

# **The Cause of God and Truth**

**By Dr John Gill, D.D.**

**Part III**

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**PREFACE.**

It should be known by the reader, that the following work was undertaken and begun about the year 1733 or 1734, at which time Dr. Whitby's Discourse on the Five Points was reprinting, judged to be a masterpiece on the subject, in the English tongue, and accounted an unanswerable one ; and it was almost in the mouth of every one, as an objection to the Calvinists, Why do not ye answer Dr. Whitby ? Induced hereby, I determined to give it another reading, and found myself inclined to answer it, and thought this was a very proper and seasonable time to engage in such a work.

In the year 1735, the First Part of this work was published, in which are considered the several passages of Scripture made use of by Dr. Whitby and others in favour of the Universal Scheme, and against the Calvinistic Scheme, in which their arguments and objections are answered, and the several passages set in a just and proper light. These, and what are contained in the following Part in favour of the Particular Scheme, are extracted from Sermons delivered in a Wednesday evening's lecture.

**PUBLISHERS RECOMMENDATION**

The editor of this work experienced a sudden conversion from crime to follow Christ, on the 16th January 1970. He soon learned about the many strange beliefs and differing practices among those professing Christian conversion.

His story is told in full in his autobiography, '**Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists**' listed among our further publications at the rear of this book.

Within 3 years of his conversion he aquired a good understanding of he doctrines of grace through reaing the bible an classical Christian literature, which pointed out the errors in Arminianism. This book '**The Cause of God and Truth**' was a great help to him and explained the seemingly awkward passages of scripture that opposed the teaching of the free grace of God.

This book is recommended to all Christians, of what ever persuasion, or denominational leaning.

This is Part 1 of 4 parts, and a new edition, with some alterations and improvements, is now published by request.

### **PUBLISHERS DEDICATION**

This reproduction of Dr John Gill's, 'The Cause of God and Truth' is Part III of IV parts and has been presented and dedicated to the students, pastors and teachers of Christ-Centered Church Inc. Ministries, Philippines, under the care of Bishop William Ola Poloc, its founder and senior pastor on the, 16th January 2020, by David Clarke, founder of Trojan Horse International (TULIP) Inc.

### **Brief History of the Baguio Christ-Centered Churches Ministries Inc.**

Pstr William O. Poloc Sr. was released from the New Bilibid prison in August 2002, where he graduated with a Degree in Theology, and started prison ministries in his hometown Baguio City, with his wife and the aid of a certain missionary from UK, by name David Clarke, the founder of Trojan Horse International. In December 2002 they were able to baptize 22 inmates in Baguio City Jail, 9 inmates in Benguet Provincial jail, along with William's wife Beth Poloc and Josephine Ortis, along with her daughter Karen Basoon, who had all confessed their faith in the lord Jesus Christ. David Clarke returned to the UK in 2003 after his mission.

Later, God gave them a burden to open a church within the city so as to reach out to their families, relatives and the families of William and his co-inmates who are still incarcerated at the New Bilibid Prison.

By His grace the Baguio Christ-Centered Church Inc. Stood up. As years go by God continued to bless the church by drawing more souls into it. He also bless us with a bible school to train ministers unable to study in an expensive bible schools. Graduates of our school were sent out to reach lost souls and augment Christ Centered mission churches to different places around the archipelago. As a result, by God's grace and providence Christ Centered Churches were established to the different places in the country.



God's work here in the Northern Philippines bloomed most especially here in the city of Baguio. The Baguio Christ-Centered Church is the mother church of all the Christ Centered Churches in the Philippines namely; The Pilot-Christ-Centered Church, The Kamog Christ-Centered Church, The Christ-Centered-Church Theological School(TULIP), The Christ-Centered Radio Ministry, The Christ-Centered Jail Ministries etc.). We'll, we are truly blessed by these works He has entrusted to us. To God be the glory!

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Christ-Centered Ministries Philippines

### **Personal note from the publisher**

It is noted and remarked that this date of publication is the Golden Jubilee <sup>1</sup>(Leviticus 25:8-13 King) of conversion of David Clarke, which took place on, 16th January 1971.

<http://www.Biertonparticularbaptists.co.uk>



David Clarke is the sole remaining member of Bierton Particular Baptists who was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982. The doctrinal foundation of Trojan Horse Mission are those of the Bierton Particular Baptists Articles of religion.

View the Wikipedia Entry for Bierton and view [None Conformist Place of Worship](#)

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1 8 And thou shalt number seven Sabbaths of years unto thee, seven times seven years; and the space of the seven Sabbaths of years shall be unto thee forty and nine years.

## AUTHORS BIOGRAPHY

John Gill (23 November 1697 – 14 October 1771) was an English Baptist pastor, biblical scholar, and theologian who held to a firm Calvinistic soteriology. Born in Kettering, Northamptonshire, he attended Kettering Grammar School where he mastered the Latin classics and learned Greek by age 11. He continued self-study in everything from logic to Hebrew, his love for the latter remaining throughout his life.

### Pastoral Work

His first pastoral work was as an intern assisting John Davis at Higham Ferrers in 1718 at age 21. He became pastor at the Strict Baptists church at Goat Yard Chapel, Horselydown, Southwark in 1719. His pastorate lasted 51 years. In 1757 his congregation needed larger premises and moved to a Carter Lane, St. Olave's Street, Southwark. This Baptist church was once pastored by Benjamin Keach and would later become the New Park Street Chapel and then the Metropolitan Tabernacle pastored by Charles Spurgeon.

### Works

In 1748, Gill was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Aberdeen. He was a profound scholar and a prolific author. His most important works are:

- The Doctrine of the Trinity Stated and Vindicated London, 1731)
- The Cause of God and Truth (4 parts, 1725-8), a retort to Daniel Whitby's Five Points.
- An Exposition of the New Testament (3 vols., 1746–8), which with his Exposition of the Old Testament (6 vols., 1748–63) forms his magnum opus
  - A Collection of Sermons and Tracts
  - A Dissertation Concerning the Antiquity of the Hebrew Language, Letters, Vowel-Points, and Accents (1767)
  - A Body of Doctrinal Divinity (1767)
  - A Body of Practical Divinity (1770)

Gill also edited and re-published the works of **Rev. Tobias Crisp, D.D.** (1600-1643).

CONTENTS	7
PUBLISHERS RECOMMENDATION	3
AUTHORS BIOGRAPHY	6
PART III	8
CHAPTER 1	8
OF REPROBATION	8
CHAPTER II	30
OF ELECTION AND REPROBATION.	30
CHAPTER III	41
OF REDEMPTION	41
CHAPTER IV	80
OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE	80
CHAPTER V	91
OF THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL OF MAN	91
CHAPTER VI	129
OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS	129
OF THE PRESCIENCE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD.	137
CHAPTER VIII	155
OF THE STATE AND CASE OF THE HEATHENS	155
FURTHER PUBLICATIONS	183
COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS	183
SONG OF SONGS	184
A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL (Part 1)	185
A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL (Part 2)	186
A COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS	187
A COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS	188
A COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS	189
A COMMENTARY ON 1 and 2 THESSALONIANS	191
A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY I	192
BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY II, III, IV	194
A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY, V, VI.	197
A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY, VII	199
THE PAROUSIA	200
THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN	203
BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS	204
THE BIERTON CRISIS	206
CHRIST ALONE EXALTED	212

**PART III**  
**CHAPTER 1**  
**OF REPROBATION**

The decree of reprobation is said<sup>2</sup> to be “contrary both to the nature and will of God, to his perfections, attributes, and glory.” It must be allowed, that the nature and will of God, and not the nature and fitness of things, as some say, are the rule and measure of the divine conduct. God cannot do any thing contrary to his nature and the perfections of it; as for instance: he cannot do any thing contrary to his justice and holiness, for he is without iniquity; nor to his truth and faithfulness, for he cannot lie; nor indeed, to any other perfection of his nature, for he cannot deny himself. If therefore the decree of reprobation is contrary to the nature and perfections of God, it ought to be rejected as against the will of God for the nature and will of God never contradict each other; and yet it is certain, that reprobation is according to the will of God; Whom he will, he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18, 22). And, what if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, etc. Besides, his making or appointing the wicked for the day of evil (Prov. 16:4), is for himself, for his own glory, as well as his making or appointing all other things: so that reprobation, or appointing the wicked to destruction, as it is not contrary to the will of God, so neither to the perfections of his nature, and the glory of them. But let us attend to what is offered in proof of this assertion, that the decree of reprobation is plainly contrary to the nature and will of God. And,

I. It is observed<sup>3</sup>, that “God doth immutably and unchangeably, and from the necessary perfection of his own nature, require that we should love, fear, and obey him. —That he cannot but be desirous that all men should imitate his moral and imitable perfections of holiness, justice, truth, goodness, and mercy, all which is agreeable to the light of nature and revelation; and therefore he cannot have decreed, that the greatest part of men should be for ever left under an incapacity of loving, and fearing, and obeying him; and seeing he must earnestly desire that all men should be holy, righteous, kind,

2 Whitby. p. 27; Remonstr. Act. Synod. cite. art. i.p. 241, etc.; Curcellaeus, p. 366: Limborch, p. 334.

3 Whitby, p. 27, 28.



and merciful, he cannot have ordained they should be otherwise, for want of any thing on his part to make them so; much less can he command them under the penalty of his severe displeasure, so to be, and yet 'leave them under an incapacity of being so.' To which I reply:

1. It will be granted, that God requires all men, and it is their indispensable duty, to love him with all their heart, soul, and strength, to fear him always, and keep his commandments; and that he desires that all men should imitate him in his moral perfections; all which the heathen sages were, in some measure acquainted with by the light of nature; and which God has more clearly discovered as his will to his people, under the various revelations he has made: but then none of these things contradict the decree of reprobation; for they only express God's will of command, and show what is man's duty to do; and which, if done, would be grateful and well-pleasing to God, and approved of by him, but not his will, determining what shall be done. Now could it be proved, that God has willed, that is determined that all men should love, fear, and obey him, all men would do so; for, who hath resisted his will? This, indeed, would contradict a decree of reprobation; then a decree to reject or punish any part of mankind could never be supposed. But for God to require all men to love, fear, and obey him, and to signify that these things are approved of by him, are no contradictions to any decree of his, to leave some men to themselves, to the freedom of their own wills, or to any determination of his, to punish them who do not love, fear, and obey him.

2. It is certain, that all men, in a state of nature, are in an incapacity to love, fear, and obey God; the carnal mind is so far from loving, that it is enmity against God; there is neither any fear of God in the heart or before the eyes of an unregenerate man; nor is he subject to the law of God, or obedient to it; neither, indeed, can he be, without the grace of God (Rom. 8:7; 3:17). Now this incapacity arises from sin, and the corruption of nature; and therefore, as it no way lessens men's obligations to love, fear, and obey God, nor weakens his authority to require these things, so it is not to be ascribed to the decree of reprobation. Could it be thought that such a decree

puts men into an incapacity to love, fear and obey God; it would be apparently contrary to his moral perfections, and unworthy of him. But reprobation does not, in any view of it, render men incapable of these things; for, consider the objects of preterition either as fallen or unfallen creatures; if as unfallen, it finds and leaves them so, without putting them in an incapacity, or supposing them in an incapacity to love, fear, and obey God; and therefore neither finds nor leaves them in such an incapacity; if as fallen creatures, it finds them in this incapacity; and seeing this is owing to themselves, it cannot be contrary to his moral perfections to leave them in it, or to determine to leave them in it.

3. Let it be observed, that it is the grace of God only that can remove this incapacity, or make men incapable of loving, fearing, and obeying him. "We love God, because he first loved us;" love is a fruit of the Spirit, and the produce of his grace. An heart to fear the Lord, is a part of the new covenant; in which covenant God has also promised to put his Spirit within his people, to cause them to walk in his statutes, and keep his judgments, and do them (1 John 4:19; Gal. 5:22; Jer. 32:39, 40; Ezek. 36:27). Now the grace of God is his own, and he may do what he will with it, bestow it on whom he pleases, and withhold it from whom he thinks fit, without any impeachment of his moral perfections; wherefore to leave men without his grace, and in an incapacity of loving, fearing, and obeying him, and to determine to do so, even though he determines and approves of these things, cannot be contrary to the perfections of his nature. For,

4. It is not to be doubted of, that God requires the very devils to love, fear, and obey him; they are under obligation to these things, and it is their sin that they do not do them; and should they be done by them would be approved of by God: and yet they are not only in an incapacity to do them, but are all of them: and that for ever, left in this incapacity. Now if it will comport with the moral perfections of God, to leave the whole body of apostate angels, for ever, in an incapacity of loving, fearing, and obeying him; though he requires these things of them, and they would be grateful to him if done, it cannot be contrary to the perfections of his nature, to leave, and to determine to leave, even the greatest part of mankind, and that for

ever, in such an incapacity.

5. It is a misrepresentation of the decree of reprobation, that God has ordained that men should not be holy, righteous, kind, and merciful, for want of anything on his part requisite to make them so. Since, though by this decree God has determined to deny them his grace to make them so, yet he has not by it ordained that they should be unholy, unrighteous, unkind, and unmerciful; only has determined to leave them to themselves, and the freedom of their own wills, which issues in their being so, wherefore their being so, is not to be ascribed to the denial of his grace, much less to his decree to deny it, but to their own wickedness; nor is his command, even under the penalty of his severe displeasure, that they be holy, righteous, kind, and merciful, inconsistent with his leaving them, or his determining to leave them in an incapacity of being so; since, as has been shown, that incapacity is from themselves.

II. The decree of reprobation is represented<sup>4</sup> as “contrary to the mercy of God, and as charging him with cruelty and want of compassion to the greatest part of mankind.” The mercy of God is either general or special. The general mercy of God reaches to all his creatures; his tender mercies are over all his works (Ps. 114:9). From a share in this, the decree of reprobation does not exclude any man; reprobates may have a larger share of providential mercies and goodness than others; wherefore the decree of reprobation is not contrary to the mercy of God in general. The special mercy of God, as it is guided by the sovereign will of God; for he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will, he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18); so it is, indeed, limited to the elect, who are styled vessels of mercy, in distinction from the non-elect, who are called vessels of wrath. This mercy, which lies in pardoning sin, in regenerating men’s hearts, in their final perseverance and complete salvation, the decree of reprobation denies to the objects of it; with such a mercy dispensing these blessings of grace to all men, the decree of reprobation cannot stand, we freely own: but then it does not appear to us that there is any such mercy in God, dispensing, pardoning, regenerating, and persevering grace, to all men, for there are some, that he that made

4 Remonstr. Act. Synod. cite. art. 1. p. 242; Curcellaeus, p. 370; Limborch, p. 339.

them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will show them no favour (Isa. 27:11); could it be proved that there is such a mercy in God, preparing for. And giving the special blessings of grace to all men the decree of reprobation must at once be exploded. But though this decree is opposite to any such mercy in God towards those who are included in it, yet it is no ways contrary to the mercy of God shown to the elect; wherefore we cannot but conclude, that our doctrine represents God as merciful, yea, more merciful than that which is opposite to it; since, according to our doctrine, God, of his abundant grace and mercy, has determined to give pardoning, regenerating, and persevering grace, to a certain number of men, whereby they shall be infallibly saved, when he denies it to others; whereas, according to the contrary scheme, God has not absolutely chosen one single person to salvation; but his choice proceeds upon their faith, repentance, and perseverance; which also are left to the power and will of man; so that at most, the salvation of every man is precarious and uncertain, nay, I will venture to say, entirely impossible. I proceed to consider the particular instances of the cruelty and unmercifulness of the decree of reprobation.

1. The Supralapsarian scheme<sup>5</sup> is greatly found fault with; and it is asked, What can be supposed more cruelly of God, than that he should, of his mere will and pleasure, appoint men nondum consideratos ut condendos, not yet considered as to be created, much less as sinners, to the everlasting torments of hell?" "I observe, that this learned writer greatly mistakes the Supralapsarian scheme: which considers the objects of election and reprobation as men either already created, but not fallen, or to be created, and in the pure mass of creatureship, but not as men not yet considered, whether they should be created or no. Besides, he confounds, as these men usually do, the decree of negative with positive reprobation, or the decree of preterition with that of damnation; whereas the Supralapsarians, though they think men were not considered as sinners in the act of preterition, or passing by some, when others were chosen; yet they always suppose men to be considered as sinners in the decree of damnation, and that God appointed none but sinners, and no man

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5 Limborch, p. 339.

but for sin, to everlasting torments; and where is the cruelty of this doctrine?

2. The Sublapsarians are represented<sup>6</sup> as thinking unworthily of God; who, knowing that all the lapsed sons of Adam were equally the objects of his pity and compassion equally capable of his mercy, and equally his off-spring, and so no more unworthy of it than the rest, believe that his decrees of governing and disposing of them are wholly founded on such an absolute will, as no rational or wise man acts by; so that he determines of the everlasting fate of the souls he daily doth create, after the fall of Adam, without respect to any good or evil done by them, and so without respect to any reason why he puts this difference, or any condition on their parts; and yet afterwards, in all his revelations, made in order to the regulating of their lives, suspends their everlasting state upon conditions.” I reply, that all the lapsed sons of Adam are equally the offspring of God, as men, and equally capable of his mercy, as being miserable; and equally unworthy of it, as having sinned against him; and therefore the reason why he shows mercy to one, and not to another, can be no other than his sovereign will and pleasure; who hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth. But then it is intimated, that “this is to believe, that God’s decrees of governing and disposing of men, (by which I suppose is meant, his decrees of showing mercy to some, and withholding it from others,) are wholly founded on such as absolute will, as no rational or wise man acts by.” But it should be observed, that neither the mercy nor the will of God are to be compared with the mercy and wilt of man. The mercy of God is not to be considered, quoad affectum, as an affection moved by the misery of a creature, as it is in man, but quoad affectum, as an effect guided by the sovereign will of God, to whatsoever object he thinks fit; nor is the will of God to be judged of by the will of man, since he does according to his will in heaven and in earth, and is accountable to none of his creatures; there is a ba>qov, a depth in the riches of his wisdom and knowledge, that is unfathomable, his judgments are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out (Dan. 4:35; Job 33:13; Rom. 11:33). Besides, wise and rational men, whose wills are the most absolute,

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6 Whitby, p. 29, 32; ed. 2.28, 32.

as kings and princes, when their subjects have rebelled against them, and have fallen into their hands, have thought it most advisable to show both their clemency and justice, by pardoning some, and not others, who were equally their subjects, equally objects of their pity and compassion, equally capable of mercy, and no more unworthy of it than the rest; so that such a method is justified by the conduct of the wisest and most rational men. But the most cruel part seems to be thought to lie in “determining the everlasting fate of the souls he daily doth create after the fall of Adam, without respect to any good or evil done by them.” By determining the everlasting fate of souls, I apprehend is meant, God appointing them either to salvation or damnation. Now, God’s appointment of men to salvation, that is, to eternal glory, is not without respect to any good thing done by them, but with respect to their faith, repentance, and perseverance: for God chooses to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth; though not with respect to these, as causes of his decree, but as means unto the end, or as graces which he prepares, determines to bestow, and does bestow upon them, in order to bring them to glory: so that their everlasting fate is not determined without respect to any good done by them, nor without any reason on the part of God, though without conditions on their parts. So the determining the everlasting fate of souls, or the appointing of them to damnation, is not without respect to evil done by them: though this is to be considered, not as the cause of God’s decree, which is his own sovereign pleasure, but as the cause or reason of the thing decreed: so that this is not without reason on the part of God, nor without cause on their parts. And hence the entrance of each of these persons upon their everlasting state, so determined, though not the determination of it, is suspended until these several things take place. And where is the injustice or unmercifulness of such a procedure? But, perhaps the cruelty lies here, that “God determines of the everlasting fate of the souls he daily doth create after the fall of Adam;” the meaning of which is, either that God has determined the everlasting fate of souls, and appointed them to damnation after the fall of Adam, which is what we deny; since no decree or determination of God is temporal, but eternal: or that God has appointed men to damnation

for the sin of Adam, in consideration of his fall, and their concern in it a doctrine, by no means to be rejected, since death hath passed upon all men: for that, or in him, that s, Adam, all have sinned (Rom. 5:12, 18); and by the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; it can never be unworthy of God, or contrary either to his justice or mercy, to determine the everlasting fate of men, considered as fallen in Adam, by resolving to punish some and spare others. Though none, as I know of, affirm, that God has appointed such wire live to riper years, to damnation purely for the sin of Adam, but for their own actual transgressions; and as for such who die in infancy, God's determinations about them are a secret to us; and if they perish, it is for, and in the corruption of nature in which they are born. Or the meaning is, that "it must be a piece of cruelty in God, daily to create souls after the fall of Adam, whose everlasting fate was before determined, without any respect to good or evil, done by them." Now, though God's decree or determination concerning the final state of man, was before they had done either good or evil, nor was good or evil the cause of his decree; yet neither salvation nor damnation were decreed without respect to good or evil, as has been shown; and, therefore, it could not be unworthy of God to bring creatures into being, whose everlasting fate he had before determined, no, not after the fall of Adam; since the souls he has since created, and daily does create, are not made sinful by him, nor are they created by him for misery, but for his own glory.

3. This decree is represented as unworthy of the God of love and mercy<sup>7</sup>, since it "leaves men incapable of salvation; and then God not only bids them save themselves, invites, encourages, sends messengers to entreat them to be reconciled, knowing he doth all this in vain, when he does no more; and then eternally torments them for neglecting that salvation; though he knows they never call do otherwise, without that grace which he hath absolutely purposed for ever to deny to, or withhold from them." I answer: negative reprobation, or the act of preterition, in the Supralapsarian way, neither finds nor leaves men incapable of salvation; but as it finds so it leaves them, in the pure, unfallen, and uncorrupted mass.

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7 Whitby, p. 29.



The decree of damnation finds and leaves men sinners; yet not the decree, but final impenitence and infidelity, leave them incapable of salvation; for the gospel declaration is indefinitely made, Whosoever believeth shall be saved (Mark 16:16): but though the Gospel is preached or published to all men, yet God no where bills all men to save themselves; nor does he anywhere invite, encourage, or, by his messengers, entreat all men to be reconciled to him. Peter, (Acts 2:40), indeed, exhorted and encouraged the three thousand converts to shun themselves from that untoward generation, among whom they lived, by separating from them, and professing the name of Christ: and the apostle Paul entreated (2 Cor. 5:20) the members of the church at Corinth, to be reconciled to God neither of which were ever thought to be placed under any absolute decree of reprobation. And though no man, without the grace of God, can savingly and cordially embrace the Gospel, and that salvation which it publishes; which grace God is not obliged to give, and which he may determine to deny to and withhold from men, without any impeachment of his perfections; yet it is not the denial of his grace, nor his purpose to deny and withhold it, that is the cause of their neglecting and despising the Gospel of salvation, but their own iniquity, for which they are justly punished. Besides, though this is an aggravation of condemnation (John 3:19), that the light of the Gospel, and the good news of salvation by Christ, are come into the world, and men love the darkness of sin, error, and infidelity, rather than these; yet God does not eternally torment them merely for the contempt of the Gospel and their unbelief, but for their many sins and transgressions against his law.

4. It is observed<sup>8</sup> “that sorely he thinks more worthily of the God of love and mercy, who looks upon him as an universal lover of the souls of men, who therefore would have all men to be saved, and gives them all things necessary unto life and godliness; draws them to him with the cords of a man, the cords of love, and by the most alluring promises, and by the strivings of his holy Spirit; swears to them, that he would not they should perish; warns them of, and conjures them to avoid the things which tend to their eternal ruin; directs them

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8 Whitby, p. 29,30.



to the means by which they may certainly escape it; rejoiceth more at the conversion of one sinner, that at the righteousness of ninety-nine persons who need no repentance: and when all the methods of his grace are lost upon them, breaks forth into compassionate and melting wishes, that they had known the things which belong to their eternal peace!" But it unhappily falls out for this author, that not one part of this pathetic harangue can be applied to all the individuals of mankind, as it should, to prove that the God of mercy and love is an universal lover of the souls of men, respecting their everlasting salvation. It is not the determining will of God, that every individual of human nature should be saved: for then every one of them would be saved; besides, whom he wills should be saved, he wills that they should come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:4): whereas, to multitudes, he does not so much as afford the means of knowledge. Nor does he give to all men all things necessary to life and godliness, only to those whom he calls to glory and virtue, to whom are given exceeding great and precious promises, and who are made partakers, of the divine nature (2 Pet. 1:3, 4). Nothing is more untrue, than that God draws all men with the cords of love; for as none can come to Christ, and believe in him, but whom the Father draws, so all that he draws in this manner come to him, and are saved by him. The persons he swears he would not that they should perish, or die, but live, were not all mankind, but the house of Israel, and respects not their eternal but temporal ruin; as the compassionate, melting wishes of Christ, regard not the eternal, but temporal peace of Jerusalem. To conclude: where is the mercifulness of this universal scheme, and how unworthy is it of the God of love, that after all the kind things spoken of to men, all the methods of his grace should be lost upon them, be it even through their own wickedness; when it lay in the power of his hands, had it been in his heart, notwithstanding all their wickedness, to have made them effectual?

**III.** The decree of reprobation is objected to as "irreconcilable with the wisdom of God:" this, if it can be fairly made out, must remove any such decree from God; for nothing unbecoming that glorious perfection of Deity ought to be ascribed to him. Though it should be observed, that we finite, short sighted creatures, who are

of yesterday, and know nothing, comparatively speaking, are very improper judges of what does or does not become the wisdom of God to do. But,

1. We are desired<sup>9</sup> to “consider, whether he conceives more truly and honourably of God, who thinks he chooses his favourites without reason, and rewards them without any qualifications but those he irresistibly works in them; or he who looks upon him as one who dealth with all men, not according to his, but their own works, as they are willing and obedient, as they render themselves fit objects of his love, and rewards them as they use duly, or receive his grace in vain, as they improve the talents he has given them, or hide them in a napkin?” Now, not to take any notice of the impertinency of what is submitted to consideration— the former part of it respecting the decree of election, and not reprobation; and the latter, God’s rewarding of men according to their own works—let it be observed, that though God chooses his favourites, without respect to any thing in them, or done by them, as the reason of such a choice, yet not without a reason in himself, which is his own sovereign will and pleasure. And shall we deny that to the King of kings, which is allowed to every earthly prince, to choose his own favourites as he pleases? Should it be said, that no wise prince would choose and reward men unworthy of his favours, or unqualified for his service: it ought to be considered, that in the case before us, none of all the human race are worthy to be the favourites of God, or qualified for his service; none of them are willing and obedient, or willing to be obedient, until they are made so, in the day of the power of his grace upon them; none can render themselves fit objects of his love, or duly use and improve even the common gifts and mercies of life, without his grace: since then, if he chooses any of them to be his favourites, and he must give them the necessary qualifications for usefulness, service, and ends of his own glory, his wisdom is most highly displayed in fixing upon the most unworthy and unpromising in themselves, in this the foolishness of God is wiser than men: for ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh; not many mighty, not many noble, are called; but God hath

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9 Whitby, p. 30; ed. 2.29.

chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the earth to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence? (1 Cor. 1:25-29).

2. It is asked<sup>10</sup>, “doth it become the wisdom of God to use, or to appoint these means, for the effecting what he would have done which he knows to be no means, because no ways sufficient to produce the assigned end, and to withhold, yea, to decree to withhold that which alone could make them so?” I reply, that what God would have done, that is, whatever is his determining will, shall be done, is done either with or without means; if with means, he not only appoints and uses them, but makes them every way sufficient to produce the designed end; nor does he withhold, nor decree to withhold, that which alone can make them so; should he, it would highly reflect on his wisdom indeed. Now could it be proved that God, in this sense, would have all men converted, regenerated, be brought to repentance unto life, and everlastingly saved; and that he has appointed, and uses means for the effecting of all this, and yet withholds, and has decreed to withhold that which alone can make these means sufficient; as there would be an apparent contradiction in his will, his purposes, and decrees, and actions, so it would be a most gross impeachment of his wisdom. But then we utterly deny that God has willed converting and regenerating grace evangelical repentance, and everlasting salvation, to every individual of mankind; or that he has appointed, or uses means for the effecting of these in all men; and therefore, as it is no contradiction to his eternal purposes, nor to his methods of acting in time, to withhold, and to decree to withhold from, or to deny his grace to some men, so it can be no reflection upon his wisdom to do so. It is true, indeed, it is his will of command, that all men should repent, and turn from the evil of their ways, but this is more properly expressive of what is man’s duty, than of what is the will of God; or in other words, this shows what God has made it man’s duty to do, and not what he himself has willed shall be done.

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10 Whitby, p. 81.

Now God has appointed means, and he uses them, and makes them sufficient to acquaint men that he has made such and such things their duty; whereby they are left inexcusable, though he does not give them grace to repent and turn, which he is not obliged to.

3. It is said<sup>11</sup>, that “this decree cannot be reconciled to the divine wisdom, because it introduces God expecting what he never would have done, and which cannot be done, the conversion of the reprobates; and enjoining, under a promise of eternal life, what he himself will do, and which, unless he does it, cannot be done, namely, faith and obedience in the elect.” It is strange! that the decree of reprobation should have anything to do with the elect, or introduce God enjoining them faith and obedience: though for God to enjoin his elect these things, under a promise of eternal life, when they cannot be done without his grace, is no ways alien from his wisdom; since hereby he secures his own authority to command, shows his people their weakness, and magnifies the riches of his grace. But it is stranger still! that the decree of reprobation should introduce God expecting the conversion of the reprobates, when one part of the decree is to deny them that grace by which their infidelity and impenitence can only be removed, and they be savingly converted. Nor do the Scriptures anywhere represent God looking for or expecting any such thing in them.

IV. The decree of reprobation is thought greatly to affect the truth and sincerity of God in his declarations, calls, commiserations, promises, and offers of grace to men. And,

1. It is asked<sup>12</sup>, “Whether he represents God honourably, who believes that God, by his revealed will, hath declared, he would have all men to be saved; and yet by an antecedent secret will, would have the greatest part of them to perish?” I answer; that we do not believe, nor do the Scriptures teach us to believe, that God by his revealed will hath declared, that he would have all the individuals of mankind saved; for then all of them would be saved; whereas they are not, neither will they be all saved. The Scriptures, which are God revealed will, declare Judas to be the son of perdition; and antichrist the man of sin, goes by the same name; whom the Lord shall consume with

11 Limborch, p. 389.

12 Whitby, p. 30.

the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy by the brightness of his coming; yea, that there are some that should believe a lie, that they all might be damned; and that God is willing to show his wrath upon the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (John 17:12; 2 Thess. 2:4, 11, 12; Rom. 9:22). Wherefore it is no contradiction to the revealed will of God, and so no ways opposes his truth; nor is it any dishonorable representation of him, to believe, that by his secret will he has determined that some should perish; and it should be observed,

that we do not believe that God has determined that any one should perish but for sin; or that he has secretly willed that any should perish, whether they believe and repent or not: therefore his secret will does not in the least contradict his revealed one, that whosoever believeth shall not perish, but have everlasting life (John 3:16). I observe, that the emphasis is laid upon the greatest part of mankind being willed to perish by the secret will of God: how many, and who they are, God has willed should perish, we know not: but supposing there was but one man, whom God, by an antecedent, secret will, had determined should perish, would not this be thought to be a contradiction to his revealed will, and a dishonorable representation of God? Could the truth and sincerity of God be supported, notwithstanding this instance? If they could, why may it not be thought that he has, by his secret will determined that two, or two hundred, or two thousand, or many millions, yea, even the greatest part of men should perish in and for their sins, without any impeachment of his truth and sincerity.

2. It is further asked<sup>13</sup>, “whether he represents God honourable, who believes that he hath imposed a law on men, which he requires them to obey, on penalty of his eternal displeasure; though he knows they cannot do it without his irresistible grace, and yet is absolutely resolved to withhold his grace from them, and then to punish them eternally for what they could not do without it; and after all inquires, why will ye die? etc. or he that believes it more agreeable to the truth and sincerity of the divine nature, to deal plainly with his creatures, and mean what he says?” I reply; that it can be no dishonorable representation of God, to believe that he has imposed a law upon

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13 Whitby, p. 30.

men, who are his creatures, and over whom he has a sovereign dominion, or that he requires them to obey it on penalty of his eternal displeasure, since it is holy, just, and good, and every way agreeable to his nature and perfections; and especially when it is considered, that when his law was imposed on man, as it was agreeable to his nature, make, and condition, so he was sufficiently furnished with abilities to obey and keep it; and though man has, by the fall, lost his power to obey, God has not lost his authority to require obedience, and which he does require; though he knows man cannot perform it without grace from him, which he is not obliged to give; and in all this he deals plainly with his creatures, and means what he says. But perhaps the insincerity is thought to lie here: that after God had absolutely resolved to withhold, and had withheld that grace, without which they could not yield obedience to his law, he inquires what was wanting on his part to enable them to do it. But no such inquiries are made by God; the passages referred to regard not the spiritual and eternal state of all mankind, only the civil and political state of the Jews; towards the welfare and prosperity of which civil state nothing had been wanting on the part of God.

3. It is also asked<sup>14</sup>, “does it become his (GOD’s) sincerity, to seem so earnest in his calls to them (men) to repent, and turn themselves from their transgressions, and live; when he himself hath passed that act of preterition on them, which renders it impossible for them to repent, or turn from the evil of their ways, and therefore impossible that they should live?” I answer, that whenever God calls men to repent, he not only seems to be, but he really is serious, and in good earnest; but then the calls referred to in Ezekiel (Ezek. 18:30-32), respect not internal conversion, and evangelical repentance, but a national repentance, and an external reformation of manners, as has been shown in the first part of this performance; of which reprobates are capable, and by which they may be preserved from temporal calamities, as the Ninevites were. And it will be difficult to prove, that God anywhere calls and invites all mankind, and particularly such who are not eventually saved, to spiritual and evangelical repentance; for, whom he thus calls, to them he gives repentance and remission

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14 Ibid. p. 33, 75, 233; ed. 2.32, 74, 227, 228.

of sin. Besides, it is not the act of preterition, but the corruption of nature, which makes this repentance impossible; and therefore, supposing the corruption of nature, and no act of preterition and reprobation, repentance and conversion would be impossible without the grace of God: hence the same charge of insincerity, and want of seriousness in the calls of God to repentance and conversion, would remain, supposing no act of preterition, where the grace of God is not given.

4. The decree of reprobation is thought<sup>15</sup> to be “inconsistent with the sincerity of God, in his ardent wishes, vehement desires, and passionate concern for the welfare of men; such as are expressed in Deuteronomy 5:29, 32:29; Psalm 81:13, 14; and Ezekiel 18:8, 30-32.” But, as has been made to appear in another part of this work, these things are only to be ascribed to God, after the manner of men, in a figurative, and improper sense: and, at most, only show what would be agreeable to him if done, but not what is his determining will should be done. Besides, they relate only to the people of Israel, and respect not their spiritual and eternal, not civil and temporal welfare. Whereas, if anything is done to purpose on this head, in order to disprove the decree of reprobation, it ought to be proved that God has ardently wished for, vehemently desired, and has shown a passionate concern for the spiritual and eternal welfare of every individual of human nature, even of those who are not eventually saved.

5. It is argued,<sup>16</sup> that “if God promises pardon and salvation for the non-elect, on a condition which his own act of preterition hath rendered impossible for them to perform, how can a God of truth and sincerity be said to promise seriously, and in good earnest?” I reply, that the promise of pardon is not made to any, no not to the elect, upon a condition to be performed by them; it is an absolute unconditional one, and runs thus; I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more (Heb. 8:12) and though this promise is made to faith, yet not as a condition of it, but as descriptive of the persons who enjoy it, and as the hand by which they receive it. And, it is so far from being

15 See Whitby, p. 33, 34, 222, 235; ed. 2. 32, 33, 217, 230; Curcellaeus, p. 370.

16 Whitby, p. 243; ed. 2.237.

made upon a condition to the non-elect, that it is not made to them at all, the promise of pardon being a new covenant one, reaches to no more than to those who are in that covenant, and they are only the elect of God, and much less upon a condition rendered impossible by the act of preterition; since not that, but the corruption of nature, renders faith, repentance, conversion, or whatever else of a spiritual kind that may be thought to be the condition, impossible without the powerful grace of God.

6. It is intimated,<sup>17</sup> that, “supposing an absolute decree of reprobation, the tenders of the gospel to reprobates must be false and hypocritical; and the offers of grace are not made in good earnest, and with sincerity.” But it should first be proved, that there are any offers of grace at all, made to any, whether elect, or non-elect. The gospel is not tendered to the elect, but is the power of God unto salvation to them. The grace of God is bestowed upon them, applied to them, and wrought in them, but not offered. And as for the non-elect, grace is neither offered to them, nor bestowed on them, and therefore there can be no falsehood or hypocrisy, dissimulation or guile, nothing ludicrous or delusory in the divine conduct towards them, or anything which disproves God’s act of preterition or reprobation.

V. The decree of reprobation is thought<sup>18</sup> to be “repugnant to the holiness of God;” since it is said,

1. “It makes God the author of sin, according to the doctrine both of the Supralapsarians and the Sublapsarians; seeing the former affirm, that God, before he decreed to make man, decreed his destruction; and that he might justly inflict it, decreed, that man should fall into sin, as a means of bringing the reprobate to appointed ruin, and the latter, though they do not assert that God decreed sin as a means of attaining his own end, yet say that Adam fell into sin necessarily, by the decree of God, from whence all after sins, and the corruption of all mankind, necessarily follow; and both agree that God imputes that sin of Adam to all his posterity; and from that imputation follows a necessity of sinning; and therefore God, by this

17 See Whitby, p. 33, 34, 222, 236; ed, 2, 32, 33, 217, 230; Curcellaeus, p. 370.

18 Limborch, p. 334; Curcellaeus, p. 366, 867.



imputation of his, is the cause of all the sins which follow it." I reply, this author seems to mistake the doctrine both of the Supralapsarians and Sublapsarians. The Supralapsarians distinguish the decrees of God into the decree of the end, and the decree of the means; the former respects not man's salvation, or damnation, but the glory of God as the end; the latter, with respect to the elect, includes the decree of creation, the permission of sin, redemption by Christ, the giving of grace, perseverance in it, and eternal salvation, as one complete mean to bring about the glory of God in a way of mercy tempered with justice; with respect to the reprobate, it includes the decree of creation, the permission of sin, dereliction in it, damnation for it, as one entire complete mean for the bringing about of God's glory in a way of vindictive justice. Now let it be observed, that though God decreed man's destruction before his creation, yet he decreed to damn no man but for sin; and though he has willed, or decreed, that sin should come to pass, or that man should fall into sin; yet he wills this not by effecting, but by permitting it; and therefore is not the author of it. Besides, it is not sin, but the permission of sin, that is the mean, in order to the end; which end is not man's destruction, but God's glory; the permission of sin is, with other things, the means of God's glory, but not of man's destruction; for permission of sin stands in the same place in the decree of the means, with respect to the reprobate, as it does in the decree of the means, with respect to the elect. As therefore the permission of sin, is not the means of the salvation of the elect, so it is not the means of the damnation of the reprobate; but, as with respect to the elect, it is, together with their salvation, the means of, and is requisite to, the manifestation of God's glory, in a way of mercy mixed with justice; so it is, together with the damnation of the reprobates, the means of, and requisite to, the display of his glory, in a way of wrath and justice; and therefore permission of sin no more supposes, or proves God to be the author of sin in the reprobates than in the elect. And though the Sublapsarians hold, that Adam's fall was according to the decree of God; yet they do not say, that Adam fell into sin necessarily by that decree, or that he was laid under a force, or necessity of sinning by it, or that his sinning followed upon it, as, the effect follows the cause: for though

God's decree made his fall infallibly necessary, as to the event, yet not by way of efficiency, or by force and compulsion on the will; it put nothing in him, or at all infringed the liberty of his will. And though both Supra and Sublapsarians agree in saying, and that very rightly, that God imputes the first sin of Adam to all his posterity; yet not from that act of imputation, but from the corruption of nature derived from Adam, follows the necessity of sinning in his posterity: which necessity of sinning is perfectly agreeable to the natural liberty of the will; wherefore the corrupt heart and will of man, and not God, by this imputation of his, is the cause of all the sins that are committed.

2. It is observed<sup>19</sup> that “no man can think that man hath a true love for holiness, who will do nothing that is in his power to make others so, as far as he is able, and it is fit for him to do it.” And it is asked; “Can then that God, whose love to holiness, doth infinitely transcend the love which the most holy man bears to it, and who commands us to be holy as he is holy, have passed a decree from all eternity, which renders the want of holiness in most men an infrustrable event?” I reply, the holiness of God and man are not to be compared; the love of God to holiness, infinitely transcends the love of the most holy man to it; nor is there any proportion between the power of the one and of the other to make men holy. A sinful creature can neither make himself nor others holy; and could he, God does not lie under the same laws and obligations to act to the uttermost of his power and ability in such things as man does. Certain it is, he could, if he would, make all men perfectly holy, as the angels in heaven, but it is evident he does not; and yet this is no impeachment of his holiness. It is enough that he made man upright and holy, who, by sinning against him, has lost the uprightness and holiness of his nature, which God is not obliged to restore unto him. Now, if it is not contrary to the holiness of God to leave men, as he does many, destitute of holiness, in a want of it, it cannot be contrary to his holiness, to decree to leave them in such a case. Besides, it is not any decree, passed from eternity, that renders the want of holiness an infrustrable event: but the corruption of nature, through

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19 Whitby, p. 74; ed. 2.73.

sin, has rendered it so, without the grace of God. And, whereas, it is suggested, as if there was a contradiction between the decree of reprobation, which leaves men in a want of holiness, and God's command to men, that they should be holy as he is holy. It may be replied, that the words (1 Pet. 1:16) referred to, are not a command to all men to be holy, but an exhortation to the Israel of God, to such who were called, by the grace of God, to be holy and unblameable, to which they were chosen in Christ, before the foundation of the world; but admitting they are a command to all men to be holy, God's command only expresses what is his will should be man's duty, not what he has determined shall be done. It may be every man's duty to be holy, and yet God may resolve not to give his grace to some persons to make them holy, without which they cannot be so. Hence it follows, that between God's command of holiness to all men, and, his decree to leave some in the want of holiness, is no contradiction; nor is such a decree repugnant to the holiness of his nature, nor to his love of I.

VI. The decree of reprobation is represented<sup>20</sup> as "incompatible with the justice of God, for these reasons.

1. "Because, by this decree, God reprobates men, considered as innocent, and appoints innocent persons to eternal destruction, according to the Supralapsarian scheme, or such whom, of his mere will and pleasure, he was about to make nocent [harmful, causing injury, guilty], having deserved no such thing, according to the Sublapsarian scheme." Another writer<sup>21</sup> observes, "this obvious exception lies against the equity of his proceedings with the sons of men, that most of the sons of Adam lie under death eternal by his peremptory decree, for the sin of their forefather, committed long before they had a being, and so before they were in a capacity of any personal offense." I answer, the Supralapsarians distinguish reprobation into negative and positive; negative reprobation is non-election, or preterition, a passing by of some, when others were chosen; the objects of this decree, are men considered as not yet created, and so neither wicked nor righteous. Positive reprobation is the decree of damnation, or that which appoints men to everlasting

20 Curcellaeus, p. 367; Limborch, p. 334.

21 Whitby, p. 32.

ruin, to which it appoints no man but for sin. It is therefore a most injurious representation of the Supralapsarians, that they assert that God has reprobated, that is, appointed innocent persons to eternal destruction; when they, over and over, say, as may easily be observed in the writings of that famous Supralapsarian, Dr. Twiss, that God has not decreed to damn any man, but for sin: and that the decree of reprobation is of no moment, or reason of nature, before, and without the consideration of sin. Now, if it is not incompatible with the justice of God, to damn men for sin, it can be no ways incompatible with his justice, to decree to damn men for sin. The Sublapsarians are equally abused, when they are represented as holding, that God reprobates such, whom, of his mere will and pleasure, *redditurus erat nocentes*, he was about to make innocent, having deserved no such thing: whereas they neither say that God of innocent creatures, makes nocent, or sinful ones, and then reprobates them; though with the scriptures, that God made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions (Eccl. 7:29), sinful ones; whereby they have lost their uprightness and innocence, and so justly deserve the displeasure of God: nor that the objects of reprobation are such, who are to be made innocent or sinful, either through themselves or any others, when it is well known that these divines always consider the objects of reprobation as men already created and corrupted. But let the objects of the decree of reprobation be considered either in the pure, or in the corrupt mass; that decree puts nothing in them, it leaves them as it finds them, and therefore does them no injustice. Nor is it any obvious exception against the equity of God's proceedings with the sons of men, that most of the sons of

Adam lie, yea, if even all of them had laid under death eternal, by his peremptory decree, for the sin of their forefather; if the wages of sin is death eternal, and all the sons of Adam, were concerned in that sin, as the Scriptures declare; for in him all have sinned; and by his offense judgment came upon all men to condemnation (Rom. 5:12,18). Though none as I know of, say, that any of the sons of Adam, who live to riper years, are laid under eternal death only for the sin of Adam, but for their numerous actual sins and transgressions, and for their final impenitence and unbelief. And as for infants dying in

infancy, their case is a secret to us; yet inasmuch as they come into the world children of wrath, should they go out as such, is there any unrighteousness in God?

