose also.

4. The scripture expressly proves the *eternity* of the decree, saying, it was *before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9, Titus, i. 2; and *before the foundation of the world*, Eph. i. 4; and it was an *eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord*, Eph. iii. 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. xliv. 7. None can appoint God the time. He saith, *Who is like me, and who will appoint me the time?* Jer. l. 44. Hence *time* is said to travail with those eternal decrees of God, and brings forth the accomplishment of them in their proper season; and the decree will bring forth (*before the decree bring forth*), Zeph. ii. 2. Every thing hath its accomplishment in *time*, which was decreed to fall out from all *eternity*.

6. If *human concerns* have this encomium, that, *these are ancient things*, 1 Chron. iv. 22, how much more the divine decree, which is not the work of *yesterday*. If the *negative* part of 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. ix. 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 1 Cor. i. 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* the decree thereof: 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 unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world*, Acts, xv. 18. God hath not an imperfect, but a *thorough* fore-knowledge 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. *Whom he did fore-know, he also did predestinate*, Rom. viii. 29; that is, whom he *fore-loved*, so Zanchius reads it\*. Whom he fore-knew, not only with the knowledge of *observation*, but with the knowledge of *approbation* also; he fore-knew 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. viii. 29, 30. *God hath not,*

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\* "The opinion of Zanchius is worth a thousand others."

*De Courcy.*

*and God will not, cast away his people which he fore-knew, Rom. xi. 2.*

3. Some grant a predestination eternal 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 is; for the worst evil that ever was committed in the world, to wit, the crucifying of the prince of glory, Jesus Christ, did not only fall under the fore-knowledge of God, but also under his determinate counsel, *Him being delivered by his determinate counsel, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain, Acts, ii. 23, and iv. 28*; the taking and apprehension of Christ, was not barely fore-known, but unchangeably determined.

† 4. Even suppose it be granted, that the Apostle speaks of a temporal election or choice, in 1 Cor. i. 27, &c. yet that signifies no more than our vocation or *calling*; and temporal *reprobation* intimates no more than man's *obduration*. The accomplishment of *both these* is granted to be *in time*, so may not be confounded with this *eternal* decree of God: these are but *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 was, and so before Satan was.

2. Austin tells a curious fool, that 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!

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

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The *second* property of the divine decree of predestination; it is UNCHANGEABLE.

Hence it is compared to *mountains of brass*, Zech. vi. 1\*, and it is called *the immutability of his counsel*, Heb. vi. 17. This is made evident by sundry reasons, as

1. The divine decree hath an unchangeable *fountain*, to wit, the unchangeableness of God. *He is in one mind and who can turn him?* Job, xxiii. 13. He desires, and he doth 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, or the son of man that he should repent*, Numb. xxiii. 19. *I am the LORD, I change not*, Mal. iii. 6; with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, James, i. 17. *The counsel of the Lord standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations*, Psalm, xxxiii. 11. There are many devices in a man’s heart; nevertheless the counsel of

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\* Zech. vi. 1. “By the brazen mountains are meant the eternal counsel and providence of God; whereby he hath from before all eternity, decreed what shall come to pass, and that which neither Satan nor all the world can alter.” *Beza*.

the Lord, that shall stand, Prov. xix. 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 saw not before; but there is no such imperfection in God, all things are naked before him, dissected, or with their faces upward. *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked, and opened, unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do*, Heb. iv. 13. He knows all his works (their natures and circumstances) as perfectly in the beginning of the world, as he will do at the end thereof. *And he abides still in one mind when his dispensations are changed, for he decreed the change of them from all eternity.*

2. The decree of Election stands upon an unchangeable foundation, to wit, that Rock of ages, Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, Heb. xiii. 8. As the first Adam was the foundation stone in the decree of creation; so the second Adam, even Jesus, is the foundation stone in the decree of election. God hath *blessed* us, in him, yea, and we shall be blessed; he hath *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 us IN Christ Jesus before the world began*, 2 Tim. i. 9. All those acts of grace are said to be *in Christ*. *Who hath blessed us—IN Christ*, Eph. i. 3. *Chosen us—IN Him*, ver. 4; *pardoned us—IN whom we have redemption, through his blood*,

the forgiveness of sins, ver. 7; **IN** whom also, after that ye believed, ye were sealed, ver 13; rooted and built up—**IN** him, Col. ii. 7; and ye are complete—**IN** him, ver. 10. Indeed Christ himself was under divine ordination;—he verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, 1 Pet. i. 20, and is called the elect stone, 1 Peter ii. 6. Christ is the first person elected. Behold my servant whom I have chosen, mine elect, &c. Isa. xlii. 1; Matt. xii. 18. Christ was chosen as the head, and we as his members; therefore are we said to be given to Christ. Thine they were, and thou gavest them me, John, xvii. 6. Now so long as this foundation standeth sure, so long doth the superstructure remain unchangeable. The temple stood firmly upon those two pillars, Jachin and Boaz, i.e. stability and strength; so the decree of election standeth sure upon Christ the foundation; and none can pluck an elect soul from 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 fulfil his Father's will, by taking care of them all. And this is the Father's will, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should LOSE NOTHING, but should raise it up again at the last day, John, vi. 39. They shall never perish, John, x. 28.

3. 'Tis unchangeable, because it is a decree written in heaven; and so above the reach of either angry men or enraged devils to cancel. The Lord knoweth them that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19, they are the assembly and church of the first-born, written in heaven, Heb. xii. 23. Thence it is called the Lamb's book of life,

which contains a *catalogue* of the elect, determined by the unalterable counsel of God; which number can neither be *increased* nor *diminished*. This is to be rejoiced in above dominion over devils, *rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven*, Luke x. 20; which, if our names may be written in heaven *to-day*, and blotted out *to-morrow*, would be no such ground of joy. If the decrees of the Medes and Persians, which were but earthly writings, were unalterable (Dan. vi. 8), how much more the decrees of the great God, written in heaven must be unchangeable. Must Pilate say, *what I have written, I have written*, John, xix. 22, that is to say, "*my writing shall not be altered*," and shall not God say so much more? *I know* (saith Solomon) *that what God doth, it shall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it*, Eccles. iii. 14. *My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure. I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass: I have purposed it, I will also do it*, Isa. xlvi. 10, 11. The Sun may sooner be stopped in his course, than God hindered of his *work* or in his *will*. Nature, angels, devils, men, may *all* be resisted, and so miss of their design; not so God: for, *who hath resisted his will?* All those chariots of human occurrences and dispensations, come forth from between those mountains of brass, the unalterable decrees of God, Zech. vi. 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 'Tis *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. viii. 30. Therefore the purpose of God concerning election *must* stand, Rom. ix. 11. God doth not decree the end without the means, nor the means without the end, but, *both together*. As a purpose for *building*, includes the hewing of stone, and squaring of timber, and all other materials for building-work: and as a decree for *war*, implies arms, horses, ammunition, and all warlike provisions: so here, all that are elected to salvation, are elected to *sanctification* also. God *ordains* to the means, as well as to the end. *As many as were ordained to eternal Life* believed, Acts, xiii. 48. God hath ordained that we should walk in *good works*, Eph. ii. 10. We are elected unto *obedience*, through the *sanctification of the Spirit*, 1 Peter, i. 2, therefore God hath promised to *sanctify* those whom he purposed to *save*. We teach with *Augustine*, that, "Election is an ordaining to *grace*, as well as to *glory*." In predestination, 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 doth believe and persevere:*" but rather thus, "*I do predestinate Peter to salvation, which, that he may*

*infallibly obtain, 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 a God to you, and ye shall be a people unto me ; that is, I will make ye 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; 'tis a name better than of sons and daughters, to be a free citizen of heaven.

2. Though we are changeable creatures, yet unchangeable love is towards us, that keeps *faster* hold of us than we 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!! John, x. 28, 29 ; 1 Pet. i. 4, 5.

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The *third* property of the divine decree; it is **ABSOLUTE**.

It is *absolute* in respect of the efficient impulsive *cause* which cannot be any thing out of God, as the following reasons evince.

1. If the Divine decree be *eternal*, it must be *absolute*; for nothing can be assigned before an eternal act, as the efficient cause thereof. There cannot be a

*cause* of the will of God, *out* of God. Predestination, is an immanent act of the divine will; and, so, not only the cause, but also, the *first-cause*, of all created beings: and therefore cannot (in any good sense) be said to depend on *foreseen* transient acts in the creature; so, by consequence, must be an *absolute* act: unless we will make the volitions of God to 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. If God *be* God; if he be 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 *ungods* him, by ascribing such imperfections to him as are unworthy his majesty, and below his divine being: as, *First*, it opposes his *omnipotence*;—if some conditions be antecedent to the *will* of God, then the same are antecedent also 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* God's decree concerning Peter, then divine wisdom doth not determine 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, be antecedent to the decree of God concerning them, then Peter and Judas *make themselves* the objects of election and non-election, and God hath not an absolute dominion over his own creatures; and the potter hath not freedom to make *this* lump of clay a vessel of honour,

and *that* a vessel of dishonour; 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. *Fourthly*, it takes away the glory of his all-disposing providence; if the decree be not absolute, how can God be said wholly to dispose of lots that are cast into the lap, as in Prov. xvi. 33? Shall we say that the lot of the apostleship fell to Matthias by *chance*? Acts, i. 26; was it not rather absolutely ordained and ordered by the Lord; to whom the apostles prayed, as in verse 24, saying, Thou Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether [or which] of these two thou hast chosen. *And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias.* Thus by the disposal of lots in the lap, was Achan discovered to be Israel's curse, and Saul appointed to be Israel's king, Jos. vii. 14—18; 1 Sam. x. 19—21. Man purposeth, but God disposeth; because God by an absolute decree hath fore-ordained all things that do come to pass. They fall not out casually, and beyond God's intention; thus it is said, *It behoved Christ to suffer*, Luke, xxiv. 46.

3. If the will of the potter, be an absolute will over his pots; much more is the will of God an absolute will over mankind. It is God's own comparison, Rom. ix. 20, 21. God compares not himself to a goldsmith, because a goldsmith hath costly materials, such as *silver* and *gold*, which lays some obligation on him to make honourable vessels therewith. But



he compareth himself to a potter, because, 1st. The materials of a potter are vile and sordid, to wit, clay, so more answerable to fallen mankind, out of which God maketh his choice. We are not only clay, Job, iv. 19, but sinful clay, through the fall. 2d. The potter doth 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 more illustrates the *absoluteness* of God's will in his choice, both of vessels of honour and vessels of dishonour. Again, the distance between the clay and potter, is but a *finite* distance; even the distance only between one creature and another creature, *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 God and us, as we are *sinners*. The potter also must have his clay *made to his hand*; he cannot make his own clay, though he may temper it for his work when he hath *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 heaven and the earth*, Gen. i. 1. *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground*, Gen. ii. 7. It follows then, if the potter by an absolute will, dispose of his pots, much more hath God a right concerning his creatures.

Inferences drawn from the preceding.

1. If the absolute will of God be the universal cause of all things, then no event can fall beyond or beside God's will: and *fortune* (in the *world's sense* thereof) is but the devil's blasphemous *spit* upon divine providence.

2. God's absolute will cannot be resisted; as he hath willed, so shall it come to pass; and there is no hindering the execution thereof. *The Lord of hosts hath sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand, Isaiah, xiv. 24. Our God is in the heavens; he hath done whatsoever he pleased, Psalm, cxv. 3. I know that thou canst do every thing, Job, xlii. 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 1 Kings, i. 5, with 1 Chron. xxii. 9; and mark the end thereof, 1 Kings, ii. 23—25. O for the grace of humility to enable us to adopt the language of the prophet, *Now O Lord, thou art our father: we are the clay, and thou our potter, and we all are the work of thine hand, Isa. lxiv. 8.*

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The *fourth* property of the divine decree; It is **FREE**.

As the divine decree is not conditional but absolute; so 'tis not of *necessity* but *free*, as flowing only from the pleasure of God's will. God is a free agent, and cannot fall under any *obligation*, so as to *necessitate*

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—such a decree as passeth without any obligation to *necessitate* the passing thereof, must needs have the property of freeness; and thus it was with the divine decree. If there be any obligation, it must be either in respect of *objects*, or *acts*, or *motives*; but God was not *obliged* in any of these respects.

First.—He was not obliged in respect of *objects*; for God was under no necessity of having either any *elect*, or any *reprobate*: He was happy in himself from all eternity; would have been happy for ever without either of these; and to affirm that God stood in *need* of any such objects, is to deny the perfections of God. It is called *humbling* himself, to look down on things in *heaven*, much more on things on *earth*.

Second.—He was not obliged by *acts*, as acts are necessary by a moral obligation. God was under no moral obligation to man. He had done man no wrong; if he had never willed man to BE, much less to be holy and happy. God was not bound to any of his actions concerning man; he cannot be a debtor to man any other way 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 to flow wholly from the free grace of God.*

Third.—He was not obliged in respect of *motives*; neither in the *creature*, nor yet in *Christ*. Not in the creature, for the *being* of the creature (much more the faith and good works of the creature) was the *effect* of the decree of God, so could not be the *motive* thereof. Nor could the Lord *foresee* repentance, faith, love, &c. in the creature, *antecedent* to his own *purpose* in the *gift* thereof. Neither is Christ himself the moving *cause* of the divine decree; for Christ is the *effect* of God's eternal love, not the cause thereof. *God so loved the world, that he gave his Son, John, iii. 16.* God's love gives Christ. Therefore we are said to be elected *in Christ*, but never *for Christ*; for Christ is an elect one himself, as was shewed before. Christ was first chosen, then the members. The love of God as immediately cometh from himself to *me*, as to Christ; and he was fore-ordained to be our *head*, and we 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, 1 Cor. iii. 22.