2. This decree is said to be<sup>22</sup> “contrary to the justice of God; because by it God is made to require faith and obedience of persons from whom he has either taken away strength to perform, or to whom he has absolutely decreed not to give it; which makes it impossible for them to believe and obey: and no man is bound to do that which is impossible.” I reply, that the rule, which is to frequent in the mouths and writings of our opponents, *Nemo obligatur ad impossibile*, no man is bound to that which is impossible, in many cases will not hold good; a debtor may be in such a case as that it is impossible to pay his creditor, and yet he is obliged to it. It is impossible for man in his present sinful state, to keep the whole law of God, and yet he is obliged to it. It will be owned, by those who are on the other side of the question, that a man, by a long train of sinning, or by a continued course of vicious practices, may be so habituated to sin, as that it is as impossible for him to do good, as it is for the: Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots; yet it will not follow that he is obliged any longer to do that which is good. It is man’s duty to believe the word of the Lord, and obey his will, though he has not

a power, yea, even though God has decreed to withhold that grace without which he cannot believe and obey. So it was Pharaoh’s duty to believe and obey the Lord, and let Israel go; though God had determined to harden his heart, that he should not let them go. However there are many things which may be believed and done by reprobates, and therefore they may be justly required to believe and obey; it is true, they are not able to believe in Christ to the saving of their souls, or to perform spiritual and evangelical obedience, but then it will be difficult to prey, that God requires these things of them, and should that appear, yet the impossibility of doing them, arises from the corruption of their hearts, being destitute of the grace of God, and not from the decree of reprobation, which though it denies them that grace and strength, without which they cannot believe and obey in this sense, yet it takes none from them,

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22 Curcellaeus, p. 308; Limborch, p. 336.

and therefore does them no injustice. From the whole it appears, that the decree of reprobation is not contrary to the nature and perfections of God, or unworthy of him; and therefore, since it has the testimony of divine revelation, ought to be believed by us. But we are told, that “infinite are the demonstrations which might be produced against this tremendous decree, which our author, at present, waves, intending in the next section, containing arguments against an absolute election, to confute both these decrees together:” whither I shall next follow him.

## CHAPTER II OF ELECTION AND REPROBATION.

Dr. Whitby, in the fourth chapter of his discourse concerning election, proposes arguments against the doctrine of an absolute election to salvation, and consequently to the means which shall inevitably, and unfrustrably produce it, and to confute the doctrine of absolute reprobation; they are as follow:

**Argument 1.** “He<sup>23</sup> who would have all men, to whom the Gospel is vouchsafed, sincerely to believe in Christ, to come to repentance, and yield sincere obedience to his will revealed to them; hath not prepared this saving grace only for some few Christians, leaving the rest under a necessity of perishing for the want of it; for to all such persons he hath promised, that they shall not perish. Now, that God seriously wills, that all to whom the gospel is vouchsafed, should repent, believe, and yield sincere obedience to his laws, is evident from the Scriptures: frequently and expressly declaring the doing of these things to be the doing of the will of God, and the neglecting of them to be the neglecting and even rejecting the will of God; from God’s calling them to faith, repentance, and obedience, from his sending, his apostles and messengers to invite them to them, and from his compassionate declarations, and enquiries concerning them.” To which I answer;

1. That this argument, supposing it never so strong in favour of the persons included in it, namely all, to whom the gospel is vouchsafed, is too much limited and restrained, to militate against

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23 Whitby, p. 70; ed. 2.69.

the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation; seeing there have been, and are, multitudes of men and women, to whom the gospel has not been, and is not vouchsafed God formerly shewed his word to Jacob, his statutes and his judgments unto Israel; he hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for his judgments, they have not known them (Ps.147:19, 20); for many hundreds of years God suffered all other nations to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:16). The gospel has been taken away from the Jews, and carried among the Gentiles; yet in no age has it been vouchsafed to all nations at once, much less to all the individuals of mankind in all nations: no, nor to all the individuals in a nation where it has been, or is preached; the greatest part have generally been without it. Now admitting that it is the will of God, that all men to whom the Gospel is vouchsafed should believe, repent, and obey, nay, supposing that they should all of them actually believe, repent, and obey, which is more than is in the argument; this would not be sufficient to set aside the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation; since these persons, enjoying the gospel, the means of grace, and obtaining grace itself, should rather appear to be owing to an eternal secret will and purpose in God, or to an absolute decree of election, preparing this grace, and providing these means for them, in order to bring them to salvation; whilst others have neither means nor grace, being denied them by an act of preterition [the act of passing by; ed.] or reprobation. If any thing is done to purpose, it should be proved, that God has vouchsafed the gospel to all men; that he has given to all men sufficient means of grace, and has put them all into a capacity of obtaining the blessings of grace and glory.

2. This argument proceeds upon God's will of command, which does not thwart his will of purpose. These two wills, though they differ, are not contradictory; the purpose of God is from eternity: his command is in time; the one is within himself, the other put forth from himself; the one is always fulfilled, the other seldom; the one cannot be resisted, the other may; the will of command only signifies, what is the pleasure of God should be the duty of man, or what he should do, but not what he shall do. Now admitting that it is God's will of command, that not only all to whom the Gospel is



vouchsafed, but even all mankind, should repent, believe, and obey; it does not follow, that it is the determining will of God to give grace to all men to repent, believe, and obey; nor does it contradict such a will in God, determining to give grace to some, to enable them to repent, believe, and obey, and to deny it to others. Could it be proved, that either God has willed to give this grace to all men, or that there is no such will in God to give it to some, and deny it to others, the controversy would be shut up, and we should have no more to say.

3. What is said for the illustration and confirmation of this argument, is founded upon passages of scripture which are not to the purpose; some of them belong only to the Jews, and not all mankind, nor even to all to whom the Gospel is vouchsafed, and are either exhortations to a national repentance, and outward reformation of manners, as Ezekiel 18:30, Acts 3:19; or are compassionate enquiries, and vehement desires concerning their civil and temporal welfare, as Deuteronomy 5:29, Psalm 81:13, Isaiah 5:4, Ezekiel 18:31, 24:13, and Luke 13:34, some of them contain exhortations to persons already converted and called by grace; as 2 Corinthians 5:90, Philippians 2:19, and 2 Peter 1:10, as has been made evident in the first part of this work; where also the text so much insisted on (1 Tim. 2:4), is proved to intend only some, and not all the individuals of human nature. Others of them are expressions, declarations and invitations of grace, delivered out in indefinite terms, for the encouragement and relief of sensible sinners, to believe in Christ for life and salvation; as John 3:16, Proverbs 9:6, and Revelation 22:17, and those which are most for the purpose, as 1 John 3:23, and Acts 17:30, only declare God's will of command, or what he has made man's duty, but not his intentions, purposes, counsels and decrees concerning what man shall do, or he will bestow upon him; and so in no wise contradict the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation.

**Argument II.** "This decree<sup>24</sup> is absolutely false in the foundation of it, that being laid in the sin of Adam, imputed by God's arbitrary will to his posterity." To which I reply, not to take notice that this argument has not the form, and scarce the appearance of one; it is not very easy to determine what decree the author means, whether

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24 Whitby, p. 77; ed. 2.76.



the decree of election, or of reprobation. If the decree of election is intended, the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is not the foundation of that, either according to the Supra or Sublapsarian scheme. The Sublapsarians, indeed, suppose the objects of election to be men considered as fallen; but the Supralapsarians suppose them considered as unfallen, not yet made, in the pure mass of creatureship; yet both, with the scriptures, make the foundation of this decree to be the sovereign will and pleasure of God. If the decree of reprobation is designed, this, according to the Sublapsarians, finds and leaves men sinners, and, as such, appoints them to damnation; and according to the Supralapsarians, it finds and leaves men unfallen, but appoints no man to damnation but for sin; yet both agree, that sin, either actual or imputed, is the foundation or cause of the decree, which can only be the will of God; but of damnation, the thing decreed. It might, with much more propriety, be said that the imputation of Adam's sin is founded on that decree, than that the decree is founded on that imputation. Hence it follows, that whereas neither the decree of election, nor the decree of reprobation, are founded upon the imputation of Adam's sin, to his posterity; they neither stand nor fall by it. Moreover, though the sin of Adam is imputed to his posterity, yet not merely by the arbitrary will of God. It is true, it is the will of God that it should be imputed to them, but then it is imputed to them, not in a way of mere pleasure, but in a way of justice; for if all sinned in him it is but just that judgment should come upon all men to condemnation: if it was the sin of our nature, and all human nature was corrupted and defiled with it, it is but a righteous thing that the guilt of it should be charged upon all. The several things which are proposed for the strengthening of this argument, and objected to the doctrine of the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, have been replied to in the second part of this performance, to which I refer the reader.

**Argument III.** "This decree<sup>25</sup> is false both in the parts and the end of it. The parts of it are these; that God hath, from all eternity, elected a certain number of persons to salvation; and in order to the accomplishing of it, has decreed to afford them that grace which

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25 Ibid. p. 76; ed. 2.85.

shall infallibly, and unfrustrably bring them to it; and that he hath left the rest under an absolute decree of reprobation or preterition, infallibly to fail of eternal life; of which there can be no other cause but God's own free-will; for predestination being an immanent act, cannot be dependent on any foreseen acts of man's will. The end is the manifestation of his grace and mercy in the salvation of the one, and of his justice and, sovereignty in the damnation of the other. Now,

1. It is said<sup>26</sup>, "the falsehood of these decrees, touching the absolute election, of some persons to salvation, is sufficiently argued in the fifth discourse, from God's command to all Christians, to make their calling and election sure; from his exhortations and cautions directed to them; and from the threats denounced against them." But how these things militate against an absolute election of some persons to salvation, is not easy to discern; since the command, as it is called, to make election sure, supposes an election of some, or it could not be made sure; and the making of it sure, respects not the thing itself, but the evidence of it to others, by an agreeable conversation. Besides, it is given, not to all men, but to Christians; and admitting it respects all Christians, for though all that bear that name, are not really and truly so, yet inasmuch as they are, and whilst they are under a profession, in a judgment of charity, they are to be esteemed the elect of God, and may be exhorted in this manner. But then all Christians are not all men, and all men are not Christians, in the largest and most extensive sense; wherefore this hinders not, but that there may be an absolute election of some certain persons to eternal salvation. And as for the exhortation to continuance in the faith, cautions about falling away, and threats against such that draw back, unless it can be proved from hence, that any good Christians, who have been really and truly so, any true believers, have totally and finally fallen away, the doctrine of absolute, particular election, cannot be disproved by them. In the first part of this performance, I have given the sense of the passages referred to, answered the objections taken from them, and have shown that they are so far from militating against the saints' final perseverance, that they are designed and used by the Spirit of

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26 Whitby, p. 87; ed. 2.86.

God, as the means of it; and therefore cannot contradict the choice of some persons to eternal life.

2. It is further observed<sup>27</sup>, that “as these decrees respect those that are supposed to lie under an absolute decree of reprobation, the falsehood of them hath been fully proved in the second discourse; from God’s serious and earnest invitations of them to repentance; from his vehement desires of their reformation and obedience: from his declarations, that he had done for them what was sufficient to produce it; from his promises to excite them to it; from his threats to deter them from their evil ways, and from the manifold declarations afforded in Scripture, that he doth not look upon wicked men as under an utter disability of being reformed by his judgments or mercies, or of hearkening to his calls and invitations, to return and live.” I reply; that these calls, desires, declarations, promises and threats, do not respect all men, only the people of Israel; and not their spiritual and eternal, only their civil welfare, as a body politic; and could they be thought to all mankind, even to such who are not eventually saved, it would not disprove the decree of reprobation; since they only regard external repentance, outward reformation and obedience, which we readily own, wicked men may be capable of, by the judgments or mercies of God; and which are not only agreeable to God, but are for their good, even for the good of reprobates, quo mitius puniantur, that their punishment may be the milder.

3. It is urged<sup>28</sup>, that “such a decree as this, being a secret of God’s counsel, no man can know that God has made it, but from the express and clear revelation of the holy Scriptures; and so no person can have any reason to assert it on any other account. Now the Scripture hath said nothing of the decree of election, and that it is absolute, and without respect to man’s faith, repentance, or perseverance; nor has it one syllable to prove, that the object of this election is a certain number of singular persons, or that God hath absolutely ordained one single person to faith, repentance, and perseverance to the end.” I answer; that the decree of election is a secret of God’s counsel, and that no man can know that God has made it, but from the revelation of the holy Scripture, and so can have no reason to assert it on any

27 Ibid. p. 88; ed. 2.87.

28 Whitby, p. 88, 8.9; ed. 2.87, 88.

other account, is readily granted; and we desire to bring it to no other test or standard, being well assured, that the Scripture has said a great deal concerning it; and we are willing that it should be tried by it, whether election is conditional or absolute, respective or irrelative to man's faith, repentance, and perseverance; and whether it has for its object, churches and nations, or a certain number of singular persons. I have shown in the second part of this work, that the Scriptures often speak of this decree, and that as absolute and unconditional; and, as of a certain number of persons, whom the Lord knows to be his, who are the little flock and sheep of Christ, the Father has given to him; not as Judas was, to be his apostle, but to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation. When we say that this decree is irrelative of faith, or holiness, or perseverance in grace, we do not mean that God, in this decree, had no respect to these things; for we know, that whom he hath chosen, they are chosen by him through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth (2 Thess. 2:13); and that God saves none, and has determined to save none of riper years but such who believe, and persevere to the end: so that this decree perfectly agrees with the express declarations of Scripture in Mark 16:16, and others of the like kind. But we say, and mean, that God, in this decree, did not consider these things as to be performed by the will of man, and as motives inducing him to make such a decree, but as what he determined to bestow upon them, as means of salvation. And as for God's ordaining single persons to faith, repentance, and perseverance to the end, we say, with the Scriptures, that men are ordained to eternal life (Acts 13:48); which cannot be understood of churches or nations, but of single persons; and that he has determined to give them grace to repent, believe, and persevere to the end, that they may enjoy that eternal life, which he has ordained them to.

4. But it is objected<sup>29</sup>, that "to say that election, or predestination, being an immanent, eternal act of God's understanding, or rather of his will, can have no dependence on, or respect to, any act of man's will, by way of motive, or condition, is to say things contrary to Scripture, and to common sense: for, did not God decree from all

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29 Whitby, p. 90, 91; ed. 2. 89, 90.

eternity, to pardon the penitent, justify him that believes in Jesus, save the obedient, glorify them that suffer for Christ, judge all men according to their works, offer to man a new covenant of grace, promising pardon and salvation to him, upon condition of his faith, repentance, and sincere obedience; and that he that believeth in his Son should have everlasting life: and must not those immanent eternal acts, have respect to the temporal acts of men?" I answer; that since election or predestination, is an immanent act of God it must be within himself, and therefore nothing without him can be the cause or condition of it, or motive to it: and seeing it is an eternal one, not any thing done in time, can have any influence upon it; and inasmuch as it is an act of his will rather than of his understanding, it cannot depend upon, or be moved by any act of man's will, without making the will of God dependent on the will off the creature, and the first mover of it. It is true, indeed, that God did, from all eternity, decree to pardon the penitent, justify the believer, save the obedient, glorify such who suffer for Christ, judge men according to their works; and did, from all eternity, really make a covenant of grace with Christ, on the behalf of the elect; but did not decree to offer to man a new covenant of grace, nor make one promising pardon and salvation to them, upon condition of their faith, repentance, and sincere obedience, but upon condition of the perfect obedience and sufferings of Christ; said has also declared in the gospel, that he that believes in his Son, shall have eternal life: but then, as repentance is not the cause of pardon, nor faith of justification, nor obedience of salvation, nor sufferings for, and with Christ, of glorification; so when God, from all eternity, did decree to pardon, justify, save, and glorify, these persons, he had no respect to these things by way of motive or condition; he did not decree to pardon, justify, save, and glorify, upon a foresight of these things, as arising from the will of man: but having resolved to pardon, justify, save, and glorify these men, he determines to give them of his own will and pleasure, the grace by which they should become penitent believers, obedient and cheerful sufferers for, and with Christ. So that faith, repentance, obedience, and the like, cannot be considered as conditions of, or motives to the decrees of God, since they spring from the grace

which God, in these decrees of his, has determined to bestow upon the persons he bears such a good will unto. If sin, as is suggested, is the inducement to God, from all eternity, to decree to east some men out of his favour , it must have been an inducement to cast all men out of his favour, since all have sinned, and are equally unworthy of it; and if those actions, wrought by the assistance of his grace in some, are inducements to him, to decree to reward them with eternal life, how comes it to pass, that such actions are not wrought by the assistance of his grace, in all men? It remains, that nothing can be the cause of these immanent and eternal decrees of God, but his own will and pleasure.

5. Whereas we say that God's ultimate end in these decrees is his own glory, the manifestation of the glory of his grace and mercy, together with his justice by the one, and the manifestation of the glory of his vindictive wrath and justice by the other; our author<sup>30</sup> takes some pains to show that "the end for which he decrees any thing concerning us is not, and cannot be, any advantage or good he expects to reap from it; he being from all eternity past as completely happy as he can be to eternity to come; and therefore what other end, he asks, can he be supposed to aim at in these things, but our good?" I reply, that it will be freely, owned that God is completely happy, nor can any thing in time or to eternity be added to his happiness and glory; yet his great design in all his ways said works is the manifestation of his glory to his creatures; for of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever. Amen (Rom. 11:36). Which may be concluded, without entertaining such vain imaginations and conceits, as if his view was to "gain esteem or a good word from such wild creatures as we are; or as if he was concerned, whether we approve or disapprove of his proceedings; or as if he can be tickled with applause, and aim at reputation from us in his glorious design." Moreover, though the good of the elect, even their eternal salvation, is a subordinate end in the decree of election, yet what good can be designed for the reprobates in the decree of reprobation, even according to our author's own scheme of it, is not easy to discern; for he says,<sup>31</sup> "He, that is God, from his justice, hath

30 Whitby, p. 92; ed. 2.91.

31 Whitby, p. 91; ed. 2.90.

decreed from all eternity to cast some men out of his favour; the inducement to it is that sin, which hath rendered them unworthy of it, and rendered it inconsistent with his holiness and justice to admit them to it.” But it is certain from the Scriptures, which only can give us an account of these decrees, that God’s design in the one is the declaration of his wrath and justice; and in the other, of his grace and mercy; for not to take notice of Proverbs 16:4, the sense of which passage, and the argument upon it, have been vindicated in the second part of this work, the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have raised thee up, that I might show my porter in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth. And a little after, What if God, willing to show his wrath, and 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 mercy, afore prepared unto glory? (Rom. 9:17, 22, 23). Add to this that well known place of scripture, Having predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ, to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace (Eph. 1:5, 6). This writer suggests<sup>32</sup>, that “if it is for the glory of his grace to decree to save some, it must be more for the glory of it to decree to save more; and most of all, to decree to save all, and to prepare saving grace for all, and not restrain it to a few.” To which I reply, that had God decreed to save all men, and had prepared saving grace for all men, then all men would be saved; what should hinder? But I do not find that the opposite scheme provides for this any more than ours, and therefore no more magnifies the glory of God’s grace and mercy than ours does if so much; since it provides not for certain but an uncertain precarious salvation. Besides, if God had decreed to save all men, and had prepared saving grace for all men, here would indeed have been a display of the glory of his grace and mercy; but where would have been the declaration of his wrath and justice? Especially, the glory of God’s sovereignty more appears by these distinct decrees, than if no such distinction had been made; for hence it is evident, that he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he

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32 Whitby, p. 95; ed. 2.94.



will he hardeneth (Rom. 9:18).

6. The other black part of this decree is said<sup>33</sup> to be “still more horrible in its immediate consequences; for it makes God to create innumerable souls, after the fall of Adam, to be inevitably damned without the least compassion for them, or will to afford them means sufficient to exempt them from that dreadful doom; and in prosecution of this end, having created them pure and; innocent, it makes him to put them into bodies, that so they may be made or deemed the offspring of Adam; and, by being so, may be made the fit objects of eternal wrath.” I answer; that innumerable souls are made since the fall of Adam, and are put into, or united to, human bodies, are things generally agreed upon; but how these souls are united to human bodies, and how they become polluted with sin, and so fit objects of God’s wrath, and, indeed, whether they are, by immediate creation, or ex traduce, or both, cannot be so easily determined: however, that God created souls to be inevitably damned, and put them into bodies, that they might be fit objects of his eternal wrath, are things we abhor and detest; and are no consequences of, nor can they be fairly deduced from the decree of reprobation; which, whether it considers creatures fallen or unfallen, leaves them as he finds them, and puts nothing in them; nor is creation the means of damnation, nor damnation the end of creation: God made no man to damn him; but he made him for himself, for his own glory. To conclude; this author himself owns a decree of God from all eternity, to cast some men out of his favour, induced to it by sin; and another decree, to reward some of them with eternal life, or the enjoyment of himself, induced to it by those actions wrought in them by the assistance of his grace; and, according to this scheme, salvation and damnation are as inevitable, as they are according to ours; since God’s foreknowledge of sin and damnation, of grace and salvation, is as infallible as his decree to damn or save; and the absurdities, which are supposed to follow upon our scheme, must follow upon this: for God foreknew that these men would sin and continue in it; whereby he would be induced, nay, on the account of which, he decreed to cast them out of his favour; and yet he creates them, permits them

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33 Whitby, p. 95; ed. 2.94.



to sin, when he could have hindered it, and to many of them he does not give the outward means of grace, and to none of them the assistance of his grace, by which those actions are performed, which induce him to reward others with eternal life, when it is equally in his power to assist them as others; and in a word, denies them that grace which would cure them of their impenitence and unbelief, as it does in others to whom it is given; but suffers them to continue in sin, when he could have restrained them from it, and delivered them out of it; the consequence of which is, their everlasting ruin and destruction.

### CHAPTER III OF REDEMPTION

I propose in this chapter to consider the arguments from reason, for and against the universality of Christ's redemption; and such as are said<sup>34</sup> plainly to offer themselves to confirm this doctrine, are these:

I. "If God intended not the death of Christ for the saving of any but the elect, then he never intended the salvation to any to whom the gospel is revealed, but the elect; and then he never designed any salvation for the greatest part of men, to whom the gospel was or is revealed, on any condition whatsoever; for since there is no other name under heaven given by which we can be saved; salvation could not be intended for them on any condition whatsoever, to whom the benefit of Christ's death was not intended." To which I answer; that God never intended the death of Christ for the saving of any but the elect, is evident from this consideration, that none are saved but the elect; no one will say, that any are saved who are not the elect of God. This author himself will allow, that such who repent and believe, and are persevering Christians, are the elect, and such are all those that are saved. Now if God intended to save any besides the elect, his intentions are frustrated, and he disappointed; things which cannot be said of, and ascribed to the Divine Being. Besides, what is God's intending to save any by the death of Christ, but the very act of election itself? It is no other than an appointing to salvation

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34 Whitby, p. 158; ed. 2.154.

by our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore to talk of God's intending the death of Christ for the saving of any, or intending to save any by the death of Christ, besides the elect, is a contradiction in terms. Nor is the gospel revealed internally to any but the elect, even to those to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. To these only it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom; to others, they are hid in parables; for, if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost (Col. 1:27; Matthew 13:11; 2 Cor. 4:3). Hence it follows not, that God never designed any salvation for the greatest part of men, to whom the Gospel was or is revealed; since he has designed salvation for all, and every one of those to whom the gospel was, or is thus internally revealed, and they shall all of them enjoy it. It is true that the gospel, is externally revealed, or the outward ministry of it is vouchsafed to more than to the elect; but then the outward ministration of it, in an indefinite manner, is only designed and blessed for the effectual vocation of the elect; but what means this restraining clause, to whom the gospel was, or is revealed? For if God intended the death of Christ for the saving of any besides the elect, he intended it either for the saving of all and every one besides them, or only for the saving of some; if he intended it for the saving of all besides them, why is not the gospel revealed unto all men? Strange! that God should intend the death of Christ for the saving of all men, and yet not afford the knowledge, no, nor the means of the knowledge of salvation by his death, or of the saving benefits of it to all men! If he intended it only for the saving of some besides the elect, even of those to whom the gospel was, or is revealed, the weakness and inconclusiveness of this argument, for the universality of redemption, are easily discerned; who does not see, that it must be exceeding weak to argue from God's intention to save some by the death of Christ, for an universal redemption by it? nothing is more certain than that salvation could not be intended for any, to whom the benefit of Christ's death was not intended; since salvation is the benefit of Christ's death, and which is not intended for any persons conditionally, it being absolutely designed for the elect, absolutely wrought out for them, and absolutely applied unto them; nor is

such a special retention of Christ's death, for the saving of the elect only, contrary to the love of God to the world, or to his mercy and goodness to the sons of men; the passages referred to being either impertinent, or misunderstood and misapplied, as has been shown in the first part of this performance, to which I refer the reader.

**II.** It is further urged<sup>35</sup>, that "hence it must follow, that Christ never died with an intention to save them whom he doth not actually save and deliver from the wrath to come." I answer, it is very true; for if he had died with an intention to save them whom he doth not actually save, not only his designs must be defeated, and his intentions frustrated, but his death be so far in vain. Moreover, their being not actually saved, must arise either from an incapacity in him to save them, and a superior power in other men, or devils, or both, to obstruct his methods and designs; which can never be thought of him, who is the Almighty; or from a change of his intentions and purposes, which can by no means agree with him who is Jesus, the same yesterday, today, and for ever. The passages opposed to this either regard the elect of God only, whether among Jews or Gentiles, or else have no concern with redemption, either general or particular, the thing in controversy between us, as has been made to appear in that part of this work just now referred to.

**III.** It is said<sup>36</sup> "Hence it must follow, that none of those, to whom God never intended salvation by Christ, or who shall not be actually saved by him, are bound to believe in him." I reply: the consequence is very just; none are bound to believe in Christ but such to whom a revelation of him is made and according to the revelation is the faith they are obliged to. Such who have no revelation of him, as the heathens, are not bound to believe in him in any sense; and indeed, how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14). Such who have only an external revelation of him by the ministry of the word, are obliged to believe no more than is included in that revelation, as that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, who died and rose again, and is the Saviour of sinners, etc., but not that he died for them, or

35 Whitby, p. 161; ed. 2.157.

36 Whitby, p. 152; ed. 2.136; Remonstr. Act. Synod. circ. art. 2: p. 337; Curcellaeus, p. 360; Limborch. p. 322.

that he is their Saviour. It is true, the ministers of the Gospel, though they ought not to offer and tender salvation to any, for which they have no commission, yet they may preach the gospel of salvation to all men, and declare, that whosoever believes shall be saved: for this they are commissioned to do: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved (Mark 16:15, 16). But then this preaching of the gospel to all indefinitely, no ways contradicts the particular redemption and special salvation of the elect only; it being designed, and blessed, for the effectual gathering of them to Christ; and does become the power of God to their salvation, and to theirs only.

IV. It is also said<sup>37</sup>, “Hence it clearly follows, that no man can be condemned hereafter for final impenitency and unbelief, seeing he transgresseth no law of God by his unbelief; for, surely God commandeth no man to believe in Christ for salvation, for whom he never intended salvation by Christ; or to repent for salvation, whom he intended not to save by Christ. I answer; why repentance unto salvation, or final impenitency should be brought into this argument, I see not; since God might have required repentance of men, and have justly condemned them for final impenitence, supposing Christ had never died at all, or for any at all; and as for final unbelief, none, who have not enjoyed a revelation of Christ, as the Pagans, will be condemned for not believing in him, but for their sins against the law and light of nature; and as for such who have enjoyed the external revelation Of the gospel, and yet have remained finally unbelievers, as the Jews and others, they will be condemned, not for not believing that Christ died for them, or that he was their Saviour; but they will be condemned, and die in their sins, for their not believing that he wins God, the Son of God, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, and for the contempt of his gospel, and for their transgressions of the law of God.

V. This author goes on to observe<sup>38</sup>, that “hence it will follow, that neither the elect, nor non-elect, can rationally be exhorted to, believe; nor they who are not elected, be. cause Christ died not for

37 Whitby, p. 163; ed. 2.159; Remonstr. Act. Synod. circ., art. 2: p.369, Curcellaeus, p. 361; Limborch, p. 324.

38 Whitby, p. 164; ed. 2.160.

them; nor the, elect, for he that knows himself to be one of that number, hath believed and repented already; if he do not know this, he cannot know that Christ died for him, and so he cannot know it is his duty to believe in him for salvation. I reply, that ministers, in exhorting men to believe in Christ, do not, and cannot consider them as elect or non elect, but as sinners, standing in need of Christ, and salvation by him; and that either as sensible, or as insensible of their state and condition; not as insensible of it; for I do not find that any such are exhorted to believe in Christ for salvation; but as sensible of it, as the jailer was, who trembling said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? When the apostle exhorted him, saying, Believe in the lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved (Acts 16:30, 31). Besides, such who have believed already, and do know that Christ has died for them, and that they are of the number of God's elect may be rationally exhorted to walk on in Christ, as they have received him, and to go on believing to the saving of their souls.

VI. It is further observed<sup>39</sup>, "that hence it must follow, that God hath not vouchsafed sufficient means of salvation to all to whom the gospel is revealed, which is said to be contrary to the whole tenor of the gospel and it is argued, that if men have not sufficient means to be saved by the covenant of grace, then have they only means given them to increase their condemnation, which is contrary to the mercy of God; and that all men, under the gospel, have not means sufficient to repent and believe, so as that they may be saved, vouchsafed by God, then he must still withhold something from them, without which they cannot repent and believe to salvation; upon which these absurdities will follow, that God condemns them to destruction for that which is no sin; and then must every impenitent and unbelieving person have a just excuse, and a sufficient plea, why he should not be punished and condemned for his infidelity and unbelief." To all which I reply, that there is no pardon, justification, peace with God, deliverance from wrath to come; in short, no salvation but by Christ; that no means of salvation are sufficient without the grace of God; that all men are so far from having an interest in the death of Christ, and salvation by him that there have been, and are, multitudes that

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39 Whitby, p, 164; ed. 2.160

know nothing of either, and are so far from having sufficient means of salvation, that they have none at all; and could it be allowed, that sufficient means of salvation are vouchsafed to all to whom the gospel is revealed, who are but a few, comparatively speaking, this would not prove universal redemption, or that Christ died for all men since, in all ages, God has given his word and ordinances but to a few, and has suffered whole nations to walk in their own ways. And, indeed, all to whom the gospel is only externally revealed, have not sufficient means of salvation; for, besides an interest in Christ and his death, the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, or regenerating grace, and faith in Christ, are requisite means of salvation, winch all who enjoy the outward ministry of the gospel are not possessed of nor is this contrary, but perfectly agreeable, to the whole tenor of the gospel; for, though the gospel is the power of God to salvation? (Rom. 1:16), it is only to them that believe, which all men do not who are under the external ministry of the word. The word of grace, which is able to build us up, and give us an inheritance among them that are sanctified (Acts 20:32), is not the written but the essential word, Christ Jesus, who is full of grace and truth. The grace of God which bringeth salvation, that is, the doctrine of the grace of God, the gospel, which brings the good tidings of salvation, hath indeed, appeared to all men (Titus 2:11): but then it does not teach all men to whom it appears, only us that believe, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly. The Scriptures are also able to make men wise unto salvation (1 Tim. 3:15); but then it is through faith which is in Christ Jesus, and when they are accompanied with the Spirit of God, which first inspired them. Many of the signs and miracles which Christ did, are written, that men might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that, believing, they might have life through his name (John 20:30, 31); but then these signs, when either seen, or heard, or read of, were not, nor are they sufficient to bring persons to believe in him, and so to have life through him, without the powerful grace of God; for no man can come to Christ, or believe in him, unless the Father draw him, notwithstanding all his doctrines and miracles. But it is further urged, that “if men have not sufficient means to be saved by the

covenant of grace, then have they only means given them to increase their condemnation.<sup>40</sup>

I reply: that by the covenant of grace, not only provision is made of sufficient means of salvation, but of salvation itself, even of all grace and glory; but then this provision is made only for those who are interested in it, and they are only the elect of God. Though, I suppose, this author, by the covenant of grace, means no other than the gospel or gospel dispensation. Now this, though it is not a sufficient means of salvation, without the grace of God; and though the rejection and contempt of it is an aggravation of men's condemnation, yet is far from being given on purpose to increase their condemnation: which is wholly owing to their own wickedness: and therefore the giving of it can be no ways contrary to the mercy and goodness of God, or any unnatural action in him. It is added<sup>41</sup>, that "if all men, under the gospel, have not means sufficient to repent and believe, so as they may be saved, vouchsafed by God, then must he withhold something from them, without which they cannot repent and believe to salvation; namely, special grace, an irresistible impulse, a divine energy, or an almighty power." But what has this kind of reasoning to do with the doctrine of general or particular redemption, the controversy before us, when it rather belongs to the doctrine of sufficient and efficacious grace; and besides, is wholly confined to persons living under the gospel? whereas it should be proved, that God has vouchsafed to all men, whether under, or not under the gospel, sufficient means to repent and believe, so as they may be saved: to make things comport, in any tolerable manner, with the notion of universal redemption. And supposing that sufficient means are not given to all men in either situation, as it is certain they are not given to all men even under the gospel, what follows upon it? Why, that God withholds from them special. grace, an irresistible impulse, and a divine energy." And is he obliged to give special grace to all under the gospel ministry? or throw in an irresistible impulse upon them. Or put forth a divine energy, or an almighty power, to enable them to repent and believe? These things depend upon his

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40 Whitby, p. 166; ed. 2.162.

41 Ibid.



sovereign will and pleasure. But then we are told<sup>42</sup>, “that if the want of all, or any of these things, be the reason why so many, who live under the gospel dispensation, do not believe and repent to salvation, and, upon this account, continue in their impenitence and unbelief, great absurdities will follow.” But who says that the want of these things is the reason or cause of men’s unbelief and impenitence, and of their continuance in them, than the sun, and the withdrawing of its light, is the cause and reason of darkness. It is true, that it is only the grace of God that can cure men of their impenitence and unbelief; but then it is not the want of it that is the cause or reason of either, but the vitiosity and corruption of their hearts; wherefore no great absurdities can follow. But what are these supposed ones? One is, “that God condemns them to destruction for that which is no sin;” as if unbelief and impenitence were not sins, because their can only be cured by the grace of God, without which no man can truly repent and believe; and because God is pleased to withhold this grace from, and not bestow it upon some men, therefore he cannot condemn for these things as sins; whereas, it should be observed, that God does not condemn men for the want of that grace which he does not think fit to bestow upon them, without which they cannot repent and believe, so as to be saved; but for the impenitence and unbelief he finds in them, and which he is not obliged to cure them of. According to this author’s reasoning, because man cannot be subject to the law, without the power and grace of God, it can be no sin in him to remain unsubjected to it: for the it must be the sin of man, not to be God and if lie punish him for not being subject to the law, he must punish him for not being equal in power with God himself. Such reasoning need no confutation, they carry their own in them. The other absurdity is, that<sup>43</sup> “then must every impenitent and unbelieving person, have a just excuse, and a sufficient plea, why he should not be punished or condemned, for his infidelity and unbelief. Ant such another plea is put into the mouths of these persons as was used by the officers to the Jews, to Pharaoh; There is no straw given to us, and thou sayest to us, make bricks; no special grace, no divine energy afforded us, and thou sayest to us, Do that which can no more be done without it,

42 Ibi

43 Ibid. p. 167; ed. 2.163.



than men can make bricks without straw; and thy servants are beaten, but the fault is in him who denies us straw, and yet requires bricks; yea, who requires that faith, and that repentance, which he never would afford us 'sufficient means to perform. This is a bold charge, an insolent way of treating the Almighty, to compare him with Pharaoh's officers, and say the fault is in him who requires faith and repentance, and affords no special grace, no divine energy to perform. Moreover the case is not parallel; the impotence of the Israelites to make bricks, arose from straw being denied them, and withheld from them, which they formerly had; but the impotence of men to believe and repent, does not arise from special grace and a divine energy being denied or withheld from them, which they never had: but from the corruption and vitiosity of their nature, their enmity to God, alienation from him, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness or hardness of their hearts. Besides, God never calls persons evangelical repentance, or requires them to believe in Christ to the saving of their souls, but he gives that special grace, and puts forth that divine energy which enables them to believe and repent. God does not require all men to believe in Christ, and where he does, it is according to the revelation he makes of him. He does not require the heathens, who are without an external revelation of Christ, to believe in him at all; and those who only see the outward ministry of the word, unattended with the special illuminations of the Spirit of God, are obliged to believe no further than that external revelation they enjoy, reaches; as that Jesus is the Son of God, the Messiah, etc., not to believe these things is the sin of all that are under the gospel dispensation, as it was of the Jews; who though they saw his miracles, and heard his doctrines, yet, through the corruption and prejudices of their minds, did not believe he to be the Messiah, and therefore died in their sins; nor had they a just excuse, or sufficient plea, why they should not be punished or condemned, for their infidelity and unbelief respecting the Messiah, even though: they could not come to him, or believe him to the saving of their souls, without the special grace of God; they were not condemned for the want of that they had not and which was not bestowed upon them; but for that which was really in them, the sin

of unbelief; nor were they, nor are any, condemned for not believing that Christ died for them, but for the transgressions of the law of God, and the disbelief or contempt of his gospel. And as for those, who besides the external, have also an internal revelation of Christ, as they are called to the exercise of evangelical repentance, and to faith in Christ as their Saviour and Redeemer, who loved them, and gave himself for them; they have that grace bestowed upon them, and that power put forth in them, which enables them to believe and repent. I make no use of the reply commonly made on our side the question, “that we all had sufficient strength to believe, in our first parent Adam, which we have lost by our fall in him; and though we have thus lost our power to believe, yet God has not lost his authority to require it, and may deal with us as if we had it still;” since, according to the scheme I proceed upon, that, as is the revelation God makes to the sons of men, such is the faith he requires of them, there is no need of it. However, cannot consider it as such a lamentable weak pretense, and so sure a sign of a desperate cause, as our author<sup>44</sup>, from Dr. Claget, represents it to be; for, that Adam, in a state of innocence, had a power of believing in Christ, and did believe in him as the second Person in the Trinity, as the Son of God, cannot well be denied; since with the other two Persons, he was his creator and preserver; the knowledge of which cannot well be thought to be withheld from him. And his not believing in him as the Mediator, Saviour, and Redeemer, did not arise from any defect of power in him, but from the state, condition, and situation in which he was, and from the nature of the revelation made unto him; for no doubt, Adam had a power to believe every word of God, any revelation that was, or might be made unto him, Now all mankind were in him, in such sense, as Levi was in the loins of Abraham, and paid tithes in him long before he was born; yea, they were in Adam as their federal and representative head, and so had representatively the power he had, which when they sinned in him, and fell with him, in his first transgression, they lost; hence followed a depravation of nature, an enmity to God, an opposition to his will, and an impotence to sit that is spiritually good, which is the root and source of infidelity; but

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44 Whitby, p. 168; ed. 2.164.

though men have lost the power of believing, and are shut up in unbelief, God may justly require them to give credit to, and believe, whatever revelation he is pleased to make. As for those texts of Scripture,<sup>45</sup> I know of none, that exhort and command all men, all the individuals of human nature, to repent, and believe in Christ for salvation; they can only, at most, concern such persons who are under the gospel dispensation; and, in general, only regard an external repentance and reformation, and an historical faith in, or assent to, Jesus as the Messiah. Our blessed Saviour's<sup>46</sup> marveling at the unbelief of his countrymen, and at the faith of the centurion, is to be understood of him as man, and no way contradicts men's disability to believe: he marveled at the unbelief of his countrymen, that they should be offended at him, and reject him as the Messiah, on account of the meanness of his parentage and education, when they had such large means, by his ministry and miracles, to convince them that he was the Messiah; whom they might have believed in, and received as such, though they lay under a disability of coming to him, or believing in him to the saving of their souls, without the special grace of God: he marveled at the faith of the centurion, that he, who had such small means, and such little knowledge of him, yet should so strongly believe in him: which greatly argued the mighty power of God in him, and is what our Lord designed those about him should take notice of to the glory of God. The instances<sup>47</sup> from Scripture of Christ's, upbraiding persons for their, impenitence and unbelief, respect himself as the Messiah, and not assenting to him as such, and not repenting of their rejection of him, when they had such plain proofs, demonstrations, and examples; and are far from disproving man's disability to repent and believe in a spiritual manner. The parables of the marriage- supper, and the talents, are foreign to, the purpose; the design of the one being to show that men may be externally called, by the ministry of the word, and not be chosen; and have neither the grace of God, nor the righteousness of Christ; and so will, at the last day, be speechless, and have nothing to say why they should not be condemned for their many 'actual sins

45 Whitby, p. 169; ed. 2.165.

46 Ibid. p. 172; ed. 2.68.

47 Ibid. p. 173; ed. 2.169.

and transgressions, from which, the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, could only save them; though they could not obtain, procure, and merit either of these by their own deserving, since, as they were destitute of them, so they were unconcerned about them, made no application for them; but, perhaps, slighted and contemned them. The design of the other, is to show the nature and use of external gifts for the ministry, which men may have, and use, and improve, as they ought, and as they have power to do, even though destitute of the grace of God. But these instances, as they do not properly belong to this branch of the argument, so most, If not all of them, have been considered in the first Part of this performance, which the reader may consult.

VII. It is said,<sup>48</sup> that “that which doth render this doctrine (of particular redemption) most worthy to be rejected by all who truly love their God and Saviour, is this consideration, that it unworthily reflects upon our good and gracious God, our blessed Lord and merciful High Priest, who is, in Scripture often said, but, by this doctrine is denied to be, the Saviour of the world; for it, in effect, declares he who is, in Scripture, styled love, hath from eternity, hated the greatest portion of mankind; represents him as having no bowels of compassion, no drop of mercy, no inclination to do good to the generality of his most noble creatures; and renders the God of truth and sincerity, full guile, deceit, and insincerity, dissimulation, and hypocrisy.” To all which I reply,

I. As to what is said, that “this doctrine unworthily reflects on our blessed Lord and merciful. High Priest, who is, in Scripture, often said, but by this doctrine is denied to be, the Saviour of the world;” I observe, that Christ is not often, only twice, in Scripture said to be the Saviour of the world (John 4:42; 1 John 4:14); nor is he denied to be so by the doctrine of particular redemption; though, according to that doctrine, this phrase is to be understood in a limited and restrained sense; as it appears it should be, from those Scriptures in which he is oftener said to be our Saviour, the Saviour of Israel, and the Saviour of the body, the church. He is, indeed, a merciful High Priest, but it should be observed, that he is also a faithful one, in

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48 Whitby, p. 176, 177, 179; ed. 2.171. 172, 175.

things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; but if he has not taken care of things pertaining to God, so as to make full atonement for the sins of his people, that justice may have no more to require, and they be entirely free from any further demand of his, and not liable to future punishment, I cannot see how he can be either a merciful or a faithful High Priest. And it deserves consideration, whether that doctrine does not most unworthily reflect upon our blessed Lord and merciful High Priest; which represents him not as procuring, by his death, an actual pardon and reconciliation for any, only a conditional one for all; not as obtaining certain salvation for any of the sons of men, only as putting them into a salvable state, or into a capacity of being pardoned, reconciled, and saved, through conditions of their own performing, and as dying in vain for multitudes, whom he came 'into the world to save.

2. As to the love and mercy of God, these are to be considered, not *quoad affectus*, as affections, or passions, in him; which are to be moved, raised, and influenced, by anything out of himself, as the misery or goodness of an object; so to think of God, is to conceive most unworthily of him, to take him to be altogether such an one as ourselves, and savors rankly of Atheism, and scarcely deserves another name; but they are to be considered *quoad affectus*, as to their effects; which are guided by the sovereign will of God, to whatsoever objects he pleases, for he will have mercy on whom he will have mercy. Add to this consideration, that the love, grace, and mercy of God, and the glory of them lie not in the numbers to which they extend, but in the freeness of them, or in the liberal manner in which they are communicated to objects altogether undeserving of them, for that of Austin will always hold good, *Gratia non est gratis, nisi omnino gratuita*, Grace is not grace, unless it is altogether free. Besides if the glory of God's love, grace, and mercy, is more advanced by the redemption of all men, according to this way of reasoning, it would be still more advanced by the salvation of all men, and most of all, by the salvation of all the devils, as well as all men; and therefore, if God does not save all men, and all the devils, when it is in his power to do it, it must be a reflection upon his love, grace and mercy, and upon him, as the Lover of souls and Father of spirits. And

indeed, what is said by our author<sup>49</sup>, in favour of general, and against particular redemption, upon this head, may be argued in favour of the redemption and salvation of devils, in opposition to a restraint of it to the sons of men; as,

1st. that God, by sending, his Son to be the Saviour of the world, or in giving him up to the death, had no other primary end, than the glorifying himself in the salvation of men; had he therefore designed his death for the salvation of all the devils, upon conditions possible to be performed by them, he must have glorified himself more than by restraining the design of it only to the salvation of men.

**2ndly.** That the death of Christ was a sufficient sacrifice for the sins of all the devils, and so might have procured a conditional pardon 'for all them, as well as for all men, had God been pleased to give him up to the death for them all.

**3rdly.** That it could be no ways more dishonorable to God, or more inconsistent with his justice, wisdom, hatred of sin, or any other of his attributes, to have designed Christ death for the salvation of all the devils, than to intend it only for the salvation of men.

**4thly.** That the devils, who are supposed to be excluded from any benefit by Christ death, were as much the offspring of the Father of spirits and every whit as miserable, and as much wanting an interest in our Lord's salutary passion, as men, who are supposed to be the objects of the pardon and salvation purchased by our Saviour's blood; can it be then consistent with the grace, goodness, and mercy of the divine nature, and of the lover of souls, and the relation which this Father of spirits beareth to them, to consign the death of Christ only to men, and to suffer a large number of his creatures, which were equally his offspring and as miserable, and so in the same need of pardon and salvation with men, to remain inevitably miserable, only for want for God's designing the same sacrifice for the procuring mercy to them as well as others.

If this reasoning is closely attended to, the patrons of universal redemption, as well as we, must fly to the sovereignty and prerogative of God over his creatures, in showing and denying mercy to whom he pleases; which is never to be mentioned and compared with that

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49 [16]Whitby p. 177, 178; ed. 2.173, 174.

absolute power, prerogative, and sovereignty, exercised by Grecian or Roman governors, or any ether princes over their subjects.

But to proceed: Where is the love, grace, mercy, and goodness of God, in sending Christ to die only to procure the possibility of salvation for all men, and leave it precarious and uncertain whether any are saved at all? What kind of love and mercy is that which sends Christ to die for men, and then leaves them to deny that Lord who is supposed to have bought them, and to aggravate their guilt by sinning against him? It must have been much better for them if he had never been sent, or had never died for them, or had never bought them. What sort of love is that which gives Christ to die for men, and yet withholds the gospel of salvation from them, and does not send down the Spirit of God into their hearts, to reveal and apply salvation to them, purchased by Christ? How easily might the several things, objected by our author, be retorted upon this scheme, to show that God, according to it, must hate the greatest portion of his creatures, and have no mercy, bowels of compassion, or any inclination to do good unto the generality of them; might it not be said, with equal force, that if God himself saith, Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated, only because he laid the mountains and heritage of Esau waste (Mal. 1:2, 3); is there not greater reason to say he hated all those souls whom he has suffered to walk in their own ways (Acts 14:18; 17:30); whose times of ignorance he has winked at, or overlooked; and, notwithstanding all his seeming love in sending Christ to die for them, he “does not so much as give them an external revelation of him, the outward means of grace, the ministry of the word?” If he is said (Lev. 19:17) to hate his brother in his heart, who suffers him to go on in his sin without reproof, must not he hate those souls much more who, “though he has given his Son for them, does not so much as send his Spirit to them to reprove them of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment?” (John 16:8). Our Lord makes it the particular case of Judas (Matthew 26:24), that it had been better .for him he had not been born; whereas this doctrine makes it the case, “even of multitudes redeemed by Christ, who, notwithstanding their redemption by Christ, are left to perish in the horrible pit, in the mire and clay of an unregenerate state. Now can



we imagine, that that God who will he require the blood of souls from every watchman, who doth not warn the sinner to turn from his iniquities, that he die not, should himself leave them to perish in it, “and not warn, even multitudes of his redeemed ones, of their sin and danger?” So that what he doth threaten to him only (Prov. 29:1), who being often reprov'd hardeneth his heart, should be the state and case of many for whom Christ has died, namely, to be destroyed without remedy. And is not this to represent our God and Saviour more uncompassionate to the souls “redeemed by Christ; who seeing them in their blood, does not say unto them, live; or, dead in trespasses and sins, does not quicken them (Ezek. 16:6; Eph. 2:5), when it is in his power to do it;” than were that priest and Levite to their brother's body, who seeing him ready to perish by his wounds (Luke 10:31,32), passed unconcerned by another way? And when the apostle inquires, If any man see his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? (1 John 3:17). Would not this doctrine teach them to reply, even as it dwells in God himself, towards “a considerable number of those his Son died for; who seeing them in extreme need, in a state of sin and misery, yet shuts up his bowels of compassion from them; withholdeth the outward means, the ministry of the word, from them; does not give them the least knowledge of his Son, the Saviour of the world, nor the least measure of the grace of the blessed Spirit?” In a word, the love, grace, mercy, and goodness of God, are more magnified displayed in the doctrine of particular redemption, which provides for the sure and certain salvation of some men, for their actual participation of grace here, and glory hereafter, than by the doctrine of universal redemption; which provides for the possibility of the salvation of all men, leaving it to the mutable will of man, and to conditions to be performed by the creature, which makes it precarious and uncertain whether may will be saved or no.

3. As to the charge of guile, deceit, and insincerity, which the doctrine of particular redemption is thought to fix upon the Divine Being; this proceeds upon a mistaken sense of several passages of Scripture, which con-rain ‘declarations, calls, and exhortations of God to men, and expostulations with them, and ardent wishes



concerning them; all which either only regard civil and temporal, mad not spiritual and eternal things; or do not belong to all mankind, or are not directed to any who are not eventfully saved; as has been made appear in the first Part of this performance, where the Scriptures referred to are particularly considered under distinct sections.

**VIII.** It is urged<sup>50</sup>, that “this doctrine of particular redemption is visibly destructive of almost all the acts of piety and virtue; as prayer, thanksgiving, loving the Lord with all our hearts and souls: when, on the other hand, the doctrine of general redemption layeth the greatest obligations on us to fear the Lord, and to serve him; gives him the glory of his free love, rich goodness, great mercy and compassion to the sons of men, far above the contrary doctrine; instructs us how to imitate the goodness, mercy, and compassion of God, administers just ground of comfort to the greatest sinner, and gives life and energy to all the exhortations to him, to return and live.” And,

**I.** It is observed<sup>51</sup>, that “all prayer is the duty of all Christians, to be performed in every place, and at all times, for all Christians, and all men; and that in faith, and in the name of Jesus, for pardon. And it is asked, “How can we have access to God in our prayers for pardon, or for any other spiritual blessings, for all men, through the blood of Jesus, if he did not shed his blood for all?” I answer; that all prayer is the duty of all Christians, is certain; and that this is to be made for all Christians, for all saints, is as certain; yea, even for our enemies, as well as for our friends; but that we are to pray for all the individuals of human nature, that have been, are, or shall be in the world, is not so certain; since then we must pray for the dead as well as the living, for the saints in heaven, and the damned in ‘hell, and for them that are not yet born, as for those that are; and yet so we should pray to answer to the extent of the redemption pleaded for. The apostle, indeed, exhorts that supplications, prayers, and intercessions, be made for all men (1 Tim. 2:1); that is, for men of all sorts, ranks, and degrees; particularly for kings, and for all that are in authority, and chiefly respecting the civil affairs of government, that

50 Whitby, p. 182, etc.; ed. 2.177, etc.

51 Ibid. p. 182; ed. 2.177.

kings may act for the glory of God, and the welfare of their subjects; and that the latter, especially such who are Christians, may lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. The scripture gives us no warrant anywhere to pray for the pardon and salvation of all men, collectively; to do so, would be to act contrary to divine revelation; which represents to us, that the sins of all men will not be pardoned, and that all men will not be saved. And if a man prays for the pardon and salvation of any particular person or persons, for whom he is more especially concerned, it should be always with submission to the will of God, who will have mercy on whom he will have mercy; for no man can pray in faith, and with confidence, but for such things as are agreeable to the revealed will of God. There is, indeed, great encouragement for a man to go to God through Christ, and pray for the discovery of pardon, and application of salvation, to him-self and others, upon the scheme of particular redemption: since the blood of Christ was shed for many, for the remission of sins: and therefore, why not for their sins? and he came to save the chief of sinners, and, therefore, why not them? But, upon the scheme of general redemption, a man has no encouragement to pray for pardon and salvation, either for himself or others; since, according to that scheme,<sup>52</sup> Christ, by his death, has not procured actual pardon, reconciliation, or salvation; only obtained a new covenant, in which these things are promised, on conditions to be performed by men; so that all a man has to do, is to perform these conditions, and then he may claim his interest in pardon and salvation, and consequently has no need to pray for them. When these things are considered, it will be easy to judge which scheme is likely to damp devotion, or to be destructive of fervent prayer.

2. It is further observed<sup>53</sup>, that “it is the duty of all Christians to give thanks always to God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, etc., and this we are to do for all men; and that opinion which obstructs this gratitude, must be repugnant to Scripture and reason.” I reply; that it is beyond dispute, the duty of all Christians, to give thanks to God in the name of Christ, for all things which the’ have received, enjoy, and are made partaker of; and particularly

52 See Whitby, p. 109, 110; ed. 2.106, 107.

53 Ibid. p. 184; ed. 2.179, 180.

for God's sending hi Son to die for them, and for their redemption by him: and though he is not an universal Saviour, yet the greater part of Christians that is, believers, by the scheme of particular redemption, are so far from being disobliged, and incapacitated, as is suggested, reasonably to thank or to praise him for anything that he hath suffered and done; that they are all, and every one of them, laid under the greatest obligations, and put into the best capacity of gratitude and thankfulness, on the account thereof; for these grounds of thanksgiving respect all Christians, all believers in Christ, who have any degree of faith and hope in him, though they may not be fully assured of their salvation by him. But then, that it is their duty to give thanks for all men, and for redeeming grace, and other spiritual blessings, which they have not received, do not enjoy, are not made partakers of, does not at all appear. Giving of thanks is, indeed, to be made for all men, on the account of civil and temporal blessings they enjoy, and because of that use and service they are of to others; though this cannot be extended to every individual, as to a persecuting tyrant, or an infamous heretic. Add to this, that the form of thanksgiving and praise, used by the saints on the score of redemption, which is referred to in the margin by the learned Doctor, but not transcribed, runs thus: Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation (Rev. 5:9); not every kindred, every tongue, every people, and every nation.

3. It is said<sup>54</sup>, that "the great duty required from the Jew and Gentile is, to love the Lord with all our hearts; but if he intended no such kindness to the greatest part of mankind (as the sending of his Son to be their Saviour,) what motive can they have to love him, who never had any love to their souls? Surely they cannot be obliged to love him for that redemption which never was intended for them, or for that grace which will not be vouchsafed to them." To which may be replied; that it is the duty of all men to love the Lord, as they are the creatures of his make, the care of his providence, and supplied by him with the blessings of life; and, so long as they are, the obligation

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54 Whitby, p. 185; ed. 2.181.

to love him continues, and would have continued, had there been no redemption at all by Christ. It is true, redemption by Christ lays a fresh obligation on those who are interested in it, to love the Lord; and, indeed, those who have no interest in that special blessing of grace, have reason to love the Lord upon the account of it; since it is owing to Christ's engagement to redeem his own people, that the rest are continued in their being, and supplied with the blessings of providence, which were forfeited by sin. Besides, though such cannot be obliged to love the Lord for that redemption which never was intended for them, nor for that grace which will not be vouchsafed to them; yet, all to whom the gospel revelation comes, are obliged to love the Lord on the account of redemption by Christ; since all who see their need of it, and are desirous of interest in it, have no reason to conclude otherwise, than that Christ died for them, and has redeemed them by his blood.

4. It is urged,<sup>55</sup> "that the doctrine of general redemption layeth the greatest obligations on us to fear and serve the Lord." But why may not the doctrine of particular redemption be thought to lay as great obligations on us to do the same? For if God thus first loved us, when we did not love him, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, and not the sins of others; surely we stand bound to show our love to him by that obedience, which is the only test of our sincere affection; and if Christ has bought us, and not others, with the price of his own precious blood, we ought to glorify him with our souls and bodies, which are his: and especially, this doctrine may be thought to lay as great obligations on us, to fear and serve the Lord, since it teaches us, that Christ gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works (Titus 2:14); yea, this doctrine may be thought to lay greater obligations on us than the other, to fear and serve the Lord; since, according to the scheme of general redemption, no actual pardon, reconciliation, and salvation, were procured by the death of Christ; only by it men were put into a capacity, and there was a possibility of their enjoying these things on certain conditions to be performed by them; whereas the doctrine of particular redemption

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55 Whitby, p. 186; ed. 2.181.

assures the salvation of all, who have interest in it; which every one has reason to conclude, who is sensible of sin, of his need of Christ, and salvation by him.

5. It is said<sup>56</sup> that the doctrine of universal redemption tends highly to the promotion of God's glory; it gives him the glory of his free love, rich goodness, great mercy, am compassion to the sons of men, far above the contrary doctrine." But how does it promote the glory of God, when, notwithstanding this redemption by Christ, it is possible not one soul may be saved; and they that are saved, must save themselves by performing the conditions of the new covenant, which is all that Christ has obtained by his death? And where does the glory of his free love, rich goodness, great mercy, and compassion to the sons of men appear; when, notwithstanding his sending his Son to be their Saviour, he does not so much as give, to multitudes of them, any knowledge of him, or means of knowing him; and where the external revelation of the gospel does come, to multitudes, he does not give his Spirit to make known and apply salvation by Christ to them? And if, as it is said, "to redeem any, doth magnify his goodness; to redeem many, doth increase it; to redeem all, doth advance it to the highest pitch;" it would follow, that not only to redeem all mankind, but redeem all the devils, would tend most highly to magnify the goodness of God; but the glory of God's grace, mercy, and goodness, lies not so much in the numbers to which they are extended, as in the freeness of them; as I have observed under the preceding head of argument; where I have also shown, that the love, grace, mercy, and goodness of God, are more magnified by the doctrine of particular redemption, than by that of general redemption. The instance of a king's redeeming one hundred of his subjects, when he found five thousand of them in thralldom, upon a declaration he would be gracious to them all; and which is therefore represented as delusory and insincere, inhuman and unmerciful, is foreign to the purpose; since God has no where declared, that he would show himself gracious to all the individuals of mankind; but, on the contrary, that he will be gracious to whom he will be gracious; nor has he any where declared, that he is not

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56 Whitby, p. 86; ed. 2.82

willing any of them should perish.

6. It is observed<sup>57</sup>, that “this doctrine of general redemption doth best instruct us how to imitate the goodness, mercy, and compassion of our God, even by being kind and merciful unto all, and ready to procure, much as in us lies, the welfare of all men (Matthew 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36; 1 Thess. 3:19; 4:9; Eph. 4:39, Matthew 18:35)? But, without this doctrine, we are sufficiently instructed, even by the providential goodness of God to all his creatures, to which the passages in Matthew 5:44, 45, Luke 6:6- 35, 36, refer, to imitate the goodness, mercy, and compassion of God, by being kind and merciful to all men. Nor do we need this doctrine to teach us to love all men, as men and fellow-creatures, nor to love one another as Christians, or believers in Christ.; since all that are born again, are taught of God in regeneration, to love as brethren, all that are regenerated by the grace of God, which is the meaning of 1 Thessalonians 4:9. Such who have received, or expect to receive, forgiveness from God, ought to forgive one another, every- man his brother’s trespasses; but then the ‘rule of this proceeding is not, nor is it necessary that it should be, even as God, for Christ’s sake, has forgiven all men, which the argument in favour of general redemption requires, but even as God for Christ’s sake, hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:32).

It is said,<sup>58</sup> “that it is not a sufficient answer to the argument to say, that God is kind in temporals; for this is indeed no kindness, if all these temporal enjoyments, without grace and interest in Christ, which is denied them, can only be abused to the aggravation of their guilt and punishment; and that it is thinking unworthily of God, that he should take such care of human bodies, and make no provision for their souls.” I reply, that it must be kindness in God, to bestow temporal blessings upon the sons of men, seeing they are altogether undeserving of them, which should engage them to seek and serve him; and it is owing to the wickedness of men, that they are abused by them; for without the grace of God, and interest in Christ, temporal enjoyments may be so used as not to be abused; nor does it become us to say, what is worthy or unworthy of God, respecting the communications of his providential goodness of special grace,

57 Whitby. p. 187; ed. 2.183.

58 Ibid, p. 188, 189: ed. 2.184.

since they depend entirely on his will and pleasure. Though it is an awful consideration, that God should bestow upon some of the sons of men such a large share of temporal blessings, and withhold from them his special grace; and, on the other hand, make such large provisions of grace for his dear children, and yet suffer many of them to be in strait circumstances, and without the conveniences of life: what shall we say to these things, but what the apostle does. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! (Rom. 11:33).

7. It is thought<sup>59</sup>, that “the doctrine of general redemption administers most comfort to sinners, under the terror of God’s threats and convictions of conscience.” I answer, it must be matter of comfort to distressed minds, that Christ came to seek that which was lost, to save the chief of sinner; that whosoever comes to him, he will in no wise cast out; and whosoever believes in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life. All which perfectly agree with the doctrine of particular redemption, and which administers better ground of comfort, to distressed minds than the other doctrine does, since it secures both grace and glory to those who are interested in it. Whereas the other leaves the salvation of every man very precarious and uncertain, and, at most, barely possible, if it can be said to be so, when it depends upon conditions to be performed by themselves; what comfort can that doctrine yield to a distressed mind, which tells the man, that Christ died for all men, and has redeemed all by his blood, and so himself among the rest; and yet he may be damned for all this, and be in no better or safer state than Cain or Judas? Whereas the doctrine of particular redemption ascertains the salvation of some, and all that believe in Christ have reason to conclude their interest in it, and take comfort from it, believing that they shall have, in consequence of it, every blessing of grace here, and eternal life hereafter; so that penitent believers may take as much, yea, more comfort from this doctrine than the other. Could our opponents, upon their general scheme, ascertain salvation to all men, they would have some room and reason to talk upon this head.

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59 Whitby, p. 190; ed. 2.185.



8. It is said<sup>60</sup>, “that this doctrine (of general redemption) gives life and energy to all our exhortations to the sinner, to return and live; whereas, the contrary persuasion robs them of their strength and virtue.” I reply; for my own part, I know of no exhortations to dead sinners, to return and live, in a spiritual manner. Those referred to in Ezekiel 18, I have often observed, respect civil and temporal, and not spiritual and eternal things; we may, and should indeed, encourage and exhort sensible sinners to believe in Christ, and testify their repentance, by bringing forth fruits meet for the same; and to such exhortations the doctrine of particular redemption gives life and energy, and cannot rob them of any strength and virtue; since it ascertains complete salvation, continuance in grace here, and glory hereafter, to all that repent and believe: whereas the other doctrine does not; for, according to that, persons may repent and believe, and yet finally and totally fall away, and at last he damned. Let any unprejudiced person judge which doctrine gives most life and energy to these exhortations, or robs them of their strength and virtue: and, with respect to men In general, I see not why, upon our scheme, we may not as briskly put the question, How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation? and, as boldly inquire, why despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to re-repentance?

The learned writer attended to, proceeds<sup>61</sup> to remove an objection or two lying in his way; as,

(1.) “That after all our quarrelling about this affair, we seem both, at last, to say the same thing; the one, that Christ will save none’ but the elect; the other, that he will only save those who perform the conditions of the new covenant: now these are the same men both for number and quality. And the actual salvation of men being not enlarged by their doctrine, it seems not to be much more worthy of God, or to represent him more a lover of souls, or more concerned for their welfare than the other.” To this he answers, that “though the persons saved be eventually the same, yet the doctrine is by no means the same, nor is the honour of God as much consulted, or his love to souls as much demonstrated by the one as by the other.” To

60 Ibid; ed. 2.186.

61 Whitby, p. 191; ed.2.187.



which I reply; that the doctrine is by no means the same, is certain; and as for the absurdities which this author thinks the doctrine of particular redemption is clogged with; as, that no salvation ever was by God designed for some persons; and as if they are damned for unbelief, must be damned for what they neither could do, nor were, by any law of God, obliged to do; and because they want sufficient means, on God's part, to render their salvation possible; and that this doctrine represents the God of truth and sincerity full of guile, deceit, dissimulation, and hypocrisy, and is visibly destructive of all the acts of piety and virtue. All this has been replied to before. I shall only observe, that by the doctrine of particular redemption, the honour of God is more consulted, and his love to souls is more demonstrated, than by that of general redemption; for according to the former, all the gracious purposes and designs of God, respecting the salvation of men, are fully accomplished; his justice is fully satisfied by the obedience and sufferings of his Son; 'his grace and mercy are, wonderfully displayed, and all his people are certainly saved with an everlasting salvation; whereas, according to the latter, the gracious purposes and designs of God, respecting the salvation of men, are, with regard to a large, if not the largest number of them, entirely frustrated; his justice does not appear to be satisfied with the sacrifice of his Son for their sins; nor are his grace and mercy displayed in the application of salvation to them; this doctrine not providing for the sure and certain salvation of any, but leaving it upon a precarious bottom, to be procured upon conditions of men's own performing; so that if it is obtained, it is rather to be ascribed to the free will of man, than to the free grace of God; and if so, how is the honour of God consulted by this doctrine? And that the love of God is more demonstrated by the doctrine of particular, than by that of general redemption, has been shown in the consideration of the preceding argument.

(2.) The other objection is<sup>62</sup>, "that God is no debtor to any man; he was at perfect freedom, whether he would show mercy to any, or make provision for the salvation of the smallest number, and so he could not be termed unmerciful, had he made no provision for the

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62 Ibid. p.193, 194; ed. 2.189.

salvation of all.” To this he answers, that “God is no debtor to any man; but yet, he is most certainly obliged, by the perfection of his own nature, to act suitably to his attributes.” It is very true; but let it be shown, and proved, if it can be, that God is showing mercy to some men, and not to all, in making provision for the salvation of some, and not for all, in sending, his Son to die for some, and not all, and so in saving of some, and not all, when he could, in justice have damned all mankind for sin, acts unsuitably to any of his attributes. The main of this author’s reasoning in his answer to this objection, belongs to the doctrine of efficacious grace; and therefore must be thought to be impertinent, and does not require an answer here, but must be referred to its proper place. From the whole,

(3.) The two corollaries, or inferences, namely, that “there is no absolute decree of reprobation excluding from saving mercy;” and that “there is no absolute decree of election of a certain number of particular persons to salvation,” do not necessarily follow, as it is said:<sup>63</sup> but, on the contrary, that whereas there is a redemption of particular persons, by the blood of Christ, whose everlasting salvation is procured and secured thereby; so there is an election of particular persons in Christ, who shall certainly enjoy all the grace and glory to which they are chosen. The harangue this author makes upon this, proceeds upon some passages of Scripture, which either have no manner of relation to this controversy, or are misunderstood, and misapplied, as I think has been sufficiently shown in the first Part of this work.

I now proceed to consider the answers of this learned writer to our arguments, and what he calls objections, made from rational accounts, against the doctrine of general redemption, contained in the seventh chapter of his discourse upon this subject. And,

1. The first argument, or objection, he takes notice of, is, that “it is not reasonable to believe, that Christ should die in vain, with respect to any: whereas, if he had died for all, he must have died in vain, with respect to the greatest part of mankind.” Which is said with a great deal of reason; for if Christ died for all men, and some, or many of them perish, then he must die in vain, with respect to these persons.

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63 Whitby, p. 196; ed. 2.191.

But that a matter of so much moment and importance, as the death of Christ, whereby the purposes of God, the promises of the covenant, and the salvation of men, were to be accomplished; in which the wisdom, love, and grace of God are so much displayed; his holiness and justice, truth and faithfulness, so much concerned, should, in any respect, be thought to be in vain, is an unreasonable conclusion. In answer to this it is said,<sup>64</sup> “that all those acts of divine grace, whose effect depends upon the will of man, or which are offered to him upon conditions which he may perform or not, are, through man’s wickedness, too often done and offered in vain; as that imports their being done and offered without any benefit man receiveth by them.” And then instances are produced, of the law and ordinances of God, his fatherly corrections, the gospel, and the ministry of it by Christ and his apostles, being often in vain. But what are all these things to the purpose? Does it follow, that because corrections are sometimes in vain, and the external ministry of the word and ordinances have been in vain, that therefore the death of Christ may be, in any respect, in vain? Does the effect of it depend upon the will of man, or is it ever offered upon conditions to men? To suggest any thing of this kind, must be injurious to, and highly reflect upon the sufferings and death of Christ. This learned writer affirms,<sup>65</sup> that “to say indeed Christ died to no purpose, or to no good end, is a great absurdity; but to say, he died in vain, eventually, for them who will not repent or believe in him, is none. at all.” But surely to die in vain for any, is to die to no purpose, or to no good end with respect to them; and therefore, if to die to no purpose, or to no good end, is a great absurdity, to die in vain must be so too; for to what purpose or good end can Christ die for those, for whom he died in vain? Besides, the apostle represents Christ’s dying in vain as a great absurdity, when he says, If righteousness came by the law, then Christ is dead in vain (Gal. 2:21). And with equal strength of argument it may be said, if men can be saved without the death of Christ, or any are not saved for whom Christ died, then is he dead in vain with respect to them.

II. Another argument or objection against general redemption is, “that a general will that all men should be saved carries some

64 Ibid. p.199; ed. 2.194.

65 Whitby, p. 200; ed. 2.196.

marks of imperfection in it, as representing God wishing somewhat which he could not accomplish; whereas infinite perfection can wish nothing but what it can execute; and if it be fit for him to wish it, it must be fit for him to execute it.” The answer to it is<sup>66</sup>, that “this objection advances a metaphysical nicety against the dearest revelations of the Holy Scripture (Ps. 81:12, 13; Isa. 48:18; Deut. 32:29; Isa. 5:4, 5; Matthew 23:37; Luke 19:42).” I reply, it will be allowed that God sometimes wishes that to be done by others which he himself does not think fit to execute; but then wishing is to be ascribed to him only in a figurative and improper sense, and is only expressive of what, if done, would be grateful and well pleasing to him, but not of what is his proper will and determination should be done, in which sense the passages referred to are to be understood: and besides, they regard not the spiritual and eternal salvation of all mankind, only the civil and temporal welfare of the Jewish nation, as has been shown in the first Part of this performance, and so are not apposite and pertinent to the case before us. It should be proved that there is in God a general will that all men should be saved, or that he anywhere wishes for and desires the salvation of all the individuals of mankind. For God to will or wish the salvation of all men, and intend the death of Christ for that purpose, and yet not save all men, is inconsistent with the perfection of his nature and the immutability of his counsel. Nor is this argument, that God wills not what he sees not fit to execute, attended with those dreadful consequences as are suggested;<sup>67</sup> as “that God is not willing any should obey his will who doth not obey it; and that he is not unwilling any one should sin whom he restrains not from it; and that he is not willing any one should repent who doth not repent.” Since God commanding and approving will is one thing, and his determining will another, in the former sense God wills what he does not see fit to execute; it is what he commands and approves of, that men should obey his will, abstain from sin, and repent of it, when he does not see fit to give them grace to enable them to do these things; but God never wills, that is determines, any thing but he sees fit to execute, and does execute, it. Besides, it is one thing for God to will and wish, that is, command

66 Whitby, p. 201; ed. 2.196.

67 Ibid.

and approve, what is entirely man's duty to do, though he does not see fit to give him grace to execute it, which he is not obliged to do; and another thing to will and wish the salvation of all men, which entirely depends upon himself, and which, if he did wish, he would surely see fit to execute.

III. Another argument taken notice of is, that "if Christ died for all men, and all are not saved, the wisdom of God must be defective and imperfect; for, to fall short of what a man intends, argues a deficiency in point of wisdom." The meaning of which is, that if God intended the death of Christ for the salvation of all men, and all are not saved, his intentions being frustrated, there must be a deficiency of wisdom in the case, which is by no means to be ascribed to the all-wise: Being; it should therefore seem rather, that God never intended the death of Christ for the salvation of all men. To this it is answered<sup>68</sup>, that, "if this be so, then every prince, parent, master, neighbor, or schoolmaster, who cannot make their subjects, children, servants, friends, or scholars, as good as they intended they should be, must deficient in wisdom." To which may be replied; that, "the instances are very impertinent, since it is not in the power of a prince, a parent, a master, a neighbor, schoolmaster, to make those with whom they are concerned as good as they would have them to be; and so it is no impeachment of their wisdom, that their good intentions do not succeed, when they have taken wise and proper methods, but their ill success must be ascribed to the evil dispositions of the persons related to them. Whereas God is able to save as many as he pleases; salvation does not depend upon the dispositions and inclinations of men, but lies entirely in the breast, and depends upon the will and pleasure, of God." Now, if God intended the death of Christ for the salvation of all men, and all men are not saved, either the means he has pitched upon are not sufficient to answer the end, or he has changed his mind and altered his intentions, either of which would imply deficiency of wisdom in him. Should it be said, that God intended the death of Christ for the salvation of all men, upon certain conditions to be performed by them, and that it is the non-performance of these conditions which is the reason why some are

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68 Whitby, p. 202; ed. 2.197.

not saved. Now, not to observe that this greatly reflects upon the death of Christ, as though it was insufficient and ineffectual to the salvation of men, without some performances of theirs, I argue thus; God foreknew either that these conditions would be performed, or that they would not be performed; if he foreknew they would be performed, and yet are not performed, he must be defective in his knowledge; if he foreknew they would not be performed, where is his wisdom, in appointing the death of his Son, and intending that for the salvation of all men, when he knew that multitudes would not perform the conditions on which their salvation depended? Moreover, it is further observed<sup>69</sup>, that “if a God, perfect in wisdom, can intend nothing but what he actually doth compass and perform, it plainly follows that he intended not, by his prohibition of sin, that any person should avoid or abstain from it, who doth not actually do so; or by his exhortations to repentance, holiness, obedience, that any person should repent, be holy, or obedient, who is not actually so.” I reply, that whatever God intends, resolves, and determines upon, he always actually compasses and performs; so when he intends, that is, resolves, that men shall avoid and abstain from sin, repent, be holy, and obedient, his intentions are never frustrated; men do actually avoid and abstain from sin, repent of it, become holy and obedient. But his bare prohibitions of sin, and exhortations to repentance, holiness, and obedience, are not expressive of his intentions, resolutions, and determinations, of what shall be avoided or done, but declare his will of command what should be avoided or done; and which, if avoided or done, would be agreeable and well-pleasing to him; and this, indeed, is not always, yea very rarely, accomplished; and therefore he may justly blame and punish for those things which are contrary to his revealed will though he, in his secret intentions and purposes, has determined not to give them that grace to enable them to avoid sin, repent of it, be holy and obedient, which he is no ways obliged to give.

**IV.** A fourth objection or argument against universal redemption is, “If Christ died for all men, and all men are not saved, then is not God omnipotent, since he could not apply to them that benefit

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69 Whitby, p. 202; ed. 2.197.

which he was willing should be procured for them.” For that the benefit of redemption is not applied to some persons must arise either from want of power or from want of will in God; not from want of will, for it would be exceeding strange that he should be willing it should be procured for them, and not be willing it should be applied to them; and if from want of power, then he is not omnipotent. But it is suggested,<sup>70</sup> that it is owing to “a want of will, and a perverseness or evil disposition in others obstructing his kind influences on, or intentions towards them, and that it cannot be applied because of their unbelief.” The consequence of which is, that he is not omnipotent; for can he be omnipotent whose influences can be obstructed by the perverseness of a creature’s will? Cannot an omnipotent Being remove that unbelief which stands in the way of the application of the benefit of Christ’s death? And if he can do it, and will not, it follows, that though it is his will the benefit of redemption should be procured for all men, yet it is not his will that it should be applied to them; and then where is the love and kindness of God so much boasted of in the universal scheme? That God wills, that is, commands and approves many things which he does not effect, is certain, and no way impeaches his omnipotence; wherefore the instances alleged in the second, answer to this argument being of this kind, are impertinent; but that he should intend to bestow any benefit or blessing upon any persons, and not bestow it upon them, or not make them partakers of it, must arise either from a change of mind, which is inconsistent with the perfection of his nature, or from want of power to give it, which is contrary to his omnipotence.

V. Another argument or objection, and which is said to be but the first, in other words, is, “That if Christ died for all men, and all men come not to be saved, then the great love of God in giving his Son to men, is useless and unprofitable; for to what purpose, or of what use is the love of God and the gift of his Son to men, if he doth not withal give them faith in his Son?” And indeed, what kind of love can that be thought to be in God, which gives his Son to die for men, and by his death to procure redemption for them, but does not give his Spirit to apply, nor faith to receive this benefit, without which it must be

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70 Ibid. p. 203; ed. 2.198.



useless, and of no service to them? It should seem rather, that if God has not spared his own Son, but has delivered him to death for all the individuals of human nature, that he should with him also freely give them all things, his Spirit and faith, and every other grace, and at last glory; and if he does not, it will be more rational to conclude, that he has not delivered up his Son to death for all mankind. The answer to this is,<sup>71</sup> “As if all God’s acts of grace and favour to men which are not effectual, through men’s perverseness of their wills, to obtain his gracious purposes, must be in vain and fruitless on his part, if he also giveth not the grace, which will make them effectual to his ends.” Why, really I think, that both the gracious purposes of God are made void, and his acts of grace and favour vain and fruitless, if they become ineffectual, through the perverseness and stubbornness of men’s wills, to those ends for which they were made; and particularly, that the act of God’s grace and favour, in giving his Son to die for the salvation of men, is vain and fruitless, if they are not saved by his death. The providential goodness of God, the external ministry of the word, God’s prohibitions of, and revelation of wrath from heaven against sin; his commands and gracious calls to the sons of men, instanced in, though they are oftentimes ineffectual with respect to man, yet always answer the ends God has designed by them; and besides, are not to be put upon a level with the gift of his Son. What though providential goodness, the external ministry of the word, etc., are fruitless and ineffectual; does it follow, that the death of Christ, which is of so much consequence and importance, and which depends not upon the will of men, but of God, should be so in any respect? And should it be so, it must be asked again, of what use is the love of God, in the gift and mission of his Son?

**VI.** The favourers of particular, and who oppose general redemption, are introduced arguing in this manner: “no man wittingly pays a price of redemption for a captive, which he certainly knows this miserable man will never be the better for; Christ therefore paid no price of redemption for any man who will never be the better for it. And indeed no wise man would do so, and therefore it must be unreasonable to conclude, that the only wise God and

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71 Whitby, p. 205; ed. 2.200.



our Saviour should act in this manner.” To show the absurdity of this objection, the dispensations of God, from the beginning of the world, are taken notice of;<sup>72</sup> as, the striving of the Spirit of God with the old world, and allowing them space to repent; the sending of the prophets with promises and threats to the Jewish nation, and the ministry of Christ and his ambassadors, when God knew that men would be never the better for either of them. I reply; that some, though not all, were the better for these dispensations of providence, and the rest left without excuse; and it is easy to observe the wisdom of God, his long-suffering and forbearance to them; whereas for Christ to pay a price for the redemption of men, and the justice of God to accept of that price, and yet men be never the better for it, one must be at an eternal loss to account for the divine wisdom in such a procedure. Besides, the offer of the things instanced in, according to this author, depended on the will of man; whereas the price of man’s redemption, the acceptance of it, and the consequences attending it, or the effects of it, wholly depend on the will of God, and the covenant transactions between the Father and the Son. To say, “this objection or argument is built upon a false supposition, namely, that Christ paid no such price for them that perish, as for them that will be saved;” is a mere *petitio principii*, a begging of the question; it is the very tiling in dispute. And though, under the old law, the same sacrifice was offered to make atonement for a single person, and for the whole nation of the Jews, it does not follow, that the sacrifice of Christ was offered to make atonement for the whole world; for though those sacrifices were typical of Christ’s sacrifice, yet the people for whom they were offered, were not typical of the whole world but only of God’s elect, the true and spiritual Israel. Remission of sins is indeed received but not obtained by faith; not that, but the grace of God, gives an interest in Christ’s atonement. The reason why one man has the remission of sins, and faith to receive it, is, because the blood of Christ was shed to obtain it for him; and the reason why another man has not the remission of sins, nor faith given him to receive it, is, because the blood of Christ is not shed for him, nor any atonement made by that blood on his account.

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72 Whitby, p. 206; ed. 2.201.

Thus having vindicated the arguments in favour of particular, and against general redemption, taken from rational accounts, from the exceptions of Dr. Whitby, I shall proceed to observe some others which he has omitted, and have been taken notice of by the famous Limborch; and are as follow.

**VII.** Another argument against general, and for particular redemption, is formed thus: "If grace and remission of sins is procured for all men by the death of Christ, it is necessary that the word of grace and redemption should be preached to all and each, at all and every time, that so by faith they may be made partakers of this reconciliation; or otherwise Christ died in vain for many, to whom this revelation never comes; which is very absurd. But the word of reconciliation is not preached to all and each, at all and every time; for before the coming of Christ, God excluded the Gentiles from the knowledge of his law (Ps. 147:19, 20; Acts 14:16). Nor did he suffer the apostles at a certain time to preach the gospel in Asia (Acts 16:6). And now the Indians and other nations are yet destitute of the knowledge of the gospel." The more general answer to this is<sup>73</sup>, "that when Christ is said to die for all men, so as that they may obtain salvation through the benefit of his death, respect is chiefly had to them to whom the gospel is preached; that, according to the intention and command of God, it ought to be preached to all men; that there has never been an age, from the fall of Adam to the present time, which has been entirely destitute of it; and that the reason why it is at any time removed from a people, is their own fault; they having either neglected or despised it, or held it in unrighteousness." I reply; to say, that respect is chiefly had in this argument to those to whom the Gospel is preached, is not only to alter the state of the question, but, in a good measure, to give up the cause; for the question before us is, not whether Christ died for all to whom the Gospel is preached; but whether he died for all the individuals of mankind; and if he died only or chiefly for those to whom the Gospel is preached, then he died not for all mankind; since the Gospel is not, and never was preached to every man. It is indeed the will and command of God now, that it should be preached to every creature; but this was not

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73 Limborch, p. 307.

always his will and pleasure: it is of a late date, and belongs only to the times of the Gospel. It is true, there never was an age entirely destitute of it; but then, the revelation was made to some particular persons, and those but few, or to a particular nation to the exclusion of others, excepting a few particular persons only among them. There never was an age since the creation of the world to the present time, in which the Gospel was preached to all nations, and to all the individuals of them, nor is it now; there are multitudes that know nothing at all of it. It has been indeed preached where it is not now, and its removal has been owing to men's neglect, contempt, or abuse of it; but why should their posterity be deprived of it? Surely, if God had a people among them, and Christ had died for them, he would have sent his Gospel, age after age, to make known their Saviour to them, and the benefits of his death, that they, through faith in him, might enjoy them. To this a more special answer is<sup>74</sup> returned; "that the people who are now destitute of the knowledge of Christ, either have been before called to believe in him by the Gospel; but, through their own wickedness and infidelity, are deprived of it; or the Gospel was never sent to them: if the former, the answer is easy, that God once vouchsafed the favour to them, and willed that they should propagate it to posterity; but if negligent, the fault is not in God, who is to be considered as having called their posterity virtually by them; but in men's neglecting their duty. As for those to whom the Gospel was never preached, as the Indians, it is certain, that God has now abolished all distinction among people, and wills that the Gospel should be preached to all nations, and to all and each man among all nations, without any difference, for their conversion; and that those who are converted might instruct others, which is all one as if he virtually called them. But if men are negligent, or the people to whom they come stubborn, and by force drive away the preachers, and reject the truth; the fault is not in God, but men. It is granted, that it may be that God may never expressly send ministers of the word to some men, and yet he never denies the communication of his grace, unless it be for men's demerits." To which may be replied; that some persons, to whom the gospel has been vouchsafed, have

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74 Ibid. p. 328.

been deprived of it through their own wickedness and infidelity, will not be denied; but that the salvation of any for whom Christ died, should depend upon the will and conduct of other men, or that the means of the knowledge of Christ, of the benefits of his death, and salvation by him, should be withheld from such for whom Christ died, through the negligence, ingratitude, or unbelief of others, is neither consistent with the perfection's nor providence of God. Besides, if it was his will, where the gospel has been sent, that it should be propagated to posterity, this will of his is either an imperfect velleity, [a mere wish not accompanied by action or effort to obtain it; ed.], a faint wish, which is not to be ascribed to God, or his proper will, and this would have been fulfilled; for who hath resisted his will? Nor can God be thought to have virtually called the posterity of those men to whom his gospel has been sent, who have neither received it themselves, nor is it transmitted to them. Can the present inhabitants of Ephesus, Smyrna, and other places in Asia, where the gospel was once preached, be said to be virtually called by God, by the means of their ancestors, who in process of time, either neglected or despised the gospel, or held it in unrighteousness? As to what is said respecting the Indians, or such to whom the gospel was never sent, the former part of the reasoning upon it is very impertinent; seeing it supposes, not only that it is the will of God that the gospel should be preached to them; which, if it was, it doubt- less would be preached to them; but that it has been sent unto them, and rejected by them. It is owned that God may never send the ministers of his gospel to some men; but why does he not? Is it because they are more unworthy of it than those to whom they are sent? This is not said, what should be the reason of this inequality and difference, that God sends his gospel to some, and not others; gives his grace to the more unworthy? The learned writer, attended to, is obliged to own,<sup>75</sup> that no reason can be assigned by us; that it depends on the mere will and pleasure of God, and is to be referred to the secret treasures of divine wisdom, unsearchable by us.

**VIII.** The next argument is, that “if Christ died for all men, it follows, that he died for Cain, the Sodomites, Pharaoh, Judas,

<sup>75</sup> Est enim fides donum Dei,—Sed tatem quando dat, per doctores dat, et proinde cause fidei immediata est auditus, etc. — Leviathan, c. 43, p. 282, 283.

etc., as well as for Abel, Lot, Abraham, David, Peter, etc., yea, for the impenitent, and even for those who were already dead in their impenitence, before he himself died.” To that it is answered<sup>76</sup>, as before, that special regard is had to those who live after Christ died, and to whom the Gospel is preached, that though those who died in their impenitence before the death of Christ, could receive no benefit by it; yet Christ is truly said to die for them, since, had they seriously converted themselves to God, as they might by the grace of God, they would have found remission of sins in the blood of Christ hereafter to be shed; even as those did who repented and died in piety before the death of Christ. That the case of Judas is single, and is no exception to the universality of Christ’s death; though there is no need to except him, for Christ may be rightly said to die for him, and he might have been a partaker of the benefit of Christ’s death, and that on a twofold account. First, inasmuch as by grace communicated to him, because of the death of Christ, a little after to be endured, he might have abstained from the great sin of betraying him. And secondly, had he repented, he would have obtained pardon of God for it.” I reply, as before, that the controversy between us, is not whether Christ died for those who lived before or after his death, but whether he died for all the sons and daughters of Adam, whether they lived before or after his death? And if he died only or chiefly for those who lived after his death, and to whom the Gospel is preached, then not for all men; since the far greater part of mankind lived before his death, and to whom the Gospel was never preached. With what view, upon what consideration or account soever, could Christ be said to die for those that were already dead in their impenitence? Had he died for them, grace would have been communicated to them on the account of his death hereafter to have been endured, as the author says in the case of Judas; and so they would have repented and been converted, as well as have received remission of sins in his blood hereafter to be shed. But inasmuch as they neither had grace to repent, nor forgiveness of sins, by virtue of the future death of Christ, as others had, it is most reasonable to conclude, he never died for them; for to what purpose should he or could he die for them that

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76 Limborch, p. 329.

were already damned? As to the case of Judas, though single, it must be an exception to Christ's dying for every individual man; though I think the cases of Cain, the Sodomites, Pharaoh, such who have sinned the sin against the Holy Ghost, antichrist, the man of sin, etc., are much alike exceptions to it. What grace Judas had communicated to him on the account of Christ's death, a little after to be endured, by which he might have abstained from the sin of betraying of him, I do not understand, when his betraying of him was to be the means of his death: and as for his repentance, this writer himself owns, that God justly deprived him of the power of repenting, and so the death of Christ was of no advantage to him.

**IX.** Another argument against universal redemption, stands thus: "If they can perish, and some of them do perish, for whom Christ died, then their sins are twice punished: once in Christ, who died for them, and again in themselves undergoing the punishment of everlasting fire:" which is contrary to the justice of God, which will never inflict punishment and require satisfaction twice for the same offense, and must greatly reflect upon the satisfaction and atonement of Christ as insufficient. The answer to this<sup>77</sup> is, "that Christ was not properly punished for men, nor did he properly translate the punishment of sin from sinners, to himself, that their sins might be punished in him. But surely, if Christ did not translate to himself and bear the punishment of our sins, how could he be said to be made sin and a curse for us, to have the chastisement of our peace upon him, to be wounded, bruised, and die for our sins, to be stricken and cut off in a judicial way for the transgressions of his people? (1 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; Isa. 52:5, 6; 1 Cor. 15:3; Isa. 53:8). And if he was, and underwent all this for all mankind, their sins must have been punished in him; and therefore it would not be consistent with the justice of God to send any of them into everlasting fire, when Christ bore what was equivalent to it in their room and stead.

**X.** "If Christ died for all men, then also for infants dying in their infancy; but this the Remonstrants do not believe; since they affirm, that infants are born without original sin, and are not guilty of eternal condemnation; and therefore, according to them, need

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77 Limborch, p. 329.

no Redeemer:” and, indeed if they have neither original nor actual sin, and so not liable to condemnation and death, what should they be redeemed from? The answer is<sup>78</sup> “Not from sin, but from an hereditary death they derived from Adam.” But how comes death to be hereditary to them, or how come they to derive it from Adam, if they are not involved in his sin and guilt? Besides, they are not redeemed by Christ from this hereditary corporeal death: Death reigned from Adam go Moses, and so it has ever since, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression (Rom. 5:14). Should it be said, they will be redeemed from it in the resurrection; so will all the wicked, who will have no share in eternal life, and so no proof of their redemption by Christ; should it be urged, that they will not only be redeemed from this death, but also translated into the possession of eternal life, through the death of Christ; this must be in consequence of their redemption from sin, the cause of this death, by virtue of Christ’s righteousness wrought out for them, which justifies from sin, and gives a title to eternal life. The case is this, either infants dying in infancy are sinners, or they are not; if they are, they must be so by virtue, and in consequence of original sin, which the Arminians deny; if they are not sinners, they stand in no need of a Saviour, they are not the objects of redemption, Christ died not for them; and if not for them, then not for all mankind.