2. The *second* argument to prove the *freeness* of the 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 thy sight, Matt. xi. 26. It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom, Luke, xii. 32.* It was a *gracious* purpose in God

from all eternity, 2 Tim. i. 9; Eph. i. 5, 9, 11. Paul's repeated exclamation is, "the pleasure of his own will, the counsel of his own will:" but more fully in Rom. ix. 13, 16, doth he exemplify this truth in Jacob and Esau. *Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy.* Both Malachi the Prophet (Mal. i. 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, doth more illustrate the free predestination of God, than of any *other* two whatsoever. 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 had no regard to *faith* in the *one*, or of *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, as 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 hardeneth*, Rom. ix. 18. Now in opposition to this, *Carnal-reason* saith, "*It was because God foresaw what they would be:*" Nay, but, *God loved them because he loved them*, Deut. vii. 7. 8. It was *chusing* love, that he bare to them; and that is the best of the kind. *That* is the favour 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—God hath in all ages given us *examples* of his free receiving some of mankind, and rejecting others; this is plain from scripture-history. Of *Adam's* three sons, *Cain, Abel, Seth*; the *eldest* was rejected: Of *Noah's* three, *Japheth, Shem, and Ham*; the *youngest* was rejected; of *Terah's* three, *Abraham, Nahor, Haran*; the *middlemost* was rejected; for *Nahor* was an *idolater*, and *Laban* sware by *Nahor's* idol [compare Gen. xxxi. 53, with Josh. xxiv. 2]. Now, why this picking and chusing, this receiving and rejecting; eldest at one time, youngest at another time, and middlemost at a third time? What is all this but to shew, that neither *birth* nor *age*, nor any thing foreseen or existing in the creature, can produce any claim: but that all lies in the free election of God. We can give no reason, save the good pleasure of God, why Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar (both engaged in the same warfare against *Israel*, the church of God) had different dispensations of heaven upon them; 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 *Aaron's* rod, of all the twelve, only blossomed.

4. If the *fruits* of the divine decree be free, then must the decree *itself* be free. This assumption is clear; for, 1st.—Our *vocation* 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, i. 20. *He called to him whom he would*, Mark, iii. 13. *It is given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; but to them it is not given*, Matt. xiii. 11. *We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true*, 1 John, v. 20. *Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight*, Matt. xi. 26. 2d.—Our *sanctification* is from free grace. *Of his own will begat he us*, James, i. 18. This sanctifying grace breathes where it listeth; and the wind, at sea, is as much at our command, as the fresh gales of this *renewing* spirit. 3d.—Our *glorification* is free. Eternal life is the *gift* of God (Rom. vi. 23); he doth not *sell* it, for *foreseen* faith or works, but he freely *gives* it. Now if all these *fruits* of election be free, then the election itself *to* these fruits, must be free also. If *faith* be the free gift of God, Eph. ii. 8, then *predestination to faith*, must of necessity be also free; for God worketh *all things* according to the counsel of his own will, Eph. i. 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 thou dost manifest thyself and thy love *to me*, and not unto the world! John, xiv. 22.

2. Thou makest not thyself to differ from others, but free-grace does it for thee. Thou art a lump of clay in the hands of the potter, *no better than others*, yea, pressed down to *hell* by Adam's fall: that God should lift thee up to *heaven*, be thankful.

3. Rejoice in the Lord, sing to the honour 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 Michael, *It was before the Lord who chose me before thy Father, to appoint me Ruler over Israel: therefore will I play before the Lord?* 2 Sam. vii. 14, 21. David's appointment, at *that* time, was but to an *earthly* kingdom; thou art *freely* chosen to inherit an *heavenly*: therefore I say rejoice.

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The *fifth* property of the divine decree;—it is **DISCRIMINATING**.

That it is discriminating and particular, 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; that cannot be called election, which is equally extended to every individual. He doth not *elect*, that doth not *prefer* some before others. God did not choose *all* the thirty-two thousand Israelites that were with Gideon, to save Israel by, out of the hand of Midian, but *only the three hundred* that lapped; and these were chosen from *out* of the thirty and two thousand, Judges, vii. 3—7. God did not choose *all* the nations, but only Israel, to



be a special people to himself, *Thy God hath chosen thee, above all people that are upon the face of the earth*, Deut. vii. 6. Election must therefore be *discriminating*, and a making of *some* to differ from *others*.

2. The Scripture expressly states that only *few* are chosen, though *many* be called, Matt. xx. 16. It is only a *little* flock, Luke, xii. 32; and but *one* of a city and *two* of a family that are brought to Zion, Jer. iii. 14. I have chosen you *out* of the world (saith Christ), John, xv. 19; and the Lord calls Paul a *chosen vessel* unto him, Acts, ix. 15, and xxii. 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 which, a *general* election, which is the *Arminian hypothesis*, most necessarily asserteth. How can these "reprobate silver" pieces be, in a gospel sense, termed *chosen vessels* (as Paul was) to know God's will, and see the Just one, Acts, xxii. 14.

3. If election be general *under a condition of believing*, then Pilate, Caiaphas, and Judas, were elected under that condition; and so God is brought in to speak after *this* manner: "*I have appointed to save Pilate, Caiaphas, and Judas, if they will believe in the death of Christ: 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 Acts, ii. 23, and iv. 28. Had these men *believed* (and they *might* have believed according to

the Arminian's views), then God's decree concerning Christ's death would not have been *absolute*, but depending on a *condition* which those men *might have fulfilled* (to wit, believing in Christ's death), which, had they done, they had believed in *that which then* never would 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 others, but those who are, or shall be, effectually saved? This would frustrate the will of God, even his will of *intention*; and would be contrary to the following scriptures. *Our God hath done whatsoever he pleased*, Psalm cxv. 3. *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee*, Job, xlii. 2. And no man can resist the will of God, for *he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth*. And, if after all, O vain man! thou wilt still object, and say "why doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?" the only answer for thee is, *Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against GOD? Shall the thing formed say to HIM that formed it, "Why hast thou made me thus?"* Rom. ix. 19. Thus it was, according to the sovereign will of Jehovah, that *Jacob and Esau* were *discriminated* the one from the other.

5. The Apostle *sheweth* 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 as certainly not escape.

*The election obtaineth it, but the rest are blinded,* Rom. xi. 7. The difference is of God, according to the purpose of election; not as of him that *foresees* faith or works, but as of him that *gives* BOTH.

We may learn from the preceding.

1. It is distinguishing love, that our potter hath 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. ii. 7, and, *out of the ground, the Lord God formed every beast,* Gen. ii. 19.

2. It is the will of God that some be *poor*, and others *rich*; so here, that some be vessels of *honour*, and others of *dishonour*.

3. Christ raised not all up that were *dead*, but *Lazarus*, &c. nor all that were born *blind*, but him mentioned in John, ix.—Bless God for raising *thee* up from thy death of sin, and healing *thy* blindness, and not others! Thou wert alike *undeserving* with *them*! Thou wert, thou art *still*, in thyself, a sinner! And, if thou art taught by grace, the last accents on thy faltering tongue will be the *publican's* prayer, *God be merciful to me a sinner*.

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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 number, which no man could number, of all nations and kindreds, and people and tongues, stood before the throne and before the Lamb: and they cried, saying, Salvation!* Rev. vii. 9. There is a *general decree* that relates to all *created beings*, both animate and inanimate, celestial and terrestrial; and extends itself to every individual in the whole creation of God. For as it gave a *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 special divine decree of predestination extends not (as the general decree) 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 among *them* hath God his chosen vessels—his Davids, his Solomons, his Hezekiahs, his Manassehs. Though the scriptures say (1 Cor. i. 26), *not many noble, not many mighty, are called*; yet doth it not say, *not any*; for God hath had some *great ones* to own his ways in all ages\*. It extends to *servants* also, Titus, ii. 9, 11, for God bestows his love on those in *rags*, as well as on those in *robes*. *The POOR*

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\* 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 1 Cor. i. 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 favoured FEW."

have the gospel preached unto them, Matt. xi. 5, and God is no respecter of persons.

2. *To all sexes.*—To both sexes is the decree extended, to male and female. God hath his elect *ladies*. *The elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth—and, the children of thy elect sister, greet thee*, 2 John, 1, 13, and *both male and female are one in Christ Jesus*, Gal. iii. 28. *I entreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those WOMEN, which laboured with me in the gospel, whose names are in the book of life*, Phil. iv. 3.

3. *To all ages.*—To young and old, to children, and to those of riper years: yea, very infants lay in the womb of the eternal decree, before ever they came out of their mother's womb: *Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee: and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations*, Jer. i. 5. John Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost even from the womb, Luke, i. 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, 2 Sam. xii. 23. David's going to the *grave* to it, could yield him but little comfort.

4. *To all nations.*—Grace is not immured within the walls of one nation only, but is extended to *Jew and Gentile*, to *circumcision and uncircumcision*, to *Barbarian and Sythian*, *bond and free*, Col. iii. 11, to some of every nation under heaven, Acts. ii. 5. The partition wall, which was betwixt Jew and Gentile, is

thrown down. Our Lord saith, *I have other sheep which are not of this [the Jewish] fold ; them also I must bring*, John, x. 16. This predestinating love effectually calls its chosen ones from all quarters. *I have loved thee ; and therefore, I will bring thy seed from the EAST, and gather thee from the WEST, I will say to the NORTH give up, and to the SOUTH keep not back ; bring my sons from FAR, and my daughters from the ENDS of the earth ; even EVERY ONE that is called by MY name*, Isa. xliii. 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 of Joseph he said, *Blessed of the Lord be his land—for the DEEP that coucheth beneath*, Deut. xxxiii. 13. So fresh veins of election breaketh forth, sometimes in one generation, and sometimes in another. It is not bound up as to time—neither before the law, nor under the law, nor after the law ; but, in every generation God hath his Church visible on the earth, and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. As God is no respecter of persons, so neither is he of places, nations, or generations ; but hath 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 a view of the *extensiveness* of God's everlasting love.

1. If predestinating love extends itself to all *degrees*, then, they which 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 as 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. xlv. 22.

5. If to all *generations*, then predestinating love is an inexhaustible fountain! crying always, Is there yet any of the house of the Lord among mankind, that I may shew the kindness of God unto! 2 Sam. ix. 3.

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#### 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 eternal, unchangeable, absolute, free, discriminating, and extensive; I come now, *secondly*, to consider the ARMINIANS' view thereof, *viz.* "That it is *conditional*, upon the *foresight* of faith, works, perseverance, &c."

To this I answer, that predestination *cannot* be conditional, upon a foresight of man's faith, works, or perseverance, &c. because of the *twelve* following reasons:—

1. That which the *scriptures* declare to be the cause and ground of our election, that, and *that only*, must be the cause and ground thereof.

The *good pleasure* of God is the only cause and ground of our *election*, not any foresight of our faith, &c. That the scriptures declare this, appears *plain* from Eph. i. 5, *according to the GOOD PLEASURE of his will*; and from Eph. i. 9, *having made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his GOOD PLEASURE*; and, ver. 11, *predestinated according to the purpose of HIM, who worketh all things AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL*. Also from Matt. xi. 25, 26, Thou hast *hid* these things from the *wise and prudent*, and hast *revealed* them unto *bubes*. But *why* so? It is, *even so, Father, for so it SEEMED GOOD in thy sight*. Again, the scriptures fully declare the same truth in Rom. ix. 11—15, and xi. 5; and in 2 Tim. i. 9, our *salvation and vocation*, is stated to be, **NOT ACCORDING TO OUR WORKS, but according to his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ before the foundation of the world**. The time would fail me in enumerating more passages of scripture, for the whole Bible as with one voice crieth aloud, election is of sovereign grace and not of works; flowing only from the absolute will and good pleasure of God.

2. That which makes election an action of *debt*, ought not to be received; and the conditional decree doth this.

An action of grace, and an action of debt, are contradictory terms. If election be an act of grace (and



the whole work of salvation hath been proved to be wholly and solely from free grace, p. 27) then 'tis *abominable* and to be *rejected*, to make it an act of debt. If the decree be *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 of giving glory to believers *persevering*, as their *reward*, can be nothing else but *remunerative justice*.

3. That which makes God go out of himself, in his immanent and eternal actings, ought not to be received; and the conditional decree doth so.

It makes God look upon *this* or *that*, in the creature, upon which the will of God is *determined*; thus man is the author of his own salvation, and God is not the author thereof. The doctrine of the conditional decree, sets God upon his *watch-tower* of fore-knowledge to espy what men will DO; whether they will *believe* or no; *obey* or no; *persevere* or no; and according to his observation of *their actings*, so he determines his will *concerning* them: thus the *perfection* both of the divine *knowledge* and divine *will*, is with one breath denied.

4. No temporal thing can be the efficient cause of our eternal election; but faith, obedience, &c. are temporal things, the former being wrought *in* us, and the latter performed *by* us, in their *appointed time*.

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

5. That which is the *fruit* and *effect* of the divine

decree, cannot be the *cause* thereof; and faith, perseverance, &c. are but the fruits and effects of electing love.

Such as are *given* to Christ in the decree of election, do *come* to, or *believe* in Christ; others do *not come*, do *not believe*: and the cause assigned is, *because they are not of his sheep*, because they are not *given* to him. *All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me*, John, vi. 37. *Coming to Christ, is believing on him. Ye believe not, BECAUSE ye are not of my sheep*, John, x. 26. *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed\**, Acts, xiii. 48. We may not (according to the *Arminian* notion) read it, *as many as believed were ordained unto 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. i. 4. We are fore-ordained *to walk* in good works, not because we *do* so, Eph. ii. 10. We are predestinated *to be* conformed to the image of Christ, not because we *are* so, Rom. viii. 29. It is the election that obtains faith, and not faith that obtains the election, Rom. xi. 7. And the Apostle, in 2 Tim. i. 9, excludes *all works* (both *foreseen* and *existing*), shewing that God's gracious purpose is the *original*

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\* Acts, xiii. 48, "Therefore either all were not appointed to everlasting life, or else all should have believed; but because that is not so, it followeth that some certain were ordained: and therefore God did not only foreknow, 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.

of *all*. Yea, Paul himself was chosen, that he *might* know the will of God, not that he was *foreseen* to do so, Acts, xxii. 14; and he tells the Thessalonians, *That God had chosen them to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth,* 2 Thess. ii. 13. We may not make that an *antecedent* to election, which is but the *consequent* thereof. I *have* chosen you, and ordained you, *that ye should go* and bring forth fruit, John, xv. 16.

6. That which sets up an *inferior* cause, before a *superior*, ought not to be admitted; and the conditional decree doth so.