**XI.** The last argument is, “If Christ died for all men, even for them that can and do perish, then do consolation nor certainty of salvation can be had from the death of Christ, even by those that believe he died for them, seeing, notwithstanding he has died for them, they may perish: but this is absurd, and contrary to Romans 8:34, where believers conclude, from the death of Christ, where believer’s conclude that they cannot come into condemnation.” The consequence of this argument is denied<sup>79</sup>. But how is it possible, that there should be any solid comfort or real certainty of salvation from the death of Christ, when notwithstanding complete redemption is obtained by it, the benefit of it enjoyed, sin really forgiven in Christ, and the remission of it truly applied, yet persons may fall from the enjoyment of those benefits through sin and unbelief, and eternally

78 Limborch, p. 330.

79 Limborch, p. 330.



perish? So that the benefit of Christ death, and continuance in the enjoyment of it, depend on the will of man, and certain conditions to be performed by him; whence if any comfort or assurance of salvation arise, which must be very low and precarious, they must arise, not from the death of Christ, but from the performances of men: whereas, on the other hand, the doctrine of particular redemption secures grace here, and glory hereafter, to all the subjects of it; so that those who believe in Christ, may take solid comfort from his death, that they shall never enter into condemnation, but shall be for ever with him; and may be strongly assured of this, that maugre all the opposition of sin, Satan, and the world, they shall be saved with an everlasting salvation by him.

#### **CHAPTER IV OF EFFICACIOUS GRACE**

Dr. Whitby, in the second chapter of his Discourse of sufficient and effectual, common and efficacious, grace, proposes arguments to overthrow the doctrine of irresistible or unfrustrable grace, as necessary in the conversion of a sinner; and begins with some general considerations, which he thinks sufficient to cause any man to distrust, if not entirely reject it; as, that the defenders of it grant, what is inconsistent with it, "That preventing grace is given irresistibly and universally to men, and is never taken away by God from any man, unless he first, of his own accord, rejects it; that there are certain inward workings and effects wrought by the word and Spirit of God, preceding conversion and regeneration, in the hearts of persons not yet justified; which God ceaseth not to promote and carry on toward conversion, till he be forsaken of them by their voluntary negligence, and his grace be repelled by them; that God doth very seriously and in earnest call all those to faith and repentance, and conversion, in whom, by his word and Spirit, he works a knowledge of the divine will, a sense of sin, a dread of punishment, some hopes of pardon; and yet, that all these men, excepting the elect, are not converted, through a defectiveness in the grace of God to do it, or for want of means sufficient for their conversion, and because God never intended by these means salvation to any but the elect." Who



these defenders are that make these concessions I am not concerned to know, the inconsistency of them with the doctrine of efficacious grace, will be readily owned; how can grace be said to be given universally to men, when multitudes of men have not so much as the means of it? or be said to be given irresistibly, when man of his own accord, may reject it? And though some certain effects may follow upon hearing the word as, awakening of the natural conscience, fear of a future judgment, and trembling of the spirits in some persons—as in Felix, who never were or will be converted; yet these things are not promoted and carried on by God, nor were ever designed to be promoted and carried on by him towards conversion, or in order to do it had they been wrought or designed for that purpose, man's forsaking the Lord by voluntary negligence, or repelling his grace, could never frustrate his designs, or cause him to cease promoting the carrying on his own work until he has brought it to perfection. Nor is it true, that God calls all those to faith and repentance, and conversion, who have a knowledge of the divine will, a sense of sin, a dread of punishment, and some hopes of pardon: for the devils have all these but the last, whom he never calls to faith and repentance, and the latter, as well as the former, some men may have, and yet be never called by the grace of God; indeed, all those to whom God, by his Spirit and word, gives a spiritual knowledge of his will, a real thorough sense of the evil nature of sin, as well as of the punishment that comes by it, and a good hope through grace, of pardon through the blood of Christ, he not only calls seriously and in earnest to faith and repentance, but he bestows these gifts of his grace upon them. But I proceed to the consideration of the arguments which, it is said, evidently seem to confute the doctrine of irresistible and unfrustrable grace in conversion. The first four arguments, with the eighth and ninth, are founded upon passages of Scripture, which have been considered in the first Part of this work, to which the reader is referred; the rest shall be attended to, and are as follow.

I. "If such a divine unfrustrable operation is necessary to the conversion of a sinner, then the word read or preached can be no instrument of their conversion, without this divine and unfrustrabl

impulse, because that only acts by moral suasion.<sup>80</sup> I answer: it is very true that the word read or preached is not, nor can it be an instrument of conversion, without the powerful and efficacious grace of God; and it is abundantly evident, that it is read and preached to multitudes on whom it has no effect, and to whom it is of no use and service. Some persons are, indeed, begotten with the word of truth, and through the gospel; and are born again of incorruptible seed by the word of God (Jam. 1:18; 1 Cor. 4:15; 1 Pet. 1:28); but then all this is by and through it, not as it comes in word only, or as it acts by moral suasion, or as it is a mere moral instrument, but as it comes in power and in the Holy Ghost, or with the demonstration of the Spirit and of power (1 Thess. 1:5; 1 Cor. 2:4). The Spirit of God is the efficient cause of regeneration and conversion, the word is only a means which he makes use of when he pleases; for though he, generally speaking, works upon men by and under the means, yet not always; the work of grace upon the soul is not such an effect as doth entirely depend upon these two causes, so that, without the concurrence of them both, it will not be produced: wherefore the argument will not hold, that “he that hath it always in his power to resist, that is, to hinder the operation of the one upon him, must also frustrate the other, and consequently binder the effect.” For though the word, unattended with the Spirit and power of God, may be resisted, so as to I be of no effect, yet neither the operations of the Spirit, nor the word, as attended with them, can be resisted, so as either of them should be ineffectual. And though the work of grace is wrought by an irresistible and unfrustrable operation, and the word without it is insufficient to produce it, yet it is not unnecessary; for it pleases God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe (1 Cor. 1:21); whereby he confounds the wisdom of the world; and, by making use of weak means, he magnifies his own grace and power; he puts the treasure of the gospel in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power (2 Cor. 4:7) in conversion may appear to be of God, of his operation, and not of man’s moral suasion.

II. It is said, <sup>81</sup>“Hence it must also follow, that no motive can be offered sufficient to induce the person who believes this doctrine,

80 Whitby, p. 255; ed. 2.249.

81 Whitby, p. 259; ed.2.252.

to enter upon a change of life, or a religious conversation, till he feel this irresistible impulse come upon him." I reply: that internal conversion, and an external change of life, regeneration, and a religious conversation, are different things. Though no man can be regenerated and converted without the powerful and efficacious grace of God, yet they may, without that grace, enter upon an outward change of life, and a religious conversation with and before men, though no motive can be offered sufficient to induce any person, whether he believes or does not believe this doctrine, to regenerate and convert himself; which does not lie in his own power, but is entirely owing to an unfrustrable operation of grace; yet many motives may be offered, sufficient, without an irresistible impulse of grace, to induce him to an external reformation and amendment of life, and a religious conversation. Though it must be owned, that a change of life, and a religious conversation, when genuine, are the fruits and effects of regeneration and conversion; nor do men truly and rightly enter upon them, nor are these established upon the best principles, until they are regenerated and converted by the Spirit and grace of God.

**III.** It is further urged that<sup>82</sup> "if man be purely passive in the whole work of his conversion, and it can only be wrought in him by an irresistible act of God upon him, then can nothing be required as a preparation, or a prerequisite to conversion." I answer: for my own part, I must confess, I know of no works preparatory to conversion. Works are either good or evil; evil works cannot be thought to be preparatory to it; and good works, which are strictly and properly so, spring from a principle of grace implanted in regeneration, and so follow upon it, and are not preparatory to it. And, indeed, what things preparatory to conversion can be thought robe in a natural man, that neither knows or receives the things of the Spirit of God? or in a carnal heart, which only minds the things of the flesh? or in a dead man, in order to be made alive? There is no middle state between a regenerate and an unregenerate, one; what preparatory works were there in a persecuting, blasphemous, injurious Saul? (1 Tim. 1:13), or in those mentioned by the apostle? (1 Cor. 6:9-

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82 Ibid.

11). There are some things which sometimes precede conversion, and which the Spirit of God makes use of for that purpose, such as reading, hearing the word, etc., but then he does not always make use of these for conversion, nor does it always follow upon them. God's exhortations to men to consider and turn unto the Lord, are said to demonstrate that this consideration is a pre-requisite to conversion: what exhortations are referred to, I know not; the Scriptures, which speak of men's considering and turning from their evil ways, regard that consideration which is requisite to an outward reformation of life, the fruit of regeneration, and internal conversion, and so not preparatory to it; and, indeed, there is want of spiritual consideration and attention in every man, until God! opens his heart, by his powerful grace, as he did Lydia's, to attend to the things which are spoken, or which regard his spiritual and eternal welfare. The parable of the seed sown, instanced in, shows, that the hearts of unregenerate men are unlit and unprepared to receive the word, and therefore it becomes unfruitful to them; and that it is only fruitful where it is received in an honest and good heart, made so by the Spirit and grace of

God in regeneration; whence it follows, that regeneration is rather a preparation for the right hearing of the word than the hearing of the word is a preparation for regeneration. Faith, indeed, often comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (Rom. 10:17), when that is attended with the Spirit and power; and therefore it is no wonder, that the Devil comes and endeavors to take away the word out of men's hearts, their minds and memories, by diverting them to other objects, lest they should believe and be saved (Luke 8:12); since he knows not who will believe and be saved, nor to whom the word will be made effectual, and to whom it will not; nay, even where it is attended with an unfrustrable assistance, he will endeavor to hinder men's believing to salvation, though he knows his attempts are in vain; which at once discovers both his folly and his malice.

IV. It is said, that<sup>83</sup> "the opinion (of God, working upon men and converting them in a way of moral suasion) tendeth much more to the glory of God, than doth the contrary opinion:" and it is urged,

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83 Whitby, p. 264; ed. 2.257.

1. That the wisdom of God is most glorified by that opinion which supposeth he acts with man in all his precepts, exhortations, invitations, promises and threats, suitably to those faculties he has given." I reply, according to our opinion God does not act unsuitably, to the rational powers and faculties he has given, when he clothes his word with omnipotence, makes it the power of God unto salvation, and attends it with an unfrustrable operation upon the understanding, will, and affections; since no coercive force or violence is offered to them, the understanding is wonderfully enlightened, the will is sweetly drawn, and the affections delightfully engaged and moved, without any injury, yea with an advantage, to these natural faculties; and therefore can be no imputation upon the divine wisdom; nor does our opinion suppose, that God "uses and appoints means for the recovery of mankind, which he knows cannot in the least degree be serviceable to that end;" but on the contrary, that whatever means he uses and appoints, he makes them powerful and effectual to the ends and purposes, for which he appoints and uses them, and does not leave them to the uncertain, precarious, and impotent will of man, so that our opinion is so far from impeaching and depreciating the wisdom of God that it magnifies and exalts it; nor, according to our hypothesis<sup>84</sup>, as is suggested, might he as well send ministers to preach to stones, and persuade them to be converted into men, because his omnipotency can produce such a change in them. There is no doubt, but that God could convert stones into men, and make them his children; but he has nowhere signified that he would do this upon men's preaching to them; whereas he has not only signified as his will, that the gospel should be preached to every creature, but that it shall be the power of God in the conversion of many souls, both among Jews and Gentiles; wherefore there is not the same reason for sending his ministers, and for their preaching to the one as to the other, though equal power is necessary for the conversion of the one as of the other. Not that unregenerate men are altogether like stocks and stones; for though they cannot contribute anything to their regeneration or new birth, yet they are capable subjects of having the grace of God implanted in them, which stocks and stones

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84 Vide Camero in loc.

are not; but nevertheless, if God did not make bare his holy arm, and exert his mighty power in the conversion of sinners, ministers would preach with as much success to stones as to men; and consequently the wisdom of God, according to our scheme, is greatly displayed, in accompanying the word preached with a divine energy, and an unfrustrable operation; so that all his gracious designs towards his people are effectually answered, and not leaving it to the bare force of moral suasion.

2. It is observed<sup>85</sup>, that “whereas according to our doctrine (of moral suasion) the truth and faithfulness of God, and the sincerity of his dealings with men is unquestionable; according to the other doctrine of efficacious grace God seems to promise pardon and salvation to all men sincerely, and yet in truth, intends it only to some few persons whom he designs to convert by an irresistible power.” To which may be replied, that whenever God promises, he not only seems to promise sincerely, but he really does promise sincerely, and is as good as his word; he will never suffer his truth and faithfulness to fail. But then, according to the doctrine of efficacious and irresistible grace in conversion, God neither seems to promise, nor has he promised pardon and salvation to all men: his promise in Christ runs thus, To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins (Acts 10:43); and to all these is it given by Christ, who is exalted to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance, and forgiveness of sins (Acts 5:31), not to all men, but to Israel; how then does this doctrine detract from the sincerity, truth, and faithfulness of God? And, on the other hand, according to the contrary doctrine of moral suasion, these things do not appear so unquestionable as is pretended; for if God has promised to any of the sons of men, to put his law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, to give them new hearts and new spirits, to take away the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them hearts of flesh, and to put his spirit within them, to cause them to walk in his statutes and keep his judgments, and do them; and yet leaves all this to be brought about by the mere force of moral suasion, and power of man’s free will, and does not

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85 Whitby, p. 264; ed. 2.257.

exert that powerful and unfrustrable grace without which he knows none of these things can be done; where is his sincerity, truth, and faithfulness in his promises?

3. It is also said<sup>86</sup>, that “whereas the justice of God shines evidently from the doctrine which asserts that God doth only punish men for willful sins, which it was in their power to avoid; it never can be glorified by that doctrine which supposes, that he punisheth men with the extremest and most lasting torments, for not accepting those offers of grace tendered by the gospel, which it was not possible for them to comply with or embrace, without that farther grace which he purposed absolutely to deny them.” I reply, for my own part, I do not think that any man will be punished for not accepting offered grace, he could not comply with or embrace, for want of further grace, because I do not believe that grace was ever offered to them; but then they will be punished for their willful contempt and neglect of the gospel preached unto them; and for their manifold transgressions of the righteous law of God, made known unto them; and surely this doe. Trine can never be derogatory to the glory of God’s justice.

4. It is asked,<sup>87</sup> “Is it not for God’s glory, that the praise of what good we do should be ascribed to his grace, and the shame of our evil doings should rest upon ourselves? But what reason can there be for this, unless we suppose it possible for the wicked to have been converted, or have ceased to do evil?” And let me ask, in my turn, which doctrine, that of free will or of free grace, does most ascribe the praise of either what good is in us, or is done by us, to the glory of God’s grace? Not the former, surely, but the latter; and if so, the glory of God’s grace is more magnified by the one than by the other. And as this doctrine ascribes the praise of all the good that is done by men to the efficacious grace of God, which makes for his glory; so it leaves the shame of evil doings to rest upon the authors of them, who are not partakers of the grace of God; even though it is not in their power to convert themselves, or cease to do evil; since this is owing to the vitiosity and corruption of their nature, of which they have reason to be ashamed; from whence all their evil doings spring, which being voluntarily committed, are their

86 Whitby, p. 265; ed. 2.258, 259.

87 Ibid.



faults, though conversion work transcends all the power of man to perform. Our author thinks, that if this be the case, their evil actions may be their misfortunes; but how they should be their faults, it is not easy to conceive; whereas let conversion be by moral suasion, or by omnipotent power, it makes no alteration in the nature of evil actions; they are voluntary transgressions of God's law, and as such, faults in men, as well as misfortunes to them, whether men are turned from them to God by the force of moral suasion, and the power of man's free will, or by the mighty power of God's grace. I now proceed to mention some arguments in favour of efficacious and irresistible grace in conversion, and consider the exceptions to them. And,

I. If the grace by which we are converted, does not work with that efficacy, that it cannot but obtain the effect, but the cooperation of free-will is required, then Race is not the beginning of every good thing, but the free will of man, yea, the efficacy of grace is made to depend upon the will of man; and so the good work of faith and conversion, from whence all other good things spring, must be ascribed rather to the will of man, than to the grace of God; whereas every good and every perfect gift comes from above, from the grace of God as the spring and source of it, and not from below, as it must, if it comes from the will of man; for to say, as is said<sup>88</sup>, that when equal grace is conferred on two persons, and the one believes, and the other does not, that the reason is, because the one receives it by the right use of free-will, excited by the grace of God, and the other rejects it by the wicked abuse of free-will, and fresh obstinacy against the grace of God; what is this but to make the free will of man the chief cause of believing? when nothing is more certain than that faith is the sole gift of God, and the operation of his power.

II. If God, in the conversion of man, does not make use of that efficacious operation which determines man, but it is in his power to embrace or refuse the grace of God, or to do any thing towards his conversion, which another neglecting to do, is not converted, then he makes himself to differ, and has matter mad occasion of boasting. The exceptions to this argument have been considered in the second part of this performance, whither the reader is referred.

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88 Limborch, p. 388.



III. If such determining grace, or such a powerful operation of it, is not requisite to men's conversion, and is not put forth in, it, then God does not bestow any more singular special grace on them who are converted, than he does on them who are not converted; and so no more grace was given to Peter than to Judas, to Paul than to Pilate; whence it follows, that he that believes has no more reason to give thanks to God, than he that does not believe. In he reply to this, it is owned,<sup>89</sup> that God, in the ordinary vocation of men, does not give to one more grace than to another, or any special singular grace which he denies to another; but gives equal and sufficient grace to all to obey the call, provided by more grace is meant the species of grace, but not the same degree. But if the same degree of grace is not given to one as to another, how does it appear that God gives equal grace to all, and what is sufficient for them to obey the divine call? or that the greeter degree of grace is not attended with such an efficacious operation and irresistible power pleaded for by us? Moreover, it is said to be no absurdity, that he who does not believe has equal reason to give thanks to God as he who does believe, if we respect the first offer of grace. But surely, according to this writer's own scheme, it can never be thought that he, who, though he has the same kind of grace bestowed upon him, yet not the same degree of grace, and so does not operate in the same way, nor produce the same effect in him as it does in others, can ever have the same reason to give thanks to God, as such have who have a greeter degree of it, and in whom it is productive of true faith and real conversion.

IV. Such is the, method of Divine Providence, that second causes should so depend upon God, in their beings and operations, that they cannot determine themselves to any act; but it is requisite that they be fore-ordained from eternity, and in time be pre-determined by God, not only to the act itself, but to the mode of it. The answer to this is<sup>90</sup>, that if this was admitted, a fatal and an inevitable necessity of all things and events, negative and positive, and of actions, good and bad, would be introduced, and God must be the only cause of all the sins and iniquities committed in the whole world. To which may be replied, that the dependence of second causes upon God, in their

89 Ibid. p. 390.

90 Limborch, p. 390.

beings and operations, and the preordination and predetermination of them to their acts, do indeed introduce a necessity of the event, that is, that such and such ‘things shall be done, and in the manner appointed by God; but do not introduce a coactive necessity or force on .the will of man.; neither God’s purposes in eternity, nor his pre-determinations in time, infringe the liberty of man’s will, nor make God the author or cause of any one sin, as appears from the instances of I the selling of Joseph by his brethren, and the crucifixion of Christ by the Jews.

V. The opinion which makes the grace of God resistible, leaves it uncertain whether any one will be converted by it or not; for, if God did not work with an irresistible operation of grace upon the hearts of men in conversion, it was possible that not one soul would have been converted. To this it is answered<sup>91</sup>, “that it leaves it as uncertain, whether any one will be converted or not.” I reply; since this irresistible grace finds all men unconverted, and considering the irresistibility of it, and the state and condition of man, that he is deed in sin, in enmity against God, his heart hard, and his will obstinate and perverse, it is not so uncertain whether any one will be left by it unconverted, as that whether any one will be converted by it. It is moreover said,<sup>92</sup> that “a man may, notwithstanding this opinion, be infallibly certain, otherwise, that many will be found true converts at the last, because he knows that many have already died in the fear of God, and in the faith of Christ; and because the holy Scriptures do assure us, that some shall arise to everlasting life, and receive the end of their faith in the salvation of their souls. This is very true, and yet, according to this opinion, it was possible that not one of these might have been converted, because they might have resisted the grace of God, and made it of none effect. Besides, such who will be found true converts at last, who die in the fear of God, and in the faith of Christ, who shall arise again to everlasting life, and receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls, are such who are regenerated and converted by the efficacious and irresistible grace of God, and are kept by the power of God, through faith

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91 Whitby, p. 302; ed. 2.295.

92 Ibid. p. 303.

unto salvation. It is further observed,<sup>93</sup> that “to say that it is barely possible, in the nature of the thing, that none may be converted, hath no inconvenience in it, because it tends not to hinder any man’s endeavors after his conversion.” I reply; supposing it does not, yet it has these inconveniences in it, that if it is possible that none may be converted, then it is possible that God’s choice of persons to eternal life may be made void, and all his counsels and purposes concerning his elect frustrated. It is possible, that the purchase and redemption by Christ may become of no effect, and he not see the travail of his soul, and be satisfied, though it is promised to him; and it is possible, that the Spirit and grace of God may have none of the glory which arises from the conversion of a sinner, as well as that the salvation of every man must be very precarious and uncertain.

## CHAPTER V

### OF THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL OF MAN

I have considered the nature of the power and liberty of man’s will in the first part<sup>94</sup> of this work, where I have shown, that the liberty of it does not consist in an indifference or indetermination to either good or evil; that the will of man is free from coercion or force, but not from an obligation to the will of God; the powerful influence of whose grace it stands in need of, to move and act in any thing that is spiritually good, without any infringement of the natural liberty of it; for the opposition we make is not to the natural, but moral liberty of the will, which is lost by the fall. And though we cannot allow that man has either will or power to act in things spiritually good, as conversion, faith, repentance, and the like, yet we readily grant, that he has a power and liberty of performing the natural and civil actions of life, and the external parts of religion: hence all the instances produced by Dr. Whitby, to prove the liberty of the will as opposite not only to coercion, but necessity, are to no purpose; since they relate to such cases as are allowed to be within the compass of the natural power and will of man;<sup>95</sup> such as choosing, and retaining virginity, a power of eating and drinking, given of alms, and the

93 Whitby p. 303.

94 Whitby, Sect. 5.

95 Whitby. p. 338, 339; ed. 2.329, 330.

92 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
external ministration of the gospel. I have likewise considered, in the same performance, the several passages of Scripture which are thought to contain arguments in favour of man's free will and power in conversion,<sup>96</sup> taken from the calls, invitations, commands, and exhortations of God to it, as is supposed. In the second part of this work I have endeavored to vindicate such passages of Scripture objected to, which represent the depravity and corruption of human nature, and the disability of man to that which is spiritually good; what remains now, is to consider the arguments taken from reason, to prove the liberty of the will from necessity, that it cannot consist, with a determination to one, namely, either good or evil; and that it does not lie under a disability of choosing and doing that which is spiritually good. And,

I. It is said,<sup>97</sup> "that the freedom of the will, in this state of trial and temptation, cannot consist with a determination to one; namely, on the one hand, in a determination to good only, by the efficacy of divine grace; seeing this puts man out of a state of trial, and makes him equal to the state of angels; nor with the contrary, determination to evil only; for then man, in this state of trial, must be reduced to the condition of the devil and of damned spirits." And it is more than once urged<sup>98</sup>, "that the doctrine, which teacheth that man is so utterly disabled by the fall of Adam, that, without the efficacious grace, which God vouchsafes only to some few who are the objects of his election to salvation, he hath no power to do what is spiritually good, or to avoid what is spiritually evil, must be destructive of the liberty belonging to man, in a state of trial, probation, and proficiency." This seems to be the principal argument, and on which the greatest stress is laid, since it is so often repeated and referred to. In my first Part<sup>99</sup>, I have considered this case, whether man is now in such a state of trial and probation as is contended for; where I have shown, by several arguments, that man is not in such a state; and have given an answer to those which are brought in favour of it; and therefore am not concerned to reconcile the doctrine of man's

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96 See Whitby, p. 344, 345; ed. 2.335, 386.

97 Whitby, p. 309, 310; ed. 2.301,302.

98 Ibid. p. 314, 319; ed. 2.306, 311.

99 Sect. 4

disability to do that which is spiritually good, to the liberty of man in such a state; or what becomes of this imaginary state, and the liberty of man in it. But though man is not in such a state, and his will is biased and determined, either by the efficacy of divine grace, to that which is good, or through the corruption of nature, to that which is evil: yet he is not, by the one, made equal to the state of angels; nor by the other, reduced to the condition of the devil and of damned spirits: for though regenerated persons, when and while they are under the divine impulse, or powerful operation of grace, are blessed and determined to that which is spiritually good, as the angels are, without any violation of the natural liberty of their wills; yet they are not in an equal state with them, for they are still liable to sin, and their obedience is imperfect; neither of which can be said of angels. Besides, at the same time, there is a principle of corruption in them, sin, that dwells in them, the old man, which is as much biased and determined to that which is evil, as the new creature, or the new man, is biased and determined to that which is good. And as for unregenerate men, whose hearts are fully set in them to do evil, though their hearts and inclinations may be as bad as the devils and damned spirits, yet they are not reduced to the same condition with them; for, besides their not being in a state of punishment, and being in the enjoyment of many mercies, and in a capacity of attending to the external ordinances, and duties of religion, there is a possibility of their having the grace of God implanted in them.

II. Another argument against this disability of man is thus formed;<sup>100</sup> “That which disables any man from choosing what is spiritually good, or refusing what is thus evil, and therefore must be destructive to his soul and spirit, must also take away his liberty to choose what is spiritually good, and to refuse what is spiritually evil.” I reply; It is certain that what disables man from choosing what is spiritually good, or refusing what is thus evil, must take away his liberty to choose and refuse them: nor do we say, that man thus disabled, has still a freedom in reference to these actions, nor a power of doing otherwise; we deny both; these are the things in controversy between us. We allow that man has a faculty and power of willing

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100 Whitby, p. 313; ed. 2.305.

and doing things natural, but not a power and faculty of willing and doing things spiritual; we own that this disability is destructive to his soul and spirit; if by being destructive, is meant being injurious to the well-being of it, to its spiritual and eternal welfare, unless the grace of God takes place; but if by it is meant, that it is destructive to the natural powers and faculties of the soul and spirit, this must be denied; for though the moral liberty of the will is lost by sin, yet the natural liberty of it remains. Now, the moral liberty of the will is not essential to it, and therefore may be taken away without the destruction of it. I doubt not, but it will be allowed, that the liberty to choose what is spiritually good, and refuse what is spiritually evil, is the same liberty which is pleaded for in man's supposed state of trial and probation; and yet this learned writer freely owns,<sup>101</sup> that this is not essential to man, as man; and consequently may be taken away, without the destruction of the soul, or spirit, or will of man: he owns, that it is no perfection of human nature, yea, that it is an imperfection, and that it will, with our other imperfections, be done away. So that the doctrine of man's disability to that which is spiritually good, is not destructive of any of the natural faculties of the soul or spirit, nor of the will, nor of the natural liberty of it.

**III.** It is further urged, that "the doctrine of man's disability, by the fall of Adam, to do what is spiritually good, is inconsistent with the new covenant of grace, established in the blood of Jesus, and tendered to all to whom the gospel is vouchsafed." Some men, indeed, plead for offers of Christ, and tenders of the gospel; but the offer or tender of the new covenant, is what I never met with in other writers. If this covenant is tendered, upon the conditions of faith and repentance, to all to whom the gospel is vouchsafed, how can it be said to be established in the blood of Jesus? It must be very precarious and uncertain, until the conditions of it are fulfilled by those to whom it is tendered. The doctrine of man's disability to do what is spiritually good, may seem inconsistent with the covenant of grace, to such who have no other notions of it, than that it is a conditional one; that faith, repentance, and obedience, are the conditions of it; and that these are in the power of man to perform; but not to those

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101 Ibid. p. 307, 308; ed. 2.299, 300.

who believe, and think they have good reason to believe, that the covenant of grace is made with Christ, as the head and representative of the elect, and with them in him, and with them only; and that, with respect to them, it is entirely absolute and unconditional, to whom grace is promised in it, to enable them to believe, repent, and obey. The covenant of grace supposes the disability of man to do that which is spiritually good, and therefore provides for it; for God promises in this covenant to put his law in the inward parts, and write it in the hearts of his people: yea, to put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his statutes; and says, they shall keep his judgments, and do them (Jer. 31:33; Ezek. 36:27).

IV. It is argued,<sup>102</sup> that “if the will of man is determined to one, namely, to that which is good, by the grace of God; or to that which is evil, through the disability contracted by the fall; this must take away the freedom of men’s actions: since then, there is no place for election and deliberation; it being certain, that the liberty of man must be deliberative, if it doth choose, there being no election without deliberation.” To which I reply; Supposing choice necessary to free actions, a determination of the will to some one thing, is not contrary to choice, for the human will of Christ, and the will of angels and glorified saints, are determined only to that which is good; and yet they both choose and do that good freely.<sup>103</sup> And again, all that is done freely, is not done with deliberation and consultation; a man that falls into water, and is in danger of being drowned, spying something he can lay hold on to save himself, does not stay to consult and deliberate what he had best to do; but immediately, without any deliberation or consultation, lays hold upon it; and yet this he does freely. Besides, neither the disability of man, nor the efficacious influences of grace, at all hinder the freedom of human actions. A wicked man, who is under the strongest bias, power, and dominion of his lusts, acts freely in his fulfilling of them; as does also a good man, in doing what is spiritually good; and never more so, than when he is under the most powerful influences of divine grace.

V. It is observed,<sup>104</sup> that “the freedom of man’s will, pleaded

102 Whitby, p. 310, 312, 355; ed. 2.302, 304, 346.

103 Ibid. p. 108, 310; ed. 2.300, 302.

104 Ibid. p. 308. 310; ed. 2.300, 302.

for, is absolutely requisite, to render our actions worthy of praise or dispraise: and that a determination to one, leaves no room for either of these.” I reply; As to good men, they are not solicitous about the praise of their actions, being very willing to give the praise and glory of them to the grace of God, by which they are what they are, and do what they do; though I see not why these should not be praiseworthy; and the more, for being done in a dependence on the grace of God, and under the influences, and by the assistance of it. The good actions of angels and glorified saints are praiseworthy; they are commended for doing the commandments of the Lord, for their constant and perfect obedience to his will; hence our Lord taught his disciples to pray, that the will of God might be done on earth, as it is done in heaven; and yet the wills of these celestial inhabitants are only determined to what is divine, spiritual, and heavenly. And as to the actions of wicked men, notwithstanding their disability to do that which is spiritually good, they are worthy of dispraise; for if bad fruit may be dispraised which comes from a corrupt tree, that brings it forth by a physical necessity, a necessity of nature, much more must the actions of wicked men be worthy of dispraise, who voluntarily choose their own ways, and delight themselves in their abominations. The actions of apostate angels deserve dispraise, and they have been rebuked for them by the Lord himself: and yet their wills are determined only to that which is evil.

**VI.** It is said,<sup>105</sup> that “the freedom pleaded for, is such, as is absolutely requisite, to render our persons worthy of rewards or punishments;” and that “without such a power and liberty to choose or refuse what is spiritually good,<sup>106</sup> men are no more rewardable for choosing it than the blessed angels, and as little liable to punishment for not doing what is spiritually good, as the devils and damned spirits;” or, as it is elsewhere<sup>107</sup> expressed, “then must all future recompenses be discarded, it being sensibly unjust to punish any man for doing that which it never was in his power to avoid; and as unreasonable to reward him for the action which cannot be praiseworthy.” I have already observed, that actions to which

105 Whitby, p. 308; ed. 2.300.

106 Ibid. p.320; ed. 2.311, 312.

107 Ibid. 15.



men are directed, influenced, and determined by the grace of God, are commendable and praiseworthy; as the services of angels and glorified saints, and so are rewardable by the grace of God, though not through any merit or desert in them; for as the saints have all they have through the grace of God, and do all they do, that is well done, by the assistance of it, so they expect no other reward but what is according to it. And as to wicked men, they are justly liable to punishment for their wicked actions, since these are committed by them against the law of God, voluntarily, with a full will, desire, delight, and affection, without any force upon them: though they are influenced and determined to them by the corruption of their nature; which corruption of nature is so far from excusing them from condemnation and punishment, that it is an aggravation of it: even as the devils are not only liable to punishment for their former transgressions, but to greater degrees thereof, by their daily repeated sins; though their wills, through the malice and wickedness of their natures, are only determined to sin.

**VII.** The learned writer<sup>108</sup> attended to, argues from what he had more largely insisted on elsewhere, to show, that “God acts suitably to our faculties, by the illumination of our understanding, and by persuading the will by moral causes; and from his having demonstrated the falsehood of that supposition, that though God has laid no necessity upon man to do evil by his own decrees, yet man lies under a necessity of doing evil since the fall, by reason of the disability he hath contracted by it, to do any thing which is truly good; and from his having showed, that though the evil habits, added to our natural corruption, do render it exceeding difficult, they do not render it impossible for them to do what is good and acceptable in the sight of God.” I reply; If no more light were put into the understanding of man, or communicated to him, but what is done by moral causes, he would never be capable of knowing and receiving the things of the Spirit of God; and if the will of man were no otherwise wrought upon than by moral suasion, it would never be subject to the law of God, or gospel of Christ. Nor has this author demonstrated the falsehood of the hypothesis, that though God has

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108 Ibid. p. 353; ed. 2.344.

laid no necessity upon men to sin, by his decrees, yet such is the disability of man, contracted by the fall, that he cannot but sin; for God's decrees do not all infringe the liberty of the will, as the case of Joseph's being sold by his brethren, and the crucifixion of Christ, do abundantly declare; and that such is the state of man since the fall, such the corruption and impotency of his nature, that he cannot do that which is spiritually good, and is fully set and wholly bent upon that which is evil, both Scripture and all experience sufficiently testify. I observe, this author allows of the natural corruption of man, which he elsewhere seems unwilling to own; and that evil habits added to it, render it exceeding difficult, though not impossible, to do that which is good: whereas the prophet represents it (Jer. 12:23) as impossible for persons to do good, that are accustomed to do evil, as it is for the Ethiopian to change his skin, or the leopard his spots.

**VIII.** The same<sup>109</sup> author argues from the received notion of the word, that "that only is said to be free for us to do, which it is in our power to do; which may be done otherwise than it is done, and about which there is ground for consultation and deliberation." I reply: that these rules will hold good about the natural and civil actions of life, which, it is allowed, are in the power of man to do, are controllable by his will, upon consultation and deliberation; and as to outward acts of religion, there are many things in the power of man, which may be done otherwise than they are, upon consultation and deliberation. But as to spiritual things, they are not in the power of man, and yet they may be done freely, under the influence and by the assistance of the grace of God; and if no actions can be free, but what may be done otherwise than they are, then the actions of the holy angels and glorified saints, of Christ as man, yea, of God himself, cannot be free. And as to evil actions, committed by wicked men, they are done by them freely; even though they are such slaves to sin, so overcome by it, and so much under the power of it, that they cannot do otherwise but sin and that oftentimes, without consultation or deliberation, the corruption of their natures strongly inclining and pushing them on unto it.

**IX.** This author goes on<sup>110</sup> to argue from Le Blanc, that all the

<sup>109</sup> Whitby, p. 354; ed. 2.345.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. p. 356: ed. 2.347

actions which proceed freely from us, may be subject to a command, and by the law of God or man may be enjoined or forbidden; but this cannot agree to those acts, *circa quos voluntas immutabiliter se habet*, in which the will is so immutably determined, that it never can or could do otherwise. To which may be replied; that the actions of the holy angels and glorified saints are subject to a command, and are done in obedience to the will of God, and which proceed from them freely, though their wills are immutably determined, that they never can do otherwise. On the other hand, the evil actions of devils are forbidden by the law of God, and proceed from them freely, though their wills are immutably determined, that they never can do otherwise. And if so, why may not, on the one hand, the good actions of saints, done in obedience to the law of God, proceed freely from them, though their wills are influenced and determined by the grace of God to them? And, on the other hand, why may not the actions of wicked men, forbidden by the law of God, proceed freely from them, though their wills are influenced and determined to them through the corruption of their nature? This writer<sup>111</sup> further observes, “that if this be the case of lapsed man, his sin cannot proceed freely from him, and so cannot reasonably be forbidden; and that those laws are certainly unjust, which prohibit that under a penalty, which a man cannot possibly shun, or require that which cannot possibly be done:” or, as he elsewhere<sup>112</sup> expresses it, “to make laws for lapsed man, impossible to be performed by him, is unsuitable to the divine wisdom; to punish him for not doing what he could not do; or performing what he could not avoid, is unsuitable to the divine justice: and to excite them to their duties by motives, which he knows cannot work upon them, is unsuitable to the sincerity of God.” I answer: that when God first made and gave laws to man, he was in a capacity to obey them; they were not impossible to be performed by him, he was not then in his lapsed estate; and therefore it was not unsuitable to the divine wisdom to make and give out the laws he did; nor is it now unsuitable to it to continue them; which is necessary to support his own authority, though man has lost his power to obey. Man’s present impossibility to fulfil the law of God, does not arise from the nature

111 Whitby, p. 356, ed. 2.347.

112 Ibid. p. 315: ed. 2.307.

100 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
of that law, nor from his original constitution, but from that vitiosity and corruption which he has contracted by sin: wherefore, it is not unsuitable to divine justice to punish for that which man cannot do, or cannot avoid: any more than it is unjust in a creditor to demand his just debts, and punish for the same, though the debtor is not in a capacity to pay. Nor is it unsuitable to the sincerity of God, nor in vain, that he makes use of motives, as promises and threatenings, to excite men to duty, which he knows cannot work upon them without his powerful grace; since by these he more fully points out the duty of man, admonishes him of it, expresses more largely the vile nature and dreadful consequences of sin, leaves the impenitent inexcusable, and, by the power of his grace accompanying these means, brings his own people effectually to himself.

X. Another argument to prove freedom from necessity, is thus<sup>113</sup> formed: “If wicked men be not necessitated to do the evil that they do, or to neglect the good they do neglect, then have they freedom from necessity, in both these cases; and if they be thus necessitated, then neither their sins of omission nor of commission could deserve that name.” It is elsewhere said,<sup>114</sup> “that the notion concerning the consistence of liberty with necessity, and a determination to one, is destructive of the nature of vice and virtue:” and if this be true,<sup>115</sup> “then vice and virtue must be empty names.” I reply: As to the first of these, the definition of sin is not to be taken from the power of man, or from what he can or cannot do, but from the law of God; for sin is a transgression of the law; and that action which is voluntarily committed against the law of God, is blameworthy, and deserves the name of sin or vice, and so is punishable; though the will may be influenced and determined to it by the corruption of nature; for sin is no less sinful, because man has so corrupted his way, and implicated himself in sinning, that he cannot do otherwise. The devils can do nothing else but sin; and yet, surely, their actions deserve the name of vice. As to the actions of good men, performed under the influences of the grace of God, it is certain, that they are called (Phil. 4:8; 2 Pet. 1:3, 5), virtues in Scripture, and are truly and

113 Ibid. p. 357: ed. 2.348.

114 Whitby, p. 322; ed. 2.314.

115 Ibid. 15

properly so; it is strange, that the grace of God, which influences, determines, and enables men to perform an action better, should destroy the goodness of it, and take away both his name and nature. The good actions of the holy angels may be called virtues, though their wills are influenced and determined by the grace of God to these, and these only.

**XI.** It is affirmed,<sup>116</sup> “that there is a plain agreement betwixt the doctrine of Mr. Hobbes and of us (Calvinists) concerning this matter, as to the great concernments of religion.” Be it so; if it be truth we agree in, it is never the worse for being held and maintained by a man otherwise of corrupt principles. Truth is truth, let it drop from what mouth or pen soever; nay, if delivered by the devil himself, it ought to be assented to as such; but perhaps, upon an examination of this matter, it will not appear, that there is such a plain agreement between our sentiments and those of this gentleman. For,

1. The question between Mr. Hobbes and Bishop Bramhall, as drawn up by the latter, and allowed by the former, was plainly this;<sup>117</sup> “whether all agents and all events, natural, civil, moral (for we speak not now of the conversion of a sinner, that concerns not this question), be predetermined extrinsically and inevitably, without their own concurrence in the determination; so as all actions and events, which either are or shall be, cannot but be, nor can be otherwise, after any other manner, or in any other place, time, number, measure, order, nor to any other end, than they are, and all this in respect of the supreme cause, or a concurrence of extrinsical causes determining them to one.” So that the conversion of a sinner did not concern the question between them; whereas this is the main thing between us and the Arminians, “whether the conversion of a sinner is to be ascribed to the efficacy of the grace of God, or to the power of man’s free will.”

2. The dispute between Mr. Hobbes and his antagonist, was not about the power of the will, or of man to do this or that thing, but about the natural liberty of his will. Mr. Hobbes allows,<sup>118</sup> that

<sup>116</sup> Whitby, p. 359; ed 2.350.

<sup>117</sup> The questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, clearly stated and debated, p 3, 34. Ed. 1655

<sup>118</sup> The questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, clearly stated

102 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
“man is free to do what he will;” but denies that “he is free to will;” and therefore declares, that whatever is alleged to prove that a man hath liberty to do what he will, is impertinent to the question;<sup>119</sup> and complains of the bishop, who “would fraudulently insinuate, says he, that it is my opinion, that a man is not free to do if he will, and to abstain if he will; whereas, from the beginning, I have often declared, that it is none of my opinion, and that my opinion is only this, that he is not free to will, or which is all one, he is not master of his future will;” which he elsewhere explains thus:<sup>120</sup> “Put the case, a man has a will today to do a certain action tomorrow, is he sure to have the same will tomorrow, when he is to do it? Is he free today to choose tomorrow’s will? this is that now in question.” Hence it appears, that though he denies the natural liberty of the will, or that the will has a liberty of itself to will, but supposes it is necessitated by preceding causes: yet he affirms, that man has a power of doing whatsoever he will: in which he agrees not with us, but with the Arminians; as is more fully manifest from what he observes concerning the covenant made with man, Do this, and thou shalt live. It is plain, says he,<sup>121</sup> that if a man do this he shall live; and he may do this if he will: in this the bishop and I disagree not. This, therefore, is not the question; but “whether the will to do this, or not to do this, be in a man’s own election;” whereas, on the other hand, we believe that man has no power to do anything that is spiritually good, and that if he had a will to keep the law of God, he is not able to do it; we affirm with the apostle, that though to will is present with us, but how to perform that which is good we find not (Rom. 7:18).

3. The learned author himself, I attend to, has such an observation as this:<sup>122</sup> “It is no great difference,” says he,<sup>123</sup> “betwixt the opinion of these men and that of Mr. Hobbes, that the one destroys the liberty of all our actions, and theirs only destroys our liberty in spiritual and

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and debated, p. 4.

119 Ibid. p. 143

120 Ibid. p. 310.

121 Ibid p. 191.

122 Whitby, p. 362; ed. 2. 354.

123 The questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, clearly stated and debated, p. 190.

moral actions.” This observation implies that there is a difference, though it supposes no great difference, between our opinion and that of Mr. Hobbes. The difference must appear considerable to every one that observes, that as the case is here stated, the one only destroys our liberty in spiritual and moral actions, the other destroys the liberty of all our actions. We say, that “the moral liberty of the will is only lost by the fall, but that the natural liberty of it continues, and is even preserved in all those actions, in which man appears to be a slave to his sinful lusts and pleasures.” We suppose that man has a liberty of will in things of a natural and civil, but not in things of a moral and spiritual kind

4. Our opinion is, that “the will of man is moved and determined by the special influence of the grace of God, to that which is spiritually good; as it is moved and determined, whilst the man is in a natural estate, by the influence of corrupt nature, to that which is evil.” Mr. Hobbes will not allow, that the will is determined by special influence from the first cause: “that senseless word influence,” says he, “I never used;” nor will he allow, that the will is moved at all; and still less, by any thing infused: whereas, we suppose, that grace is infused into the soul: and by this the will is moved and determined to that which is spiritually good;” his words are these;<sup>124</sup> “and because nothing can move, that is not itself moved, it is untruly said, that either the will, or anything else, is moved by itself, by the understanding, by the sensitive passions, or by acts or habits, or that acts or habits are infused by God; for infusion is motion, and nothing is moved but bodies.”

5. The necessity we contend for, that the will of man lies under, is only a necessity of obligation to the will of God, and a necessity of immutability and infallibility with respect to the decrees of God, which have their necessary, unchangeable, and certain event, and a necessity of influence by the power of the grace of God, to that which is spiritually good; and by the strength and prevalence of corruption, to that which is evil; all which is consistent with the natural liberty of the will; but then we say, it is free, not only from a necessity of coercion or force, but also from a physical necessity of

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124 Ibid., p. 246.

104 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
nature; such as that by which the sun, moon, and stars, move in their course, fire burns, light things ascend upwards, and heavy bodies move downwards; whereas Mr. Hobbes affirms,<sup>125</sup> that “every man is moved to desire that which is good to him, and to avoid that which is evil to him, especially the greatest of natural evils, death; and that by a certain necessity of nature, no less than that by which a stone is moved downwards.” And elsewhere he expresses himself thus:<sup>126</sup> “My meaning is, that the election I shall have of anything hereafter, is now as necessary, as that the fire that now is, and continueth, shall burn any combustible matter thrown into it hereafter; or, to use his (the bishop’s) own terms, the will hath no more power to suspend its willing, than the burning of the fire to suspend its burning; or rather, more properly, the man hath no more power to suspend his will, than the fire to suspend its burning.”