God is the cause of causes, and, the *first* cause of *all* things. There can be no being, but *from* him, there can be nothing *before* him. *Of him, and to him, and through him, are all things,* Rom. xi. 36. *In him, we live, and move, and have our being,* Acts, xvii. 28. *O Lord, thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created,* Rev. iv. 11. God is the chief efficient cause, and the ultimate end of all beings; but if any being be 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. That which takes away the *certainty* and *unchangeableness* of the divine decree, ought not to be received; and the conditional decree doth so.

If any thing *in man* move God to *choose* man, then the purpose of God cannot remain firm; but must depend on some contingent *act in man*, be it faith, works, or perseverance. If it depends on our per-

severing 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 after this changeable dress, *viz.* "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 shall 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 such as I *foresee* will believe, and persevere in believing." O what a *changeable* picture of an *unchangeable* God!

8. That which makes us to choose God, before God chooses *us*, ought not to be received; and the conditional decree upon faith foreseen, doth so.

If God do 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; contrary to these Scriptures, *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you*, John, xv. 16. *We love him, because he first loved us*, 1 John, iv. 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, 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. That which taketh away the *mysteriousness* of the divine decree, ought to be rejected, and this doctrine of *foreseen* faith doth so.

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; where the great Apostle stands at the gaze, crying, *O the depth! how unsearchable!* and, *who knoweth* the mind of the Lord!! Had Paul been of the *Arminian* persuasion, he would have answered, *Those are elected that are foreseen to believe and persevere!* 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, 2 Pet. iii. 16. But Paul was ignorant; and these men are wiser than the Holy Ghost; for *he* tells us, that our

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\* Dear reader! If thou art a child of God! I then desire thee 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 hath 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, disdainful 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, xi. 12. It is said, the Lord knoweth vain men (ver. 11.) He doth indeed know them. He knoweth 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 thee to wrap thy face in the mantle of thine own nothingness; and, taking up Job's reply, to say, "I have uttered *that* I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I know not. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, therefore I ABHOR MYSELF, and repent in DUST and ASHES."

election proceedeth from the will of the *elector*, and not from any thing in the *electeds*. 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 hardeneth*. Had foreseen faith and perseverance been the causes and conditions of election, there had been *no mystery in it*.

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

*First, Jacob the person.*—He was under electing love; all foresight of faith and works being excluded. *Jacob have I loved*, Rom. ix. 12, 13. To love Jacob, is to will unto him the greatest good, even everlasting salvation, and all things which accompany the same; and this was before there was any difference between him and Esau, for they were both alike in the womb, both conceived in sin. *The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil; that the purpose of God according to ELECTION might stand, NOT OF WORKS,*—*It was said unto Rebecca, The elder shall serve the younger*, Rom. ix. 11, 12.

*Second, Jacob the nation.*—Our election is typified by God's election of Israel, which plainly appears *not* to be an election upon foresight, of *worthiness* in Israel; *Not for thy righteousness, nor for the uprightness of thine heart. Understand therefore that the Lord thy God giveth thee not this good land to possess it, for thy righteousness; for thou art a STIFF-NECKED people*, Deut. ix. 5, 6. All works and

worthiness are excluded, and the reason assigned is, *Because the Lord LOVED you*, Deut. vii. 8.

11. That which sets up the rotten *Dagon* of man's free-will, before or above the ark of God's special predestinating grace, ought to be rejected; and the conditional decree doth so.

The conditional decree is grounded upon a fore-sight of our *wills*, receiving or rejecting of *proposed grace*; and so man's will is made the *first mover*, and advanced above God's will: and the *act* of predestination is put in the *will* and *power* of the *predestinated*, and not in that of the divine *Predestinator*. 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*, not of the *saver*; and to *will* and to *do*, is not of God's good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13. Thus men wickedly think that God is such an one as themselves, (Psalm i. 21,) wavering, and fluctuating in his counsels; and, hanging in *pendulous suspenses*; yea, taking up *new consultations*, as dependant on the will of men, and the contingent *acts* flowing therefrom.

12. That which inferreth a *succession* of acts in God, ought not to be admitted; and election upon fore-sight doth so.

God is ONE ACT, and in him there can be *no succession*, for then he would not be I AM. Fore-sight of faith necessarily pre-supposes a fore-going decree, concerning the *being* of that faith fore-seen. For, *first*, God must decree faith to *be*; *second*, he foresees that faith; *third*, then decrees to save upon

that fore-sight. So that this *fore-sight* necessarily comes between *two decrees*.

Much more might be added, such as—fore-seen faith can have no place in *dying infants*, yet of such is the kingdom of heaven, and their names are written in the book of life, see Rev. xx. 12. But to sum up the whole in one sentence;—**A CONDITIONAL DECREE MAKES A CONDITIONAL GOD, SEEING THE DECREE IS GOD HIMSELF DECREERING.** Therefore it *must* be rejected.

May not the Sov'reign Lord on high  
Dispense HIS favours 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 thy sight,  
Yet still his written will obey,  
And wait the great decisive day!

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#### 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 thereof, that it is *conditional*: I shall now, *thirdly*, 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 the primitive Christians in the *ten* first persecutions; who wrapped them up in the skins of beasts, and then exposed them to be torn in pieces by their fierce ban-dogs: so do the ARMINIANS 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 at it one *cynical sarcasm* after another, saying "This doctrine of absolute predestination goes to accuse and charge God with injustice, dissimulation, hypocrisy," &c. &c.

Objection 1, *Of Injustice, in giving to equal persons unequal things; contrary to that scripture which saith, that God is no respecter of persons, Acts, x. 34.*

Answer 1. This was objected against Paul's doctrine, Rom. ix. 14. *What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness [is there injustice] with God? God forbid.* And seeing the apostle brings it in as the *cavil* of carnal reason against God's decree, we have therefore sufficient ground to reject it. God must not lose the honour of his righteousness, because the *reason* of it appears not 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 for God, and talking deceitfully for him*, Job, xiii. 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 ever be viewed as inseparably *united*.

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 from God. God's ways are *always equal*, though men think otherwise of them;—*Yet ye 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?* Ezek. xviii. 25; and though they be sometimes secret and *past finding out*, as Rom. xi. 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 fountain of *justice* and *equity*. God is too *kind* to do us harm, and too *just* to do us wrong.

3. Jacob and Esau were *equal* in the womb, yet had an *unequal* disposing decree concerning them; this was God's right and power to do. This the apostle demonstrates, 1st, from *Moses'* testimony, Exod. xxxiii. 16. *I will make all my goodness pass before thee; I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.* It is his *right* to do so. And 2dly, from the example of the potter, who hath *power* over his pots, yet less than God over his creatures. Now that which the *pot* cannot do with the *potter*, that *man* may not do with his Maker. But the pot (supposing it could speak) could not blame the potter, of injustice, in appointing equal lumps to unequal ends.

4. God's decree is not an act of justice, but of *lordship* and *sovereignty*. Justice always pre-supposes *debt*; but God (who was perfect in himself



from all eternity) could not be a debtor to man, who had his all *from* God: the decree is not a matter of *right* and *wrong*, but of *free favour*; grace is God's own, he may do what he will with it. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? is thine eye evil, because I am good?* Matt. xx. 15. If he give grace to *some* and not to *others*, it is no wrong in him, that is not bound to give it to *any*.

5. God is not a respecter of persons, because he doth 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 but 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 to their young; than rat-catchers, who stop up all holes, and then hunt them with their dogs, &c. &c.\**

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\* There was a favourite 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 thee well to ponder on these replies. May the Lord anoint thine eyes with eye salve! The doctrine of the FREEDOM of the WILL is an all-important point. It appeareth to ME, that these pages (48 to 56) contain, as it were, the CREAM, yea, 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 drinketh iniquity like water, to stretch out

Answer 1. This is charging God foolishly, seeing no act of God can be a means to damn men, but men's *own acts* are the cause thereof; to wit, *the fulfilling their own lusts*. As reprobation gives not such a grace as infallibly to make them *better*, so it works nothing in them whereby they are made *worse*.

2. 'Tis 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, was not the cause why either the one or the other came to an untimely end; but it was treason against *Solomon* in *Joab*, and running from *Jerusalem* in *Shimei*, which procured their deaths, see 1 Kings, ii. 5, 28, 40, 42.

3. It is a false hypothesis, to suppose that God, in the decree of *reprobation*, doth by as effectual means intend to bring men to *damnation*; as in the decree of *election* to bring others to *salvation*: for salvation is a *favour* not due to *any*, so God may absolutely *give* or *deny* it; but damnation is a *punishment*, so hath relation to a *fault*. *Means to salvation* is the gift of free grace, but *damnation* comes of man's own voluntary *sin*, and is the fruit or wages thereof. *The wages of sin is death: but the gift of God, is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. vi. 23. It is *God* that fitteth Peter for *salvation*; but Judas fits *himself* for *damnation*.

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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, xv. 26.

4. Should God *constrain* the creature to *sin*, and then *damn* him for it, he delighteth in the destruction of his creature, contrary to Ezek. xviii. 23; and xxxiii. 11. God did not thrust Adam *into* his sin, as, *after* he HAD willingly sinned, he thrust him out of paradise. 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 is objected against the absolute decree, *that it makes God guilty of dissimulation; in calling upon such as are under the negative part thereof, to repent, &c. just as if God should bid men, whose eyes he had closed, to judge of colours: or those whose feet he had bound, to rise up and walk.*

Answer 1. The *non-elects* not repenting, is not only from want of power [*No man can come unto me, except the Father draw him*], John, vi. 44; but also from want of will. *Ye will not come to me, that ye might have life*, John, v. 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.

2. Man *had* a power, in *Adam*. God gave him knowledge in his *understanding*, rectitude in his *will*, and purity in his *affections*:—these are all *lost* by the fall. God must not lose his authority to *command*, because man by reason of *sin*, hath lost his ability to *obey*.

3. May it not more truly be said, that it is the

*Arminians* who charge God with *folly* and *dissimulation*, by their representing him as disappointed in his purpose, and by their bringing him in as speaking thus;—“*I do indeed earnestly desire to save you, but ye so hinder, that I cannot do what I desire; I would, if ye would; therefore seeing I am, by you, frustrated of my intention, I will change my purpose of saving you, and my consequent will shall be a determination to destroy you.*” So said *Vorstius*, the *Arminian*, “*Things may happen, that may bring God to grief, having tried all things in vain!*”

4. But there is *another* view to be taken here. When God giveth command to *spiritual* acts, he granteth *power* to *obey* the same.—So it was, when Christ bade the man to stretch out the withered hand; and Lazarus to come forth out of the grave. The call and 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.

Answer 1. Adam's standing was possible respecting himself, but not respecting God. To say that Adam might not have sinned, is a categorical and simple proposition, and will hold good, Adam being considered in himself as clothed with the freedom of his will: and to say also, that it could not be but that Adam would sin, is equally true, considering Adam as subordinate to the decree of God, determining what Adam would do *out of* the freedom of his own will.

2. As it respects *man*, Adam might have stood as well as fallen: for God gave not his creature a *law* only, but also furnished him with power sufficient to *keep* that law, if he would; and if man had not been *mutable*, he had been *God* and not *man*. Man is *mutable*; God alone is *immutable*: in this, *He*, the Lord, is distinguished from all created beings. Yet as it respects *God*, it was *not possible* man should 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 of himself, but necessarily in respect of God. He acted as freely therein as if there had been no decree, and yet as infallibly as if there had been no liberty. God's decree took not away man's liberty; man in the *fall*, while fulfilling the decree of God, yet freely exercised the proper motions of his own will.

3. Thus then, God by decreeing Adam's sin, did not subtract from Adam any *grace* that he *had*; for he decreed that he should sin *voluntarily*. He diminished not that power with which he was endued, only, he super-added not that grace whereby Adam would infallibly not have fallen: which grace was no way *due* to man, neither was God *bound* to bestow it on him. So that Adam might stand, in respect of *himself*; yet certainly fall, in respect of *God*. The Jews might have broken Christ's bones, in respect of their own free-will in such actions, yet was it not possible they should do so; for, *not a bone of him*

*shall be broken*, John, xix. 36. It was possible, in a sense, that Christ should be delivered from his Passion, by legions of angels (Matt. xxvi. 53), *but how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it MUST be?* ver. 54. It was possible, in respect of the thing, that God *might* have pardoned sinners without a Christ; but impossible, in as much as God had *decreed* Christ to be the ransom. To argue on the Arminian hypothesis of *free-will*, 'tis possible none may be *saved*, or none *lost*; and then, either *heaven* or *hell* would be superfluous.

Objection 5. *The predestinarians cannot agree about stating their decree; some stating it before the fall, as the supra-lapsarians; and others after the fall, as the sub-lapsarians.*

Answer 1. The *Arminians*, by the law of retaliation, may be called *submortuarians*, for their holding no *full* election till men *die*; and *post-destinarians*, for placing the eternal decree *behind* the race of man's life. Surely when believers *die*, they are the subjects of *glorification*, not of *election*. Christ should have *said* (upon this hypothesis) to the penitent thief, *this day thou shalt be FULLY ELECTED, not, thou shalt be with me in paradise.* And may they not also be stiled *relapsarians*, for saying that the elect may totally and finally fall away; and that he who is a child of God to day, may be a child of the devil to morrow?

2. Those notions of *sub* and *supra*, are but human conceptions of the *order* of the divine decree, which so far transcends our understanding, that our weak



capacities cannot comprehend it, but after the manner of *men*. Those several *states* of man, *before* and *after* the fall, are not in the *divine understanding*, as they are in *ours*, by a *succession* of acts, one after another; but, God *by one single act*, orders all things; and the *divine idea* in the decree, is a representation of all those states *at once*. They are not *sub-ordinanda*, but *co-ordinanda*; *not this after that*, but, altogether in one instant of eternity\*.

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\* *Supra-lapsarians* and *Sub-lapsarians*.—It hath been a question in the Church, “Whether men were considered, in the mind of God, in the decree of election, as fallen or un-fallen; 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 stiled *sub-lapsarians*, 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 any thing 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 Pre-destination; 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

Objection 6. Absolute election makes men remiss in duty; saying, "*What need or use is there of*

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act in God, and not temporal; or which commenced in time, but from all eternity. For it is not the opinion of the sub-lapsarians, 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 supra-lapsarian 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 any one 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 creable, 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.