6. Mr. Hobbes’s opinion makes God the cause of all sinful actions, as well as good; and this is not only a consequence deduced from his principles by his opposers, but is what is allowed by himself, though he will not admit that it follows, that God is the author of them. “Author,” he says,<sup>127</sup> “is he which owneth an action, or giveth a warrant to it: do I say,” adds he, “that any man hath in the Scripture (which is all the warrant we have from God for any action whatsoever) a warrant to commit theft, murder, or any other sin? Does the opinion of necessity infer that there is such a warrant in the Scripture? Perhaps he (the bishop) will say, no; but that this opinion makes him the cause of sin. But does not the bishop think him the cause of all actions? and are not sins of commission actions? Is murder no action? And does not God him say, *Non est malum in civitate quod ego non feci*? And was not murder one of these evils? Whether it were or not I say no more, but that God is the cause (not the author) of all actions and motions; whether sin be the action or the defect, or the irregularity, I mean not to dispute.” But in another

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125 *Fertur enim nuns quisque*, etc. — Hobbes de Cive, c. 1, sect. 7. P. 11. Ed. Amsterd. 1657.

126 The questions concerning Liberty, Necessity, and Chance, clearly stated and debated, p. 232.

127 *Ibid.* p. 175.



place,<sup>128</sup> he will by no means admit of the distinction between the action, and the sinfulness or irregularity of it.

Now, though our opinion is often charged with making God the author of sin, yet we are far from admitting such a charge to be just, and one way of clearing ourselves from such an imputation, we take, is by using the distinction of an action, and the ataxy [loss or lack of muscular condition; ed.], disorder, or irregularity of it, which Mr. Hobbes disallows of. And so far are we from making God the cause of sin, that we allow sin to have no efficient, but only a deficient cause, though Mr. Hobbes is of opinion<sup>129</sup> “that the distinction of causes into efficient and deficient, is bohu (?), and signifies nothing.” All these things being considered, it will not appear that there is such a plain and manifest agreement between the doctrine of Mr. Hobbes and us concerning this matter, as to the great concernments of religion, as is undertaken to be shown. But supposing there is a plain agreement between him and us in this single point, of the consistence, of liberty with necessity, why should it be cast upon us in a way of reproach? when it is notorious, that in many things there is a plain and manifest agreement between him and the Socinians and Arminians; for, not now to give instances of his agreement with the former, about the doctrine of the Trinity,<sup>130</sup> the person,<sup>131</sup> and offices of Christ, and his satisfaction,<sup>132</sup> the doctrine of justification,<sup>133</sup> the immortality of the soul, its state after death, and the eternity of the future torments of the wicked.<sup>134</sup> I shall just hint some few things in which he agrees with the latter; by which it will appear that if any reproach attends an agreement of sentiments with him, it will fall upon them, and not upon us. And,

I. We say that all men are, as David was, shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin; that they are evil from their birth, and are by nature

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128 Ibid, p. 89. See also his *Leviathan*, c. 46, p. 322. Ed. Amsterd. 1670.

129 Ibid, p.175.

130 *Leviathan*, c. 16, p. 81; c. 46, p. 317; *Append. ad. Leviticus* c. 1, p. 333, 339, 342, 346.

131 Ibid. c. 46, p. 317; *Append. c. 1*, p. 339.

132 Ibid. c. 38, p. 217; c. 41, p. 226, 227.

133 Ibid. c. 43, p. 287; *de Civ.* c. 18, p. 12.

134 Ibid. c. 38, p. 211; c. 44, 295; *Append. c. 3*, p. 363.

106 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
children of wrath. But Mr. Hobbes says,<sup>135</sup> “that men are by nature evil, cannot be granted without impiety; and though from their birth they may have desire; fear and anger; yet they are not to be reckoned evil on the account of these, since the affections of the mind, which flow from the animal nature, are not evil; but the actions which arise from them are sometimes so, when they are noxious and contrary to duty. Infants, unless you give them all that they desire, weep and are angry, and even beat their parents, and this they have from nature; and yet they are without fault: nor are they evil: first, because they cannot hurt; and next, because, wanting the use of reason, they are free from all duty.” In this the Arminians agree with him, who, one and all, deny the doctrine of original sin: it would be needless to refer to authorities in proof of this.

2. We say that every imagination of the thought of the heart is evil; that the first thought and desire of sin, or inclination and motion to it, is sinful. “But,” says Mr. Hobbes,<sup>136</sup> their opinion, who say the first motions of the mind are sins, seems to me to be too severe, both to themselves and others.” He denies “that the affections of the mind are evil,” or “that the passions of men are sins.” And do not the Arminians agree with him, when they say,<sup>137</sup> “that concupiscence, and the first motions of it, are no sins; and that it was not forbidden to Adam in his state of innocence?”

3. We say, that men have no good thing in them, but what is put into them by the grace of God; that they cannot think a good thought of themselves; and that everything of this nature comes from God. But Mr. Hobbes says, that “the schools, not knowing the nature of the imagination and sense, teach what they have learnt; some, that the imaginations arise from themselves, that is, without a cause; others, that, for the most part, they arise from the will; and that good thoughts are inspired into men by God, and evil ones by

135 Ibid. c. 38, p. 210, 211; c. 44, p. 295, 300, 301.

136 Objectum porro a nonnullis est, quod omnes homines non modomalos, sed etiam (quod concedi sine impietate non potest) natura malos esse, etc. — Hobbes Praefat. in lib. de Cive.

137 Sententia igitur eorum qui motus animi primos peccata esse aiunt, tum aliis tum sibi ipsis nimirum severa mihi videtur.—Leviathan, c. 27. p. 138. Affectuosae animi mali non sunt ipsi. — Praefat. 1. de Cive. Passiones hominum peccata non sunt.—Leviathan, c. 13, p. 65.

the devil; or that good thoughts are infused into men by God, and evil ones by the devil.” This he represents as a great mistake, and arising from gross ignorance, that good thoughts are infused by God; and what else do the Arminians say, when they affirm, <sup>138</sup>“that man, before regeneration, has a power of willing that which is good; and that the will of man is flexible to that which is good, without the grace of God; and observe that when the apostle says, not that we are sufficient as to think anything as of ourselves, that he does not say that they were not sufficient to think any good thing of themselves; intimating that men are sufficient of themselves to think that which is good.”

4. We affirm, that the understanding of man is so darkened by sin, that, without the illumination of the Spirit of God, he cannot understand the mind of God in the Scriptures. On the other hand, Mr. Hobbes<sup>139</sup> intimates, that “men, without a supernatural revelation or inspiration, which he calls enthusiasm, may, by mere natural reason, know what God says, and understand the Scriptures, as much as is necessary to know our duty to God and man.” And do not the Arminians teach the same, that the mind and will of God may be easily known from the sole reading of the Scriptures, without any illumination of the Holy Ghost; for, say<sup>140</sup> they, “a sense super-infused, would be the sense of the Holy Ghost, and not of the Scripture; and that men endued with common sense and judgment may understand the meaning of them; and that there is a natural power, common to all that are endued with reason, to attain unto it.”

5. We say, that faith is the gift of God, and does not proceed from natural causes, and that all grace is implanted in us, and infused into us by the Spirit of God. Mr. Hobbes rejects everything of this kind; and says,<sup>141</sup> “that these phrases, infused virtue, inspired virtue, are

138 Est autē n hoc opus scholarum—nescientes enim imaginationis et sententionis naturam, etc.—Leviathan, c. 2. p. 8.

139 Voluntas hominis post lapsum, ante regenerationem retinuit libertatem seu facultatem liberam sive bonum sive malum volendi. — Remonstr. sex colloc. Hag. p. 250. An tu negas liberum arbitrium esse flexibile in utrumque partem, addo et sine gratia? flexibile enim est natura sua.—Armin, contr. Perkins, p. 604.

140 Vide Act. Synod. circ. art. 4. p. 168.

141 Ex quibus scripturis per interpretationem rectam, etc.—Leviathan, c. 32, p. 176, & c. 33, 176.

108 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
insignificant, mere sounds, and are equally as false as, that a four square is round; and that it is giving the name of body to an accident, to say that faith is infused or inspired, when nothing is fusible or spirable but a body.” He reckons<sup>142</sup> it among the diseases of a body politic, as a seditious opinion, and what makes men apostates from natural reason, “that faith and holiness cannot be acquired by study and reason, but are supernaturally inspired or infused;” and roundly<sup>143</sup> asserts that “though faith and holiness are scarce, yet not miracles; and that they proceed from education, discipline, correction, and other natural causes.” And elsewhere<sup>144</sup> he says, “that God disposeth men to piety, justice, mercy, truth, faith, and every kind of virtue, moral and intellectual, by doctrine, example, and other natural and frequent methods.” And though he is obliged to own,<sup>145</sup> that “faith is the gift of God, which he works in different persons, and in different ways, as seems good unto him, and is what he gives and denies to whom he pleases; yet,” he says, “when he gives it, he gives it by teachers: and therefore the immediate cause of faith is hearing; as in a school, where many are taught, some are proficients, some not, the difference is not always from the master. All good things, indeed, come from God; but most commonly by natural means; therefore we must not rashly give credit to them, who, in their doctrines, pretend to a supernatural gift; for their doctrine is first to be examined by the church. Though elsewhere, when it serves his purpose, he thinks fit to contradict himself, and asserts,<sup>146</sup> that faith is an act of the mind, not commanded, but wrought by God; which, when, and to whom he will, he gives or denies.” And moreover says,<sup>147</sup> that” the hearts of all men are in the hands of God, who works in men both to do and to will; and without his free grace, no man hath inclination to

142 *Sensus ille superinfusus non erit sensus verborum Scripturae, sed sensus Spiritus Dei, etc.*—Remonstr. Apolog, pro Confess. c. 1, p. 34. *Ib.* Confessio, c. 1, s. 14, p. 6. Vide *Episcop. disp.* 3, *Thess.* 1, 2.

143 *Fides sit sanctitas etsi rarae, etc.*—*Ib.* p. 153.

144 [54] *Homines enim ad pietatem, etc.*—*Ib.* c. 36, p. 200.

145 *Homines enim ad pietatem, etc.*—*Ib.* c. 36, p. 200.

146 *Credere enim animi actus est, non adeo jussus sed factus quem quando et quibus vult, Deus dat negatque.*—*Ib.* c. 26, p. 136.

147 *Sine cujus gratis libera nemo habet neque inclinationem ad bonum neque resipiscentiam a malo.*—*Ib.* c. 44, p. 300.

good, or repentance for sin.” And do not the Arminians agree with this man in his other expressions? since they deny<sup>148</sup> the infusion of habits, before any act of faith, or that any grace is infused into the will, or that the internal principle of faith is a habit infused by God, or that faith is called the gift of God, in respect of any actual infusion of it into our hearts; and affirm,<sup>149</sup> that no other grace is necessary, to draw forth an act of faith, than that which is of a moral nature, or that which uses the word as an instrument to produce faith; which word of the gospel is the sole and ordinary means of conversion, without the concurrence of any internal, efficacious, and irresistible act of the Holy Ghost.

6. We say, that that faith which is commonly called justifying faith, or that by which we believe to the saving of our souls, is not a general assent to the person and offices of Christ, and to the truths and doctrines of the gospel; but is that grace by which a soul goes out of itself to Christ, and relies upon him for pardon, righteousness, life, and salvation; by which it appropriates Christ to itself, and is a holy and humble persuasion and confidence of interest in him, and in the blessings of grace procured by him. But Mr. Hobbes says,<sup>150</sup> that “the only article of faith which the Scriptures make necessary to salvation is, that Jesus is the Christ.” And not much different from this, is the definition of faith given by the Arminians, who say,<sup>151</sup> that “justifying faith is that by which we believe in Christ as the Savior of them who believe in general;” or, “that it is a fiducial assent to the gospel, by which a man is persuaded that all that is in it is true, and by which he trusts and acquiesces in God through Christ.”

7. We affirm, that we are only justified by the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and not by faith or works, as the matter of our

148 Corvin. ad. Walachr. p. 67; Grevinchov. contr. Ames. p. 327; Remonstr. in Coll. Hag. art. 3. & 4. p. 308.

149 Acta Synod. circ. art. 4: p. 62. Ib. p. 128.

150 Unicus articulus fidel quem ad salutem aeternam necessarium faciunt Scripturae sacrae, hic est, quod Jesus est Christus. — Leviathan, c. 48, p. 28; 1. de Cive, c. 18, s. 6.

151 Fides justificans est qua creditur in Jesum Christum tanquam in salvatorem credentium universe, Armin. Artic. perpend, de fide art. 6. est autem fides in Christum assensus fiducialis evangelio adhibitus, etc.—Episcop. disp. 14, thess. 3.

110 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
justification before God; that faith is that grace by which we receive the righteousness of Christ, as a justifying one, by which we have the sense and perception of our justification, and enjoy the peace and comfort which flow from it; and that good works, springing from faith, are declarative of it before men. But Mr. Hobbes says,<sup>152</sup> that “both faith and obedience justify, God accepting the will for the deed; that obedience justifies, because it makes righteous, in the same manner as temperance makes a man temperate, prudence makes a man prudent, and chastity makes a man chaste, namely essentially: faith justifies in the same sense as a judge is said to justify, who absolves by a sentence which actually saves; in this acceptance of justification, faith alone justifies; in the other, obedience alone.” And how near does this come to the sentiments of the Arminians?<sup>153</sup> who say “that faith only, although it is not alone without works, is imputed for righteousness; and by this alone we are justified before God, absolved from sin, and reckoned, pronounced, and declared righteous by him?” and, that “this, by the free acceptance of God in Christ, is reckoned for the whole righteousness of the law, which we are bound to perform;” and “that faith is properly to be taken for the habit, without that obedience which is to be yielded to the gospel; and by that we are properly, though freely, justified and saved by God.”

Now, not to take any notice of the agreement of these men with Mr. Hobbes, about the extent of Christ’s death and the nature of his sacrifice,<sup>154</sup> the power of man to do what he will, before observed, and the easy performance of the laws of nature,<sup>155</sup> when these things are seriously considered, the charge of Hobbism or Hobbesianism,

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152 *Fides et obedientia utrsque justificent, sed in diverse significatione Justificare Leviathan, c. 43, p. 287, 288. Justificat ergo obedientia, quia facit justum eo modo, quo temperantia fecit temperatum, etc., justificat ergo fides eo sensu quo justificare dicitur Judex, qui absolvit, etc. L. de Cive, c. 18, s. 12.*

153 *Haec mea sententia est, fidem eamque solum quanquam sola sine operibus non est, ad justitiam imputari, etc. Armin. ad Hippol. Inter ejus Opera, p. 772. Haec per gratuitam acceptationem Dei in Christo habeatur pro omni legis justitia, quam nos praestare tenebamus. Bert. Discept. Epist. contr. Lubbert. p. 6. Fidem proprie accipiendam esse pro habitu, etc. Ib. p. 81*

154 *Vide Leviathan, c. 38, p. 217, etc., 41; p. 226, 227.*

155 *Vide L. de Civ. c. 3, s. 30.*

will fall upon them, and not upon us.

**XII.** It is said,<sup>156</sup> “that our opinion differs very little, and in things only of little moment, from the stoical fate; and lies obnoxious to the same absurdities which the philosophers and Christians did object against it.” To which I reply:

1. That of all the sects of the ancient philosophers, the stoics come nearest to the Christian religion, has been observed<sup>157</sup> by many; and that not only with respect to their strict regard to moral virtue, but also on the account of principles and doctrines; insomuch that Jerome affirms,<sup>158</sup> “that in most things they agree with us. They assert the unity of the divine Being, the creation of the world by the Logos, or Word, the doctrine of Providence, and the conflagration of the universe.” And it is not to be wondered at, that they should have any knowledge of these things, since Zeno, the founder of their sect, was a Phœnician, as was also Antipater of Sidon; and others of them were of Syrian extract, as Diogenes Babylonius, and Posidonius, who, doubtless conversed with and received most of their doctrines from their neighbors, the Jews<sup>159</sup>. And certain it is, that several of the first Christian writers were either of this sect, or much inclined to it, and greatly favoured it; as Pantaenus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Arnobius, and others. It is an observation of Lipsius,<sup>160</sup> that “Divine Providence, before it would spread the first light of wisdom among us, by sending Wisdom itself, that is, the Son of God, thought good to send first such as these, meaning the stoics, and their writings, to light up the sparks thereof, and drive away some of the Cimmerian darkness of vice and error.” And should it appear, that we agree with them in the doctrine of God’s decrees, I know no other consequence that will follow upon it but this, that our doctrine is consonant to the light of nature, and far from being, repugnant to the natural reason of mankind. It is indeed, not very easy, to settle their true sense and

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156 Whitby, p. 359; ed. 2. 350.

157 Vide Gataker, Praeloq. ad Marc. Antonin.

158 Stoici qui nostro dogmati in plerisque concordant. Hieron. in Esaiam, c. 11, p. 22, L.

159 Vide Lips. Manuduct. ad Stoic. Philippian. 1.1, diss. 17, p. 100, 101.

160 Divina providentia priusquam lucem sapientiae plenam, etc. Lips. ib. diss. 16, p. 91.



112 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
meaning of fate, since they do not seem to agree one with another, nor to write consistently with themselves; did they, we should not be ashamed to own an agreement with them. And it must be allowed, that there are some things said by them which have an affinity with some tenets of ours; as,

(1.) When they say that “fate is God himself, to whom all things are subject, and by whom they are all determined, ordered, and directed as he pleases. This is mentioned by Laertius,<sup>161</sup> as one of the positions of Zeno, the author of this sect, that “there is one God, who is called the mind, fate, Jupiter, and by many other names.” And, says Seneca,<sup>162</sup> who was one of the best writers among them, “If you call him (God) fate, you will not be mistaken, since fate is nothing else but an implicated series of causes, and he is the first cause of all on which the rest depend.” And a little after,<sup>163</sup> “If you call him nature, fate, fortune, they are all the names of the same God, using his power, in a different way.” Panaetius, the stoic, also expressly asserts fate to be God;<sup>164</sup> with whom agrees Phurnutus, another of the same sect, who says,<sup>165</sup> that Jupiter is called fate, because of the invisible distribution or ordination of things which befall every man in this life.” Now, setting aside the language in which these things are expressed, there is nothing but what is agreeable to our sentiments, namely, that God is he who has fixed and determined all things in their own order, place and time, according to his good will and pleasure; and that God’s decree is God himself decreeing: and therefore we also agree with them when,

(2.) They represent fate as no other than the will, purpose, and decree of God. This Homer calls<sup>166</sup> “the counsel, or good will and

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161 En te einai qeoi kai < noun kai < eimarmenhn kai < dia pollaiv te eteraiv onomasiav prosonomazesqai. — Laert. in vit. Zen. 1. 7.

162 Hunt eudemque et future si dxieris, non mentieris, etc. Seneca de Beneficiis, 1. 4, c. 7.

163 Si hune naturam vocas, fatum, fortunam, etc. Ib. c. 8. Vide Nat. Quest. 1. 2, c. 4, 5.

164 Vide Gale’s Court of the Gentiles, par. 2, b. 4, c. 3, s. 12.

165 [76] O Zeus de ejsti kai h moira dia to mh orwmenh dianemhsiv einai twn epiballomenwn ekastw. — Phurnutus de Natura Deorum, p. 19. Vide Chrysippum apud Cicerou. de Nat. Deorum, 1.1.

166 Diow ot eteleietoboulh. — Homer. Ibad. 1, lin. 5.



pleasure of God; and Seneca,<sup>167</sup> “a divine law, and an eternal law;” which is no other than the eternal will of God, and so agreeable to the derivation of the word,<sup>168</sup> *fatum a fando*. Servius says,<sup>169</sup> that “fate is the voice of Jupiter.” To this nothing can be excepted, but the use of the word fate, as has been owned by many Christian writers: “what else is fate,” says Minutius Felix,<sup>170</sup> “but what God says of every one of us?” And so the great Augustin allows the thing, though he denies<sup>171</sup> the name; “human governments are entirely constituted by Divine Providence,” says he; “which if therefore any one will ascribe to fate, because he calls the will or power of God by that name, let him hold his opinion, but correct his language.” And when the Pelagians charged the doctrine of grace, as maintained by him, with being the same with the stoical fate,<sup>172</sup> he replies, “Under the name of grace we do not assert fate, because we say, that the grace of God is not anteceded by any merits of men; but if any please to call the will of the omnipotent God by the name of fate, we shun indeed the use of new profane words, but do not love to contend about them.” So our Bradwardine, who was a second Austin, says,<sup>173</sup> concerning the stoics: “They spoke of fate according to the efficacy of the divine will, wherefore they were free from all real, though perhaps not from verbal, error; for the word fate is suspected with Catholics though the thing itself is right.”

(3.) We agree with them when they assert, that “all things that happen<sup>174</sup> are determined by God from the beginning or from

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167 Seneca *cur Bon. vir. Malachi Fiant.* c. 5. *Ib. de Benef.* 1. 6, c. 23, & Ep. 76.

168 *Fatum autem dicunt, quicquid Dii fantur quicquid Jupiter fatur; a fando ignitur fatum dicunt, id est a loquendo.*—Isidor. *Hispal. Origin.* 1. 8. c. 11, p. 72.

169 *Vox enim Jovis fatum est.*—Servius in Virgil. *AEneid.* 1. 10.

170 *Quid enim aliud est fatum, quam quod de unoquoque nostrum Deus fatus est?*—Min. Felix. *Octavius*, p. 39.

171 *Aug. de Civ. Dei*, etc., 1. 5, c. 1; vide *ib.*, c. 8, 9.

172 *Nec sub nomine gratiae fatum asserimus*, etc.—*Aug. contr. Duas Epist. Pelag.* 1. 1, c. 5.

173 *Ipsi enim loquebantur de fato secundum efficaciam voluntatis divinae*, etc.—Bradwardin, *de Causa Dei*, 1. 1, c. 28, p. 267.

174 *Afhv tanta ta ginomena summrnetai*—*M. Antonin.* 1.8, s. 23.

114 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
eternity;<sup>175</sup> and that they happen very justly,<sup>176</sup> and always for the best;<sup>177</sup> and therefore advise men to give themselves up willingly to fate, or patiently and quietly to submit to the will of God:<sup>178</sup> all which entirely agrees with many passages of Scripture (Acts 15:17, 18; Ps. 145:17; Rom. 8:28; Jam. 4:15; Ps. 46:10); and with the practices of the best of men, both among Jews and Christians (1 Sam. 3:18; Job 1:21; Ps. 39:9; Acts 21:14), and of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ himself (Luke 22:42).

(4.) Some of them were very careful to preserve the natural liberty of the will of man, as we are. Chrysippus, one of the principal among them,<sup>179</sup> was of opinion, that “the mind was free from the necessity of motion,” which, in this case, he disapproved of; and though it was his sentiment, that nothing happened without preceding causes, yet, that he might escape necessity, and retain fate, he distinguished causes; some of which, he said, were *perfectae et principales*; others, *adjuvantes et proximae*; and, therefore, when he asserted, that “all things were by fate from preceding causes, his meaning was, that they were so, not by the former, but the latter sort of causes.” And says Seneca,<sup>180</sup> men know not what they may will, but in the very moment in which they will; for to will, or nill, is not entirely decreed to any man. Indeed, they seem to be jealous of the liberty of the will, and fear, where no fear or cause of fear was, as if liberty could not consist with any kind of necessity; and, therefore, Austin blames them when he says,<sup>181</sup> “Hence it appears, that that necessity is not to be feared; by fearing which, the stoics have laboured so to distinguish

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175 Pan to sumzainon dikaiwv sumzainei.—Ib. 1. 4. s. 10.

176 Ap archv soi sugkaqeimarto kai suneklqweto pan to sumzainon. — Ib. 1. 4, 6, s. 26. Ex aiwnov prokaterkeuzeto —Ib. 1. 10. s. 5

177 Oi qroi kalwv ezouleusanto Ib. I. 6, s. 44. Monon filein to eautw sumzainon kai sugklwqomenon ti gar armodiwteron. — Ib. 1. 7. s. 57.

178 Vide Epist. Enchirid. c. 38, 77-79; et Arrian. 1. 2, c. 17, et 1. 3, c. 26; Antonin. 1. 3, s. 16, et 1. 4, s. 34, et 1. 10, s. 28; et Seneca, ep. 107.

179 Vide Epist. Enchirid. c. 38, 77-79; et Arrian. 1. 2, c. 17, et 1. 3, c. 26; Antonin. 1. 3, s. 16, et 1. 4, s. 34, et 1. 10, s. 28; et Seneca, ep. 107.

180 Nesciunt ergo homines quid velint, nisi illo momento quo volunt, in totum nulli velle ant nolle decretum est. — Seneca, ep. 20.

181 Unde nec illa necessitas formidanda est, etc. August. de Civ. Dei. 1. 5. c. 10.

the causes of things, as to withdraw some from, and put others under necessity; and among those which they would not have to be under necessity, they place our wills, lest they should not be free, if put under necessity:" and goes on to prove, that the will may be subject to some sort of necessity, without any disadvantage to it; so that in this he, with whom we agree in some respect, exceeded the stoics themselves.

(5.) It must be allowed, that much the same objections were made against the stoical destiny, as are made against the decree of election; and met with like success, and were refuted in much the same manner. As our opponents argue, that if a man is chosen to salvation, he need not be concerned about the means; whether he has them, and uses them, or not, he shall certainly be saved: but if he is not chosen to it, let him be never so careful and concerned about means, he shall not be saved. So the opposers of the stoics argued against them thus: "If it is thy fate that thou shalt recover of this disease, thou shalt recover whether thou makest use of a physician or not; but if thy fate is, that thou shalt not recover, whether thou usest a physician or not, thou shalt not recover. This argument, in Cicero, is represented agreeable to the philosophers, as *argov logov, ignava ratio, iners genus interrogationis*, an idle way of reasoning. Cicero observes, that if there was any thing in this argument, it would hold equally good if fate was never mentioned: his words are these: "You may change, and not use the word fate, and yet hold the same opinion, in this manner: If this was true from eternity, that thou shalt recover of this disease, thou shalt recover, whether thou usest a physician or not; but if this was false from eternity, that thou shalt recover of this disease, whether thou usest a physician or not, thou shalt not recover." And then proceeds to show in what manner Chrysippus, the stoic, answered and refuted this argument, by distinguishing things into *simplicia et copulata*; which are illustrated by the instances of *Ædipus* being begotten by *Laius*, and *Milo's* wrestling in the Olympic games; where he shows, that it is a mistake to suppose that it was destined that *Laius* should beget *Ædipus*, whether he had carnal knowledge of a woman or not; or that *Milo* should wrestle, whether he had an adversary to wrestle with or not;

116 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
for these things, he observes, are *confatalia*, equally included in fate: to which Cicero assents, and says, that in this way all captious arguments of this kind are refuted; and, upon the whole, Carneades himself, a violent opposer of the stoics, disapproved of this kind of reasoning, and thought the argument was too inconsiderately concluded, and therefore pressed Chrysippus in another way, and left off calumny.<sup>182</sup> In like manner we say, that “the means, sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, or faith, holiness, etc., are, to use Chrysippus’s phrase, *confatalia*, equally with the end included in the decree of election, as they are left out of the decree of reprobation;” and therefore pronounce it a captious and idle way of talking, to say, that if a man is elected to salvation, he shall be saved, whether he is sanctified or no, or whether he believes or no; and if he is not elected, he shall not be saved, let him be never so much concerned for faith and holiness. Again, it was objected to the stoics, that they made God the author of sin, and particularly by Plutarch<sup>183</sup> to Chrysippus, that, according to him, “there was no intemperance or fraud but what Jupiter was the author of:” and by others,<sup>184</sup> to the same stoic, “that if all things were moved and governed by fate, and could by no means be avoided, then the sins and transgressions of men were not to be ascribed to their own wills, but to a certain necessity which arises from fate, and is the governess of all things, by which that must needs be which shall be; and therefore the punishment of transgressions is unrighteously fixed by laws, if men do not willingly commit sin, but are drawn to it by fate.” To this Chrysippus answers, and the substance of his answers is this, “that though all things are connected with fate, yet the dispositions of our minds are only subject to it, agreeable to the property and quality of them: for if they are first wholesomely and profitably formed by nature, they more inoffensively and tractably get over all that force which extrinsically

182 *Nec nos impedit illa ignava ratio quae dicitur. Appellatur enim quidam a philosophis argov logov, cui sic pareamus, nihil est omnino, quod agamus in vita. Sic enim interrogant, si fatum tibi est, ex hoc morbo convalescere, sive medicum adhibueris, sire non convalesces, etc. — Cicero de Fato.*

183 *Vide Lips. Physiolog. Stoic. 1. 1. diss. 14.*

184 *Si Chrysippus, inquam, fato putat omnia moveri et regi, peccata quoque hominum et delicta non sustentanda neque concidenda sunt ipsis voluntatibusque eorum, sed necessitati cuidam et instantiae. etc. — Aul. Gell., Noct Attic. 1. 6, c. 2.*

comes upon them by fate; but if they are rough, ignorant, and uncultivated, and not assisted by the help of wholesome arts, though they may be moved by little or no force of fatal disadvantage, yet, through their own badness and voluntary impetus, fall into daily sins and mistakes.” This he exemplifies by the rolling of a stone down-hill; the man that pushes it gives it its first motion, but not its volubility; and its continuing to move downwards does not arise from him that first moved it, but from its own volubility. So, says he, the necessity of fate moves the kinds and principles of causes; but it is our own will that moderates, governs, and directs the counsels, determinations, and actions of our minds; and therefore<sup>185</sup> denies, “that such vile and wicked men are to be heard or borne with, who, when they are in fault, and convicted of a crime, fly to the necessity of fate, as to an asylum, and say, that what they have wickedly done is not to be ascribed to their own rashness, but to fate.” And then some lines in Homer<sup>186</sup> are mentioned, in which Jupiter is introduced complaining that men accused the gods of being the author of their evils, when their sorrows arose from their own wickedness. Now, from hence it appears, whatever mistakes there may be thought to be in this way of reasoning, they did not believe that God was the author of sin, or that the sins of men were to be ascribed to fate, but to the depravity of their wills; and that whatever distant concern fate had in these things, yet it did not excuse the wickedness of the actions of men, nor exempt them from punishment. This may be further illustrated by the instance of Zeno and his servant Zeno caught his servant playing the thief, and beat him for it. The fellow, agreeable to his master’s doctrine, as he thought, and in vindication of himself, says, that “he was destined by fate to steal.” “Yes,” replied Zeno, “and to be beaten too.”<sup>187</sup> When it is objected to us, that we make God the author of sin, we deny it, and clear ourselves, by distinguishing between the action and the disorder of it; for though God is concerned in all motion and action, for in him we live, move, and have our being; and he is the first cause and mover of all things: yet the ataxy, disorder, and

185 Propterea negat oportere ferri audiri que homines aut nequam, etc. Ib. vid. etiam Ciceronem de Fato.

186 Homer, *Odyss.* 1, lin. 22, 24.

187 Eimarto moi kleyai kai darhnai, efa. —Laert. 1. 7, iu Vita Zeno.

118 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
iniquity of any action, arise from ourselves, and our own corrupt wills and affections; and whatever concern we suppose the decrees of God have about sin, yet they do not excuse the wickedness of men, or exempt them from proper punishment: the same degree which permits sin, provides for the punishment of it.

(6.) How far soever the stoics carried their doctrine of fate or destiny, it is certain they never thought it had a tendency to looseness of life; nor does it appear to have had any such influence upon them; for, of all the sects of the philosophers, none were more addicted both to the love and practice of moral virtue, than this sect. The Manual of Epictetus, his Commentaries, digested by Arrianus, the writings of Seneca, and of the emperor Mark Antonine, do abundantly declare their strict regard to the worship of God, and the doing of justice among men. This made Josephus say,<sup>188</sup> that the sect of the Pharisees, which was the strictest sect among the Jews for morality and external holiness, was very much like to that of the stoics. It is, indeed, said<sup>189</sup> of Tiberius Nero, that he was more negligent of God and religion, being fully persuaded that all things were done by fate; but then the historian observes, that he was addicted to the mathematics; so that the fate he gave into was not the stoical fate, as asserted by the best writers of that sect, but the mathematical fate, which depended upon the influence of the stars. Now, of these things, in which we agree with them we are not ashamed; and what advantage our opponents are able to make of all this, I see not. But others of this sect, or the same writers, by either contradicting themselves, or one another, or as they have been understood by others, very greatly differ from us in their doctrine of fate or destiny, as when,

(1.) And as far as they agree with the Chaldeans and astrologers, who placed fate in the position and influence of the stars. The wiser sort of them, indeed, rejected the dreams and fables of judiciary astrology,<sup>190</sup> and were far from making fate wholly consist in these things; and yet it seems as though they were more or less included by

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188 Hfarisaiwn airesiv paraphsiov esti th par Ellhsi stoikh legomhnh Joseph, in vita sua.

189 Circa Deos et religiones negligentior, quippe addictus mathematica, persuasionisque plenus cuncta fato agi. Sueton. Tiber. Nero. c. 69.

190 Vide Cicer. de Divinatione, 1. 2.

them in their series and connection of causes, which they make fate to be; however, it is certain that the vulgar sort had no other notion of fate than this, which made Austin<sup>191</sup> say, that “when men hear fate spoken of according to the usual custom of speech, they understand nothing else but the influence of the position of the stars, such as it is when a man is born or conceived.” Now between this notion of fate, and our doctrine concerning God’s decrees, there is no manner of agreement. We deny any such influence of the stars which work by a necessity of nature upon the wills and actions of men; and therefore, when this was objected to the doctrine of grace, taught by the above writer, he answers,<sup>192</sup> “They that assert fate,” says he, “contend, that not only actions and events, but that our wills depend upon the position of the stars, at the time that a man is conceived or born, which they call constellations; but the grace of God not only exceeds all the stars, and all the heavens, but even all the angels. Moreover, the assertors of fate, ascribe both the good and evil things of men unto it; but God prosecutes the sinful demerits of men with their due reward, and gives good things with a merciful will, through undeserved grace; doing both, not according to the then present consort of the stars, but according to the high and eternal counsel of his severity and goodness; wherefore, we see, that neither belong to fate.”

(2.) When they make fate to be something distinct from the divine Being, something without him, and by which he himself is bound and governed, and which he cannot obstruct nor alter, such laws being put in the nature of things, that he cannot change. Seneca says,<sup>193</sup> “The same necessity binds both God and man, the irrevocable course equally carries things divine as human. The Maker and Governor of all things himself has, indeed, ordained the fates; yet follows them, and always obeys, having once commanded.” It is said,<sup>194</sup> that “it is not lawful for him to alter the connection, or

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191 August. de Civ. Dei, 1. 5, c. 1.

192 Fatum quippe qui affirmant, de siderum positione, etc. August. contr, duas epist. Pelag. 1. 2, c. 6.

193 Eadem necessitas et Deos alligat, etc. Seneca de Provid. c. 5.

194 Non illa Deo vertisse livet. Quae nexa suis currunt causis. Seneca, OEdipus, act. 5:chorus. Finxit in oeternum causas, etc. Lucan. Pharsal. 1. 2, c. 9, etc.



turn the course of causes, or go contrary to the laws which he has fixed, and by which he himself is bound; yea, that it is impossible for him to avoid the destined fate." So Jupiter is introduced in Homer,<sup>195</sup> complaining that he could not deliver his son Sarpedon from death, which was appointed by fate for him. But we say, that God's decree is within himself, and that whatever is in God, is God; and that his decree is nothing else but himself decreeing, which flows from his sovereign free good will and pleasure; and that whatsoever he does in heaven or in earth, he does freely, and as he pleases; and can, and does, when he thinks fit, interrupt, stop, or change the natural order and course of things; he can make the sun to stand still, stop the course of waters, and make them to stand up as a wall, hinder the burning of fire, open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys, make the wilderness a pool of water, and dry land springs of water. If indeed, they meant no more, than that God is immutable in his purposes, unalterable in his decrees, and will, stare decreto, stand by his decree, and never repent, *primum consilium*, of his first counsel and thoughts, as Seneca<sup>196</sup> says; we are of the same mind with them: but otherwise, as Lactantius<sup>197</sup> observes, "If such is the power of the destinies, that they can do more than all the celestial beings, than even the Lord and Governor himself, why may not they be rather said to rule, whose laws and statutes necessity obliges all the gods to obey?"

(3.) When they make fate to be a series of causes, whose connection is natural, or which are in their own nature fitly and unalterably joined and connected together; for according to Chrysippus,<sup>198</sup> "fate is a natural order or connection of all things from eternity, one following upon another, such being the complication of them, that it is entirely unalterable;" whereas we say, that all second causes are governed, directed, and disposed of by the will of God, and entirely

195 [106] *Thn pepwmenhn moirhn adunata esti apofugeein kai qew* Herodot. 1. 1, c. 91.

196 Homer, *Iliad*. 5. 16, l. 433, 434. *Hoc sentit Homeros cum queremus Jovem inducit, quod Sarpedouem filium a morte contra. fatum criperenon posset.* Cicero de *Divin*. 1. 2.

197 *Si parcarum tanta vis est, etc.* Lactant. de *Fals. Relig.* 1. 1, c. 11.

198 *Eimarmenhn fusikhn suntaxentwn wlon ex aidiou etc.* Chrysipp apud A. Gell. *Noct. Attic.* 1. 6, c. 2.



depend upon his free good will and pleasure; and that, when he pleases, he can break the chain and connection, and can act without them, besides them, and above them. The sentiments of the stoics in this respect, seem to have the nearest affinity with those of a certain generation of men who have lately risen up among us, who talk of the nature and fitness of things, by which God himself is bound, to which he conforms, and according to which he acts: though one would think, if this was the case, the nature and fitness of things should rather be called God, than he whom they call so.

(4.) When they assert, as Chrysippus does in the above definition, that fate is a series of all causes and things from everlasting; whereas, though we believe that whatsoever comes to pass, was known and determined by God from all eternity, and comes to pass in the way and manner, with, without, or besides second causes, just as he pleases; yet neither the things, nor their causes, nor the series of them, were from eternity, but arise and proceed in time, according to the eternal will of God.

(5.) When they seem to say, that all causes act naturally, and by their own natural strength produce their effects necessarily<sup>199</sup>, and so destroy all contingency in any sense: whereas we suppose, that as there are some causes which act naturally and necessarily, others are free, and produce their effects freely; others are contingent, and produce their effects contingently, in respect of themselves, though with respect to the decree of God they act necessarily.

(6.) When they intimate that the will of man may be forced, though this is sometimes strongly denied by them;<sup>200</sup> and, indeed, they talk much of free will, and say,<sup>201</sup> “A wise man does nothing unwillingly, and escapes necessity; but then it is, because he wills what she would otherwise force him to.” And even in that famous wish or prayer of the stoic Cleanthes<sup>202</sup> so often mentioned by

199 Quid fles? quid optas? perdis operam. Desine fata Deum flecti sperare precando. Rata et fixa sunt atque magna et aeterna necessitate ducuntur. Senec. epist. 77.

200 Vide Arrian. Epictet. 1 1, c. 6, 17, 19, & 1. 2, c. 2, 15, 17, 23, & 1. 3, c. 26.

201 Nihil invitus facit sapiens, necessitatem effugit, quia vult quod ipsa coactura est. Senec. ep. 54. [113] Nihil invitus facit sapiens, necessitatem effugit, quia vult quod ipsa coactura est. Senec. ep. 54.

202 Age de me me w zeu kai su h peprwmenh etc. Quod sic reddidit, Senec.

122 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
themselves and others, where, though he desires that fate and Jupiter would lead him to what he was ordained; yet observes, that “if he did not follow, whether he would or no, he must: for,” says he, “the fates lead him that is willing, and draw him that will not, that is, by force, whether he will or no.” Now we deny that the will of man, though it is in the ‘hand of the Lord, and is influenced and determined by his grace to that which is good, has any violence offered to it, or is forced and compelled unto it. But, supposing there was a greater likeness between our sentiments and those of the stoics concerning fate, why should it be thought so reproachful in us to agree with that sect of philosophers, when it is notorious, that in many things the Pelagians and Arminians agree with them? as will appear from the following hints. As,

(1.) When they<sup>203</sup> affirm it to be a mistake, that sin is born with us, or we in sin, or that it comes into the world with us; and say, that nature allures us to no vice; that we are born whole and free; that man is by nature led to that which is convenient and proper for him;<sup>204</sup> that nature has laid the foundation, and implanted seeds of virtue in man; that all are born unto it,<sup>205</sup> and that if we look within, there is a fountain of good, which would continually spring up, if we would but dig.<sup>206</sup> And do not the Pelagians and Arminians agree with them in these things, when they cry up the purity of human nature, and deny original sin? But, on the other hand, we, with the Scriptures, say (Ps. 51:5; Rom. 7:18; 3:10) that men are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin; and that in us, that is, in our flesh, dwells no good thing; and that there is none righteous, no, not one, of themselves.

(2.) When they talk of their *orqov logov*, *recta ratio*, right reason,

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ep. 107 *Duc me parens, celsique dominator poli, Quocunque placuit, nulla parendi mora est, Adsum impiger: fac nolle, comitator gemens, Ducunt volentem fata, nolentem trahunt, Malusque patiar, quod pati licuit bono.*

203 *Erras enim si existimas nobiscum vitia nasci, supervenerunt, ingesta sunt, etc. Senec. ep. 94.*

204 *Egw gar pefuka prov to emoi sumferon. Arrian. Epict. 1. 1, c. 22.*

205 *Omnibus naturam dedit, fundamenta semenque virtutem, etc. Senec. ep. 73 & 90.*

206 *Antonin. 1. 7. s. 59.*

and ascribe so much to it as they do. They say,<sup>207</sup> it is the nature of God, and the same in man as in God;<sup>208</sup> only with this difference, that it is in him consummate, in them consummable;<sup>209</sup> that to follow it, is the same as to follow God himself;<sup>210</sup> that it is implanted in nature to live according to it;<sup>211</sup> and that this completes man's happiness, yea, that this alone perfects a man, and alone makes him happy.<sup>212</sup> And do not the Pelagians and Arminians likewise extol it, as the rule of all doctrine and practice, and the measure of happiness?

(3.) When they speak so much concerning ta ef hmin,<sup>213</sup> the things that are in our power, and the free will of man. They say,<sup>214</sup> it is in a man's power to be sincere, grave, patient, without love of pleasure; to be content with one's state and condition, to want but little; to be meek, free, without luxury, serious, and sublime; to avoid our own wickedness; yea, to be wholly without any; to live well, to do no other but what God approves of, and cheerfully receive what he appoints. They affirm,<sup>215</sup> that both good and evil are in the power of man's will; that if he desires any good thing, he may have it from himself; and that such is the nature of his will, that God himself cannot conquer it; yea, they are bold to say, that God can do no more than a good man; and that there is something in which a wise man exceeds him; since he is wise, not of himself, but by the indulgence of nature. And in this Cicero himself seems to agree with them, when he says,<sup>216</sup> "No man ever looked upon himself obliged to God for virtue, and that very

207 Tiv oun ousia qeou nouv episthmh logov orov. — Arrian. Epict. 1. 2, c. 8.

208 Estin o orqov logov dia pantwn trecomenov o autov en tw dii. — Laert. in Zeno, 1.7.

209 Ratio vero diis hominibusque communis, haec in illis consummata est, in nobis consummabilis.—Senec, ep. 92.

210 Proseqiepiteutaion to esqai tw logw kai qew. — Antonin. 1. 12, s. 31.

211 To kata logon zhn orqwv gineqai toiv kata fusin — Laert. in Zeno, 1. 7.

212 Quid in homini proprium? Ratio. Haec recta et consummata felicitatem hominis implevit, etc. Senec. ep. 76. Vide Epict. Enchirid. c. 1, 2.

213 Antonin. 1. 5, s. 5, & 1. 7, s. 71, & 1. 8, s. 29, & 1. 11, s. 16, & 1. 12, s. 11.

214 Arrian. Epict. 1. 1, c. 25. Vide 1.4. c. 10. lb. c. 22, & c. 1.

215 Solebat Sextiusdicere, Jovem plus non posse quam bonum virum. Senec. s. 73. Est aliquid quo sapieas antecedit Deum. ille Naturae beneficio, non suo, sapiens est, lb. ep. 53.

216 Cicero de Natura Deor. 1. 3. prope finem.

124 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
rightly; we are justly praised for virtue and rightly glory in it, which could not be, if we esteemed it a gift of God, and not of ourselves. Did ever any man give thanks to God, that he was a good man? But that he was rich, or honored, or in health and in safety?" It is easy to observe, how near all this comes to the Pelagian and Arminian tenets; only these philosophers are, perhaps, somewhat more bold and free in expressing themselves than the Pelagians and Arminians are, though many of them have used great liberty of speech.

(4.) When they represent it as possible for a man to live without sin, and arrive to perfection. They say, that wise men are without sin, and cannot fall into it. Epictetus<sup>217</sup> used to say, that "if a man had but these two words at heart, and took care to observe and obey them, he should be, for the most part, impeccable, and live a most quiet life: the words were, bear and forbear." And, said another<sup>218</sup> of them, "It is now in my power, that there should not be any iniquity or lust, or any perturbation at all in this soul of mine." Zeno, the founder of the sect, in a letter to king Antigonus, tells him,<sup>219</sup> "that a good genius, with moderate exercise, and by the help of a candid preceptor, might easily attain to perfection of virtue." Now this entirely agrees with the notion of the Pelagians concerning impeccability and perfection, which they supposed persons might easily arrive to by the mere strength and power of nature, as appears from the writings of Augustin and Jerome; the latter of these observes<sup>220</sup>, that the Pelagians "embraced the poisons of all heretics; which, says he, flow from the fountain of the philosophers, and especially of Pythagoras and Zeno, the prince of the stoics; who assert, that by meditation, and the daily exercise of virtue, sin may be so extirpated out of the minds of men, that no root nor fiber of it may remain."

(5.) When they intimate that virtue may be lost. They are not all of them, indeed, agreed in this point. Chrysippus<sup>221</sup> was of opinion,

217 *Eti kai anamarthtouv to apiriptwseiv einai amarthmati.* Laert. 1. 7, in vita Zeno.

218 *Nun ep emoi estin*, etc. Antonin. 1. 8. s. 29.

219 *Fusiv de eugenhv metrian askhsin proslabousa epi te* Laert. 1. 7, in Zeno.

220 *Omnium haereticorum venena complecti*, etc. Hieron, adv. Pelag, tom. 2. p. 83, M.

221 *Kai men thn arethn Crusippov apoblhthn K;eanqhv ote anapoblhton*

that virtue might be lost. Cleanthes differed from him, and affirmed it could not be lost, but remained firm and constant. Seneca<sup>222</sup> seems to be of his mind, when he asserts, that virtue is natural, cannot be unlearned; being once received, never departs: the preservation of it is easy, and is a perpetual possession. But others of them incline to the opinion of Chrysippus, and suggest,<sup>223</sup> that modesty, meekness, integrity, etc. may be entirely destroyed. Upon the whole, it is certain, that there is a very great affinity between Pelagianism and the stoic philosophy; and it is more than probable, that the former took its rise from the latter. There is one expression of Seneca's, which is the very life and soul of Pelagianism; he says,<sup>224</sup> "There is one good thing, which is the cause and security of a blessed life, and that is, to trust to one's self." Pantaenus and Clemens of Alexandria were both addicted to the stoic philosophy, which led the latter especially to say many things which seem to favour free will. Origen greedily slicked it in, in the school of Alexandria, where the Christian religion received its first taint, or began to be corrupted; and this paved the way for the reception of the positions of Pelagius, when he published them in the world.

**XIII.** And lastly, it is objected,<sup>225</sup> "that our notions of liberty are contrary to the sense, and repugnant to the common reason of mankind, as will be evident by the rules laid down by them, who were guided only by the light of nature." To which I answer, our case is very hard indeed, for if we seem to agree with the stoics, who were governed only by the light of nature, we are reproached with holding a stoical fate, and charged with the absurdities of it. If we differ from them, we are cried out against as maintaining notions contrary to the sense and repugnant to the common reason of mankind; for, I observe, that the authors this writer refers to, by whom the rules were laid down he produces, were all, excepting Aristotle, of the stoic

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Laert. 1. 7. in Zeno.

222 Sed co majore animo ad emendationem nostri debemus accedere, quod semel traditi boni perpetua possessio est, etc. Senec. ep. 50.

223 Vide Arrian. Epict. 1. 1, c. 28, & 2, 10, & 4, 9.

224 Unum bonum est, quod beatæ vitæ. causa et firmamentum est, sibi fidere. Senec. ep. 31.

225 Whitby, p. 334; ed. 2, 325.

126 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER V  
sect, or inclined to it. And as for the rules themselves; as, “that a lawgiver must act absurdly to command what is impossible; that vice and virtue are in our own power, and are voluntary, otherwise not worthy of praise or dispraise, reward or punishment that it is no fault not to do that which we have no power to do; that what is natural to all men, cannot be evil; and that there can be no deliberation or consultation about things which are not in our power;” I say, as to these rules laid down, and which are objected to us, I have already considered them, and replied to them, so far as they concern the argument before us. What now remains is only to subjoin some arguments, proving that liberty does not consist in an indifference to good and evil; and that it is consistent with some kind of necessity, and a determination to one, and a vindication of them.

**I.** God is a most free agent, and liberty in him is in its utmost perfection, and yet does not lie in an indifference to good and evil; he has no freedom to that which is evil; he cannot commit iniquity, he cannot lie, or deny himself; his will is determined only to that which is good; he can do no other; he is the author of all good, and of that only; and what he does, he does freely, and yet necessarily. It is said,<sup>226</sup> that “this argument is vain, since he is in no state of trial, nor can he be tempted to do evil.” I reply, neither is man in a state of trial, as has been before shown; he may be, indeed, and is tempted to do evil; and there is a propensity in his nature, nay, he is only determined to it before a principle of grace is wrought in him; which shows that the liberty of his will lies in a determination to one. Moreover, since God cannot be tempted to evil, nor is it possible that he should ever commit it, it follows, that true liberty does not consist in an indifference to good and evil.

**II.** The human nature of Christ, or the man Christ Jesus, who, as he was born without sin, and lived without it all his days on earth; so was impeccable, could not sin. He lay under some kind of necessity, from the purpose of God, the command of God, the covenant between God and him, as well as from the purity of his nature, to fulfill all righteousness; and yet he did it most freely and voluntarily: which proves that the liberty of man’s will, in its greatest perfection,

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226 Whitby, p. 308; ed. 2. 300.

which is so in the man Christ Jesus, does not lie in equilibrio, in an indifference to good and evil, but is consistent with some kind of necessity, and with a determination to that which is good only. The objection to the former argument can have no force here, for though Christ was not in a state of trial, as men in common are not; yet he was liable to be tempted, and was tempted to evil, though he had no inclination to it, nor was it possible that he should be prevailed upon to commit it.

III. The good angels, holy and elect, who are confirmed in the state in which they are, and by the confirming grace of God are become impeccabile, cannot sin, or fall from that happy state; yet perform their whole obedience to God, do his will and work cheerfully and willingly. The freedom of their wills is not lost, nor in the least curtailed by their impeccability, confirmed state, and determination to take that which is only good. To say, "There was a time when they were not confirmed in goodness, as now they are, and have lost that liberty *ad utrumvis*, they then had,<sup>227</sup>" is more that can be proved; since, for aught we know, they might be confirmed in goodness from the original of their creation; and the reason why they fell not when others of the same species of creatures did, might be because they were thus confirmed, and the rest left to the weakness and mutability of creatures. I have, indeed, in the first part of this work, allowed the good angels to have been in a state of probation, antecedent to their confirmation, which I am now tempted to retract; but since we know so little of angels, I choose to be in suspense about it. When it is urged<sup>228</sup> that being thus confirmed, they are not in a state of trial; it must be replied, as before, nor is man. When it is said,<sup>229</sup> that they are not under any temptation to do evil, it is saying more than can be made good. But, suppose it true, as it is certain, that there is no propensity in them to sin, nor can they by any temptation be induced to it, it serves but to confirm what is contended for, that liberty, does not consist in an indifference to good and evil. When it is further asserted,<sup>230</sup> that their actions are not now rewardable, it is

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227 Whitby, p. 308; ed. 2. 300

228 Ibid.

229 Ibid.

230 Ibid.

nothing to the purpose, since this no ways affects the liberty of their actions; though I see not why their actions, which are taken notice of with commendation, may not be rewarded now by the grace of God.

**IV.** The devils and damned spirits have no inclination to, nor capacity of doing that which is good, but are wholly determined to that which is evil, and yet do all they do freely and voluntarily. It is true, they are not in a state of trial: no more are men. But to say,<sup>231</sup> they are not subject to any farther punishment for the evil they do, is not consistent with the justice of God, and the dreadful expectation of the devils themselves, who are not as yet in full torment.

**V.** The liberty of the will of man, in every state he has been, is, or shall be in, lies not in an indifference to good and evil. In his state of innocence, as he was made after the image, and in the likeness of God, so the bias of his soul was only to that which is good, which he performed willingly, in obedience to the will of God. In his fallen state, he is averse to all that is spiritually good, and is a slave to his sinful lusts and pleasures, is wholly set upon them, and given up to them; and yet serves and obeys them with the utmost willingness and freedom. In his regenerate state, there is, indeed, an inclination both to good and evil; but this arises from two different principles in the regenerate man. The new man, or principle of grace, is inclined, bent, and determined to that which is good only; and yet freely serves the law of God. The old man, or corrupt nature, is inclined, bent, and determined to that which is evil only; and yet freely serves the law of sin. In the state of glorification, the saints will be impeccable, cannot sin, can only do that which is good; and yet what they do, or will do, is and will be done with the utmost freedom and liberty of their wills, whence it follows, that the liberty of man's will does not lie in an indifference or indetermination to good or evil; but is consistent both with some kind of necessity, and a determination to one.

**VI.** If liberty is not consistent with necessity in any sense, then it is not consistent with the decrees of God, nor even with the foreknowledge of God, from whence must follow some kind of necessity, not, indeed, a necessity of coercion or force upon the will of man, but of event; for if there is not a necessity of the

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231 Ibid.



things coming to pass, which are foreknown and decreed by God, then his foreknowledge is uncertain, and is but mere supposition and conjecture, and his decrees must be frustrable and precarious. It is said <sup>232</sup>this “was of old the chief argument of the fatalists, espoused of late by Mr. Hobbes, and is still made the refuge of the predestinarians.” Be it so; if the fatalists and Mr. Hobbes meant no more by necessity than we do, namely, a necessity of the immutability and unfrustrableness of God’s foreknowledge and decrees, and not of coercion or force upon the will of man; we have no reason to be ashamed of the argument they made use of; and, instead of making it a refuge, or mere shift, shall think ourselves obliged to defend it, and abide by it.

## CHAPTER VI

### OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS

I now proceed to consider the arguments taken from reason, against the doctrine of the saints’ perseverance; to which will be added, those that proceed upon rational accounts, in favour of it; with a vindication of such as are excepted to. I shall begin with the arguments or objections against it. And,

I. It is objected,<sup>233</sup> that “this doctrine gives a great encouragement to those, who have once gotten an opinion that they are the children of God, to indulge themselves in the like iniquities (that is, such as Lot, David, Solomon, and Peter committed,) as being never able to separate them from the love of God.” To which may be replied, that though the sins committed by the persons mentioned, were of such a nature, that those who do the like, and die without repentance for them, and faith in the blood and sacrifice of Christ, have no inheritance in the kingdom of God and Christ; to which the law of Moses threatened death, without admission of any atonement by sacrifice, and the severest of God’s judgments; yet the persons of these men being high in the favour of God, remained so, when these sins of theirs were abominable in his sight, displeasing to him, and resented by him. He visited their transgression with a rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless his loving kindness he did not utterly, not at all, take from them, nor suffer his faithfulness

<sup>232</sup> Whitby, p. 371; ed. 2. 362.

<sup>233</sup> Whitby, p. 487; ed. 2.466.

to fail (Ps. 89:32, 33). These instances of the falls of good men are not recorded to encourage men in sin, but to caution against it, and to set forth the free, unchangeable, and everlasting love of God, in pardoning and accepting his people, notwithstanding their aggravated transgressions, and so to encourage souls distressed with sin. What use such persons may make of this doctrine, to indulge themselves in sin, who have only gotten an opinion that they are the children of God, I know not; however, I am sure, that those who are the children of God by faith, or who have reason to believe, and do believe that they are so, or who have received the spirit of adoption, witnessing their sonship to them, under the influence of that Spirit, neither can nor will make any such use of it. Nothing has a greater tendency to promote holiness of heart and life, than the absolute promises of God, respecting grace and glory, the assurance of adoption, the certainty of perseverance to the end, and the sure enjoyment of eternal life: and every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure (1 John 3:2, 3). The force of the prohibitions of sin, of exhortations to avoid it, and of cautions to resist and flee from temptations to commit it, is not abated by this doctrine of the saints' perseverance; seeing these things are made use of by the Spirit of God with great energy and power, as means in order to the thing itself. How preposterous and irrational must it be in a man who thinks himself to be a child of God, and believes he shall persevere to the end, from this consideration to indulge himself in all manner of sin, as if resolving that he will persevere no longer!

**II.** It is said,<sup>234</sup> that "this doctrine lessens the force of all the motives offered in the Scripture, to engage us to persevere in righteousness and goodness, and to have our fruit unto holiness, that the end may be eternal life." I answer; the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, and the absolute promises of God concerning their everlasting safety and happiness, are so far from lessening the force of Scripture motives to righteousness, that they are made use of in Scripture to encourage the saints to the practice of them, and to engage them to continue in them. The apostles did not judge it irrational to argue from them to this purpose; nor did they think that hope and fear were excluded by

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234 Whitby, p. 488; ed. 2.467.

them, when they reason after this manner: Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God (2 Cor. 7:1). Should it be asked what promises these were; they were such as these: I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people; and I will be a father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty (2 Cor. 6:16,18). So the apostle Peter, having asserted that the elect of God, and such as are begotten again through abundant mercy, are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, proceeds to exhort them to gird up the loins of their mind, to be sober, and hope to the end; and to pass the time of their sojourning here in fear (1 Pet. 1:2, 3, 5, 13, 17); not once imagining that the force of these exhortations was lessened or weakened by the doctrine he had before advanced; or that this left no room for hope and fear, and the proper exercise of them.

**III.** It is urged,<sup>235</sup> that “it seems not well consistent with the truth, righteousness, and holiness of God, to give an absolute promise of his favour, and the fruition of himself for ever, to any creature, though he fall into the sins aforementioned.” For God to give an absolute promise of his favour, and the fruition of himself for ever, can never be inconsistent with his truth, righteousness, and holiness. The seeming inconsistency lies in his giving such assurance to any of his creatures, though they fall into sin. That God has given an assurance of his everlasting favour and loving-kindness to his children, though they fall into sin, is certain. If his children, says he, forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes; nevertheless, my loving-kindness I will not take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips (Ps. 89:29-34). Though he sometimes chides his people in a providential way, and hides his face from them on account of their sins, yet with everlasting kindness will he have mercy on them. The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but his kindness

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235 Whitby, p. 488; ed. 2.467.

shall not depart from them, neither shall the covenant of his peace be removed (Isa. 54:8, 10). Nothing shall ever be able to separate from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom. 8:38, 39). Nor is this at all inconsistent with the truth, righteousness, and holiness of God, since the same covenant which gives this assurance, and contains these absolute promises, not only provides fatherly chastisements for sin, but a full and complete Saviour from it; who, by the sacrifice of himself, has made such an entire satisfaction for it, that the purity and holiness of God, in the abhorrence of sin, the truth of his threatenings against it, and his strict justice and righteousness in the punishment of it, are perfectly reconciled to the everlasting standing of these persons in the love and favour of God. As for the promises and declarations of the Old and New Testament concerning this point, they have been taken notice of in the two former parts of this work; and what was the sense of the ancient writers upon this head, will be considered in another. I shall only add a few arguments in favour of this doctrine. And,

**I.** It seems not agreeable to the perfections and attributes of God, that he should take any into his love and favour, show grace and mercy to them, send his Son to die for them, and his Spirit to begin a good work in them, if any of them should fall short of eternal glory and happiness. It would be contrary to his immutability, should he cease to love those whom he once loved, withhold his grace from them, and show no more mercy to them, let it be on what account soever: it would be contrary to his justice, to take satisfaction at the hands of his Son for their sins, and yet punish them eternally for them; and it would greatly reflect upon both his wisdom and power, to begin a work of grace upon the souls of any he does not go through with, and which does not spring up unto, and issue in eternal life.

**II.** That the saints should not persevere to the end, is not consistent with the purposes and counsels of God, which are absolute, unchangeable, and unfrustrable; for if God has chosen and appointed any unto salvation, and these should miscarry of it upon any account, he must be disappointed of his end; which disappointment must arise either from want of foresight of those things which obstruct the attaining of the end, or from want of power to accomplish it;

neither of which is to be once thought of him, whose understanding is infinite, and who is the Lord God Almighty.

III. The defectibility, or total and final apostasy of the saints, is contrary to the promises of God, which are absolute, unconditional, and all yea, and amen, in Christ Jesus; for if God has promised, as he certainly has, that he will put his fear into the hearts of his people, that they shall not depart from him, that they shall hold on their way, be preserved blameless to the coming of the Lord, and be eternally saved; and yet some of them at last eternally perish; the reason must be, either because he could not, or because he would not fulfill his promises: to say he could not fulfill his promises, is to impeach his wisdom in making them, and his omnipotence in not being able to keep them; to say he would not make them good, is to reflect upon his truth and faithfulness.

IV. The glory of Father, Son, and Spirit, is greatly concerned in the final perseverance of the saints. Should any of them come short of eternal happiness, the glory of the Father in election, the Son in redemption, and of the Spirit in sanctification, would be entirely lost; for the purpose of God, according to election, would not stand; the price of Christ's blood would be paid and the purchase by it made in vain, and the work of grace upon the soul come to nothing; and consequently, Jehovah must be frustrated of his grand and ultimate end in choosing, redeeming, and sanctifying persons, even his own glory, which is not reasonable to suppose.

V. That the saints may totally and finally fall away from grace, is obstructive of the peace and comfort of believers, impairs their humble confidence in God, and fills them with continual fear and dread of falling from their happy state. To this last argument, many things are excepted; as,

I. In general,<sup>236</sup> that "the doctrine of the saints apostasy truly teacheth, with the holy Scriptures, that a well-grounded peace is the fruit of righteousness; that all true peace and comfort arise from the testimony of an upright conscience: that then only have we ground of confidence with God, when our heart doth not condemn us of willfully departing from him; that we ought to work out our salvation

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236 Whitby, p. 482; ed. 2.461.

with fear and trembling, and to pass the time of our sojourning here in fear; and that happy is the man that feareth always, with the fear of caution, which renders him more watchful against sin.” To which I reply, that a well-grounded peace is, indeed, the fruit of righteousness; but not of our own, which is polluted and imperfect, but of Christ’s; for, being justified by faith in his righteousness, which for ever secures from all condemnation, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 5:1). True peace and comfort do not arise from the testimony of conscience, which, being thought to be upright, speaks a false peace; but from the blood of Christ, by which the heart (Heb. 10:22) is sprinkled from an evil conscience, and though then have we confidence towards God when our hearts do not condemn us; yet our confidence in him does not arise from the non-condemnation of our hearts, but from the freedom from condemnation which we apprehend we have through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of the Son of God. The fear which the Scriptures referred to speak of, is not a fear and dread of falling from a state of grace, and into hell-fire and everlasting damnation; but a holy, filial, reverential fear of the Divine Majesty, which is consistent with an humble dependence upon him, strong confidence in him, full assurance of his favour, and of final perseverance in grace.

2. It is objected<sup>237</sup> more particularly, that “a doctrine is not therefore true, because it is comfortable, if it be liable to just exceptions on other accounts; for very comfortable was the doctrine of the rabbins to the Jews; of Simon Magus, and the Valentinians, to their followers; and of Antinomians and other Solifidians to men of carnal minds; but very opposite to and destructive of the doctrine which is according to godliness.” I reply, As to the doctrine of the Jewish rabbins, Simon Magus, and the Valentinians, I have nothing to say in the defense of; but as to those who are reproachfully called Antinomians and Solifidians, who, with the apostle, assert (Rom. 3:28), that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law; I know of no doctrines they hold which are opposite to and destructive of that which is according to godliness. However, let it be observed, that our argument does not proceed upon the comfortableness of

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237 Whitby, p. 483; ed. 2.462.

the doctrine we plead for, but upon the uncomfortableness of the opposite to it; for though a doctrine may not be true, which is seemingly comfortable to a carnal mind; yet that doctrine is certainly not true, which is really uncomfortable to a sanctified heart, or which manifestly breaks in upon the true peace and comfort of a believer, as the doctrine of the saints' falling away from grace evidently does.

3. It is said<sup>238</sup> that "a possibility of falling into a very great evil, though it be such an one into which I see daily others fall, and to which I may be obnoxious, creates no trouble or anxiety to any man, provided he knows he cannot fall into it, unless he will and chooseth so to do: and unless he acts contrary to all the rules of reason and discretion, and the strongest motives and sufficient means vouchsafed to avoid it." I answer: that if the evil is of such a nature, as threatens at once an entire deprivation of the grace of God, and a total and final apostasy from him, of which there is a possibility of a man's falling into, which he sees others fall into, and he himself is obnoxious to; it must needs create great trouble and anxiety in one sensible of the weakness of human nature, the strength of temptation, and the insufficiency of moral suasion; if his preservation from it depends upon his own fickle and mutable will, and the power of it, and his conformity to the rules of reason and discretion, under the influence of that; notwithstanding all the motives and means vouchsafed to avoid it; whereas, on the other hand, though there is a possibility of falling into such an evil, through the corruption of nature, and the temptation of Satan yet if preservation from it is secured by the power of God, which is promised to be engaged, and is engaged for that purpose, it creates no trouble and anxiety; though it puts a man upon the diligent use of those means, which, by the will of God, are signified to him, and which the power of God makes use of to that end.

4. It is observed, that this doctrine of the impossibility of saints falling finally from grace, cannot be truly comfortable, for two signal reasons.<sup>239</sup>

(1.) "Because though it seems comfortable to a man, who thinks himself a good Christian, to believe he ever shall continue so; yet

238 Whitby, p. 483, 484; ed. 2.462, 463.

239 Whitby, p. 483, 484; ed. 2.462, 463.



the reverse of this doctrine is as uncomfortable, namely, that he who does not so continue to the end, let him have been never so fruitful in the works of righteousness, or in the labour of love, or in religious duties, or in a zeal for God and goodness, was never better than an hypocrite." To which may be replied, it is certain that such who have made a profession of religion, and drop it, and do not continue to the end, appear to be hypocrites, formal professors, and such who never received the grace of God in truth; yet it will not be easy to prove that ever any, fruitful in the works of righteousness, which I think a man cannot be without the grace of God, did not continue to the end, or ever proved an hypocrite; nor has such an one who acts from an internal principle of grace, any reason to doubt either of his sincerity or of his continuance in the way of righteousness; for though he cannot prove the truth of his faith by better works than an hypocrite may do in show, yet he is conscious to himself of inward principles of love to God, and regard to his glory, from whence he acts which an hypocrite is an utter stranger to. It is, indeed, uncomfortable for a man to doubt either of his sincerity, or of his continuance in the way of righteousness, and a true believer may be left to doubt of both, and yet his final perseverance be certain; which does not depend upon his frames, but the power of God, the consideration of which may yield him relief and comfort, when the contrary doctrine must be distressing.

(2.) "Let men hold what doctrines they please, yet, as it is with them who question providence and a future judgment, their impious persuasions cannot remove their fears, arising from the dictates of a natural conscience; so neither can men's theological persuasions remove the fears and doubtings, which do as naturally arise from the dictates of a conscience "enlightened by the word of God." We are obliged to this writer, for the kind and good-natured comparison he makes between us and the disputers of providence and a future judgment; between their impious persuasions concerning these things, and our theological ones, as he calls them, about the doctrine of perseverance; and between their fears arising from the dictates of a natural conscience, and those of others, arising from the dictates of an enlightened one. Though it should be observed, that the doubts



and fears of believers concerning falling from grace, do not arise from the dictates of a conscience enlightened by the word, but rather from a conscience darkened by sin, and loaded with the guilt of it, upon which a wrong judgment is formed of their state and condition. A believer may fall into sin, and conscience may pronounce him guilty of it, and condemn him for it, whereby his peace may be broken, and his comfort lost; which are restored, not by sincere repentance, removing the guilt, as is intimated; but by application of the blood of Christ, which speaks peace, yields comfort, and encourages confidence in God, notwithstanding all the condemnations of his heart and conscience. It is in this way he only desires to have peace and comfort; nor does the word of God deny it him this way, but gives it and receives it, though his heart cannot afford it, but suggests the contrary; for if our heart condemn us; God is greater than our heart, and knows all things (1 John 3:20). And though a believer may lose the comfort of the divine favour, when his interest in it remains firm and inviolable: yet his loss of comfort does not necessarily cut off his assurance of being a child of God, and of his perseverance to the end; nor has he any reason, upon every fall into sin and condemnation of conscience for it, to suspect his fall from grace, and the truth of his sincerity; nor does this doctrine of perseverance make men less careful, but more so, to avoid all willful violations of the law; nor less speedy, but more so, in their application to the blood of Christ, for pardon and cleansing, in the exercise of faith and repentance, and in the performance of every religious duty; since these are means of their holding out and persevering to the end.

## **CHAPTER VII**

### **OF THE PRESCIENCE AND PROVIDENCE OF GOD.**

In the controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians, concerning the decrees of election and reprobation, the freedom of man's will, and the specialty of God's grace, it is observed by the former, that many of the arguments of the latter seem as strongly to conclude against God's foreknowledge of future contingencies, as against his absolute decrees; that what is said in favour of the freedom of men's wills, and against the determination of them by a divine influence, weakens the providence of God; and that the case of the

heathens being left without a revelation, cannot well be reconciled to the doctrines of universal grace and general redemption. The learned writer attended to, proposes, in his sixth Discourse, and answer to these three objections, which he easily saw lay against the doctrines he had asserted in his former discourses, and the arguments by which he endeavored to confirm them, which I shall consider and reply to in this and the following chapter. And,

I. It must be, and is generally allowed, that God had, from eternity, a prescience or foreknowledge of all future events; of all future contingencies, even of the free actions of men's wills; of every thing that should be done in time, to the end of the world, and to all eternity. He foreknew what all men would do, or would not do; who would believe and repent, and who would not; and who would perish, and who would be eternally saved: which foreknowledge is not conjectural, uncertain, and precarious, but is real, certain, and infallible; whence it must follow, that whatsoever arguments are advanced upon the attributes of God, his wisdom, justice, holiness, truth, sincerity, goodness, and mercy, or upon the methods and dealings of God with the sons of men, against the absolute decrees of God, are as much opposed unto, and lie as strongly against, the foreknowledge of God; since that as much requires the certainty, and secures the infallibility, of the event, as his absolute decrees do; otherwise his foreknowledge would not be knowledge, but conjecture. The answer to this is,<sup>240</sup>

I. "That though this argument be offered in favour of the decrees of absolute election and reprobation, yet doth it plainly overthrow them, or render them superfluous; for be it, that these decrees were made from eternity; yet seeing that God's foreknowledge of the events of all men was also from eternity, must he not know what was the condition of , all men when he made these decrees? And what need then would there be of a decree for that event, which was infallible by virtue of his foreknowledge, without that decree?" To which I reply, that the foreknowledge of God is so far from overthrowing or rendering superfluous the decrees of God, that the decrees of God are the foundation of his foreknowledge of future

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240 Whitby, p. 491; ed. 2.407.

events; for he foresees and foreknows all things that come to pass in himself, in his own will, and the decrees of it. The reason why God decrees this or the other thing, is not because he foreknew they would be, whether he decreed them or not; but he foreknew they would be, because he decreed they should be. God foreknows all things possible in his own power, and all things future in his own will, and the determinations of it; he willed things, and then knew what he willed; though there is neither first nor last in God, yet we are obliged to consider one thing after another. God's decrees are not to be conceived of without his knowledge, nor his knowledge without his decrees; wherefore it follows, that God's foreknowledge does not avert or render his decrees superfluous, nor do his decrees destroy his foreknowledge, or render that insignificant; of the two, the latter might rather be supposed, though it ought not by any means, since God's foreknowledge of future events necessarily arises from himself, his will, and the decrees of it, and are strictly, closely, and inseparably connected with them.

2. It is said,<sup>241</sup> that "this argument is obnoxious to these dreadful consequences, that it plainly renders God the author of sin; and prescience thus stated must be attended with a fatal necessity." To which may be replied, that the foreknowledge of God can never reasonably be thought to make him the author of sin, when even the decrees of God, respecting sinful actions, from whence his foreknowledge of sin arises, and upon which it is founded, do not make him so. God determined the selling of Joseph into Egypt, the betraying of Christ by Judas, and the crucifixion of him by the Jews, and yet was the author of neither of them. Nay, should it be allowed what is suggested,<sup>242</sup> that "to say God only doth foresee things future, because he hath decreed they should be so, is to say God moves and predetermines the wills of men to those things which are evil;" though I think the difference is very wide between God's decrees of future events, within himself from eternity, and his motions and predeterminations of the wills of men to any actions in time. But supposing such motions and determinations of the wills of men to that which is evil, since he moved David to number the people,

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. p. 492; ed. 2.470, 471.

<sup>242</sup> Whitby, p. 492; ed. 2.470, 471.

and put it into the hearts of the kings of the earth to fulfil his will, and to agree to give their kingdom to the beast (2 Sam. 24:1; Rev. 17:17); even these do not make God the author of sin; for the divine predetermination, motion, and providential concurrence respecting men, do not at all alter the liberty of the will; men, under them, feel no power or force upon them: they freely will, and voluntarily do what they do; of which not God, but they, are the authors. If, therefore, neither the predeterminations of the wills of men in time, nor the decrees of God from eternity, make him the author of sin, much less his foreknowledge. God foreknew that Adam would fall, as Christ did that Judas would betray him, for he told him of it beforehand; and yet God was no more the author of sin and fall of Adam, than Christ was of betraying by Judas; nor did either Adam or Judas feel any force or constraint from this foreknowledge, obliging them to sin; nor do they ever complain of it, or impute their sin and fall unto it. Prescience, thus stated, introduces no fatal necessity: it is, indeed, attended with a necessity of infallibility respecting the event; but not with a coactive necessity upon the wills of men, which are left hereby entirely free, and so they find themselves in the commission of every action; neither the decree of God, nor his foreknowledge, necessitate men, or oblige and compel them to do the things decreed and foreknown; nevertheless, whatever is decreed and foreknown by God, is certainly, infallibly, and immutably brought to pass, according to his will.

3. It is urged<sup>243</sup> “that if there were any strength in this argument, it would prove that we should not deny the liberty supposed in all the arguments used against these decrees, but rather, prescience itself; for if those two things were really inconsistent, and one of them must be denied, the introducing an absolute necessity of all our actions, which evidently destroys all religion and morality, would tend more, of the two, to the dishonor of God, than the denying him a foreknowledge.” It is easy to observe, that this author was rather disposed to deny the foreknowledge of God, than to part with his favourite notion concerning the liberty of man’s will lying in an indifferency to good and evil, and as opposed to any sort of necessity. Socinians, upon

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243 Whitby, p. 493; ed. 2.471, 472.

this principle, have come into a denial of it; and the Arminians have shown a good inclination to it. Their champion, John Goodwin,<sup>244</sup> has roundly declared, that “there is no foreknowledge, properly so called, in God.” This has been always the way of these men, that, if their notions would not comport with the being and perfections of God, they will shape God and his perfections agreeable to their notions. Though it may be a considerable difficulty to reconcile the prescience of God and the liberty of man’s will, yet there is no need to deny either of them: not the natural liberty of the will; this would be to destroy the will itself, which liberty is no ways infringed either by the foreknowledge or decrees of God, though the moral liberty of the will, since the fall, without the grace of God, must be denied; nor the prescience of God, which introduces no such necessity of our actions, which destroys religion and morality, or tends to the dishonor of God, since it puts no coercive necessity upon us, but leaves us free to the commission of our actions; for to deny this perfection of God, would be to deny God himself; and, one should think, if either of these must be denied, it would be more eligible to deny man what may be thought to belong to him, than to deny that which so evidently belongs to God.

4. It is observed,<sup>245</sup> “that if these decretalists may take sanctuary in the foreknowledge God hath of things future, the Hobbists and the fatalists may do the same; that the Hobbists do found their doctrine of necessity upon the ninth chapter to the Romans, and the fatalists upon the certainty of divine prescience and predictions; and that it was the fear of this, that the liberty of man’s will could not be preserved, which made the Greeks embrace this impious doctrine, that God did not foreknow things future and contingent: whereas it is said from Le Blanc, that the truest resolution of this difficulty is, that prescience is not the cause that things are future; but their being future, is the cause they are foreseen.” I reply; that if the sentiments of the Hobbists and fatalists were the same with those who are called decretalists, they might justly take, what this author styles, sanctuary in the foreknowledge of God; or, in other words, rightly make use of it in favour of their principles. But it has already

244 Redemption Redeemed, c. 3, s. 2, p. 29.

245 Whitby, p. 493-495; ed. 2.472-474.

been made to appear, that the opinions of these men do not agree with our doctrines concerning the decrees of God, and the liberty of man's will; nor have the same countenance from the prescience of God that ours have. Though Mr. Hobbs makes use of some passages in the ninth chapter to the Romans, it is to prove what cannot be proved by them, and which we deny, namely, "that God, the will and decrees of God, necessitate men to sin." So far as the stoical fate can be thought to agree with our doctrine concerning the decrees of God, they might rightly improve the doctrine of prescience in favour of it. Cicero denied the prescience of God, which the stoics, doubtless, had some notion of: though it does not appear, from the passage referred to in him, that they founded their doctrine of fate upon the certainty of it; but rather, as abundantly appears from their writings, upon the fixed and unalterable nature of things. Cicero is arguing against the definition his brother Quintus had given of divination, that it was *rerum fortuitarum presensio*, a foresight or pre-apprehension of fortuitous events, after this manner:<sup>246</sup> "Nothing, says he, is so contrary to reason and constancy, as fortune; that to me, it does not seem even to belong to God, to know what shall be by chance and fortune; for if he knows certainly, it will come to pass, and if it will certainly come to pass there is no such thing as fortune; but there is fortune, therefore there is no foresight of fortuitous events; or if you deny that there is fortune, and say that all things which are, or shall be, were from all eternity fatally determined; change the definition of divination, which you said is a foresight of fortuitous events; for if nothing can be done, nothing happen, nothing come to pass, but was certain from all eternity should be in the fixed time, what fortune can there be? which being removed, what room is there for divination? which is said by you to be a foresight of fortuitous events." The Greeks, it seems, upon the same principle on which the Socinians and others since have proceeded, fearing lest the liberty of man's will could not be preserved, embraced this impious opinion, "that God did not foreknow things future and contingent;" whereas it is said with Origen, it must be owned, "not that God's prescience is the cause of things future, but that their being future is the cause

<sup>246</sup> Nihil est enim tam contrarium rationi et constatae, quam fortuna, etc.

of God's prescience, that they will be." And this, saith Le Blanc, is the truest resolution of this difficulty, "that prescience is not the cause that things are future; but their being future is the cause they are foreseen." Which, so far, is very right; but then what is it that gives these things their futurity? Nothing less than the will of God, and his decrees, from whence the foreknowledge of them arises. For, as it is the power of God that gives possibility to things possible, it is the will of God that gives futurity to things that shall be. Nothing that is in time can give futurity to things in eternity: for the futurity of things was from all eternity, or all things which are or shall be in time, were future from all eternity; which futurity could arise from nothing else but the will and decrees of God, which of things possible made them future. Now whatsoever God has determined shall come to pass, he certainly foreknows will come to pass; wherefore it is as absolutely necessary that whatsoever God foreknows will be, should be, as it is that what he has decreed shall come to pass, should. Hence it follows, that whatever arguments lie against the absolute decrees of God, lie against the prescience of God and the certainty of it.

5. It is further<sup>247</sup> observed, that "God's prescience hath no influence at all upon our actions." It is true, it has no casual influence upon the actions of men, nor lays any coactive necessity upon them to perform them, nor at all impairs the freedom of them; no more do the decrees of God. There is no need of the plain reasoning of Mr. Hobbes, or the more nice and subtle argumentation of Mr. Baxter, to prove this. But then, though neither the foreknowledge of God, nor the decrees of God, have any casual influence upon the actions of men nor do they lay any compulsive necessity upon men, nor in the least impair the freedom of their actions; yet the latter are the cause of the futurity of such and such actions, and the reason of God's foreknowledge of them as future, and both lay a necessity of infallibility upon them with respect to the event; that is to say, make it necessary that the things determined and foreknown, should certainly come to pass, though every thing in its own way; necessary actions, necessarily; free actions, freely; and contingent ones, contingently; yet all certainly. Neither the decrees of God, nor

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247 Whitby, p. 495; ed. 2.474.



the foreknowledge of God, put anything in men; nor is there that signal difference between them, as is suggested:<sup>248</sup> a difference there is between them, the one belonging to his understanding, the other to his will; and so the one can be no more deceived, than the other can be frustrated: but not as is intimated; the decrees of God are no more active and powerful, and lay no more a necessity on our actions, than his foreknowledge. The decrees of God, indeed, include both end and means; and God sees both in the determinations of his will. In the decree of election, God determines to give both grace and glory to the objects of it, and it is a preparation of both for them; but puts neither in them, or them into the possession of either of them; and God, in his infinite knowledge, sees the preparation of both in the determinations of his will, and foresees that both will be certainly bestowed upon them. In the decree of reprobation, God determines to deny both grace and glory to the objects of it; but then this decree is not active, or it does not put anything in man to render him deficient or sinful of necessity, but leaves him as it finds him; and God, in his infinite knowledge, sees this denial of both to them in the determinations of his will, and foresees and foreknows that neither of them will be bestowed upon them. Thus the decrees of God and his foreknowledge go hand in hand together, and exactly agree with each other.

6. It is said,<sup>249</sup> “that God’s knowledge reaches not only τα μελλοντα to future contingencies; but also τα δυνατα, future possibilities; namely, he knows that such things may be, though they never will be; that I might will and do, what I neither do nor will; and abstain from that I do not abstain from; and that I will this, when I might will the contrary.” I reply; future possibilities I do not understand: whatsoever is possible, may be, and it may not be; but what is future, shall be, and so not barely possible, but certain. A future possibility seems to be a contradiction, as is the instance of one of these future possibilities, namely, “that he (God) knows that such things may be, though they never be?” For, how can he know they may be, though they never will be? when, if they never will be, he must know they never will be, and therefore cannot know that

<sup>248</sup> Whitby. p. 496; ed. 2.475.

<sup>249</sup> Ibid. p. 497; ed. 2.476.



they may be. He knows whatever is possible for himself to do, that is, he knows what his power can do, as well as what his will determines to do, or shall be done: the former is called possible, the latter future; and God's knowledge reaches to both: but then, every thing that is possible, is not future; all that God knows might be accomplished by his power, he has not determined that it shall be: and whatsoever is future, ceases to be barely possible. God also knows what is possible for man to do, that he might will and do this, and abstain from that, when he does neither; that is, he knows that he has a power to will, do, and abstain. These future possibilities, as they are called, which men may do, and may not do, are no other than future contingencies: which are so not with respect to God, but with respect to men; for it cannot be said of God, that he knows that so it may be, that man may will or do this, or abstain from that, which he knows he never will do or abstain from; or that so it may be, that he may not do what he knows he will do: for then those puzzling inquiries must be made, how can God certainly know I will do, what he sees I may not do? or how can that be certainly known, which neither in itself, nor in its causes, hath any certain being, but may as well not be, or not be done, as be, or be done?" Which brings this author,

7. To observe,<sup>250</sup> "that this argument only opposeth a great difficulty, arising from a mode of knowledge in God, of which we have no idea, against all the plain declarations of his revealed will, produced in great abundance, against the imaginary decrees which men have imposed upon God without just ground." To which I reply: that the mode of knowledge in God is such indeed, that we can have no adequate idea of, nor have we of God himself, of the modus of his being, subsistence, or any of his perfections; but then the thing itself is certain, that God has a foreknowledge of future contingencies, as is evident from the word of God, which ascribes it to him: from the many predictions of contingent events in it; from the infinite perfection of God, his complete happiness, and the immutability and infinity of his understanding; and therefore we may be allowed to advance an argument upon it in this controversy, though we do not use it, and are far from using it, against the plain declarations

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250 Whitby, p. 498; ed. 2.477.

of God's revealed will. In the first Part of this work, I have shown, that there are no declarations of God's revealed will against the decrees of election and reprobation, which are called imaginary ones; and in the second Part of it, that there are many declarations and testimonies of Scripture in favour of them: so that they are not what men have imposed upon God, nor do they depend on a single argument founded upon the foreknowledge of God.

II. That the world is made by the power, and governed by the providence of God, none but Atheists and Epicures will deny. Now much of the providence of God lies in the government of men, in moving of their wills, and ordering of their actions, to bring about his great designs and his own glory. For, as he has made all things for himself, for his own glory, so he orders and disposes all things to answer to that end. The Lord looketh from heaven, he beholdeth all the sons of men, from the place of his habitation, he looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth, he fashioneth their hearts alike he considereth all their works (Ps. 33:13, 15). And as he has made and fashioned the hearts of all men, it is as certain that the hearts of all men are under his government; he can move, influence, and determine them to this and the other action at his pleasure, without offering any violence to them; for not only the king's heart, but every other man's, is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will (Prov. 21:1). God has not made a creature that he cannot govern, or possessed man of a will that is independent of his own. If man was in such sense a free agent, or lord paramount of his own will, or had such an *αυτεξουσιον*, such a power over himself, as not to admit any divine motion, influence, or predetermination of his will, a very considerable branch of providence is lost, and God is shut out from having any concern in the most considerable affairs and events of this lower world; or as the learned writer attended to has stated our objection,<sup>251</sup> "this doctrine must weaken the providence of God; for if he doth not order and effectually move the wills of men, he cannot compass the designs of providence." To which several answers are returned: as,

I. That<sup>252</sup> "this objection will receive the shorter answer, because

<sup>251</sup> Whitby, p 505; ed. 2.483.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.; ed. 2.484.

it falls into this great absurdity,” that “it makes God as much the author of all the evil, as of all the good that is done in the world.” To which may be replied; that the providence of God has for its object evil actions as well as good, or God’s providential concurrence attends sinful actions, though not as such, as well as good; and that God orders and moves the wills of men to each, must be allowed; since he moved David to number the people, and put it into the hearts of the kings “of the earth to fulfill his, will, and give their kingdoms to the beast. But then this does not make him as much the author of all the evil as of all the good that is done in the world; for God, when he moves and influences the wills of men to that which is good, puts his own grace and goodness into them, or stirs up and excites what he had put there before; and not only his providential concurrence attends and assists in the performance of the action as natural, but his grace is concerned in the goodness of it, and attends and assists in the performance of it as a good one; for it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure; whereas when he moves the wills of men to evil actions, he puts no sinfulness into them, only leaves them to the sinfulness he finds, and moves the natural faculty of the will to these actions, not as sinful, but as natural; and his providential concurrence only attends and assists in the performance of the action as natural, and is no ways concerned in the vitiosity of it: whence it follows, that since God puts no sinfulness in men, nor moves them to sinful actions as such, nor does his providential concurrence assist in the performance of them as such, he cannot be at all, in any sense, the author of sin; as has been fully made to appear by that learned and excellent writer Theophilus Gale, in his *Court of the Gentiles*, Part 4, Book 3, Of divine Predetermination; which is well worth the reader’s consulting.

2. The more particular answer is<sup>253</sup>, that “these things seem only necessary to accomplish all the designs of providence; that God hath a perfect prospect of the events of all actions, as well of those which proceed from the free-will of man, as of those which issue from natural causes; —that he hath infinite Wisdom to direct these actions to their proper ends; —that he hath power to restrain from

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253 *Ibid.* p. 506; ed. 2.485.

the execution of those purposes which would thwart the designs of his providence, —without laying any force or necessity upon the wills of men.” To which I reply; that the things mentioned are necessary to accomplish the designs of providence will be allowed, but not that they are only so; for the perfect prospect or foresight which God has of all actions and their events, arises from the determinations of his will that they shall be; wherefore it is not proper that they should be left, nor are they left, to depend upon the will of man, whether they shall be, or shall not be. Hence it is necessary, that as God has the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them as he pleases, he should move, influence, and predetermine the wills of men to such and such actions; and that the concurrence of his providence should attend the performance of them, which he has willed shall be, in order to accomplish his designs; which motions, influences, and predeterminations of God, may be, and are, without laying any compulsive necessity or force upon the wills of men, with respect either to good or evil actions. David, though moved to it, freely numbered the people; and the kings of the earth, though it was put into their hearts to give, yet did voluntarily give their kingdoms to the beast; so all good actions which men are moved and influenced to, and assisted in, by the grace of God, are yet freely and voluntarily performed.

3. It is said,<sup>254</sup> “though this argument from providence doth not concern us (the Arminians) in the least; yet it seems evidently to overthrow the contrary doctrine: for, what answer can they return to these inquiries?”

(1.) “Is it consistent with the justice of providence to wrap up all men’s fate in that of Adam’s?” I reply, it highly concerns all that have a regard to the doctrine of providence, that it is not in the least curtailed or weakened in any part or branch of it; which it seems to be, by exempting the actions which spring from the free will of man, from divine influx and predetermination; nor are we in any pain lest our doctrine should be overthrown by it; nor are we at a loss to return an answer to the enquiries made, and to this in the first place. For by the fate of all men, is either meant their state of happiness or misery in the

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254 Whitby, p. 507; ed. 2.485.

other world to all eternity; and then it must be replied, that all men's fate is not wrapt up in Adam's; some being saved, as it is reasonable to suppose Adam is; and others lost, when he is not; or, by the fate of all men, is meant their passing under a sentence of condemnation in Adam, whereby they became liable to everlasting punishment. This can never be inconsistent with the justice of providence, that such who sinned in Adam should die in him. If it was consistent with the justice of providence, that if Adam had continued righteous, he having all human nature in him, his posterity would have partook of all the blessings and privileges arising from his continuance in such a state, it cannot be inconsistent with it, that all mankind being in him, both as their common root and parent, and as their federal head, and representative, and so sinning in him, should be involved in all the miseries and consequences of his fall. If it was consistent with the justice of providence, to visit the iniquities of the fathers upon the children, to the third and fourth generation of them that hate the Lord; it cannot be inconsistent with it to visit the sin of Adam upon all his posterity, their carnal minds being enmity against God. As for Adam's repentance being made ours, as his sin is, and we be restored by it to the grace and favour of God, as we became the objects of his wrath by his sin; there is this reason lies against it, the justice of God; which was so far from admitting Adam's repentance to be satisfactory on the account of his posterity, that it would not admit of it as such upon his own account; wherefore God reveals his Son, and the satisfaction to law and justice he had provided in him, the seed of the woman, that should bruise the serpent's head.