*good works ? Let me live as I list, if I am elected to salvation, I shall certainly be saved."*

Answer 1. God's decree establishes *means* ; it doth not only ordain the *end*, but the *means* to that end ; and *one* is never separated from the *other*. God decrees that the earth shall be *fruitful* ; this doth not *exclude*, but *includes*, that the sun must shine upon it, showers must water it, and the husbandman must till it, as his God instructs him, Isa. xxviii. 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 said not " though I run into the fire, or into the water, or drink poison, I shall nevertheless live so long ;" but natural providence, in *the due use of means*, co-wrought so, as to bring him on to *that period* of time pre-ordained for him. Man's industry is subservient to God's decree ; it is called *the life of our hands*, Isa. lvii. 10. We may not tempt the Lord our God.

2. The *golden chain* hath so linked the means to the end, and *sanctification* in order to *salvation*, that God doth infallibly stir up the elect to the *use* of the means, as well as bring them to the end *by* the means. *Brethren, beloved of the Lord ; God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through SANC-TIFICATION of the spirit, and, belief of the truth, 2 Thess. ii. 13. A new heart will I give you, a new spirit will I put within you ; I will take the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judg-*

*ments, and do them. THEN shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations, Ezek.*

—xxxvi. 25—31. —Those in whom the Lord hath put his spirit, let them live as they *list*, and I am very sure they will live *godly* lives.

3. The *Arminian* eternal præscience infers as absolute a certainty, and necessity of events, as our predestination doth ; for things must be *fore-ordained* to be, *before* they can be *foreseen* that they shall be. Men may argue *thus* from *their* grounds, *If I be eternally foreseen to believe, I shall believe and be saved.* And yet on the contrary, they teach men to say, *I can repent when I will ; I may be elected whenever I please, though I at present am living in lewdness, for I have a free-will to repent even on my death-bed, so I may be saved if I think proper.* THIS IS THE DOCTRINE THAT WILL MAKE MEN REMISS IN DUTY !! But, for an elect soul, by the operation of the Holy Spirit, to read the heart of his covenant God towards him, as loving him everlastingly, absolutely, and peculiarly ; and, in consequence of his everlasting unchangeable love, bestowing on him, and giving for him, his greatest, his best gift, even Jesus Christ ; let *him* live as he listeth, this will be his language, eye and his *practice* also, “ For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. I love thee, *because* thou hast first loved me ; I am *constrained* thereto, by the all-powerful influences of thy 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 up with thy likeness." Phil. i. 21 ; 1 John, iv. 19: 2 Cor. v. 14, 15; Psal. xvii. 15.

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

**Answer I.** This is to suck *poison* out of a sweet flower ; to *dash* against the rock of ages ; to *stumble* at the word, whereunto they were appointed, 1 Pet. ii. 8. Why hath God ordered all things by an absolute decree for ever ? It is *that men should fear before him*, Eccles. iii. 14. God acteth *freely*, as the *first* cause ; and man *freely*, as the *second* ; in *concurrence*, and not by *constraint*.

2. This objection is *well answered* in the 17th article of the Church of England.—“ For *curious* and *carnal* persons, *lacking* the spirit of Christ, to have continually before their eyes the *sentence* of God's predestination, is a most dangerous downfall ; whereby the devil doth thrust them either into *desperation*, or into wretchedness of *most unclean living*, no less perilous than desperation.”

3. No man may judge himself a reprobate in this life, and so 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.

4. The *Arminian* doctrine [*God foresaw what good*

*courses I would take, of my free-will, so did elect 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 oft he offendeth?* Cleanse thou *me* from secret faults, Psal. xix. 12.

To tell men (as the Arminians do) that they may be justified and sanctified, and God's *children* all but *glorification*; and yet *after this*, may become reprobates, and be *damned in the end*; is desperate doctrine indeed. Truly it is *theirs* which is the desperate doctrine; whereas *our* doctrine, is only liable to *false inferences* from carnal persons; from such persons as drew false conclusions from our Lord's words, and said, *Who then can be saved?* Luke, xviii. 26. Such inferences are not fairly deduced, but *corrupt consequences* drawn from *good* premises.

God's ways are just, his councils 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 works, 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 which 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, *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 be of *equal extent* and latitude; but Universal Redemption, in the *Arminian* sense thereof, makes these *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. As there are *three* that bear witness on *earth*, the spirit, the water, and the blood; so there are three which bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; *and these three agree in one*, 1 John, v. 6—8. Whom the Father *elects*, the Son *redeems*, and the Holy Ghost *sanctifies*. If then there be an universal *redemption*, there must be an universal *election* and an universal *sanctification* also, and so (by consequence) an UNIVERSAL SALVATION. That the Son *redeems* no more than the Father *elects*, is evident from *two* scriptures, the *first* is John, v. 23,

which declares the Son must be honoured as equal with the Father ; but, to say that the Son redeemed *all*, and the Father elected but *few*, is to give greater honour to the *one*, than the *other*, and to make an inequality in their operations. The *second* scripture is John, xvii. 9, 10. *All thine are mine, and all mine are thine, &c.* They were the Father's by *electing love*, and they became the Son's by *gift and redemption* : *thine they were, and thou gavest them me*, ver. 6. Christ redeems only those whom the Father gave unto him. Hence God's book of life, wherein the number of the elect is recorded, is called also, *the Lamb's book of life* ; intimating that the number of those elected by the Father, is commensurate with those redeemed by the Son. And that Christ redeems no greater number than the Spirit *sanctifies*, is evident from 1 John, v. 6, 7 ; there must be water to sanctify, where there is *blood* to redeem : Christ's *oblation* is not of larger extent than the Spirit's *operation*. Thus it is most apparent, that all the three persons in the Trinity, have one *object* and one design of *love*. They are equal in essence, equal in honour, and equal in operation.

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

That the benefit of Christ's resurrection is not extended to all, and every one alike, but is peculiar to believers, is acknowledged *even by the Arminians*. That the death and resurrection of Christ are of equal extent in their objects, is evident from Rom. viii. 34,



(they are both put together,) *who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, for whom Christ died? Who can condemn those for whom Christ was raised? Those whom Christ died and rose again for, cannot be condemned. He died for our sins, and was raised again for our Justification, Rom. iv. 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 on some the wrath of God abideth, John, iii. 36.*

3. The benefit of Christ's *death* and *intercession* are of equal extent in their objects; but Christ intercedeth not for *all*.

This is expressly declared in scripture—*I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me, for they are thine. They are not of the world, John, xvii. 9, 16. Christ's intercession is not for the world at large, but only for those whom his Father hath given to him; and reason confirms this, for if Christ interceded for Judas, Pilate, &c. then had he a repulse, and was not always heard of the Father; contrary to John, xi. 42. Again, Christ is a high priest, and the two parts of his priestly office, oblation and presentation, cannot be separated: and they which have a part in the former, have part in the latter also. For presentation doth necessarily imply the oblation; and gives a perpetual force thereto in the sight of God, Heb. ix. 12. Christ must intercede on the behalf of those whom he hath reconciled to God by his death; and his intercession is a personal presenting of himself to his Father, on the behalf of those whom he personated on the cross. We cannot*

say that there be some for whom Christ offered himself upon earth, but doth not intercede for in heaven; this would make Christ but a *half-priest* to some, and therefore not a *faithful* high priest; contrary to sundry scriptures, Isa. liii. 11, 12; 1 John, ii. 1, 2; Heb. ix. 11, 12, and x. 19—21.

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

All are sinners: and every sinner must die, either in himself, or his surety, for the wages of sin is *death*. And the suretiship of Christ consists in this, that he *died* for us, Rom. x. 8. He was made a curse for us, that is, in our stead, Gal. iii. 13; 2 Cor. v. 21. Judah was surety for Benjamin's safety, Gen. xlv. 32, and Christ is the surety of the new covenant, Heb. vii. 22, he took upon him our sins in his death, Isa. liii. 4—8; 1 Pet. ii. 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 knows not workers of iniquity, and *he never knew them*, Matt. vii. 23; yet he knows his sheep, and he laid down his life for them, John, x. 11—15.

5. If the Covenant of Grace be not to all, then Christ died not for all.

Christ's blood is called the blood of *the covenant*, Heb. ix. 20, and the blood of *the new testament*, Matt. xxvi. 28. That the covenant of grace is not extended to *all*, is evident, for it is made with the house of Israel only; *this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel, saith the Lord,—*

*I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts ; and will be their God, and they shall be my people, Jer. xxxi. 33.* The covenant is with those only in whose *hearts* the conditions are effectually wrought, to wit, putting God's *fear* therein, and writing his law in their *minds* ; which the election only 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 hurteth, Gen. iii. 15.

6. If Christ died for his *sheep*, his *friends*, and his *church* only ; then he died not for all.

This is plain from several scriptures.—*The good Shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. I know my sheep, and am known of mine, and I lay down my life for my sheep, John, x. 11—15. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, John, xv. 13. Feed the church, which he hath purchased with his own blood, Acts, xx. 28. Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, Eph. v. 25.* Christ died for such as were Paul and Titus, not such as were Pharaoh and Judas, who were *goats* and not *sheep*, Matt. xxv. 33. He died to save *his people* from their sins, and therefore his name was called Jesus, Matt. i. 21 ; who are called *the redeemed of the Lord*, Psalm cvii. 2. Now, seeing those for whom Christ died, are such as *hear his voice, and follow him*, to whom *he gives eternal life*, John, x. 27, 28, such as *he sanctifies, and cleanses, and presents to himself without spot or wrinkle*, Eph. v. 27, such as *he hath redeemed from*

*all iniquity, to purify them to himself a peculiar people, Titus, ii. 14, such as are his people, his chosen, his children, and it cannot be intended for all, unless we say that Pharaoh, Judas, &c. were of the sheep, friends, and church of Christ. It is true he died for enemies, Rom. v. 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. Those for whom Christ's death was *intended*, to them it must be *applied*; but it is not applied to *all*, therefore it was not intended for all.

The *end* and design cannot be severed from the *action* to accomplish that end. Christ's aim being to *bestow* what he obtains, he obtains nothing but what he *applies*. He himself speaks of *some* from whom the gospel was *hid*; and of *others* to whom it was *revealed*, or made known. *Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, Matt. xi. 25.* The sum total of the intercession of Christ, is, that what he has obtained, may be applied, see John, xvii. 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. iii. 25, so that *all for whom Christ died, must be reconciled to God*; the death of Christ is the *cause*, and reconciliation the *effect* following the cause. If all be reconciled, all must be saved; and nothing can be laid to the charge of any. 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, &c. 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 therefrom. 2d, That God damns reconciled persons. 3d, 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, &c. But these things are *not* so; for to those for whom Christ died, *repentance* is granted, and *remission of sins*, Acts, v. 31; to *them* is given freedom from the slavery of sin, and regeneration to newness of life, Rom. vi. 6; Heb. ii. 14, 15; on *them* is bestowed *purifying grace*, *purifying their hearts by faith*, Acts, xv. 9; *they* have the blood of Christ to purge their conscience from dead works, that they may serve the living God, Heb. ix. 14, and *their's* is life eternal: *I give to them eternal life, and they shall never perish*, John, x. 28. All these fruits are evidences of our reconciliation by Christ's death.

9. That cannot be a truth, which the scripture no where affirms; and it no where 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 that ALL is rendered MANY in Matt. xx. 28, and Mark, x. 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, Matt. xxvi. 28 ; and it is so frequently restrained to his sheep, friends, church, believers, chosen, and such as are *given* to Christ, that it must mean, *some of all sorts* ; which, in *equivalent terms*, is clearly expressed in Rev. v. 9, 10. *Thou hast 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 hath given him, &c. not all men universally, and every man individually.

10. That which opposes the attributes of God, ought not to be received ; and universal redemption doth so.

1st, 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's sin, *when Christ's death was his very sin.*

2d, 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.

3d, It opposes his *power* :—If Christ died intentionally (as to God) for all, then God's *intentions* are frustrated, seeing all are not *saved*. Then is God not *omnipotent*, if crossed in his designs 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, AND MAKING A LAUGHING-STOCK OF RELIGION.

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OBJECTIONS AGAINST PARTICULAR REDEMPTION,  
ANSWERED.

Objection 1.—*What every one is bound to believe, must be true ; and it is the duty of all men to believe ; therefore, Christ must have died for all men.*

Answer 1. Suppose we *grant* this position, would not the doctrine of *discriminating love* be thereby destroyed? Would it not be *poor* comfort for a *distressed* soul, to believe that Christ died for it, no more than for Judas, and all the damned in hell?

2. They to whom the gospel never came, they 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 no where reveals, that it is *his* intention that Judas shall believe, or that *all* shall believe.

3. *All* have not the gospel preached to them; and many to whom it is preached, only *hear the sound thereof with the outward ear*; they come and go, in an attendance thereon, as the door upon 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 know not their *need* thereof. Evan-

gical 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, 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, &c. &c. these are the characters invited to *come to*, and believe in Christ, and *not* all men, Matt. xi. 28; Isaiah, lv. 1; Mark, ii. 17.

Objection 2.—*The words ALL and EVERY, often used in scripture, must be taken universally.*

Answer 1. ALL and EVERY, must not be taken for an universal affirmative, collectively, and for every man individually, in the common quoted scriptures; but *distributively*, as in Matt. ix. 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 healed not every disease individually. Also in Col. i. 28, where *every*, is taken distributively three times over, and must be restricted to those to whom Paul preached.

2. *All*, in 1 Tim. ii. 4, 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 that very justly, *for their sins and transgressions*. Unto *some* men it will be said, *depart ye cursed into everlasting fire*. If God-willeth all men to be saved, then, *all men WILL be saved*, for HE (God) doth according to his WILL in the army of heaven, and among the



*inhabitants of the earth*, Dan. iv. 35. God faileth not, he cannot be disappointed in his own will; for he worketh all things after the counsel thereof\*. Again, in Heb. ii. 9, Jesus is said to taste death for *every man*; it is in the very next verse restricted to "sons brought to glory," and in verse 11, to "sanctified" ones. 1 Tim. ii. 6 (who gave himself a ransom for *all*) is rendered in the parallel text in

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\* "I rather think that by ALL MEN, in 1 Tim. ii. 4, are meant the GENTILES, who are sometimes called the WORLD, the WHOLE WORLD, and EVERY CREATURE, Rom. xi. 12, 15; 1 John, ii. 2; Mark, xvi. 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 Saviour, who will have all men (GENTILES as well as Jews) to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth,' and therefore hath 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 1 Tim. ii. 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.