(2.) "Is<sup>255</sup> it not one great part of providence, to give men laws for the direction of their actions, prescribing what he would have men do, and leave undone; and that under a promise of reward to the obedient, and a declaration, that he will certainly and severely punish the willful and impenitent offender? Now, do not they destroy both the justice and wisdom of this providence, who introduce God, after the fall, giving laws positive and negative for the direction of his (man's) actions, with threats of the severest and most lasting punishments, if he neglect to do what is required, and to avoid what is forbidden;

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255 Whitby, p. 507, 508; ed. 2.486.

and that after his own decree of withholding from him the assistance absolutely necessary to his doing the good required, or avoiding the forbidden evil?" answer, that it is one great part of the wise and just providence of God, to give men laws for the direction of their actions, prescribing what he would have done, and left undone is readily granted. Now, inasmuch as all laws, which are of a moral nature, and serve for the direction of human actions in things moral, were given to, and written upon the heart of man before his fall, when he had sufficient strength and power to keep them; the wisdom and justice of providence cannot in the least be injured, much less destroyed, by the continuance of them after the fall; though man has lost his power to obey them, and cannot obey them without the assistance of divine grace, which is absolutely necessary to his doing anything that is truly good; and though God withholds, having decreed to withhold that assistance of grace from some men, which he is not obliged to give; God's withholding, and his decree to withhold that assistance, being neither of them the cause of man's disability, but his own vitiosity: since the continuance of them is necessary to keep up the authority of the lawgiver, to assert his dominion over man, to declare his will, to show the vile nature of sin, and what satisfaction is requisite for it; to discover the impotency of man, without the grace of God; for the direction of such who have it in their walk and conversation; for the restraint of others under the influence of common providence; and for the declaration of his displeasure and indignation against sin, and his strict justice in punishing of it.

(3.) "It is consistent<sup>256</sup> with the justice of providence, to aggravate the sins of reprobates on this account, that they knew their Lord's will, and did it not: provided that knowledge rendered them no more able to do it than the most ignorant of men; or, to make it such an aggravation of the sins of Christians, that they are committed against greater light, and stronger motives to perform their duty, than ever was vouchsafed to the heathen world; if, after this, they of them who lie under God's decree of preterition, are as unable to perform that duty as the worst of heathens?" To this may be replied, that though the knowledge of the will of God does not give men power and

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256 Whitby, p. 507, 508, ed. 2.486.

ability to do it; yet it puts men in a better situation, and in a better capacity of doing it, than men wholly ignorant of it are; and it may be more reasonably expected, that such should be disposed to do it, be desirous of it, and implore that assistance which is necessary to it; and therefore, when, on the contrary, such persons hate the very knowledge they have, and choose not the fear of the Lord, but say, depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of thy ways; it can never be inconsistent with the justice of providence to aggravate the sins of these men on this account. So the sins of men who enjoy the Gospel revelation, being committed, against greater light and stronger motives to perform their duty, than ever were vouchsafed to the heathen world, must be an aggravation of them, notwithstanding their inability to perform it; since that inability does not arise from the decree of preterition, but from their own wickedness; though that any of them, who are truly Christians, lie under God's decree of preterition, or are as unable to perform their duty as the worst of heathens, is never said by any, and must be denied.

(4.) "Is it suitable<sup>257</sup> to the holiness of providence, or to that purity which is essential to the divine nature, and makes it necessary for him to bear a strong affection to, and to be highly pleased with, the holiness of all that are thus like unto him: and to reward them for it with the enjoyments of himself; notwithstanding, absolutely to decree not to afford, to the greatest part of them to whom he hath given his holy commandments, that aid which he sees absolutely necessary to enable them to be holy, and without which they lie under an absolute incapacity of being holy?" I answer, that holiness is essential to the divine nature, whence he necessarily bears a strong affection to, and is highly pleased with, the holiness of all that are like him, whom he blesses with the enjoyment of himself, is certain; but then, this is no contradiction to any decree of his not to afford his grace, which he is not obliged to give. Certain it is, that he could make all men holy if he would; and it is as certain, that he leaves some destitute of that grace which is absolutely necessary to enable them to be holy, and without which they cannot be so; now, if it is not unsuitable to the holiness of providence, to leave men destitute of that grace, which

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257 Ibid.



only can make them holy, it cannot be unsuitable to the holiness of providence to decree to leave them so.

(5.) “Is it reconcilable<sup>258</sup> to the goodness of providence, or to the kindness, philanthropy, the mercy, and compassion of our gracious God, in all his providential dispensations, so highly magnified in holy Scripture, to deal with men according to the tenor of these doctrines?” I reply, that the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation, which are here referred to, are entirely reconcilable to the goodness, kindness, mercy, and compassion of God, which abundantly appear in his saving, and determining to save, some of the sinful race of mankind, when he could, in strict justice, have damned them all, as he has the whole body of apostate angels; but since this has been largely considered in this Part already, under the head of Reprobation, I shall add no more; especially, since nothing new is offered in this inquiry.

(6.) “Doth it comport<sup>259</sup> with the wisdom of providence, to promise or to threaten upon impossible conditions, an impossible condition being, in true construction, none at all? how much less will it comport with the same wisdom, to tender the covenant of grace to all mankind, to whom the gospel is vouchsafed, upon conditions which the most part of them, before that covenant was established, were utterly unable to perform; and who, by God’s decree of preterition, were inevitably left under that disability?” I answer that the covenant of works, which, I suppose, is referred to in the former, part of this question, by what follows in the latter part of it, being made with man in his state of innocence, did not promise life, and threaten with death, upon an impossible condition, but upon one that was possible, and which man was then capable of performing; and therefore no ways incompatible with the wisdom of providence. And though man, by breaking this covenant, has lost his power of fulfilling the condition of it, perfect obedience; yet it entirely comports with the wisdom of providence, that he should be subject to the penalty of it, from which he can have no relief, but by the provision made in the covenant of grace; which covenant of grace is not a conditional one, as is suggested; nor is it tendered to

258 Whitby, p. 510; ed. 2.487.

259 Ibid. p. 509; ed. 2.488.



any, much less to all mankind, to whom the gospel is vouchsafed, or to any left by God's decree of preterition, under the disability of the fall; but is a covenant made with Christ on the behalf of God's elect; is established in him, on better promises than conditional ones, depending on the power and will of man, being absolute and sure to all seed.

(7.) "On the other hand,<sup>260</sup> can it accord with the same wisdom of providence, to threaten the severest judgments to them, if they repented not, or if they turned away from their righteousness, or fell away from their own steadfastness, or endured not to the end; whom he had absolutely decreed to give repentance to; and, by continuance in well-doing, to preserve them to a blessed immortality; or to caution them not to do so, or to inquire whether temptations had not prevailed upon them so to do, or bid them fear lest they should do so." I answer; that the threatenings, cautions, and exhortations referred to, will appear to accord perfectly with the wisdom of providence, when it is considered, that they are made to societies and bodies of men under a profession of religion, some of which were real, others nominal professors; some true believers, others hypocrites, men destitute of the grace of God; and, perhaps, with a particular view to the latter, were these things given out, to whom God had never decreed to give repentance and perseverance. Besides, allowing that these threats, cautions, and exhortations are made to such to whom he had decreed to give repentance and perseverance, they are to be considered as means leading on, and blessed, in order to the enjoyment of what God had determined to give; and, therefore, it must accord with the wisdom of providence to make use of them.

(8.) "It is suitable<sup>261</sup> to the sincerity of his providential dispensations, of which his dealings with men, by his revealed will towards them, make so great a part, to move them to the performance of their duty only by motives, which he knows cannot work upon them, without that farther aid he, from eternity, hath determined to deny them?" I reply; that if, by performance of duty, is meant that men should convert themselves, repent of sin, and believe in Christ, to the saving of their souls, it will not be easy to prove that God

260 Ibid. p. 511; ed. 2.489.

261 Whitby, p. 511; ed. 2.489.

makes use of any motives to move any persons to do these things of themselves; and still more difficult to prove, that he makes use of any to induce such persons thereunto to whom he does not give that grace which only can enable them to do them. If by performance of duty, is meant moral obedience to the law of God, this is every man's duty, whether he has any motives to it or not; and if God makes use of any motives to induce unto it, which, without his grace, do not, and cannot, work upon them, the insufficiency of them does not arise from any thing in the motives themselves, nor from the denial of God's grace, nor from his determination to deny it, but from the perverseness and wickedness of men's hearts; wherefore, it is not unsuitable to the sincerity of providence, to make use of such motives, though they do not, and he knows they cannot, influence without his grace, which he is not obliged to give, and which he has determined to deny; since thereby, the perverseness and wickedness of men are more fully discovered, and they left inexcusable. Besides, the instances referred to regard not all mankind, but the people of Israel, and God's dealings with them, not in relation to their spiritual and eternal welfare, but their civil and temporal estate, as a body politic, as has been shown in the first Part of this work.

(9.) "It is suitable<sup>262</sup> to the same wisdom and sincerity, to move such persons by promises, to repent and believe; and to require them, having such promises, to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God? What wit of man can show, how God can be serious in calling such men to faith and repentance, much less, in his concern, that they might do so, or in his trouble that they have not done so; and yet be serious and in good earnest in his antecedent decree to deny them that aid, without which they never can believe or repent?" To which may be replied, that God is serious in calling men to faith and repentance, and as serious in his decrees either to give or deny that grace, without which none can ever believe or repent, is certain; and it must be owned, it would appear unsuitable to his wisdom and sincerity, should he move such persons by promises, and call such to faith and repentance, for whom, by an antecedent decree, he had determined to deny that

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262 Ibid. p. 512; ed. 2.490.

grace, without which they could never believe and repent: but, then, it remains to be proved, which I think, can never be proved, that God calls any persons, and moves them by promises to believe in Christ, to the saving of their souls, or to evangelical repentance, to whom he does not give grace to believe and repent, or such who are not eventually saved.

## CHAPTER VIII

### OF THE STATE AND CASE OF THE HEATHENS

In favour of the doctrines of absolute election and reprobation, particular redemption, and special grace in conversion, we observe, that, for many ages, God suffered the heathen world to walk in their own ways, leaving them without a revelation of his mind and will, without the gospel, and means of grace; and which has been, and still is, the case of multitudes to this day. This it cannot reasonably be thought he would have done, had it been according to the counsel of his will that all the individuals of mankind should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; or had Christ died for and redeemed them all; or was it the will of God to bestow on all men sufficient grace, whereby they may be saved. Nor can it be thought that God deals more severely with men, according to the above doctrines, than he seems to have done with the heathen world in this respect: particularly, in favour of God's decrees, it is observed, that if God conveys his gospel to, and bestows the means of grace on some people, and not on others, when the one are no more worthy of it than the other, and so must arise from his free grace, sovereign pleasure, and the counsel of his will; why may not the decree of the end of bestowing salvation on some, and not on others, as well as the decree of the means of sending the gospel to some, and not to others, be thought to be equally free, absolute, and sovereign? And seeing it is in fact certain, that the greatest part of mankind have been always left destitute of the means of grace, we need not wonder why that God, who freely communicates the knowledge of himself by the gospel to some nations, denying it to others, should hold the same method with individuals that he doth with whole bodies: for the rejecting of whole nations by the lump, for so many ages, is much more unaccountable than the selecting of a few to be infallibly

conducted to salvation, and leaving others in that state of disability in which they shall inevitably fail of it. Now to this it is replied:<sup>263</sup>

I. “That this objection doth by no means answer the chief arguments produced against these decrees, which are all taken from the inconsistency of them with the truth and sincerity of God’s declarations, with his commands to repent, his exhortations and desires that they would, threats of ruin to them that do not, and with all the promises, motives, and encouragements to induce them into it.” I observe, that this writer himself seems to be convinced, that this objection answers some, though not the chief, arguments produced against the absolute decrees of God. And as for those which are taken from the supposed inconsistency of them with the truth and sincerity of God, in his declarations, they have been replied to already, in this Part, under the article of Reprobation, to which the reader is referred, where it is made to appear, that there is no inconsistency between these decrees and the truth and sincerity of God in his declarations. It is much we should be called upon to show the like inconsistency, as is here pretended, between God’s declarations touching the heathen world, and his dealings with them, when it is agreed, on both sides, he has made no declarations of his mind and will to them. This author goes on, and allows<sup>264</sup>, that there is a greater depth in the divine providence, and in his dispensations towards the sons of men, than we can fathom by our shallow reason; but then, it must be insolence in us to say, that God does not act, in the ordering of affairs in the world, according to the measures of true goodness, because we, who cannot dive into the reasons of his dispensations, cannot discern the footsteps of that goodness in all his various transactions towards men. To which I heartily agree; and it would have been well if this author, and others of the same cast with him, had carefully attended to such an observation, and contented themselves with such a view of things; which must have stopped their mouths from calumniating the goodness of God, on a supposition of his absolute decrees of election and reprobation. It is further observed,<sup>265</sup> “that what God hath plainly and frequently

263 Whitby, p. 515; ed. 2.493.

264 Ibid, p. 516, 517; ed. 2.494, 495.

265 Ibid. p. 517; ed. 2.495.

revealed concerning his goodness, ought firmly to be owned and believed, although we are not able to discern how the transactions of God in the world comport with our imperfect knowledge and weak notions of immense and boundless goodness.” All very right. To which is added,<sup>266</sup> that “seeing the revelations of this nature (of divine goodness) are so clear and copious, have we not reason to believe them, notwithstanding those little scruples which, from our fond ideas and imperfect notions of divine goodness, we do make against them?” But, pray, what are these plain and frequent, clear and copious, revelations of divine goodness? and what the things that are not so clearly revealed? why, we are told, that to apply these things to our subject,

1. “We know from Scripture, how dreadful for quality, how endless for duration, will be the punishment of every Christian who fails of the salvation tendered; but we know so little of the future state of heathens, that we are uncertain both as to the measure and duration of their punishment.” Now not to take notice, that salvation is not tendered, and that a Christian, or one that truly deserves that name, cannot fail of it, or be liable to endless punishment; it is strange, that the dreadful punishment of any, and the endless duration of it, should be mentioned among the plain and frequent, clear and copious revelations of divine goodness, when it belongs to the plain and frequent, clear and copious revelations of divine goodness. Besides, though we know so little of the future state of heathens from the Scripture, yet we are not altogether at an uncertainty about either the measure or duration of their punishment; for as to the former, we are told (Matthew 11:21, 22) that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, for the inhabitants of these places, who had not the advantage of Christ’s ministry and miracles, at the day of judgment, than for the inhabitants of Chorazin and Bethsaida, who were favoured with them; and it is reasonable to conclude, that this will hold good of all men, without a divine revelation; and as to the latter, it is certain, when our Lord shall descend from heaven, he will take vengeance on them that know not God, the Gentiles, and that obey not the gospel of our lord Jesus Christ; meaning such who have

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<sup>266</sup> Ibid. p. 519; ed. 2.496.

enjoyed, but have neglected and despised the means of grace; who, one as well as another, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power (2 Thess. 1:8, 9). Moreover, whereas it is suggested, that Providence may put the heathens into a better state before their final doom, since God overlooked the times of their former ignorance (Acts 17:30), there being the like reason for his still overlooking them; it should be observed, that God's overlooking the times of heathen ignorance, was not an instance of his kindness and goodness, but of his disregard unto them: the meaning is, that he looked over them, took no notice of them, made no revelation to them, but left them in their blindness and ignorance, without giving them any helps, or sending them any persons to instruct and teach them.

2. It is said,<sup>267</sup> "We know that God hath made a tender of the covenant of grace, upon conditions of faith and repentance, to all that live under the Gospel dispensation; and that these decrees of absolute reprobation, and of denying the help necessary to the performing these conditions, are inconsistent with that tender: whereas we know of no such tender made to the heathen world; but rather, that they are still strangers to the covenant of promise" (Eph. 2:12). I answer; We know, indeed, from the Scriptures, that God has made a covenant of grace, which is a considerable instance of his divine philanthropy and goodness; but then, this covenant of grace is neither made with, nor tendered to all that live under the Gospel dispensation; it is only made with God's elect in Christ, and that not upon conditions of faith and repentance; for these are blessings of grace secured for them in this covenant. Hence the decrees of absolute reprobation, and of denying the aid of grace to some persons, are; not at all inconsistent with this covenant, and the promulgation of it in the Gospel. We also know of no such covenant made with, nor of any tender of it, nor of any publication of it to the heathen world; but rather, that all that are destitute of revelation, are strangers to the covenant of promise (Eph. 2:12), which passage likewise acquaints us, that such as are without the knowledge of Christ, and God in Christ, are without hope; and that such who live and die so, have no good ground of

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<sup>267</sup> Whitby, p. 519; ed. 2.497.

hope of eternal life and salvation; which plainly points out the state and case of the heathens, and leaves us at no great uncertainty about it: wherefore, we freely own, what is further alleged,<sup>268</sup> that,

3. “We know<sup>269</sup> not any promises God hath made to them;” and we know as little of any promises, or tenders of promises, God has made to the reprobate part of mankind, either with or without conditions, or upon possible or impossible ones: as also, that,

4. “We know from Scripture that the heathens, who never had Christ preached to them, are not bound to believe in him.” This is readily granted; and to it may be added, that they will not be condemned and punished for their unbelief, but for their sins committed against the law and light of nature. And though “we know from the same Scripture, that this is the command of God to all that have heard of Christ, that they believe in the Son of God;” yet we know that the faith enjoined and required is proportionate to the revelation that is made of Christ; for no man is bound to believe more than what is revealed. If evidence is given of Christ’s being the Son of God, the Messiah and Saviour of the world, as was to the Jews, credit should be given thereunto; which the Jews should and could have given, though they could not believe unto salvation, without superior power and grace: if Christ is represented, to any persons as a proper object of faith, trust, and confidence; it becomes such persons to believe in him, and rely upon him; and such are, by the grace of God, enabled so to do. If the Spirit of God reveals to a man his particular interest in the death of Christ, or that Christ died for him in particular, he ought to believe it. All which perfectly accords with the doctrine of particular redemption, and is no ways inconsistent with God’s decrees of giving the necessary aid of his grace to some, to enable them to believe unto salvation, and of denying it to others,

5. It is added,<sup>270</sup> “We know that God sent his prophets and messengers, apostles and evangelists, to move the Jews unto repentance, and those Gentiles to whom the gospel was offered, to embrace it; and that under both these dispensations, he established an order of men to call all men indifferently to repentance; but we

268 Whitby, p. 519; ed. 2. 497.

269 Ibid. p. 520; ed. 2.498.

270 Ibid.



know not that any thing was done towards those heathens to whom the Gospel never hath been preached, nor ever any messenger or prophet sent." Be it so, as it will be allowed, that proper persons were sent to move the Jews to repentance, and the Gentiles to embrace the Gospel, who were blessed to the conversion of God's elect, which lay among them both; and that nothing of this was ever done to the heathens, to whom the Gospel was never preached; for, indeed, how should anything of this kind be done to them, this being their case? yet this is not at all inconsistent with God's decrees of election and reprobation, since it will be difficult, if not impossible, to prove that God ever called any person to evangelical repentance, to whom he has not given the grace of repentance; or that he calls all men indifferently to repentance, or any to whom he denies the grace of repentance. Though, admitting he does externally call such persons to repentance, this may be done to expose the vile nature of sin, declare man's duty, and leave him inexcusable, though he denies him, and has determined to deny him, grace to enable him to repent, which he is not obliged to give; all which is consistent with the truth, sincerity, and design of the call.

**II.** A second answer to this argument of ours is,<sup>271</sup> that "that this objection supposeth it to be the same thing to be without a gospel revelation, and to be without any means of grace at all; which supposition seems plainly contrary to the declaration of the holy Scripture, touching the heathen world." For,

**I.** As God plainly saith, even in respect to their justification, that he is the God not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles (Rom. 3:29), and that he is the same Lord, who is rich unto all that call upon him (Rom. 10:12); so has he also, by St. Peter, taught, that he is no respector of persons; but that in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him (Acts 10:34, 35). "Whence it appears, that some of all nations, owning the true God, not only might, but actually did fear God, and work righteousness; and that God accepts men only because they do so: whence it follows, that those heathens who have at any time attained to the knowledge of the true God, may, in that state, perform those righteous actions

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<sup>271</sup> Whitby, p. 521, 522; ed. 2.499, 500.



which shall be acceptable in his sight.” To which I reply; that unless the law and light of nature, by which men may have some knowledge of a divine Being, though they know not who he is, and of the difference between good and evil, and unless the motives from providential goodness to serve and glorify God can be thought to be means of grace, the heathen must be without any, who are destitute of the gospel revelation; and then to be without a gospel revelation, and without any means of grace at all, must be the same thing; seeing the gospel revelation, the word, and ordinances, are the common and ordinary means of grace. It will not be denied, that God may make use of extraordinary means;<sup>272</sup> send an angel from heaven to acquaint men with the way of salvation by Jesus Christ, or by some other secret method, unknown to us; yet from the possibility of things to the certainty of them, we cannot argue: and though we would be far from judging of and determining the final state of such who are destitute of revelation; yet, according to the Scripture account of them, we cannot but conclude, that as such, and while such, they are without the means of grace, being without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. Nor do the Scriptures alleged prove that they have the means of grace, as will appear from a particular consideration of them. Not Romans 3:29, God was, indeed, equally the God of the Gentiles as of the Jews, as the God of nature and providence, being the common creator and preserver of them, and provider for them; but not as the God of grace, or in point of special grace and peculiar privileges, or before the gospel dispensation took place. Now, indeed, the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile is broken down; the gospel has been sent and preached to one as to another; and some of both have been brought to believe in Christ; and so God is the God of one as of the other, and stands no more distinguished by the God of Israel. And to this the apostle has respect in the place before us, when he puts the question, Is he the God of the Jews only? is he not also of the Gentiles? Which he answers in the affirmative, Yes, of the Gentiles also. The argument proving this, follows; seeing it is one God which

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272 Vide Curcellaeus, p. 389; Limborch, p. 363.

162 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER VIII  
shall justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision through faith. Whence it is manifest, that the apostle is not speaking of the justification of heathens, by their obedience to the law and light of nature, nor of them as heathens, or of God being their God, considered as such; but of their justification by faith in Christ; and so of them as believers, and of God being their God as such, equally with the believing Jews. Could it be proved, that God justifies the heathens by their obedience to the law and light of nature, as he justifies others by faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, it would be much to the purpose; but since this text gives no such intimation, but the contrary, it must be impertinent to the present argument. Nor Romans 10:12. There is, indeed, no difference between the Jew and Greek, under the Gospel dispensation, for the same Lord over all, who has made them, and has a sovereign dominion over them, is rich, in the distributions of his grace unto all that call upon him, be they Jews or Gentiles. And, for their encouragement, it is observed (v. 13), that whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. But then it is added (v. 14), How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? Which manifestly shows, that though the Lord plenteously distributes the riches of his grace to all that call upon him, without distinction of nations; yet to them only that call upon him aright, that is, in faith; of which faith the preaching and hearing the word are the ordinary means; Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God (v. 17). Now the Gentiles being without these means, and so destitute of faith, cannot rightly call upon God, there being no true invocation of him without faith in him; it follows, that they are not only without the means of grace, whilst this is their case, but even without any hope or likelihood of enjoying the blessings of grace; since these, in the text, are limited to them that call upon the Lord, and that call upon him in faith. Nor Acts 10:34, 35. The character given of Cornelius is, indeed, very great, and no doubt, very just; when he is said to be a devout man, and one that feareth God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway (v. 2). Whose prayers and

alms were greatly taken notice of, approved and accepted of God; for the angel said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God, verse 4; that is, they were grateful to him, and were remembered by him. But then, it is not so evident, that he was now in a state of heathenism, destitute of divine revelation, of that particularly which was made to the Jews, or destitute of faith in the Messiah, especially as to come, or in a state of unregeneracy. He was, indeed, of heathen extract; was now a Roman soldier, and his falling down at Peter's feet, and worshipping of him (v. 25), may look like acting the part of an idolatrous heathen; when it was no other than an instance of civil respect, which Peter would not receive, lest the standers-by, or those that came with him, should think more was designed by it. It is moreover said, that Peter should tell him words whereby he and all his house should be saved (chapter 11:14). Which may seem to intimate, as if he and his family were not in a state of salvation; which sense, though it would prove that heathens may do many things which are materially good, though they have not all the circumstances of a good action; yet, so far as they are good, may be taken notice of and regarded by God; so that on the account of them they may be saved from temporal ruin, as the Ninevites, upon their repentance, were; and enjoy temporal good, and their future punishment be lessened: but then, this sense would prove what is quite beside and contrary to the scheme of our author, namely, that persons in a state of heathenism, though they may be very devout and religious in their way, and do a great many good things; yet are not in a state of salvation. But I am inclined to think, that the meaning of them is this, that whereas Cornelius and his family were seeking after, and were very desirous of knowing the way of salvation, of which they had some knowledge from the writings of the Old Testament, upon Peter's coming to them, they should be more clearly led into it, and become thoroughly acquainted with the promised Messiah, by whom alone they could be saved; for that Cornelius and his family were proselytes of the gate, this writer himself owns:<sup>273</sup> since the same titles which belonged to the proselytes of the gate are given to them. It is evident that Cornelius attended to and complied

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273 Whitby, *ibid.* So Hammond in Acts 10:2.

164 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER VIII  
with the rituals of the Jews, as appears from his observing the same hour of prayer with them, the ninth hour (v. 30), compared with Acts 3:1, and from his being of good report among all the nation of the Jews (v. 22). He, no doubt, read the prophecies of the Old Testament, attended the synagogues of the Jews, believed in the Messiah to come;<sup>274</sup> so that his faith was of the same kind with the saints before the coming of Christ, and in this faith.<sup>573</sup> he did all the good works he did, which became acceptable to God through Christ; for without faith it is impossible to please him (Heb. 11:6). And now God is no respecter of persons, he makes no difference between nation and nation, but in every nation, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, he that feareth him, which includes the whole of religion internal and external, and so faith in Christ, and from such a principle worketh righteousness, is accepted with him; though let it be observed, that notwithstanding God accepts of such who fear him, and work righteousness, without any regard to their being circumcised or uncircumcised, to their being of this or the other nation; yet their fear of him and working of righteousness, are not the ground of their acceptance; but are to be considered as descriptive of the persons who are accepted in Christ; for there is no acceptance of persons or services but in Christ the beloved. From the whole, it does not appear that heathens, as such, and while in that state, may and actually do fear God, in the true sense of that phrase, as it imports the whole of internal and external religion; to both which, in the truth of them, they are utter strangers, and consequently cannot, and do not work righteousness, or what deserves that name, or what springs from the principles of the fear of God, and faith in him: and hence it follows not, that heathens may, in that state, perform those righteous actions which are acceptable in the sight of God; since what they perform, is not done in faith, nor directed to the glory of God; and especially in such sense, as that for the sake, and upon the account of them, their persons should be accepted, and they be everlastingly saved by him.

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274 Falluntur enim vehementer, qui Cornelium arbitrantur, vera fide non fuisse praeditum, quum eujsebh<v, et Deo tam gratas fuisse ipsius preces aperte dicatur. Hoc autem ipsi deerat ut cum veuisse, crederet, cui tanquam venturo credebat, licet carne incircumcisus. —Beza in Acts 10:4; vide etiam in verse 35; & Piscator in Acts 10:4.

For if the works of true believers, which spring from love, are done in faith, in obedience to the will of God, and with a view to his glory, cannot, and do not render their persons acceptable to God, nor procure their salvation, how should it be thought that the actions of heathens should do all this, were they even ten thousand times more and better than they are?

2. It is said<sup>275</sup>, that “this (that the heathens are not without any means of grace at all) may be gathered from these words of St. Paul, God, who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways, nevertheless left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, etc. (Acts 14:16, 17).” I reply; that God’s giving of rain and fruitful seasons to the heathens, and filling them with food and gladness, were indeed testimonies of his providence and goodness; in which respect he left not himself without witness: but then, though these were instances of providential goodness, yet not means of grace. It is true, that the works of creation were means of men’s knowing that there is a God, and that he is to be worshipped; so that the heathens were without excuse, because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened (Rom. 1:20, 21): but then, these were not sufficient means of knowing who this God was, and in what manner he was to be worshipped. So that frequent instances of rain and fruitful seasons, and the daily supplies of food for the bodies of men, are proofs a divine Being, who is kind and good, and of a divine Providence, and lay men under obligation to be thankful, and to seek after God, and serve him; but are not means of grace, or of eternal life and salvation; for these very persons, to whom God gave rain and fruitful seasons, whose hearts he filled with food and gladness, he suffered to walk in their own ways; which unavoidably lead to ruin and destruction. What means of grace could these men have, who were thus entirely left of God, to do that which was right in their own eyes; though he did not leave himself without witness? How blind, ignorant, and superstitious were they, that, when they saw what the apostle Paul had done, cried out, The gods are come down to us in

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275 Whitby, p. 523; ed. 2.500.

the likeness of men? and brought out their oxen and garlands, and would have done sacrifice; from which the apostle scarce restrained them by these sayings of his. What means of grace could these be supposed to have? when, as this author himself observes,<sup>276</sup> God “so far permitted this, as that he sent them no prophet to instruct them better, and gave them no positive revelation of his will, no written instructions of the way in which he would be worshipped, as he had done unto the Jews.”

3. The same, it is observed, may be gathered<sup>277</sup> “from those words of the same apostle; God, that made the world, and all things in it — made all nations of one blood, and hath determined the times before appointed (that is, the fixed seasons of the year,) and the bounds of their habitations, that they might seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him (Acts 17:24, 26, 27). Whence we learn, that God made the world with this design, that men, by contemplation of the power, wisdom, and goodness, visible in the creation of it, might seek after the author of it, and seeking, find him. That to seek after God, in the Scripture-phrase, is so to seek him out, that we may give him that worship which is due to him; and, to find him, is to obtain his grace and favour. That sinners cannot thus hope to seek or find God, unless they can expect to find him merciful in the pardon of those sins they confess and forsake, all which must depend on this foundation, that God is the maker of heaven and earth, and all that is therein; whence it follows, that men guided only by the light of nature, may so acceptably seek God, as to find him gracious and merciful towards them.” To which may be replied, that the making of the world, and all things in it, with the suitable provisions for all creatures, is a glorious display, of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God; and it will be allowed, that men, by the light of nature, may, as those Athenians might to whom the apostle speaks, so seek after God, and find that there is one, and such an one as dwells not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed anything; seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things (vv. 24, 25); which was sufficient to convince them of the gross idolatry they were guilty of; and that they ought not

<sup>276</sup> Whitby, p. 523; ed. 2.501.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid. p. 524-526; ed. 2.502-504.

to think, as they did, that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art, or man's device (v. 29). But then, it must be denied, that the heathens did, or could, by the light of nature, seek God acceptably, or so as to find him gracious and merciful unto them; for he is only sought acceptably, and found gracious and merciful, in Christ Jesus our Lord. And though propitiatory sacrifices did very early, and long, and generally, obtain among them; yet, as these were not taught them by the light of nature, but were either some broken, mangled traditions, which originally sprang from divine revelation, or satanical imitations of that kind of worship God had appointed; so they were performed in such a manner, as abundantly declared the wretched barbarity ignorance, and stupidity of the worshipers nor was God ever acceptably sought in them or even found to be propitious, gracious, and merciful through them. Besides, let it further be observed, that though the passage before us shows, that it is possible for men by a contemplation of the power, wisdom, and goodness of God, visible in his works of creation and providence, so to seek after him and find him, as to know that there is a God who has made all these; to be convinced of the vanity and falsehood of all other gods, and to see the folly, wickedness, and weakness of idolatrous worship; yet, at the same time, it very strongly intimates to us, how dim and obscure the light of nature is; since those who have nothing else to direct them but that, are like persons in the dark, who feel<sup>278</sup> and grope about after God, whom they cannot see; and after all their search and groping, there is only an haply, a peradventure, a maybe, that they find him. Add to this, that the times of heathenism are called in verse 30, times of ignorance which God winked at, ὑπεριδω<sup>279</sup> overlooked, disregarded, took no notice of, and gave them no means of spiritual light and knowledge. In short, these words, at most, only declare what is the end of man's creation, which is, to seek the Lord and glorify him; and not what man can do, or the heathens have done, by the mere light of nature; and are far from being a proof of their having any means of grace.

278 Yhlafa>w, metaphorice, etiam accipitur pro perscrutari, sumpta translatione, a coecis qui palpando viam quaerunt, ut apud Polybium. — Scapula. Vide Hammond in loc.

279 Vide Hammond in loc.



4. It is said,<sup>280</sup> that “this may be proved from those words (Heb. 11:6), He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” Where observe, that to come to God, is to serve him, throughout the tenor of the Scripture, and more especially in this epistle, where it signifies to come to his throne of grace by prayer, by the oblation of sacrifices, or by the performance of any other duty; yea, from the context it appears, that it is *ευφραεστη σαι*, to do that which is pleasing to him. That all men may so seek God, as to do what is well-pleasing to him, if they diligently endeavor so to do. That if they do so, they shall be regarded by him. That the heathens may have grounds sufficient to believe, that they shall be rewarded for serving him diligently, according to the light which God had given them. The inference is, “that heathens may have faith in God, even that faith which is the expectation of things hoped for, and may encourage them to seek him diligently.” I answer, It is strange that this passage of Scripture should be a proof of heathens having the means of grace, or of their being capable of seeking and serving God acceptably, and of their having faith in God, even that faith which in verse 1 is said to be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen; when the apostle is only speaking of such a faith, as is founded upon the word of God, and of such persons only who were favoured with a divine revelation; of the patriarchs before and after the flood, the forefathers of the Jews; various instances of whose faith he produces, partly to prove the above definition of faith, and partly for the imitation, example, and encouragement of the Hebrews, to whom he writes; men who also enjoyed the oracles of God, had plenty of the means of grace, and were blessed with a gospel revelation. Besides, let it be observed, that since to come to God, as this author explains it from the context, is to do that which is pleasing to him; and since it appears from the former part of this text, that without faith it is impossible, *ευφραεστη σαι*, to do that which is well-pleasing to God; and from the words themselves, that believing is absolutely requisite to coming to him; not only that he exists, but that he is, in Christ, a God gracious and merciful, and a rewarder, in a way of grace, of all

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280 Whitby, p. 526, 527; ed. 2.504, 505.



them that diligently seek him in his Son, in whom only he is to be so found. And since heathens are without any knowledge of him or faith in him, as such; for, how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? (Rom. 10:14). It follows, that this passage of Scripture proves the reverse of what it is brought for; namely, that it is impossible<sup>281</sup> for heathens to come to God aright, to serve him acceptably; or to do what is well-pleasing to him, because they are destitute of faith; and whatsoever, is not of faith, is sin (Rom. 14:23). Moreover, there is no such thing as coming to God through Christ, he is the only way of access to God, for Jews and Gentiles; for through him we both (Eph. 2:18), Jew and Gentile, have an access by one Spirit unto the Father. But since the heathens, destitute of divine revelation are without Christ, and the knowledge of him, as the way to the Father, they must be without hope, and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12), and know not how to come to him, nor can they come to him aright; nor indeed, are they capable of seeking and finding him as the God of grace, or as a God gracious and merciful: since he is only to be sought and found as such in Christ Jesus our Lord. It is true, indeed, that they may and should, by the light of nature, seek after God; and they may find him, as the God of nature, and should glorify him as such, yea, they may do many things materially good, which, though they may not be thoroughly well-pleasing to God; the circumstances of a good work being wanting in them, and also being without a Mediator to render them acceptable to God; yet may be so far approved of by him, as to avert temporal judgments from them, and to lessen their future punishment; so that the heathen world, according to our sentiments of them, is not, as is suggested, exempted from all obligations to seek God, or deprived of any motive to do what appears, by the light of nature, to be the will of God. From the whole, it follows not that heathens may have that faith in God which is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen; for how should they who are strangers from the covenant of promise hope, look for, and expect those things of which they have no revelation, no promise, on which to ground their faith, hope, and expectations?

281 Thn peprwmenhn moirhn adunata esti apofugeein kai qew Herodot. 1. 1, c. 91.

5. It is moreover said<sup>282</sup> that “this may be further evident from those words: The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness” (Rom. 1:18). Where observe, that the apostle is speaking of the heathen world, of the Gentiles (vv. 16, 23, 35). That this wrath of God was revealed from heaven against their ungodliness, that is, their impiety, in robbing God of his honour, and giving it to them which by nature were no gods; and in being ungrateful to him who was the author of their blessings; and against their unrighteousness, that is, the violation of the laws of justice, charity, and mercy, towards one another. That they did this against sufficient evidence and manifestation of the truth discovered to them, holding the truth in unrighteousness. That the great reason of the wrath of God revealed against them, was this, that they thus sinned against the knowledge and conscience of their duty. The inference is, “that all the acts of ungodliness and unrighteousness here mentioned (as things too commonly practiced in the heathen world), were done against sufficient light and conviction, that they did these things against the natural light of their own consciences, and the knowledge of that duty which was due from them both to God and man.” I reply; It is not so evident, that the apostle is speaking, either in the text or context, especially in verse 16, of the heathen world, destitute of a divine revelation, where the apostle says, I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation, to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. In which words he intimates, that not only the gospel was now preached to Gentiles, as well as Jews, but that it was the power of God, or the power of God had accompanied it, to the conversion of some among the Gentiles, as well as of some among the Jews; and since therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, he signifies that it became all such who were blessed with this revelation, who embraced this gospel, and made a profession of it, to live by faith; as it is written, The just shall live by faith; which faith is productive of good works; for otherwise faith without works is dead: wherefore, such who live wicked and ungodly lives, notwithstanding their

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282 Whitby, p. 527, 528, 530, ed. 2.505-508

profession of the gospel, may expect the vengeance of God; for, even under the gospel dispensation, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven in various awful instances and examples, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men; sins against the first and second table of the law, which are no more countenanced under the evangelical than under the legal economy; and especially against the ungodliness and unrighteousness of such who hold the truth  $\epsilon\pi\nu\ \alpha\phi\delta\iota\kappa\tau\ \alpha$ , with unrighteousness; that is, who hold and profess the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, and yet live unrighteously in their conversations, or hinder the spreading of it by their ungodly lives. In this view of things, the words have no reference to the heathen world, as such; but to persons, whether Jews or Gentiles, enjoying the gospel revelation. It is true, the following part of the context seems to regard the Gentiles, as only having the light of nature, and their abuse of it: though Dr. Hammond understands the whole text of judaizing Christians, of the Gnostics; and indeed, the whole account well enough agrees with them, who not only had, in common with the Gentiles, the advantages of the light of nature, the works of creation and providence, to lead them to the knowledge of God, whereby they were left without excuse; but even boasted of superior knowledge to other Christians, from whence they had the name of Gnostics; and yet these men, who professed themselves to be wise, became fools, ran into the idolatry of the heathens, partook with them in their idol feasts, and particularly worshipped the images of Simon Magus and Helena, and were guilty of all the obscenities, impurities, unnatural lusts, and horrible wickedness, mentioned to the end of the chapter; the last words of which may be more properly true of them than of the heathen world: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them. But admitting that the heathen world, as such, is here spoken of, it will only prove what will be readily granted, that the heathens, by the visible works of creation, may know that there is a God, and the invisible perfections of Deity; that he, who is the Creator of all things, ought to be worshipped and adored, and not the creature; that they ought to acknowledge him as the author of their being and

172 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER VIII  
mercies; to glorify him on the account of them, and to be thankful to him for them; and should they do otherwise, are inexcusable, sins they must act against the natural light of their own consciences. But how does this prove them to have any means of grace, or means of obtaining eternal life and salvation? So far from it, that it proves, that men being left to the light of nature, even such as are of the highest form, profess themselves to be the soqoi, the wise men of the world, sink into the greatest blindness and stupidity, fall into the grossest idolatries, become guilty of the vilest ingratitude, and commit the most abominable and unnatural iniquities that were ever heard of.

6. It is further urged,<sup>283</sup> that “this also seemeth evident from what the apostle hath declared touching the Gentiles, who had no the law, to wit, that God would judge then according to their works (Rom. 2:6). And when the apostle adds, that the Gentiles which knew not the law of Moses, did by nature, that is, by virtue of the law of nature written in their hearts, the things contained in the moral law; he must insinuate, that they had the natural principles of good and evil discovered to them, by their own reason and discretion.” To which may be replied that what the apostle hath declared touching the Gentiles, that God would judge them according to their works, is not to be understood of his justification and acceptance of them on the account of their works, or of his rewarding them with eternal glory and happiness for the sake of them; for, by the deeds of the law, whether of nature, or of Moses, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight (Rom. 3:2); but of the righteous condemnation of them according to their evil works, which, by the light of nature, they knew to be so, and ought to have avoided, as he himself explains it (v. 12), As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law; which, surely, can never be thought to be a proof of their having means of grace; but rather the contrary. Indeed, it is true, that they did, by the mere light of nature, know the difference between good and evil in many cases; and, by the mere strength of nature did many things which had the appearance of moral goodness; but then, as their knowledge was very imperfect, and their strength but weakness, there were many things which should have

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283 Whitby, p. 530, 531; ed. 2.508, 509.

been done, were left undone, and multitudes of sins are committed against the direct law and light of nature: so that they were far from being hereby in a state of justification and acceptance with God, and which occasioned great turmoils of conscience, and restlessness and disquietude of their thoughts within them; all which is largely expressed by the apostle, verses 14, 15.

**III.** Having considered the arguments from Scripture in favour of the heathens having means of grace, we now proceed to consider such as are taken from reason. And,

**I.** It is observed,<sup>284</sup> that “it seemeth evident from reason, that if God should be worshipped, served, and obeyed by his rational creatures, he must have given them sufficient knowledge of that Being whom they are to serve, worship, and obey, and of those laws which he requires them to obey; and also must have given them abilities to do them, as far as he requires this to their acceptance, and motives sufficient to induce them thus to serve and to obey him.” I answer; that whereas there is a God, and this God is to be served and obeyed, so he has not left himself without witness to the very heathens; he has given to them means of knowing his being and perfections. The things that are made are sufficient proofs of his eternal power and godhead; so that in this respect they are without excuse; nor are they altogether without the knowledge of those laws he requires them to obey; for though they are strangers to the instituted worship and positive laws of revealed religion, for the neglect of which they will not be condemned yet not to the laws of natural religion: for though they have no written law in their hands to guide and direct them; yet they have the work of the law written on their hearts, to which their conscience bears witness, and their thoughts accuse or excuse, as they do good or evil works; and no doubt but they are able to do more than they do, in a way of natural obedience to these laws; nor are they without motives from the providential goodness of God, to induce them to a regard to them. We do not say the heathens want the means of knowing the natural duties owing to God and man; and so are far from destroying natural religion, or absolving the heathens from obligations to perform it; we say, indeed, that neither they, nor

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284 Whitby, p. 531, 532; ed. 2.509, 510.

any others, without the grace of God, can love the Lord their God with all their heart, and their neighbor as themselves, which are the main parts of the law. But then it does not follow from hence, that these are no duties of natural religion, or that God does not require them, or that men are not under obligation to them, because through their own vitiosity they have lost their power to obey them as they ought. We also say, that those actions of the heathens which are materially good, are yet formally evil, because they are not done out of love to God as the principle, and to God's glory as the end; and indeed how should they do any thing out of love to God, and with a view to his glory, when they know him not? For though they have means of knowing the being and perfections of God, yet they know not who the true God is; but being left to the mere light of nature, fix upon that which is not God, to be so; and consequently can have no true love to the only true God, nor true faith in him, nor a true regard to his glory. And we say the same of the works and actions of all men in a state of nature, before conversion, who are destitute of love to God, and faith in Christ: and so says the church of which this author was a member, in her thirteenth article (Titus 3:5, 6), "Works done before the grace of Christ, and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ, neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school-authors say) deserve grace of congruity; yea, rather, for that they are not done as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but that they have the nature of sin." But, after all, supposing that the heathens have sufficient means of knowing God, and the duties of natural religion, and that they do know God, and do perform the duties of natural religion, are these the means of grace, life, and salvation; when it is not by works, of righteousness, works done according to a righteous law, and from a principle of grace and holiness, which we Christians, believers in Christ, have done after conversion, in the faith of Christ, from love to God, and a view to his glory, that we are saved; but according to the mercy of God, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour? (Titus 3:5, 6). To say no more, the argument may easily be retorted

thus: It seemeth evident from reason, that if God had willed that all the individuals of human nature, and among the rest the heathens, should be saved through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom alone we hope to be saved, there being no other way of salvation that we know of; I say, it seemeth evident from reason, that God would have given these persons the means of salvation, the means of knowing Christ, and salvation by him, and the knowledge of these things itself.

2. It is further argued,<sup>285</sup> “If God hath given to all men immortal souls, it seemeth plainly hence to follow, that he had put them some way in a capacity of being happy after death, and hath not left them under an inevitable necessity of being always miserable.