Titus, ii. 14, who gave himself for us. Now, *who* are the persons called, us, in this text? Are they not *particularized* as, “redeemed from all iniquity, purified and made a peculiar people?” For *all* of this description, Christ gave himself a ransom, and for none else.

The prophet David saith, *All men are liars* : take the word *strictly*, and he must be a liar that said so.

Objection 3.—In John, iii. 16, and 1 John, ii. 2, it is declared that *God gave Christ for the world, and for the sins of the whole world* ; which must be taken literally.

Answer 1. The word “*world*” is of various significations. A decree went out that *all the world* should be taxed, Luke, ii. 1, that is, *the Roman empire*, and such countries in subjection thereto. The faith of the church of Rome, was spoken of throughout *the whole world*, Rom. i. 8, that is, throughout all the *churches*, and among all the *saints* in the world. When the Pharisees said of Christ, “*behold the world is gone after him,*” John, xii. 19, by reference, we find they meant the “*much people*” who went out of Jerusalem to meet Jesus, crying hosannah, verse 12, 13. The Pharisees themselves, who *so* said, *they* were not gone after Christ; therefore, the *whole world* was *not* gone, they themselves not being gone. So John, iii. 16, *God so loved the world*, cannot be understood of the world *containing*, in a strict sense, for so birds, beasts, fishes, and all inanimate things are comprehended, which cannot have everlasting life; nor can it be the world of *men*,

but as God is the preserver of both *man* and *beast*, Psalm. xxxvi. 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 this 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, not such as he *found* good, but such as he *made* so.

2. There is the world of *believers*, Rev. v. 9; and as *manna* was only for Israel, so Christ, the true manna, the bread from heaven, gives life to the world of believers only, John, vi. 33. Christ was *believed on* in the world of believers only, 1 Tim. iii. 16; the reconciled world, 2 Cor. v. 19; and *all men* have *not* faith, 2 Thess. iii. 2. There is also the world of *unbelievers*. *All the world wondered after the beast, and worshipped the dragon*, Rev. xiii. 3, 4. *The whole world lieth in wickedness*, 1 John, v. 19. The believing world is a world *in* the world (*these are in the world*, John, xvii. 11), and they are taken and chosen *out* of the world. They are *in* the world, and sojourning among the inhabitants thereof as *strangers* and *pilgrims* only, this not being their *rest*, their *home*; their desires being toward a *better* country, Heb. xi. 13—16. And that they are taken and chosen *out* of the world and given to Christ, is clear from John, xv. 19. *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you*. Also from John, xvii. 6, 9. *I have manifested thy name unto the men which*

*thou gavest me out of the world. I pray for them, I pray not for the world.*

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

3. It is granted, that God hath a respect for all mankind; we trust (saith Paul) in the living God, who is the Saviour, *i. e.* the *preserver*, of all men, *especially of those that believe*, 1 Tim. iv. 10. The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works, Psalm, cxlv. 9; he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good; and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, Matt. v. 45. All this implies not *eternal* preservation, but only temporal providence and *reservation*; for the wages of sin would have been paid at the *birth* thereof: and the world (through confusion by sin) would have fallen about Adam's ears, had not Christ been the glorious undertaker.

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

4. The word, *world*, is sometimes in scripture put for *Gentiles* in opposition to *Jews*, and so it is in 1 John, i. 2. John wrote to the *Jews*, and ministered unto the *circumcision*, see Gal. ii. 9, and he says unto *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 for us Jews only, but for the*

*Gentiles also.* The Jewish nation considered themselves as the peculiar 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, *Of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came,* Rom. ix. 4, 5. The Jews were always taught to appropriate the Messiah *exclusively to themselves,* to the utter rejection of the *Gentiles,* who were called strangers, uncircumcised, common, unclean, dogs, &c. And it was unlawful for a Jew to keep company or have any dealings with a Gentile, see Matt. x. 5; Mark, vii. 17; Acts, x. 28, and xi. 3. The salvation of the Gentiles is in various parts of scripture called, *a mystery, a hidden mystery;* the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, that the *Gentiles* should be fellow-heirs, Eph. iii. 4—6; Col. i. 27. But when this mystery was revealed and made fully known by the divine mission to Paul, who was by Christ sent to preach to the Gentiles, Acts, xxvi. 17, 18, when it was declared by the vision of the unclean beasts and the Lord's consequent commission to Peter, Acts, x. 9—15, 20, then the contentions of the *circumcision* ceased, Acts, xi. 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, being *now* brought nigh by the blood of Christ: They glorified God, saying, *Then hath God also to the GENTILES granted repentance*

*unto life.* Jesus Christ is not only the propitiation for the sins of *us* JEWS, but for the GENTILES also, Eph. ii. 11—18.

5. The foregoing is proved from Rom. xi. 21, where the two words, *World* and *Gentiles*, are both used, as signifying one and the same thing. *If the fall of the Jews be the riches of the WORLD, and the diminishing of them the riches of the GENTILES; how much more their fulness?*

— “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 exceeding large on the *negative* of the question; only some few, as old *Simeon* and others, knew that he should be *a light to lighten the Gentiles*, as well as *the glory of the people of Israel*. The *rest* concluded, that the most severe judgments and dreadful calamities would befall the *Gentiles*; yea, that they should be cast into hell, in the room of the *Israelites*.”—DR. GILL.

Objection 4.—*Surely Christ hath as much efficacy to save, as Adam to damn, see Rom. v. 18.*

Answer 1. There is a difference between a *necessary* extension, and a *voluntary* one: Adam's sin was extensive *necessarily*, but salvation by Christ is of *free grace*, wholly of God's pleasure, and is therefore called *the free gift*, Rom. v. 15.

2. Christ is no where compared to Adam in the extent of his object, but only in the efficacy of his obedience. All, and every one, are not in Christ radically, as they were in Adam; all are not given to

Christ; but, *as many* (saith Christ) *as thou hast given me*. As all the offspring of Adam fell by his sin, so all that are *Christ's* are saved by his death;—as all that are in Adam *die*, so all that are in Christ are *made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 22.

3. That the apostle might not be misunderstood, and the word, ALL, in Rom. v. 18, taken *universally*, the term of comprehension is *varied* in the following verse, and ALL is rendered MANY. *By the obedience of one, shall many be made righteous.*

Objection 5. In Rom. xiv. 15, it is said, *destroy not him for whom Christ died*. And in 2 Peter, ii. 1, persons are described as *denying the Lord that bought them*.

Answer 1. Everlasting destruction cannot be intended by the word, *destroy*, in Rom. xiv. 15, and the *context* shews this; for the apostle, throughout the chapter, is exhorting the believing Romans not to contemn or condemn one another on account of things indifferent; neither to *destroy the weak believer's peace of mind*, by doing any thing (which although it be 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 *esteemeth* any thing unclean, to HIM it is unclean. If thy brother be grieved with thy *meat*, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not, by thy conduct (in eating meat esteemed by thy brother unclean) the *peace of mind* of one of the *weaklings* of that flock for whom Christ died. Put not a stumbling-block, or an occasion of falling or offence, in thy weak brother's way," Rom. xiv. 13.

*Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God. GIVE NONE OFFENCE, 1 Cor. x. 31, 32. To the same purport is 1 Cor. viii. throughout.*

- 2. The persons spoken of in 2 Peter, ii. 1, as *denying the Lord that bought them*, are described by the apostle thus, “**FALSE TEACHERS,**” hypocritical professors, tares among the wheat, Matt. xiii. 25, 38, in whom was never *the root of the matter*: 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 Saviour Jesus Christ, verse 20. To answer certain purposes, they made an *outward* profession of the gospel, which obliged them for a space to be *outwardly moral*; associated with the people of God, insinuated themselves into churches\* privily introduced therein *damnable heresies*; many followed their pernicious ways, by reason of whom, the way of truth was evil spoken of, and they made merchandize of true believers; they continued thus for a while, and then, either their *sheep's clothing* (Matt. vii. 15) was *stripped off* them, or they *threw it off* themselves, and returned back again into the world. They were all this while, *goats*, not *sheep*; *ravening wolves*, not gentle *lambs*: And Peter closes the chapter concerning them by saying, *It is happened unto them*

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\* “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.



according to the true proverb. *The DOG is turned to its own vomit again; and the sow, that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire*, 2 Peter, ii. 1—3, and 17—22.

3. The apostle (in 2 Peter, ii. 1), does not appear to be there speaking concerning the purchase of the Redeemer's blood—the name or title, Lord (Gr. *Despotes*) is no where else applied to Christ in the New Testament, *but to the Father*, as in Luke, ii. 29; Acts, iv. 24; 2 Tim. ii. 22; and especially in Jude, verse 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 no unusual thing with the inspired writers, to speak of things, not as they actually *are*, but according to the *profession* of the party. Thus for instance, Matt. xiii.

12. "*Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath*"—that is, "*which he seemed to have*," as explained in Luke, viii. 18. Thus *apostates* are said to be "*twice dead*," which would seem to import that they *had been* spiritually alive, though in fact that was never the case, but *merely* what they *professed* to be.

4. So that if we even *grant the premises*, it only follows, that such as *think* themselves redeemed, or are thought so by *others*, may blaspheme and *perish*; yet this makes not 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.

THE Arminians not only deny election to be an eternal, peculiar, unconditional, and irreversible act of God ; and assert that Christ died, equally and indiscriminately for every individual of mankind ; for them that *perish*, no less than for them that are *saved* : but they also aver—that saving grace is tendered to the *acceptance* of every man ; which he may or may not receive, *just as he pleases*\*. That the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit in conversion, is *not invincible*, but is suspended, or depends for its *efficacy*, on the will of man. That notwithstanding Christ's death, it was possible (in respect of *free-will*) that all should *perish* ; that now, by his death for all,

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\* “ I came forward, in the name of God, to remove the thick darkness with which many have covered the sacred writings ; and to shew, 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 ! Thou camest forward, and didst attempt *that*, which thou wast *unable* to accomplish. It was not within *thy* grasp !

*true grace is given to all* ; which they may improve, hold fast, and be *saved* ; or despise, neglect, cast-away, and be *lost* !

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

Man is considered in a fourfold state:—1st, The state of *creation*, therein he had free-will either to *good* or *evil*, but was *necessitated* to neither.—2d, The state of *degeneration*, wherein he is a *servant* to *sin*, and necessitated to evil.—3d, The state of *regeneration*, wherein he is freed from the *slavery* and dominion of sin, and from the love of sin, though not (at present) from the inbred corruptions and inbeing thereof.—4th, The state of *glorification*, wherein man is both freely and necessarily good, perfect, and happy. In the *first* estate, man is free ; in the *second*, a slave ; in the *third*, set free ; and in the *fourth*, having a *glorious* liberty.

The controversy is concerning the *second state*, wherein we say, that man is under a necessity of sinning, yet free from coercion ; he is free to *evil*, but

not to *good*; which appears by the following arguments.

1. That there is no free-will to good in the fallen estate, is proved from the fall itself: if man, in the fall, *lost* his free-will to *good*, then it cannot be found in the fallen estate.

The fall implies—The loss of that original righteousness and perfection wherein man was created. If the other faculties of the soul became depraved, and were stripped of their primitive lustre by the fall, then must the *will* also be a sharer in that depravation. Now the depravity of the will is proved, by considering the good it hath *lost*, and the evil it hath *gained*, through Adam's sin. The good it has lost is sixfold—power, order, stability, prudence, obedience, liberty. The evil it hath gained is a threefold rebellion:—*1st*, Against the counsel of the mind. *2d*, Against the controls of conscience. *3d*, Against the commands of God. This king of the Isle of Man (*the will*) when he came first out of God's mint, was a curious silver-piece, and shone most gloriously; but now, being fallen among thieves, is robbed of all, hath ashes for beauty, and is a tyrant upon a dung-hill: yea, is free from righteousness, but a very slave to sin, Rom. vi. 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. vi. 5. The whole heart, now, is evil *extensively*, only evil *intensively*, and continually evil *protensively*.

2. If conversion be a *new creation*, then fallen man hath not a free-will to good. •

A convert is called a new creature, or a new creation, in Gal. vi. 15; and 2 Cor. v. 17. Creation is a production of *something* out of *nothing*; but if there be a free-will to do good, in man, before conversion, then is there something of its own nature spiritually good in unconverted man, towards the *work* of conversion; so can it not be called a new creature. Sure I am every *experienced* soul, finds the *contrary* in that work; 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. Yea, a greater power is required to *re-create* this *little* world, than at first to create the greater; for in *this*, though there be no pre-existing *good* matter, yet is there resisting *evil* matter. The creation of the great world was *the work of God's word*, Psal. xxxiii. 6; *of his fingers*, Psal. viii. 3; or *of his hands*, Psal. cii. 25. But to restore (the little world) MAN, requires God's *arm*, Luke, i. 51; nay, Christ set his *sides* to it, Luke, xxii. 44; it cost him *tears* and *agony* and *blood*. New qualities and operations are created *in us*; the *will* to will *well*, and the *power* to do well, are ascribed to this *creating almighty power*, in the effectual conversion of souls to God. *It is God which worketh in you, both to will, and to do, of his own good pleasure*, Phil. ii. 13.

3. If conversion be a *new-begetting*, or generation, then fallen man hath no free-will to good.

Generation is the motion *to* a being, and a proceeding into a being; this pre-supposes, that there is *no being before*; for we *are not*, we are *nothing*, before we be begotten: as it holds true in generation, so in regeneration: *Of his own will* begat he us, James, i. 18\*. 'Tis not said that God begat us of *our wills* (yet this should be said, were there in us a free-will to good) but of *God's will*; and till then we *are not*, 1 Cor. i. 28.

Unconverted men are *nothing-creatures*. 1st, A *natural-nothing*; for what is the great womb whence all things come, but *nothing*? 2d, A *moral-nothing*; we are morally *worse* than nothing, that is, [*Enosh*] miserable; *Man is vanity* (or as in the Hebrew, *Adam is Abel*, that is, *vanity*), Psal. xxxix. 5; and *a lie*, Psal. lxii. 9. *The heart of the wicked is little worth*, Prov. x. 20: neither for use nor service; as a *shadow* is not useful for war, nor a *statue* for prayer,

\* 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 be fact, if a sinner *hath* this power, of his own free-will; then was Dr. Young *right* in his "Centaur not Fabulous," who, addressing himself to man, says—"Is thy consent necessary to finish what is began? *Yes*; it is in thee to grant, or deny, the request of the Almighty. Heaven intends, decrees, labours, works miracles, for thy welfare. It presses thee, it importunately presses thee to *comply*. Consider how thou art *courted*; and by whom: by Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, thy FELLOW-LABOURERS for thy good. So glad all heaven; assert, rescue, ennoble, and with bliss eternal, CROWN THYSELF. For without thee, in the constituted order of things, heaven is UNABLE to do it. Without thee, thou amazing being, there is IMPOTENCE in heaven. HEAVEN'S DESIRES ARE AT THY MERCY." !!!

so fallen man is unfit for the service of God, for *his best actions are sin*. All this shews we are nothing, and have not a free-will to good, till begotten of God.

4. If conversion be a *new-birth*, then fallen man hath not a free-will to good.

We cannot have a birth of 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 would not be, at the same time. Thus are we taught to look up *above ourselves* for our new birth. *Except a man be born again*, or from *above*, John, iii. 3, we are born, not of the *flesh*, but of the *spirit*, ver. 6. Our first birth is of the earth, earthy; our second birth is from the Lord, heavenly; *Born of God*, 1 John, iii. 9.

5. If conversion be a *quicken*ing one that is *dead* in sin, then fallen man hath no free will to good.

This is proved from Eph. ii. 1. *You hath he quickened who were dead*, &c. He doth not say *half dead*, as the man was that fell among thieves, Luke, x. 30; but *wholly dead*, as to spiritual life. *There is no manner of good in us*, Rom. vii. 18. *And we are not sufficient of ourselves to think a good thought*, till Christ quickens us, 2 Cor. iii. 5. *Without him we can do nothing*, John, xv. 5. *From him is our fruit found*, Hosea, xix. 1; 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*, but it was solely and wholly the work of God. So Ezekiel's *dry bones* were made to live; nothing of that life was from themselves, but all from God. Thus it is in this *spiritual* life; we can contribute *nothing* whereby to dispose ourselves to *will* that which is truly good; we cannot so much as call Christ, *Lord*, but by the Spirit, 1 Cor. xii. 3. If there be no life, but through *union* with Christ, then till we be engrafted into that blessed and bleeding vine, we cannot bring forth fruit unto God. And 'tis not any natural power or principle in *us*, that can engraft us into Christ\*, for *faith* is the engrafting grace, and that is the *gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8, the grace whereby the just live, Hab. ii. 4, and whereby Christ dwells in our hearts, Eph. iii. 17, till then we are *dead*, and have no free-will to good.

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\* 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. iv. 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. ii. 8; therefore faith may be said to "engraft into Christ," *i. e.* *manifests* our union with him, Rom. ix. 24, 25. Paul could say of himself and others, we were chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, Eph. i. 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, vii. 58, and when he went to the High Priest for letters to Damascus, Acts, ix. 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* unto God, through Jesus Christ his Lord.



6. If regeneration, or recovery from the state of degeneration, be a *resurrection*, then fallen man hath no free-will to good.

That regeneration is a *resurrection*, is manifest from the following scriptures, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live, John, v. 25. When we were dead in sins, he hath quickened us together with Christ, and hath raised us up, &c. Eph. ii. 6.* It requires as much power to raise, quicken, and make alive, a sinner dead in trespasses and sins, as to raise Christ from the dead, Eph. i. 19, 20. To raise up Christ, and to work *faith* in us, requires the *exceeding greatness of His power*, verse 19. Here are three gradations—power,—greatness of power, and—exceeding 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 in working*; such strength as is in the arms of valiant men, who can do great *exploits*. Nay, more, 'tis beyond all this, it implies a power that *can do all things*; an *omnipotent* power. Surely had there been an *internal principle in us, towards this great work*; or any *free-will*, in us, to good; *Paul* would not have used those gradations, nor such emphatical, significant expressions. This work of regeneration, would not *then* have required the effectual forcible power of the valiant arm of God; even such a power as raised up Christ from the dead, whereby he was declared to be the Son of God, Rom. i. 4.

7. If moral suasion be altogether insufficient of itself, to recover man from his fallen state, then fallen man hath no free-will to good.

If moral persuasion could recover man, then faith would be an *easy work*, and not require such mighty power as has been just proved. Christ did *more* to the raising of *Lazarus* than morally *persuade* him to come out of his grave; when Christ said, "*Lazarus, come forth,*" a *mighty power* went along with the command, which gave *effect* thereto. 'Tis not enough to *persuade* a prisoner to come forth, but his *chains* must be struck off, and the prison doors must be *opened*, Acts, xii. 6, 7, 10, and man is *more* than a mere *prisoner*; he is *dead in sin*, so must have a *quickenning grace*; which *moral persuasion can never accomplish*.

8. If Christ be *ALL in ALL* (Col. iii. 11), in matters of salvation, then man is *nothing at all* as to that work; and hath not in himself a free-will to good.

*First*, Christ's work is to bore the ear, which before is stopped like the *deaf adder's* to the voice of the charmer, Psalm lviii. 4, 5. Christ gives the understanding ear; *he openeth their ear to discipline, and commandeth that they return from iniquity*, Job, xxxvi. 10, see Psalm xl. 6, and Isaiah, l. 4, which passages, although spoken of Christ, will hold good concerning his people.

*Second*, Christ opens not only the ear, *but the heart* also, Acts, xvi. 14. The Lord opened the heart of *Lydia*, not she her own heart; which she might have done, had she a free-will to good. The key of the

heart hangs at Christ's girdle, *he shutteth and no man can open, he openeth and no man can shut*, Rev. iii. 7. Moral suasion will never prove effectual to open the heart of man.

*Third*, besides Christ there is no Saviour, Isaiah, xliii. 11; Hosea, xiii. 4; but, free-will Arminianism makes man a *co-saviour* with Christ; as if there was a *halving* of it between the *grace* of Christ, and the *will* of man, and the latter dividing the spoil with the former; yea, deserving the *greatest share*: for if Christ be only a *monitor*, and *persuade* to good, then man's own *will* is the principal *author* of its own goodness; and he makes himself to differ from others, and hath *something*, that he received not at conversion, whereof to *boast* before God. *Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* 1 Cor. iv. 7. Persuasion leaves the *admonished will*, to its own indifference, not changing it at all; so man becomes his own saviour, *at least Christ is not the only Saviour*; how then is Christ **ALL in ALL?**

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

That moral suasion will not bring a soul to Christ; that man cannot come of himself, but must be *drawn*, is proved from John, vi. 44. *No man can come to me, except the Father draw him*. Drawing is a bringing of any thing out of its course and channel, by an influence from *without*, and not from an *innate*

power or principle from *within*. In Sol. Song i. 4, it is not said *lead*, but *draw*; in drawing there is less *will* and more *power*, than in leading; and though God draws us *strongly*, yet he doth it *sweetly*. As we are *drawn*, we have not a free-will to good, else man fell in his *understanding only*, not in his *will*: yet are we *volunteers*, Psalm cx. 3, *a willing people*; not that Christ *finds* us so, but *makes* us so, in the *day of his power*, and when he speaks to us with a strong hand, Isa. viii. 11. We are naturally *haters of God*, and at enmity with him, Rom. i. 30, & viii. 7, but the Spirit gives a *new power to the soul*, and then *acts* and *influences* that power to *good*; so 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, Ezek. xxxvi. 26. God the Spirit gives the inclination *to come*, and the very power *of coming* to Christ; and Christ finds nothing that is good in us, Rom. vii. 18.

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

The spirit of grace is compared to a *precious liquor* that is infused; and the called and chosen of God, are styled *vessels of mercy*. *I will pour upon the house of David, the spirit of grace, &c.*, Zech. xii. 10; *the vessels of mercy, prepared unto glory*, Rom. ix. 23; now a vessel is a passive receiver of liquor poured into it. *The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost*, Rom. v. 5; that 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*; though it was formed and organized, yet was it lifeless and breathless, Gen. ii. 7. So the will of man (in respect of this first reception of grace) hath neither concurrence nor co-operation active; the Lord is *alone* in that work. Apart from the influences of divine grace, 'tis a very hell to any to be brought *from* hell; though it be an hell to us to stay, after God hath opened our eyes and changed our hearts! Corrupt nature neither *can*, nor *will*, contribute any thing to destroy its own corruptions. In the first work, the *will* moveth not of itself, but is moved by God: The will, as a *creature*, must obey its *creator*; yet as a *sinful depraved* will, it obeys not willingly, *till made willing*, Psalm cx. 3. Man, and the will of man, while in an unregenerate state, may be compared to the tied-up colt, in Mark, xi. 2 (tied and bound with sin's chain), but when *the Lord hath need of him*, and the day of his power is come, the sinner must then be loosed and let go.

11. To deny grace, irresistible special grace in 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? And to say, that the reason why one *believes*, and another *does not*, arises from the *co-operation* of the free-will of him that believeth, is to deny special *irresistible*

grace as peculiar to the elect. All which is contrary to these scriptures, John, vi. 37, 45; Rom. viii. 14; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24; 1 John, iv. 13, and *very many others*. God's dispensations towards his people are all of free-grace. *He quickens whom he will*, John, v. 21. The heart of *one sinner* is caused to melt as wax before the fire, and receive God's seal; while the heart of *another* remains as inmoveable as *marble*, and as the *rock* that cannot be shaken; this is the work of God's gracious dispensation. *He hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*, Rom. ix. 18. *The spirit blows where it listeth*, John, iii. 8. God may *drop-in* grace, even with the first breathings of life, and regenerate a *babe* as soon as it be brought forth; as *John Baptist*, who was filled with the Holy Ghost, *even from his mother's womb*, Luke, i. 15. And *others* he may cast into the womb of the new-birth, when in the very act of *dropping out of the world*, at the eleventh, yea at the *twelfth* hour, as the *thief on the cross*. O 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 received.

First, It makes man the cause of his own salvation.

Second, It puts grace into man's *power*, not man's will under the power of *grace*.

Third, It robs God of the honour of making one to differ from another, and ascribes it to man.

Fourth, It allows man a liberty of *boasting* to God, saying,—“*God, I thank thee that thou gavest me*

*power to will (yet thou gavest that to Judas as well as me), but I thank myself for the act of willingness, seeing I received from thee no more than Judas did."*

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

Sixth, It maketh *man* the cause why God willeth *this or that* ; so *God must attend on the will of man*, and not be infallible in his decrees, nor working all things according to the counsel of his own will, Eph. i. 11 ; Psalm cxv. 3.

Seventh, then the Apostle *James* lied, in saying *every good gift* is from God, James, i. 17 ; and Paul also was mistaken, in Rom. ix. 11. He should have said, *It is of man that willeth and runneth, and not of God that sheweth mercy.*

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#### OBJECTIONS IN FAVOUR OF FREE-WILL, ANSWERED.

Objection 1. *There is a law written in the hearts of fallen mankind*, Rom. ii. 15.

Answer 1. This is *conscience*, bearing witness of right and wrong (*see the same verse*). Impotency is in the WILL.

2. Adam begat a Son *in his own image*, Gen. v. 3, not only as a man, but as a sinner. *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*, John, iii. 6. Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? *Not one*, Job, xiv. 4. While we are *Christless*, we are *without strength*, Rom. v. 6.

3. The devils have more light than men, yet are they altogether dead in sin, though they *believe and tremble*, James, ii. 19, and though they *confess Christ*, Luke, iv. 34; Mark, i. 24. They sin *freely*, yet cannot avoid it, but must sin.

Objection 2. *Why is man blamed for resisting the Spirit, if no free-will?* Acts, vii. 51; Matt. xxiii. 37.

Answer 1. They *resisted the preaching of the gospel* (which is the outward means of grace) by persecuting the ministers thereof. The word (resist) in that passage of scripture, signifies a rushing against, and falling upon, in a rude and hostile manner; and fitly expresses their ill-treatment of Christ and his ministers, by falling upon them and putting them to death. *That* is the resistance here particularly designed; see the following verse, Acts, vii. 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 *conversion*.

2. Matt. xxiii. 37. This scripture, so common in the mouths, and so frequently found in the writings, of Arminians; so readily produced by them on almost every occasion against the doctrines of grace; this scripture, *taken in its context*, will advantage them nothing. *How often would I have gathered, &c. but ye would not.* This gathering does not design a gathering of the Jews to Christ *internally*, by the spirit and grace of God; but a gathering of them *externally*, to hear him preach, so as that they might be brought to an assent unto him, AS THE MESSIAH.



This reception of Christ would not have been *saving faith*, but it would have *preserved* them from that TEMPORAL RUIN threatened in the following verse. This scripture therefore (as Acts, vii. 51) only respects a resistance to Christ's outward ministry. Jerusalem, *i. e.* her rulers, received him not, John, vii. 48, therefore their *house* is to be desolated (verse 38); the City is *one* thing, and her *children* another. Here is temporal destruction threatened for *neglecting temporal visitations*, Luke, xix. 44. Nationally considered, Jerusalem would have been preserved in its peace, had the people, upon the *rational* opportunity afforded them for receiving the Messiah, accepted Christ under that character.

Objection 3. Why doth God say, *What could I do more to my Vineyard?* Isa. v. 4.

Answer 1. This is not spoken of grace, that God gives to particular men *peculiarly*; but of great things done for Israel as a *nation*, Psalm cxlvii. 20. *God dealt not so with other nations.* "These words are part of a parable, representing the state and condition of the people of the Jews; and the design thereof is to shew the ingratitude of the Jews in the midst of many favours bestowed on them, and the patience and long-suffering of God towards them, and to vindicate his justice in their ruin as a nation." GILL.

2. God did enough in making man *upright*; and if he hath *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 *giveth* it to whom he *will*.

**Objection 4.** Man is a rational creature ; *his will cannot be determined by any thing from without, it being a self-determining principle.*

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

**2.** To *will* is from *nature*, 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 hath giv'n,  
Nor will of man, nor blood, nor birth,  
Can raise a soul to heav'n.

The sov'reign will of God alone,  
Creates us heirs of grace :  
Born in the image of his Son  
A new peculiar race.

Thus quicken'd souls awake, and rise  
From the long sleep of death ;  
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 (let God wish and strive ever so much to the contrary) throw all away, 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—that *true and saving grace cannot be totally and finally lost*.

For the better understanding of this, I shall inquire, *First*, What is saving grace? *Second*, What is it 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?

Answer *First*, negatively. It is not the grace of nature, or natural grace, which is two-fold. (1) In the pure estate. The gift of original knowledge and righteousness, which was infused into the soul so soon as it had its being in pure nature. (2) 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. ii. 14, 15.

Neither, *second*, Is it supernatural common grace, which is called *supernatural*, as not attainable by the power of nature or free-will; and *common*, because given both to the elect and non-elect. As dexterity in *callings*, 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, &c. &c.* Exodus, xxxi. 2, 6. Ministerial gifts, whereof *Judas* was a partaker. Delight in hearing the word, as the *stony-ground hearer*, Matt. xiii. 20; and *Herod* also, who did many things, and who heard John preach gladly, Mark, vi. 20. These *tastes* of heavenly things, are given to *servants* as well as to *sons*; and *differ* from SAVING GRACE in its subject, original, efficacy, property, duration, event and final issue.

1. In its *subject*;—saving grace being peculiar to the *elect* only, and is no wider than election itself.

2. In its *original*;—common grace flows from Christ as a redeemer, but not as *their* redeemer; and from the spirit of Christ *assisting*, but not as *indwelling*.

3. In its *efficacy*;—common grace may qualify for a common *profession* only, where there is a *form of knowledge*, Rom. ii. 20, and a *form of godliness*, 2 Tim. iii. 5, which doth neither *renew the heart*, nor

raise it above a common frame; yet may *do much* for God (with the stony ground) and *suffer much* for God (with the thorny ground) and yet not be special grace, *which the world cannot receive*, John, xiv. 17, and which lives, revives, and reigns, so that *sin cannot have dominion*, Romans, vi. 14. Gifts are but as *dead graces*; but *graces are living gifts*.

4. In its *property or nature*;—common grace is but the *ornament* not the *substance* of a Christian; gifts indeed may *beautify* grace, but grace only *sanctifies* gifts; as the gold beautified the temple, but it was the temple that sanctified the gold, Matt. xxii. 17. For the *eminency* of gifts, and the *prevalency* of sin; a *form* of godliness, and the *power* of sin; may *dwell* and *consist together*.

5. In its *duration*;—we acknowledge common grace may wither away; 'tis not a gift that God repents not of, as that gift of effectual calling is, Rom. xi. 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*, 1 Sam. xvi. 14, and *ministerial gifts* (as the right arm and right eye, Zech. xi. 17), may fail and be withered up\*.

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\* 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,



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

But, *Thirdly*, and now *positively*, supernatural saving grace, is the sanctification of the spirit, renewing in us the image of God, and guiding and strengthening us *to* obedience, and *in* obedience even

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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 thy 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, xvi. 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.' "



to the end. It is His almighty effectual working on the hearts of the elect, giving to them a certain *continued connexion* of all spiritual blessings, which manages them onward even to a state of glory. *Whom he did predestinate, them he also CALLED; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also GLORIFIED*, Rom. viii. 30. *He hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. i. 12. The effects of it doth accompany salvation, being *permanent* effects; both on the soul in justification and adoption, and in the soul in vocation, *sanctification*, and perseverance to glorification. This grace differs not from glory in *kind*, but only in *degree*; grace is *glory militant*, as glory is *glory triumphant*. Therefore it is called *the riches of his GRACE*, Eph. i. 7, and *the riches of his GLORY*, Rom. ix. 23. This is that grace which **CANNOT** be totally and finally lost; *the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water, springing up into everlasting life*, John, iv. 14.

Second inquiry. What is it to fall *totally* and *finally*?

Answer 1. To fall *totally*, is to have grace altogether *dead* in us, both in the act and in the habit; no life either in branches, bole, or root; no seed remaining in us, neither any root of the matter.

2. *Finally* to fall, is *never* to rise again, never to recover by repentance; but to *die in sin* unrepented of, and unpardoned.

Third inquiry. 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.

Argument 1. 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. xxxi. 3; if with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, James, i. 17; if none can pluck out of the Father's hand, John, x. 29, *then* his chosen ones cannot tota'ly and finally fall away.

Neither the force nor fraud of hell can prevail against the Father's electing love, which runs parallel with eternity. *God is love*, 1 John, iv. 8, and everlasting love must needs flow from an everlasting God. He looketh on *His*, and saith unto them, *Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love*; and, *therefore*, as the *effect* thereof, *I have drawn thee with the cords of loving-kindness*, Jer. xxxi. 3. It is to be declared of and from the Lord, unto the Church, that, *the Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty*; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will REST in his love; he will joy over thee with singing, Zeph. iii. 17. Hence *Paul* (having spoken of some *apostates* falling away) comforts the minds of *believers*, saying, that *their standing is firm, because of election*, or rather, because of electing love, 2 Tim. ii. 19. This he compares to a *foundation* and a *seal*, two things of the greatest validity and security. Believers



stand as upon a stable *rock*, and they are placed as upon a mountain of brass, so cannot totally and finally fall; for the Father is not inconstant in his love;—he doth not love to-day, and hate to-morrow.

2. The second argument is taken from *God the Son* in his *redeeming* love; which is unalterable.

Thereby are all the *members* of Christ *united* unto Christ their *head*. Neither principalities nor powers shall be able to separate them from the love of God in Christ, Rom. viii. 38. *And the gates of hell cannot prevail against his Church*, Matt. xvi. 18. If one member may be broken off from Christ, then *all* may; one having no more privilege than another, in respect of their *state* and *standing*; so Christ may be supposed (upon this *hypothesis*) to be a head without a body or members; and to have died in vain; both which are grossly absurd. Christ *prayed* for perseverance for his; that Peter's *faith* should not fail, Luke, xxii. 32, and that his *disciples* should be *kept from evil*, John, xvii. 15, yea, and *all believers*, verse 20, and what Christ *prays* for, he is always *heard* therein, John, xi. 41, 42. Christ also *promises* perseverance to his. *All that the Father giveth me shall come to me*, John, vi. 37. He will not utterly withdraw his mercy from them, under their *severest correction*, Psalm lxxxix. 31—33. Having loved his own which were in the world, *he loveth them unto the end*, John, xiii. 1, and *loses not one of them*, John, vi. 39. He is a saviour to all parts of the body, Eph. v. 23. Saints are in Christ's hands, Deut. xxxiii. 3, and it is as easy to pluck a star out of heaven,

as a saint out of Christ's hands, John, x. 28; they *are* all, 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 Christ, and called*, Jude, 1; 1 Peter, i. 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 appear, in that the Spirit's operation is compared in scripture, 1. To an earnest, 2. To a seal, 3. To a witness.

First, to an earnest.—*God hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit*, 2 Cor. v. 5. 'Tis the earnest penny of our salvation; not the pawn or pledge, which is to be returned again. The earnest is part of the bargain, and the first-fruits of heaven; now the earnest would be lost, if the bargain of salvation stand not, and he that hath the earnest be *not* saved: and if such an one be damned, he carries the earnest of the Spirit along with him into hell; which must needs be 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.

Secondly, to a seal.—Faith is *our* seal; assurance of faith is *God's* seal. He that *believeth* hath set to *his seal* that God is true, John, iii. 33. *After that ye believed, ye were sealed*, Eph. i. 13. They first

believed and *then* were sealed, *i. e.* *fully assured*. God honours *our* sealing to his truth, by *his* sealing with his Spirit: as the *earnest* makes the bargain, so the *seal* ratifies and confirms it. And the *broad seal* of heaven must needs be *more* unalterable than that of the Medes and Persians.

Thirdly, to a witness.—*He that believeth hath the witness in himself*, 1 John, v. 10. And there can be *no exceptions* taken to this witness who abides *for ever* in the elect, and is called *the spirit of truth*, John, xiv. 17, which *teacheth all things, and is truth, and is no lie*, 1 John, ii. 27; even *the eternal Spirit*, Heb. ix. 14, a witness that can neither *die* nor *lie*. So that believers, whose bodies are called *the temple of the Holy Ghost*, 1 Cor. vi. 19, may not become an habitation of devils; this would make Satan rejoice and insult over God (as if stronger than he) could he so dispossess *him*, as he is dispossessed *by* him, Luke, xi. 21, 22.

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

1st, *Satan* cannot; for that wicked one cannot touch them with any of his *deadly touches*, 1 John, v. 18, but *God treads him under their feet*, Rom. xvi. 20. The seed of the serpent may *nibble at the heels* of the seed of the woman, but cannot *mortally* wound the *heart*; for his armour is taken away, Luke, xi. 21, and his works are destroyed, Heb. ii. 14. Christ in

them, the hope of glory, is stronger than *he* that is in the world, 1 John, iv. 4.

2d, The *world* cannot; for Christ gives them faith to *conquer* the world, 1 John, v. 4, yea, he himself has *overcome the world* for them, John, xvi. 33. He makes them to be higher-region men, *above all storms*, Prov. xv. 24; they are made *kings* unto God; they have a *royal spirit* to live *above* the *frowns* and *flatteries* of the world; and the world, even all sublunary things, are beneath them, *under their feet*.

3d, Their *fleshly lusts* cannot; which have not *dominion* over those that are under *grace*, Rom. vi. 14. Though all real Shulamites find the presence of the two armies, Sol. Song vi. 13, the flesh lusting against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, Gal. v. 17, so that they cannot be as they would; yet the issue of the contest is not doubtful. A *troop* may *for a time* overcome Gad; coming upon him like *bees* (as David's phrase is, Psalm cxviii. 12), yet *Gad shall overcome at the last*, Gen. xlix. 19. Believers are *more than conquerors, even triumphers*, over all their spiritual enemies, through Christ which loveth them; and no created power can prevail against them, Rom. viii. 35—40. *Then thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ*, 2 Cor. ii. 14.

5. The nature of *saintship*, proves final perseverance; if saintship be a *service, subjection, sonship* and *marriage*, then saints cannot fall away totally and finally.

1st. 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* for life ; we are to serve God in holiness and righteousness *all the days of our lives*, Luke, i. 74, 75. A servant of God, is like the *Jewish* servant that was bored through the ear, in token of *perpetual* servitude, Deut. xv. 17. Religion is a perpetual obligation.

2d, It is a *subjection*.—It sets up God to be our *King*, and our allegiance is for life, it cannot be disclaimed, Luke, xix. 27. Born of God by the *grace* of God ; and, if we be *born* subjects into the kingdom of this *gracious* Lord and King, we must *die* his subjects : there is *no alienation*.

3d, 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 removing out of his native country ; yet, *a son cannot change his father*, and he *abides in the house for ever*, John, viii. 35. Now as God hath 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. xxxi. 9, and because of the relationship subsisting between him and us, he maketh known his *abba-love* to our souls, Gal. iii. 26 ; therefore shall we persevere ; God is *our Father*, and we are called the *children of God*.

4th, 'Tis a *marriage-state*, and that is for life too ; Hosea, ii. 19 ; Isa. liv. 5 ; Rev. xix. 7 ; Rom. vii. 14, and in this state God *hates putting away*, Mal. ii. 16.

6. In respect to *the saints themselves*.—If the names of the saints are written in heaven; if they are kept for heaven, as heaven is kept for them; and if they are compared to things that neither *fade* nor *fail*; then they cannot totally and finally fall.

1st, Their names are written in heaven, Phil. iv. 3; Dan. xii. 1. *Rejoice because your names are written in heaven*, Luke, x. 20. To be enrolled in the book of life, must needs hold out perseverance; for there is no blotting nor blurring of that book; Satan cannot (for 'tis above his *reach*) and God will not, for then his work would not be perfect and glorious, if it admitted of blottings. But of this, see more in the *first* point, pages 18 and 19.

2d, Saints are kept as in a *double* garrison, or as with a guard; heaven for them and they for heaven; they are kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, 1 Peter, i. 4, 5. Christ is their Lord-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 for his children, and to save them to the very uttermost, Matt. xi. 27; Heb. vii. 25.

3d. Saints are compared to a tree that *fades not*; Psalm i. 3, to a *cedar in Lebanon*, Psalm xcii. 12, Hosea, xiv. 5, to *Mount Zion that cannot be moved, but abideth* for ever, Psalm cxxv. 1, and to a *house built on a rock*, Matt. vii. 24. *Though they fall, God raises them up*, Psalm xxxvii. 24; Prov. xxiv. 16. The Lord is with them in their *old age*, Isaiah, xlvi. 4, and is their guide *even unto death*, Psalm

xlvi. 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*.

That which stands upon two unchangeable bottoms ; made between two unchangeable persons ; and ratified before an unchangeable witness, must be *itself unchangeable* ; and the covenant of grace is so.

*First*—It stands upon two unchangeable bottoms, even the *word* and *oath* of God. When God made *promise* to Abraham, he *swore* by himself ; he being willing more abundantly to shew the heirs of promise the *immutability* of his counsel, confirmed it by an *oath*, that *we* might have *strong* consolation, Heb. vi. 17, 18. God's word is as *gold purified*, which loses nothing of its weight, though 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 the word of the God of truth *that cannot lie* ? And this word is *confirmed* with an *oath*, when God swears by his holiness that he will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.

*Secondly*—It is made between two unchangeable persons, Mal. iii. 6 ; Heb. xiii. 8. In this covenant there is a mutual stipulation. The Father, in covenant, gave to Christ *a people*, John, xvii. 6, 9, 12, 24. The Son confederates to take man's nature upon him in the fulness of time ; and in that nature to obey, magnify, and make honourable, the *law* ; and to answer the demands of *justice* in our room and

stead, by shedding of his own most precious blood, Psalm xl. 6, 7; Heb. x. 5—7; Eph. v. 26, 27; hence 'tis called the blood of the everlasting covenant, Heb. xiii. 20.

*Thirdly*—'Tis ratified before an unchangeable witness, even the Holy Ghost. Indeed the Father and the Son are their own witnesses, John, v. 32, 36, 37, yet the Holy Ghost is the witness of that covenant, agreement, and stipulation which was between them; as Christ hath a *greater* witness than that of *man*, so hath the covenant also, even the witness of the eternal Spirit. Thus the covenant is called *everlasting*, Heb. xiii. 20; Isaiah, liv. 8, 10; Jer. xxxii. 38, 40, and *the sure* mercies of David, Isaiah, lv. 3. Sure on *God's* part, who cannot fail in his good-will to the elect; and sure also on *their* part, who shall have *no will to depart from God*. The *latter* is equally covenanted for with the *former*; therefore though the covenant permits *a fall*, yet it always ensures *repentance after the fall*, as in *David* and *Peter*, &c. The covenant doth absolutely promise *the grace of perseverance*, and all things that accompany salvation to the elect, even to the end of their lives.

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

Saving grace is called a *seed remaining in those that are born of God*, 1 John, iii. 9, an *incorruptible seed*, 1 Peter, i. 23. Grace never differs from *itself*, though a gracious man doth from *himself*. Saving grace cannot be *lost*, though as respects its *acts* and



*operations*, it may not always be in *exercise*; but *degrees* and *measures* of grace (formerly attained to) may be lost. *Thou hast left thy first love*, Rev. ii. 4, not the *habit*, neither wholly the *exercise* of love, but only that *vigour* and *heat* that once appeared.

9. The *Israelites*, who were a type of God's *spiritual Israel*, could not alienate their inheritance in the land of promise, Levit. xxv. 23, 24; 1 Kings, xxi. 3; if this was so in the *type*, then must it hold true also 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 the believer *even in this life*, Jer. xxxii. 40. *I will put my fear in their hearts* [present *gracious* possession] *that they shall not depart from me* [perseverance to glorification]. Christ is able to keep the *deposit* committed unto him against that day, 2 Tim. i. 12. He is not only our *goel*, our near kinsman, who has redeemed our *mortgaged* inheritance for us; but he is our *feoffee* in trust also, keeping heaven for us, and us for heaven; and *he abideth faithful*, 2 Tim. ii. 13, both in *drawing* that we should *come* to him, and in *holding* that we should not depart from him. Even now is he seated at the right hand of the Father, interceding on our behalf, and saying, *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am*, that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, John, xvii. 24.

His pow'rful blood did once atone,  
And now it pleads before the throne.

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

The truth of this appears from John, viii. 31; those only are Christ's disciples which *continue* in his word; and such as wholly fall away, have but the flashings of a temporary faith, which like a *land flood*, fills the country with inundations, yet at last comes to nothing. *They went out from us, because they were not of us*, 1 John, ii. 19. All true believers continue to the end, Heb. iii. 6, 14; those are God's *house* and partakers of Christ indeed; and those only.

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

Whatsoever true believers ask of the Father, in the name of Christ, according to his will, shall assuredly be obtained; John, xiv. 13, 14; and 1 John, v. 14, 15; and they *pray for the grace of perseverance*. The church is represented as coming up from the wilderness, *leaning on her beloved*, Sol. Song viii. 5; convinced of her own weakness, she leaneth on *the strength of Israel*, Psalm lxxxiv. 5. *Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe. My soul cleaveth to the dust, quicken thou me. I am thine, save me; cause me to persevere*, Psalm cxix. 25. These are the petitions of the believing soul, who is convinced that his strength is perfect weakness, his wisdom is folly in the abstract, and that *he is not safe from falling one moment, but as supported by the arm of Omnipotence*. Believers pray for perseverance, and it is said, that they never seek the Lord in vain, Isa. xlv. 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 for ever*, Isa. xl. 8.

*Dr. Moulin*, and others, have computed the texts of scripture, which declare the doctrine of the saint's final perseverance, at *six hundred*; the twelve following may, however, suffice (merely as a *sample*) to establish it as a gospel truth, Rom. xi. 29; John, x. 28, 29; Luke, xxii. 32; Rom. viii. 30, 38, 40; 1 John, ii. 19, 27; 2 Cor. i. 21, 22; Phil. i. 6; 2 Tim. ii. 19; Mal. iii. 6; John, xiv. 19; Jer. xxxii. 40; 1 Peter, i. 3, 4, 5.

“The Mount Zion of the Lord (Psalm cxxv) is immoveable. They cannot be removed from the love of God, in which they are rooted and grounded; nor from out of the covenant of grace; nor out of the hands of Christ, out of whose hands none can pluck them; nor can they be removed off Christ, the foundation on which they are laid, which is a sure and an everlasting foundation; nor out of a *state* of grace, in which they stand; neither out of *sanctification*, which is connected with life everlasting; nor yet of justification, for those who *have* passed from death unto life shall never enter into condemnation. These, like Mount Zion, *abide for ever*. 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 favours, 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. GILL.

Now if all these things are true, as they most certainly are, THEN SHALL THE WHOLE CHURCH FINALLY PERSEVERE IN GRACE, AND BE ETERNALLY SAVED.

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How oft have sin and Satan strove  
To rend my soul from thee, my God!  
But EVERLASTING is thy 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.

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#### OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE DOCTRINE OF FINAL PERSEVERANCE, ANSWERED.

Objection 1. *To teach that Grace cannot be lost, will beget looseness in professors.*

Answer 1. Ah, this is but the *stale cry of old carnality* against the doctrines of grace, *viz.—that they lead to licentiousness.* Swine may trample *pearls* under their feet, Matt. vii. 6. Ungodly men *may, and do,* turn the grace of OUR God into lasciviousness, Jude, 4. Head-knowledge of gospel truths and holy doctrines (the man being destitute of heart-experience, and a stranger to the Spirit's work) will never bring forth fruit unto God. It is in the *nature* of fallen man to *love sin, he drinketh iniquity like water,* Job, xv. 16;

and it is the work of the Spirit to *convince* of sin, even of its *exceeding sinfulness*; without this conviction, no hatred to sin, no love of holiness, whatever the outward profession may be. Satan is glad to see *carnal* persons professing religion; they are sure (sooner or later) to *disgrace* that profession, and then, the doctrines of grace are charged with being the *cause* thereof; whereas they have a direct contrary tendency, even *teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world*, Titus, ii. 12. The *two seeds* are minutely described by *their fruits*, in 1 John, iii. 8—10.

2. Grace may be considered in the *being*, or *well-being* thereof. It is, first, radical and fundamental, tending to the *being* of a saint, as *faith, hope, and love*; and second, flowing *from* these for his *well-being* only, as *joy* of faith, *confidence* of hope, *zeal* and *fervency* of love: *these* are the *lustre* and *radiancy* of the radical principle; the *beams* of the sun, as *those* the sap and substance. The *latter* we may lose, and perhaps *irrecoverably*, Psalm li. 12; not so the *former*. The *root* remains, though *reins* be consumed, Job, xix. 27, 28: 'tis a well of water *springing up to everlasting life*, John, iv. 14, and vii. 38.

3. There is a divine *purpose* to be holy even to the end. This is *a law written in every renewed will*. There is also a divine *performance* or *prosecution* of this purpose. This is *not* always found alike active, in a gracious heart. This *ebbs* and *flows* according to the Spirit's influence upon us. *How to perform that*

*which is good I find not*, Rom. vii. 18. Our life is not *hid in ourselves*, but it is *hid with Christ in God*, Col. iii. 3, and this requires our daily *dependance* on his Spirit, Phil. ii. 13, and iv. 13. In the practical part, a partial decay may befall our *judgments*, as in the bewitched Galatians (Gal. iii. 1), and our *affections* may *cool*, as in the Ephesian Church, Rev. ii. 4. Christ's spouse may be in a *drowsy* frame, yet her *heart awakes*, Sol. Song v. 2. Grace may, at times, *seem* to be lost to a child of God, when it is indeed *not* so. The *sun* may be eclipsed, yet regain his former lustre; the *tree* may lose all its fruit and leaves in *winter*, yet have fresh buddings at *spring*; Israel flies once, yea twice before their enemies, yet conquer they the land of promise. *A troop overcomes Gad, yet Gad overcomes at last*. And wherefore all this?—*Because I live, ye shall live also*, John, xiv. 19.

4. Although *all the sins* of God's people were imputed to Christ, *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 6; and although the blood of Christ *has cleansed*, and an application thereof by the Spirit *continues to cleanse* from all sin, John, i. 29; yet still is *sin* what it ever was, *exceedingly sinful*. And if one *sinful thought* remains *unatoned for* by Christ (on behalf of his people), there is evil enough in it to sink to the lowest hell. Though God doth not *disinherit* us for sin, neither blot us out of his book of life; yet doth he, when we sin against him, withdraw his *favour*, and embitter all our comforts. He makes *relations* (that should be *comforts*) to

become *scourges* to us, 2 Sam. xii. 11, and fills us with *anguish*, Psalm xxxviii. 3. Surely many of the children of God have found that the *evil* they have *smarted* under *for sin*, after sin hath been *committed*, has been fully commensurate to all the *pleasure* found in that sin. Could David have foreseen the evil consequences of his sin (in the matter of Uriah's wife), he might have said, "*a dear-bought sin thou art like to be to me.*" Yea, sometimes God may add *apprehensions* of eternal wrath for sin, without any hope of deliverance, Psalm lxxxviii. 6, 7. As the covenant *Father* of his covenant *children*, their transgressions he visits with the *rod*, and their iniquity with *stripes*; nevertheless, his loving-kindness is not removed, neither is his faithfulness suffered to fail, Psalm lxxxix. 32, 33. Upon these considerations, the doctrine of final perseverance begets *no looseness* in those who are *possessors* of the *grace* of the doctrine, whatever it may in those who are *professors* only.

Objection 2. It is said of some, *that they made shipwreck of faith*, 1 Tim. i. 19, and a falling from grace may be proved from Heb. vi. 5, &c.

Answer 1. It will be granted, that to *make shipwreck of faith*, so as to blaspheme the *doctrines* of the gospel which 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 thereof, and to *fall from the grace and favour of God*, or from *the grace of faith*, are very different things indeed. The reasons assigned for making shipwreck

of faith is shewn in 1 John, ii. 19. The *stony-ground* hearers endure but for a while, *having no root*, Matt. xiii. 21 ; by and by they are offended, fall away, and are said to give up, or make shipwreck, of *that* which they never possessed *but in appearance*, Luke, viii. 18. While *some* are savingly enlightened by the spirit of God to see their lost state and condition, their need of salvation by Christ, and their interest therein, *who shall never perish* ; there are *others* who are enlightened only into the *scheme* of the *doctrines* of the gospel ; and *some* of these persons to such a degree as to be able to *preach* them to others, and yet are themselves entirely *destitute* of the *grace* of God. When *such* fall away, they are no proofs nor instances of the final apostacy of *real saints*.

2. 'Tis spoken also in Heb. vi. 5, of such as only *taste*, but *digest* not ; that have their minds *informed*, not their hearts *reformed* ; sanctified in *profession*, not in *power*. And the apostle was persuaded *otherwise* of these Hebrews to whom he wrote ; he was convinced that *their faith* was not an *historical* one, but *of the operation of God*, Col. ii. 12, evidenced by their *fruits*, ver. 9, 10 ; 1 Thes. i. 5.

3. Objections may be *multiplied* by the impugners of the doctrines of grace, and very conclusive and scriptural *replies* made thereto ; yet, as concerns *the final perseverance of true saints*, of the Father's *beloved* ones, the Son's *redeemed* ones, and the Spirit's *sanctified* ones ; as Christ *once* dead, dies no more ; so, *in his members*, the life of grace cannot die



totally, Rom. vi. 8, 9. Faith is but once given to the saints; as we are but once born, so but once born again. *This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose NOTHING. That every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have EVERLASTING LIFE: and I will raise him up at the last day, John, vi. 39, 40.*

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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 Jesu's 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 remov'd,  
 What shall the righteous do?

## CONCLUSION

BY THE PRESENT EDITOR.

AND now my dear Christian Reader! in folding up this little Treatise, at the close of the *revisal* thereof for this *fourth* edition, I bow the knee before my Covenant Father's throne, beseeching Him to bless the perusal to thy soul's benefit.

The *old copy* was put into my hands (in the year 1810) just about the time when the Lord graciously removed the scales from mine eyes, and gave me to "see out of obscurity and out of darkness." The benefit my soul *then* received therefrom, is more than by pen or tongue I can describe. And now, after (from *that* eventful period) more than *twenty-five years* of mercies and goodness on the Lord's part towards me, and of unworthiness and sins on mine towards him, hath passed over me, I am constrained to acknowledge, to *His* praise and glory, that he hath *preserved* me (amid the *defections* of many, who began well) *fixed*, and, if possible, more and more *established* in the great and glorious truths and

doctrines advocated and scripturally maintained in the pages of this *invaluable* book.

As I have *now afresh* scrupulously examined every sentence, yea, and the *wording* of every sentence in this Treatise; so the *preparing* of this *new edition* has afforded me the *sacred* employ of, as it were, *systematically*, and I can say, *spiritually*, of going over, *step by step*, those *great doctrines* of our most holy faith, such as—eternal and personal election—divine predestination—particular redemption—effectual calling—and final perseverance to eternal glory, of all the Lord's everlastingly beloved ones in Christ. I have sought after *scripture proof* for all those *foundation-principles of the gospel*; nor have I sought in vain. Like the *preacher* of old, I have *counted one by one*, or, as the *margin* hath it, "*weighing one thing after another, to find out the reason,*" Eccles. vii. 27. The Lord be praised that I *have* found out the reason; and can declare that, the sum of ALL the amount is *as follows* :—

1. That Salvation, from first to last, from *election* to *glorification*, is ALL OF GRACE; flowing only from the sovereign love, will, and good pleasure of Jehovah, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost—and that herein consists the *everlasting security* of the people of God.

2. That love could not exist without an *object*, and the object of God's eternal love was Christ.