For since, according to our Saviour’s words, it had been better for such men that they had not been born; and, according to right reason, it is better not to be, than to be miserable; and seeing all such men must be subject to a necessity of being miserable, only by being born into the world, that is, by God’s own action in giving them life, and infusing a spiritual soul into them; it follows, that either we must deny the immortality of the souls of these heathens, or allow, that they are placed by Divine Providence in a capacity of avoiding being ever miserable.” I reply; That God hath given to all men, and so to the heathens, immortal souls, is certain; but from hence it follows not, that he has put, or is obliged to put them some way in a capacity of being ever happy; seeing he makes the angels immortal and immaterial spirits, those that fell from him, as well as those that stand; but he has not, nor is he obliged to put the former any way in a capacity of being ever happy; since they became sinful, and so miserable of themselves, and not by any act of his. So the heathens, to whom God has given immortal souls, of themselves, through their own sin, became miserable, or subject to misery, and not by being born into the world, or by God’s own action of giving them life, and infusing, an immortal soul into them: God’s act of giving them being and life, and infusing an immortal soul into them, is a blessing; it is their own iniquity that subjects them to misery, or makes them miserable, and it can be no unrighteous thing with God to leave them so; nor is it more eligible not to be, than to be

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285 Whitby, p. 534; ed. 2.512.



176 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER VIII  
so; our Lord does not say, it had been better for such men, that they had not been born; but it had been good for that man, Judas, if he had not been born (Matthew 26:24). And this, as some think, was said according to the judgment of men, and as Judas himself would hereafter judge, and is designed to express the woefulness of his state and condition; though it is not said, it had been good for him if he had not been, but if he had not been born; that is, if he had been an abortive, had died in his mother's womb. It is not according to right reason, but according to an erroneous judgment, that "it is better not to be, than to be miserable;" for to be is something, and something good, though attended with misery; but, not to be, is nothing; and *non entis nulla affectio*, can have neither goodness nor bitterness, nor can be properly eligible or desirable. The reasoning, which follows, from the goodness of God in temporal things, to his concern for men's spiritual welfare, and from the law of nature and light of reason, implanted in them, hath been elsewhere considered.

3. It is urged,<sup>286</sup> that "it cannot be consistent with divine equity and goodness, to make that a condition of any man's happiness, which he cannot know to be his duty, or knowing, cannot do. Hence it is evident, that the knowledge of any revelation made to Jew or Christian, cannot be necessary to the happiness of heathens in general, much less the practice of any purely Christian duty; and therefore faith in Jesus Christ cannot be necessary to the salvation of as many of them as have never heard of him." I answer; that the heathens will not be condemned and punished for their ignorance of that revelation which was never vouchsafed to them, nor for the non-performance of and purely Christian duty, such as baptism and the Lord's supper; nor for not believing in Christ, of whom they have never heard, only for those sins which they have committed against the law and light of nature; but inasmuch as they are without any true knowledge of the way of atonement for sin, and without any revelation from God of the method of salvation from it, they must be considered as destitute of the means of grace, and as far from true happiness and felicity.

4. When this author says,<sup>287</sup> "This I think certain, that God will

<sup>286</sup> Whitby, p 536; ed. 2.514.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid. p. 537; ed. 2.514, 515.



only judge men at the last for sinning against the means he hath vouchsafed them to know, and to perform their duty, and only by that law which he hath given them. Hence it must follow, that those heathens to whom the law of nature only hath been given, can be judged only for the violations of that law." This will be readily allowed as agreeable to what the apostle says, As many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law (Rom. 2:12). But then, this observation is no proof of their having any means of grace; this leaves them without any, and discovers the equity and justice of God in their condemnation.

5. It is further observed<sup>288</sup> that "God having laid down this method in the dispensation of his gifts, that he who is faithful in the least talent, shall have a suitable reward; and that to him that hath, so as to improve what he enjoys, shall more be given, and vice versa; we may hence rationally conclude that he who diligently endeavors to do good according to that light he hath received, shall find some tokens or the favour of God; and that if any farther aid be requisite to enable the heathens acceptably to perform their duty, the divine goodness will impart that also to them, by those secret dispensations of his providence which we are not acquainted with." To which may be replied; that the parable of the talents referred to, does not relate either to the gifts of nature, or of special grace; but to ministerial gifts, or such as qualify men for the preaching of the gospel, as has been shown in the first Part of this work; and therefore cannot be of any service in the argument before us. What secret methods God may make use of to impart his grace to heathens, to afford them the aid that is requisite to perform their duty acceptably; to communicate his mercy to them, and apply the meritorious performances of Christ; are, indeed, secrets to us; and secret things belong to the Lord our God, but those things which are revealed, belong, to us and to our children (Deut. 29:29). It is only according to the revelation God has made we are able to judge of things, and beyond that we cannot go; and according to that revelation, it appears that Christ is the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6); the true way to eternal life; that no man can come to the Father but by him; that there is salvation is

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288 Whitby, p. 539; ed. 2.516.

no other; that there is none other name under heaven given among men, Jews or Gentiles, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12); that the heathens, destitute of revelation, know not God (1 Thess. 4:5); are without Christ, strangers to the covenants of promise, without hope and God in the world (Eph. 2:12); and consequently, according to all the views of things we are capable of taking from hence, must be without any means of grace and salvation.

6. And lastly, it is said<sup>289</sup>, that “we may reasonably conclude, God will deal with them, both with respect to the acceptation and reward of their good, and his displeasure against and punishment of their evil actions, according to the measures of their ignorance and knowledge, the abilities, motives, and inducements afforded to them to do or to avoid them; and that in these particulars. That their good actions, done upon less convictions, aids, and motives, may be more acceptable to God, than the like actions done by Christians, upon much stronger evidence, and better aids, and more powerful inducements to the same actions, according to John 20:29, Luke 7:9, Matthew 15:28. That the heathens may expect a reward upon performance of less duty, according to Luke 12:48. That God should be more ready to pardon and pass by their transgressions, because there must be in them the more of ignorance, and so the less of contempt, and so the more of that which renders them excusable, and the less of that which aggravates transgression. That God should be more patient and long-suffering towards them before he punisheth, because the less the light is they enjoy, the less is their offense against it. It is also reasonable to conceive, that God may be more gentle in the punishment of their iniquities, according to our Lord’s own aphorism, Luke 12:47.” I answer; It cannot well be thought that the actions of heathens, which want the circumstances of a good work, such as love to God, faith in him, a view to his glory, and which have only the appearance of goodness in them, should, upon any consideration whatever, be more acceptable to God, than the actions of Christians done by the assistance of grace, in faith, from pure love to God, and with a single eye to his glory, and which are attended with, and are presented before God, through the sweet incense of

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289 Whitby, p. 540, etc.; ed. 2.517, etc.

Christ's mediation. There must be as much difference between these actions, in point of acceptance, as between the most fragrant flower in the garden, and the most stinking herb of the field. The words of our Lord (John 20:29), do not compare Christians and heathens together, but Christians and Christians, and commend such who believe on Christ, without the sight of his person and miracles, before such who believed on him upon the sight of them. The centurion (Luke 7:9), and the Syro- Phoenician woman (Matthew 15:28), though they were of heathen extract, were not to be reckoned pure heathens, since they conversed among the Jews, and probably were Jewish proselytes, especially the former, and had heard of the Messiah, and were now, moreover, blessed with a gospel revelation, enjoyed the ministry, and saw the miracles of Christ; and, therefore, their actions, and the instances of their faith, are not pertinent to the present argument. The saying of Socrates this author mentions supposes a plurality of gods; and the expressions of Epictetus breathe out the pride and vanity, the affectation and stupidity, of a stoic. Nor have the heathens reason to expect a reward upon performance of less duty; for they have no reason to expect a reward, especially of eternal life, upon the performance of any duty, be it more or less, since the reward must be either of debt or of grace; if of debt, the expectation must be founded upon the performance of the duty itself, and the strict proportion between the duty and the reward; but between eternal life, and the best performances of men, there is no proportion at all, and consequently there is no reward due unto them, and therefore no just expectation can arise from hence; if it is of grace, and the expectation is founded on divine goodness, there must be some notification of it, a promise of eternal life must be given: but the heathens are strangers to the covenants, of promise (Eph. 2:12); they have no such promise, and are incapable of having any, without a revelation, as this author himself observes;<sup>290</sup> and therefore can have no well-grounded expectation of the reward of eternal life, upon the performance of any duty whatever; but are, as the apostle says, (Eph. 2:12) without hope, that is, of eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began (Titus

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290 Whitby, p. 538; ed. 2.515.

1:2). The words of our Lord, in Luke 12:28, can be no foundation of expectation of reward to heathens, upon performance of less duty, since they know nothing of them; and did they, could be none at all, since they speak not of any reward to be given to men upon performance of more or less duty, only of what is required of men to whom much is committed. To proceed: though the heathens have more of ignorance, and less of contempt, in their transgressions, than others who enjoy the light of the gospel, and so as their sins are not so aggravated, their punishment will not be so great, but that they may reasonably expect, that God should be more ready to pardon and pass by their transgressions, because of their ignorance, when they are not sensible of it, is not easy to be conceived of. Again, though the less the light is men enjoy, the less is their offense against it, and God may be more patient and long-suffering towards them before he punisheth; but that the heathens may expect he will be so on this account, is not very evident. There have been instances, indeed, of God's patience and long-suffering towards them; but that of God's waiting upon the old world, in the days of Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness to them, cannot well be thought to be an instance of God's forbearance of heathens, of men destitute of a divine revelation. It must be owned it is reasonable to conceive, that God may be more gentle and mild in the punishment of the iniquities of heathens, not only from Luke 12:47, but from the express declaration of Christ, that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, and for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, wherein most of his mighty works were done (Matthew 11:20-24); which brings me to the consideration of these words, and the inference said to be made from them. As to the sense and meaning of them, that has been considered already in the first Part<sup>291</sup> of this work, to which the reader is referred. The inference said<sup>292</sup> to be made from them is this, namely, "Hence it appears, that the means of salvation are not always applied to them, whom God foresaw would use them better."

By whom this inference is made, I cannot find, and am jealous, that it is not fairly represented as it was drawn; since these words,

291 Sect. 24.

292 Whitby, p. 545; ed. 2.523.

according to our sense of them, are not to be understood of God's prescience or foresight of what was certainly come to pass, if such means were vouchsafed; but of a probability and likelihood, according to a human view and judgment of things, that the miracles of Christ would have been more regarded by, and would have had a greater influence upon, the inhabitants of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, had they been wrought among them, than on the inhabitants of those cities where they were performed: however, this, I think, may be fairly inferred from them, that God vouchsafes the means of grace sometimes to persons who are not only unworthy of them, but to whom they are of none effect; when he denies them to others, who are no more unworthy of them, and who, in all probability, would show a greater regard unto them. Now, as his withholding them from the one, and giving them to the other, must spring alone from his sovereign pleasure, it shows, that it is not his will that every individual of human nature should be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth, and therefore must lie strongly against the universal scheme. It is, moreover, said,<sup>293</sup> that "in favour of these false interpretations, we add, that it would be an act of cruelty in God to have denied them those means, which he foresaw would have produced in them repentance unto salvation" Now it should be observed, that this is said not in favour of our interpretations, which this author says are false, but upon the false hypothesis of our opponents. We do not say, that God foresaw that those means which he denied them would, had he granted them, have produced in them repentance unto salvation, or that God is cruel, when he denies the means of grace to some, and gives them to others; but this we say, and ask, upon the hypothesis of the Arminians, "that if God foresaw those means would have produced in them repentance unto salvation, was it not cruel in him to deny them those means?" This, I find, has been said, and asked by the Contra- Remonstrants, which, perhaps, our author refers to: their words are these;<sup>294</sup> "If this ought to be so taken, that God must be supposed to have certainly foreknown that these Tyrians would have truly and really converted themselves, if the mighty works had been

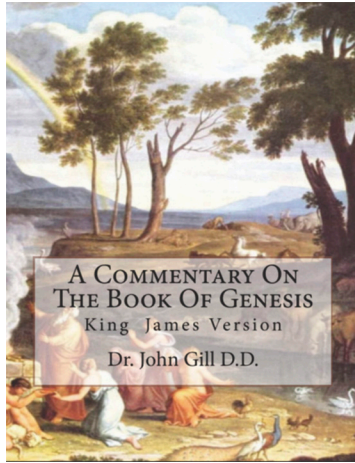
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293 Whitby, p. 547; ed. 2.524.

294 Col Hag. art. 3. & 4. p. 241.

182 THE CAUSE OF GOD AND TRUTH PART III CHAPTER VIII  
wrought among them, may it not be gathered from hence, that God is cruel and unmerciful, that he should withhold from such, and would not give unto them, the means necessary to that conversion, who would certainly have converted themselves?" But how can this agree with their (the Remonstrants) opinion, who, in favour of it, produce those words of the apostle (1 Tim. 2:4), who will have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth; especially when they say, that by the word all, every individual man, without exception, is to be understood? How could God will to save the Tyrians, from whom he withheld the means necessary to conversion, nor would he give them? From whence it is manifest, that the Arminians ought not to be so forward with their charges of cruelty and unmercifulness against our scheme, on the account either of God's decree before time, or of the methods of his grace in time, when their own scheme is not free from them. Upon the whole, it appears, that God gives and denies his grace, affords and withholds the means of it, as he himself pleases; and as multitudes in all ages have been without the latter, there is much reason to believe they have been destitute of the former. I conclude, by observing what the church of England, in her eighteenth article, says, which our author was obliged to subscribe and swear to: "They also are to be had accursed that presume to say, that every man shall be saved by the law or sect which he professeth, so that he be diligent to frame his life according to that law and light of nature; for holy Scripture doth set out unto us only the name of Jesus Christ, whereby men must be saved." The testimonies of the ancient writers in favour of the heathens, cited by this author, and their judgment of their case, will be considered in the fourth and last Part of this work; in which will be given the sense of the said writers before Austin, upon the points of election, redemption, efficacious grace, free will, and the final perseverance of the saints.

**FURTHER PUBLICATIONS**  
**COMMENTARY ON THE BOOK OF GENESIS**



A Commentary On The Book Of Genesis: King James Version

Paperback – 29 Jun 2018

by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Author)

Paperback: 500 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (29 Jun. 2018)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1721660933

ISBN-13: 978-1721660933

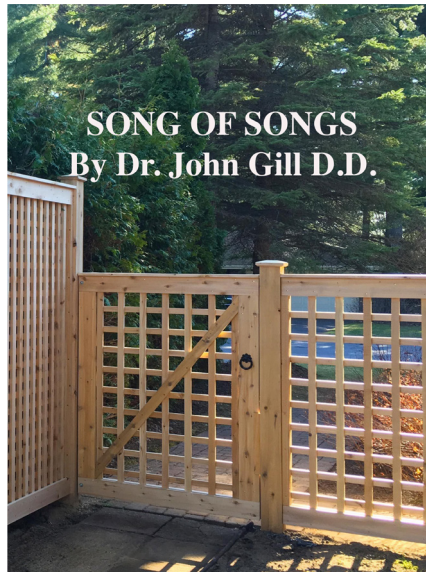
Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 2.9 x 27.9 cm

Dr. John Gil is the only person to write a commentary on every verse of the bible. He was a scholar and read both Hebrew and Greek and was a Particular Baptists minister in London, England, in the 18 century, who taught the doctrines of grace and like all Christian churches the King James Bible was the one used by Christians. All modern versions since 1948 are not translated from the text underlying the King James Version but are from their own translation of Westcott and Hort's 4th Century Greek texts. My final words on this whole matter is, 26 'Oh fools and slow in heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken, aught not Christs to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory.27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures



the things concerning himself? It seems to me that those who reject, cannot or will not receive, the record that God has given in Genesis concerning His Son and the account of the great flood, have been deceived by the Devil. The answer of the Christian to such a temptation is to say, 'Get thee behind me Satan'. And for it is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God'. Moses wrote of the coming of Christ in to the world in Genesis where it is written 'And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel. Gen 3:15. In order to understand Westcott and Hort have not been faithful to the word of God and introduced great errors we include for your reference the following books 'Which Bible' by Philip Mauro and 'The Modern Version Incursion', by Ken Matto."

### **SONG OF SONGS**



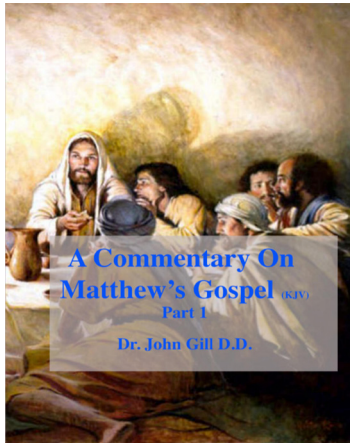
Song Of Songs Paperback – 2 May 2019  
by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Editor)  
Paperback: 393 pages  
Publisher: Independently published (2 May 2019)  
Language: English  
ISBN-10: 1096657287



ISBN-13: 978-1096657286

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 2.3 x 27.9 cm The Following Exposition was delivered in one hundred and twenty-two Sermons, to the Congregation where God his providence has placed me, and were designed only for their use, profit, and education. Had I had any thoughts of publishing it to the world when I entered upon it, perhaps it might have appeared with some little more advantage than now it does; nor had it appeared now, had not the importunity of the people to whom I minister, with others, obliged me to it; to which I the more readily complied, considering that the authority and usefulness of this book are called in question in this loose and degenerate age; in which, not only this, but all scripture is ridiculed and burlesqued, and the great doctrines of faith therein contained treated with the utmost sneer and contempt; and therefore would willingly contribute all I can towards the vindicating of this, or any other part of the sacred writings; which, being given by inspiration of God, are “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.”

### **A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW’S GOSPEL (Part 1)**



A Commentary On Matthew’s Gospel (KJV), Part 1 Paperback  
– 10 Sep 2019

by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

Paperback: 291 pages

Publisher: Independently published (10 Sept. 2019)

Language: English

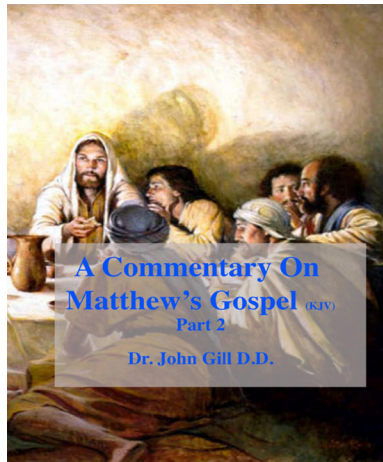
ISBN-10: 1688990348

ISBN-13: 978-1688990340

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 1.7 x 27.9 cm

Matthews gospel was the first published somewhere between 31 and 39 AD. It contains the essence of those things the Lord Jesus commanded his 12 Apostles to teach the whole world. This commentary by Dr. John Gill is a verse by verse commentary on the book of Matthew, in two parts. Dr. John Gill was a Particular Baptist minister born in Kettering, Northamptonshire and published his commentary on whole the New Testament in 1746 -1747. He taught the doctrines of grace and wrote against the Arminianism of John Wesley. He was awarded an Honorary degree by the University of Aberdeen and was the first theologian to publish a commentary on every book of the Old and New Testament scriptures. It is hoped that this publication will assist bible student to understand the teaching of Matthew and the doctrines of grace the gospel declares. It is intended that this will serve Preterist students with clear views of reformed Soteriology.

### **A COMMENTARY ON MATTHEW'S GOSPEL (Part 2)**



A Commentary On Matthew's Gospel (kJV), Part 2 Paperback –  
10 Sep 2019

by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

Paperback: 289 pages

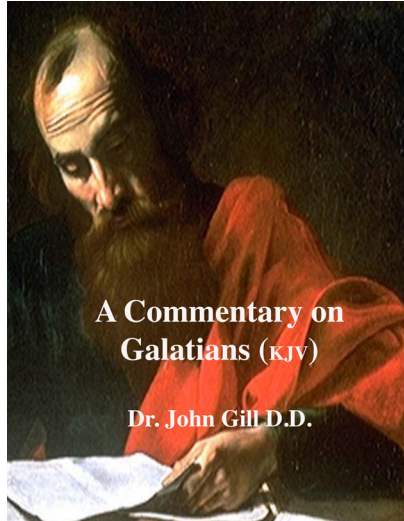
Publisher: Independently published (10 Sept. 2019)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1688923357

ISBN-13: 978-1688923355

**A COMMENTARY ON GALATIANS**



A Commentary On Galatians (KJV) Paperback – 14 Sep 2019  
by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

Paperback: 120 pages

Publisher: Independently published (14 Sept. 2019)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1693158035

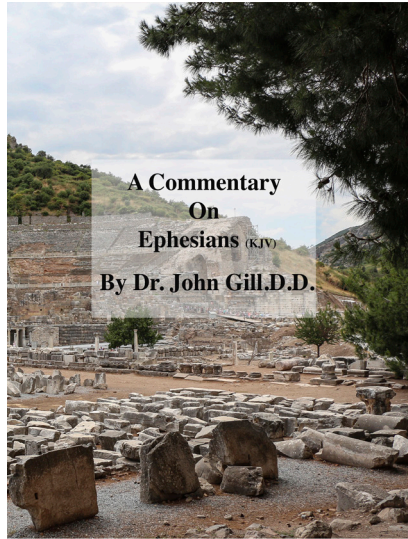
ISBN-13: 978-1693158032

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 0.7 x 27.9 cm

The Galatian epistle was probably the first epistle of Paul the Apostle. It was written to deal with Judaisers who taught the Gentiles must to be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. This was soon after he had been to Galatia on his second missionary journey and had delivered the decrees of the Jerusalem Council. Paul's epistles 1st and 2nd Thessalonians was shortly to follow. It was Written about 51 A.D. John Gill was an 18C theologian and writes his commentary on every verse of this epistle. Dr. John Gill held to high Calvinistic Soteriology and was a Particular Baptists teaching the doctrines of grace. This commentary is that which Gill published in his

Commentary of the whole of the New Testament published in 1738.

## A COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS



A Commentary On Ephesians (KJV) Paperback – 29 Feb 2020  
by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), david Clarke (Editor)

Paperback: 109 pages

Publisher: Independently published (29 Feb. 2020)

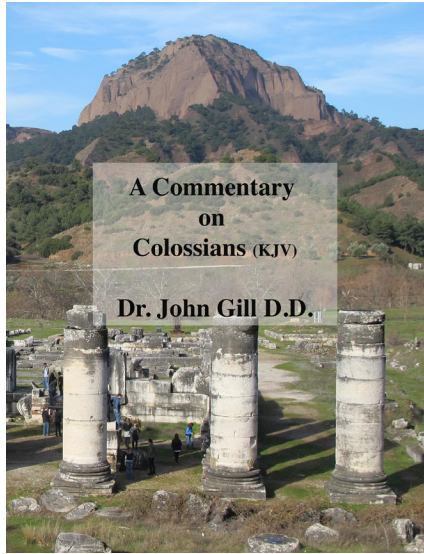
Language: English

ISBN-13: 979-8619841367

ASIN: B085D872KN

The Apostle Paul first went to Ephesus after he had been at Corinth, though he then made but a short stay; when he came thither again, he found twelve disciples, and was the instrument of making a great many more: here he continued two or three years and formed a Gospel church, very large and flourishing, to whom he writes this epistle; and which was written by him when he was a prisoner at Rome, as appears by several passages in it, Eph 3:1 4:1 6:20, and seems to have been written much about the same time as were the epistles to the Philippians, and to the Colossians, and to Philemon. Dr. Hammond thinks it was written about the year 58, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in 59, and the fifth year off Nero.

## A COMMENTARY ON COLOSSIANS



A Commentary On Colossians (KJV) Paperback – 4 Mar 2020  
by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

Paperback: 93 pages

Publisher: Independently published (4 Mar. 2020)

Language: English

ISBN-13: 979-8621440527

ASIN: B085H6M5LQ

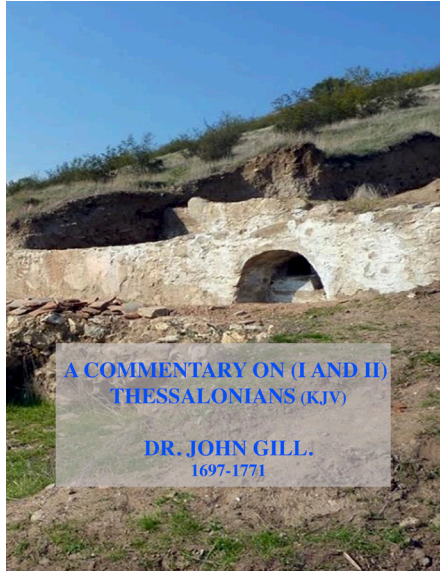
Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 0.5 x 27.9 cm

The Colossians, to whom this epistle is written, were not the Rhodians, by some called Colossians, from Colossus, the large statue of the sun, which stood in the island of Rhodes, and was one of the seven wonders of the world; but the inhabitants of Colosse, a city of the greater Phrygia, in the lesser Asia, near to which stood the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis, mentioned in this epistle. Pliny {a} speaks of it as one of the chief towns in Phrygia, and {b} Herodotus calls it the great city of Phrygia; it is said to have perished a very little time after the writing of this epistle, with the above cities, by an earthquake, in the year of Christ 66, and in the tenth of Nero {c}; though it was afterwards rebuilt; for Theophylact says, that in his time it was called Chonae. When the Gospel was brought hither, and

by whom, is not known, nor who was the founder of the church in this place; for the Apostle Paul was not, since his face had never been seen by them, Col 2:1, though it is said that Epaphras, the same name with Epaphroditus, was fixed by him pastor of this church; and others say Philemon was set over it by him. The occasion of this epistle was this, Epaphras, who had preached the Gospel to the Colossians, and very likely was the first that did, came to Rome, where the Apostle Paul was a prisoner, and gave him an account of them, how they had heard and received the Gospel, and of their faith Christ, and love to the saints; and also declared to him in what danger they were through some false teachers that had got among them, who were for introducing the philosophy of the Gentiles, the ceremonies of the law of Moses, and some pernicious tenets of the followers of Simon Magus, and the Gnostics; upon which the apostle writes this epistle to them, to confirm them in the faith of the Gospel Epaphras had preached unto them, and which was the same he himself preached; and to warn them against those bad men, and their principles; and to exhort them to a discharge of their duty to God, and men, and one another. It was written by the apostle, when in bonds at Rome, as many passages in it show, and about the same time with those to the Philippians and Ephesians; and the epistle to the latter greatly agrees with this, both as to subject and style. Dr. Lightfoot places it in the year of Christ 60, in the second of the apostle's imprisonment, and in the sixth of Nero's reign.



## A COMMENTARY ON 1 and 2 THESSALONIANS



A Commentary on (1 and 2) Thessalonians (KJV) Paperback –

8 Sep 2019

by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Editor)

Paperback: 100 pages

Publisher: Independently published (8 Sept. 2019)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1691907227

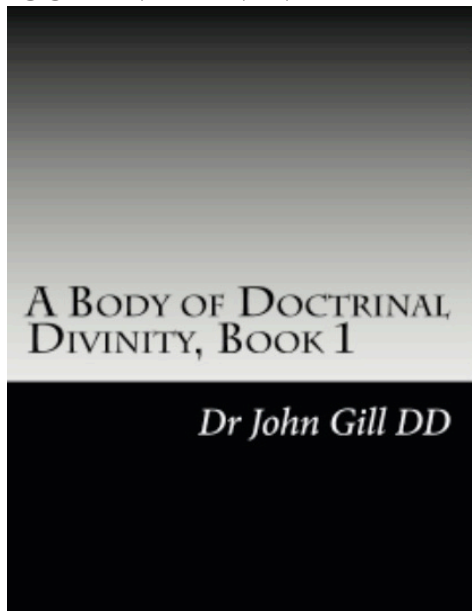
ISBN-13: 978-1691907229

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 0.6 x 27.9 cm

The two epistles of the apostle Paul to the Thessalonians were written between A.D. 51 and 53. Paul had taught them about the great tribulation that would usher in the Day of The Lord (Second Coming, Resurrection and Judgment). It was due to the heavy local persecution they were tempted to think the Day of the Lord must have arrived. But Paul reminds them of all those things that were still yet to happen before the Day of the Lord could come. Ed. Stevens in his book, 'The Decade Before the End', writes; The revealing of the Man of Lawlessness had to occur before the Day of the Lord (the Parousia). Note that this epistle was written in AD 52-53, at least

one year before Nero became Emperor (AD 54). His adopted father (Claudius) was still reigning. However, it seems more likely that the Man of Sin was fulfilled by Eleazar b. Ananias, the son of the same Ananias who arrested and tried Apostle Paul in AD 58. This may shed some light on Paul's comments in 2 Thessalonians 2 that the Man of Lawlessness would not be revealed until the revolt in AD 66. Eleazar was the instigator of that revolt. Dr. Gill held historic views on eschatology and it is intended that this publication will lead the reader to study fulfilled views of prophecy.

### **A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY 1**



#### **A System of Practical Truths**

A Body Of Doctrinal Divinity, Book I: Of God, His Word, Names, Nature, Perfections, And Persons Paperback – 14 Jan 2020

Paperback: 192 pages

Publisher: Independently published (14 Jan. 2020)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1660201942

ISBN-13: 978-1660201945

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 1.1 x 27.9 cm

by Dr. John Gill D.D. (Author), David Clarke (Editor)



BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

THIS IS BOOK 1 Of The Seven Books Treating The Subjects:  
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2 Of The Holy Scriptures

3 Of The Names Of God

4 Of The Nature Of God

5 Of The Attributes Of God In General, And Of His  
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6 Of The Infinity Of God,

7 Of The Life Of God.

8 Of The Omnipotence Of God.

9 Of The Omniscience Of God.

10 Of The Wisdom Of God.

11 Of The Will Of God And The Sovereignty Of It

12 Of The Love Of God

13 Of The Grace Of God.

14 Of The Mercy Of God.

15 Of The Long suffering Of God.

16 Of The Goodness Of God.

17 Of The Anger And Wrath Of God.

18 Of The Hatred Of God.

19 Of The Joy Of God.

20 Of The Holiness Of God.

21 Of The Justice Or Righteousness Of God.

22 Of The Veracity Of God.

23 Of The Faithfulness Of God

24 Of The Sufficiency And Perfection  
Of God.

25 Of The Blessedness Of God.

26 Of The Unity Of God.

27 Of A Plurality In The Godhead, Or, A Trinity Of Persons In The  
Unity Of The

Divine Essence.

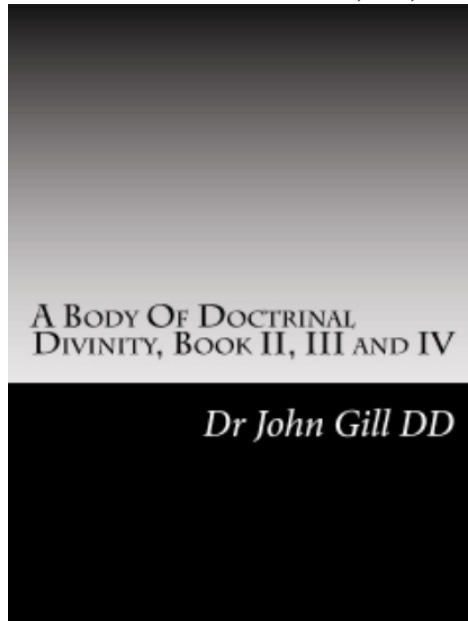
28 Of The Personal Relations; Or, Relative Properties, Which Distinguish The Three Divine Persons In The Deity.

29 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Father.

30 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Son.

31 Of The Distinct Personality, And Deity Of The Holy Spirit.

**BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY II, III, IV**



**A System Of Practical Truths**

A Body Of Doctrinal Divinity, Book II,III and IV: A System Of Practical Truths: 2-4 Paperback – 17 Mar 2017

by Dr John Gill DD (Author), David Clarke CertEd (Author)

Paperback: 212 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (17 Mar. 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1544656440

ISBN-13: 978-1544656441

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 1.2 x 27.9 cm

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke Cert.Ed

**The contents of Book II treats the subject of Of The Acts and Works of God**

Chapter I Of The Internal Acts And Works Of God; And Of His Decrees In General

Chapter II Of The Special Decrees Of God, Relating To Rational Creatures, Angels, And Men; And Particularly Of Election.

Chapter III Of The Decree Of Rejection, Of Some Angels, And Of Some Men.

Chapter IV Of The Eternal Union Of The Elect Of God Unto Him.

Chapter V Of Other Eternal And Immanent Acts In God, Particularly Adoption And Justification.

Chapter VI Of The Everlasting Council Between The Three Divine Persons, Concerning The Salvation Of Men.

Chapter VII Of The Everlasting Covenant Of Grace, Between The Father, And The Son, And The Holy Spirit.

Chapter VIII

Of The Part Which The Father Takes In The Covenant.

Chapter IX Of The Part The Son Of God, The Second Person, Has Taken In The Covenant.

Chapter X Of Christ, As The Covenant Head Of The Elect

Chapter XI Of Christ, The Mediator Of The Covenant

Chapter XII Of Christ, The Surety Of The Covenant.

Of Christ, The Testator Of The Covenant

Chapter XIV Of The Concern The Spirit Of God Has In The Covenant Of Grace.

Chapter XV Of The Properties Of The Covenant Of Grace

Chapter XVI Of The Complacency And Delight God Had In Himself, And The Divine Persons In Each Other, Before Any Creature Was Brought Into Being.

**Book III treats the subjects Of The External Works Of God.**

Chapter 1 Of Creation In General

Chapter 2 Of The Creation Of Angels

Chapter 3 Of The Creation Of Man

Chapter 4 Of The Providence Of God

Chapter 5 Of The Confirmation Of The Elect Angels, And The Fall Of The Non-Elect.

Chapter 6 Of The Honour And Happiness Of Man In A State Of Innocency.

Chapter 7 Of The Law Given To Adam, And The Covenant Made With Him In His State Of Innocence; In Which He Was The Federal Head And Representative Of His Posterity.

Chapter 8 Of The Sin And Fall Of Our First Parents.

Chapter 9 Of The Nature, Aggravations, And Sad Effects Of The Sin Of Man.

Chapter 10 Of The Imputation Of Adam's Sin To All His Posterity

Chapter 11 Of The Of The Corruption Of Human Nature.

Chapter 12 Of Actual Sins And Transgressions.

Chapter 13 Of The Punishment Of Sin

#### **Contents Book IV.**

Of The Acts Of The Grace Of God Towards And Upon His Elect In Time

Chapter 1 Of The Manifestation And Administration Of The Covenant Of Grace

Chapter 2 Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace In The Patriarchal State

Chapter 3 Of The Exhibitions Of The Covenant Of Grace Under The Mosaic Dispensation

Chapter 4 Of The Covenant Of Grace, As Exhibited In The Times Of David, And The Succeeding Prophets, To The Coming Of Christ

Chapter 5 Of The Abrogation Of The Old Covenant, Or First Administration Of It, And The Introduction Of The New, Or Second Administration Of It.

Chapter 6 Of The Law Of God

Chapter 7 Of The Gospel

#### **Table of Contents Book V**

Chapter 1 Of The Incarnation Of Christ

Chapter 2 Of Christ's State Of Humiliation

Chapter 3 Of The Active Obedience Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation

Chapter 4 Of The Passive Obedience Of Christ,

Or Of His Sufferings And Death

Chapter 5 Of The Burial Of Christ

Chapter 6 Of The Resurrection Of Christ

From The Dead.

Chapter 7 Of The Ascension Of Christ To Heaven

Chapter 8 Of The Session Of Christ At The Right Hand Of God

Chapter 9 Of The Prophetic Office Of Christ

Chapter 10 Of The Priestly Office Of Christ

Chapter 11 Of The Intercession Of Christ

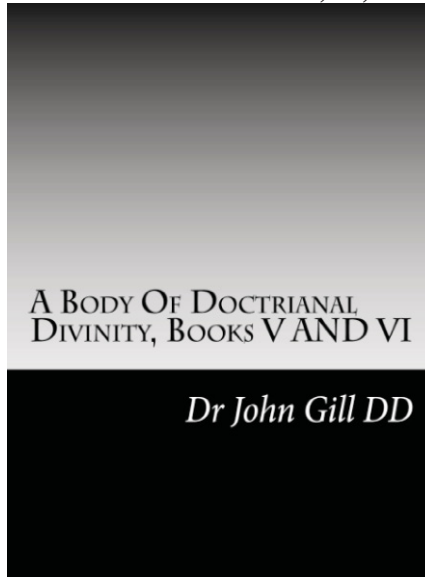
Chapter 12 Of Christ's Blessing His People

As A Priest

Chapter 13 Of The Kingly Office Of Christ

Chapter 14 Of The Spiritual Reign Of Christ

**A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY, V, VI.**



**A System Of Practical Truths**

A Body Of Doctrinal Divinity, Books V AND VI: A System of  
Practical Truths: Volume 5 Paperback – 4 Apr 2017

by Dr John Gill DD (Author), David Clarke CertEd (Author)

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (4 April  
2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1545145474

ISBN-13: 978-1545145470

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 1.2 x 27.9 cm

**Book V**

Of The Grace Of Christ In His State Of Humiliation And Exaltation,  
And In The Offices Exercised By Him In Them.

Chapter 1 Of The Incarnation Of Christ

Chapter 2 Of Christ's State Of Humiliation

Chapter 3 Of The Active Obedience Of Christ In His State Of  
Humiliation.

Chapter 4 Of The Passive Obedience Of Christ, Or Of His Sufferings  
And Death.

Chapter 5 Of The Burial Of Christ.

Chapter 6 Of The Resurrection Of Christ From The Dead.

Chapter 7 Of The Ascension Of Christ To Heaven.

Chapter 8 Of The Session Of Christ At The Right Hand Of God.

Chapter 9 Of The Prophetic Office Of Christ.

Chapter 10 Of The Priestly Office Of Christ.

Chapter 11 Of The Intercession Of Christ

Chapter 12 Of Christ's Blessing His People As A Priest

Chapter 13 Of The Kingly Office Of Christ

Chapter 14 Of The Spiritual Reign Of Christ

**Book VI**

Chapter 1 Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 2 Of The Causes Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 3 Of The Objects Of Redemption By Christ

Chapter 4 Of Those Texts Of Scripture Which Seem To Favour  
Universal Redemption

Chapter 5 Of The Satisfaction Of Christ

Chapter 6 Of Propitiation, Atonement, And Reconciliation, As  
Ascribed To Christ

Chapter 7 Of The Pardon Of Sin

Chapter 8 Of Justification

Chapter 9 Of Adoption

Chapter 10 Of The Liberty Of The Sons Of God

Chapter 11 Of Regeneration

Chapter 12 Of Effectual Calling

Chapter 13 Of Conversion

Chapter 14 Of Sanctification

Chapter 15 Of The Perseverance Of The Saints

Chapter 9 Of Adoption Of The Liberty Of The Sons Of God

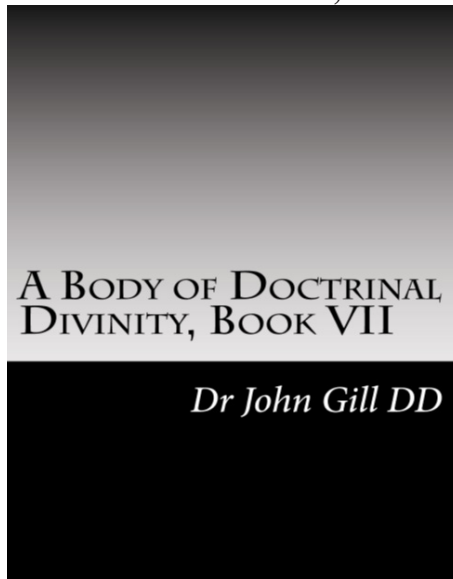
Chapter 11 Of Regeneration

Chapter 12 Of Effectual Calling

Chapter 14 Of Sanctification

Chapter 15 of the perseverance of the saints

**A BODY OF DOCTRINAL DIVINITY, VII**



**A System Of Practical Truths**

Authored by Dr John Gill DD, Created by David Clarke CertEd

List Price: \$7.99

8.5" x 11" (21.59 x 27.94 cm)

Black & White on White paper

118 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1544177342 (CreateSpace-Assigned)

ISBN-10: 1544177348

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Systematic

**Contents**

Chapter 1 Of The Death Of The Body



Chapter 2 Of The Immortality Of The Soul

Chapter 3 Of The Separate State Of The Soul Until The Resurrection,And Its Employment In That State

Chapter 4 Of The Resurrection Of The Body

Chapter 5 Of The Second Coming Of Christ, And His Personal Appearance

Chapter of Of The Conflagration Of The Universe

Chapter 7 Of The New Heavens And Earth,And The Inhabitants Of Them.

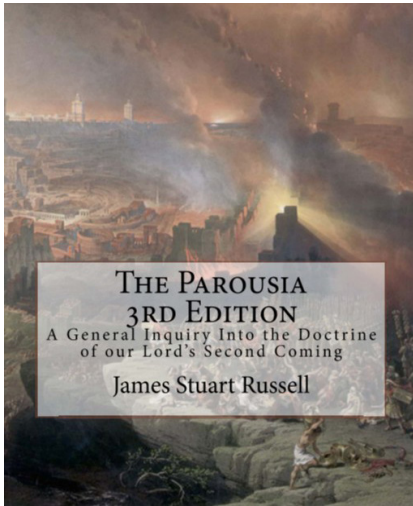
Chapter 8 Of The Millennium Or Personal Reign Of Christ With The Saints On The New Earth A Thousand Years

Chapter 9 Of The Last And General Judgment

Chapter 10 Of The Final State Of The Wicked In Hell

Chapter 11 Of The Final State Of The Saints In Heaven

## **THE PAROUSIA**



The Parousia 3rd Edition: A General Inquiry Into the Doctrine of our Lord's Second Coming Paperback – 8 Feb 2018

by James Stuart Russell (Author), Don Preston (Foreword), Ed. Stevens (Afterword), David Clarke (Creator)

Paperback: 268 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (8

Feb. 2018)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1985191199

ISBN-13: 978-1985191198

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 1.5 x 27.9 cm

A revolution of sorts is taking place in modern evangelical Christianity. And while many who are joining in and helping promote this movement are not even aware of it, the book you hold in your hand has contributed greatly to initiating this new reformation. This “new” movement is sometimes called full preterism, (Also, and preferably by this writer, Covenant Eschatology). It is the belief that all Bible prophecy is fulfilled.

The famous evangelist Charles H. Spurgeon was deeply impressed with the scholarly, solid research in the book, although he did not accept the “final” conclusions reached by Russell. In modern times, this work has, and continues to impress those who read it. The reason is simple, the New Testament is emphatic and unambiguous in positing Christ’s coming and the end of the age for the first century generation. To say this has troubled both scholars and laymen alike is an understatement of massive proportions.

This book first appeared in 1878 (anonymously), and again in 1887 with author attribution. The book was well known in scholarly circles primarily and attracted a good bit of attention, both positive and negative. The public, however, seemed almost unaware of the stunning conclusions and the research supporting those conclusions, until or unless they read of Russell’s work in the footnotes of the commentaries.

Scholars have recognized and grappled with this imminence element, that is the stated nearness of the day of the Lord, seldom finding satisfactory answers. Scholars such as David Strauss accused Jesus of failure. Later, Bultmann said that every school boy knows that Jesus predicted his coming and the end of the world for his generation, and every school boy knows it did not happen. C.S. Lewis also could not resolve the apparent failed eschatology. Bertrand Russell rejected Christianity due to the failed eschatology - as he perceived it - of Jesus and the Bible writers. As a result of these

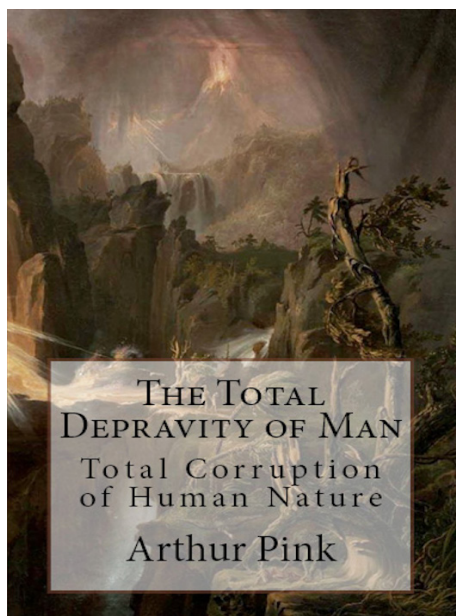
“skeptical” authors, modern Bible scholarship has followed in their path and Bible commentaries today almost casually assert the failure of the Bible writers - and Jesus - in their eschatological predictions.

This is where Russell’s work is of such importance. While Russell was not totally consistent with his own arguments and conclusions, nonetheless, his work is of tremendous importance and laid the groundwork for the modern revolution known as the preterist movement.

Russell systematically addressed virtually every New Testament prediction of the eschaton. With incisive clarity and logical acumen, he sweeps aside the almost trite objections to the objective nature of the Biblical language of imminence. With excellent linguistic analysis, solid hermeneutic and powerful exegetical skills, Russell shows that there is no way to deny that Jesus and his followers not only believed in a first century, end of the age parousia, but, they taught it as divine truth claiming the inspiration of the Holy Spirit as their authority.

Russell not only fully established the undeniable reality of the first century imminence of “the end,” he powerfully and carefully shares with the reader that “the end” that Jesus and the N.T. writers were anticipating was not the end of the time space continuum (end of the world). It was in fact, the end of the Old Covenant Age of Israel that arrived with the cataclysmic destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple in AD 70. Russell properly shows how the traditional church has so badly missed the incredible significance of the end of that Old Covenant Age.

Russell’s work is a stunning rejection – and corrective -- of what the “Orthodox” historical “Creedal” church has and continues to affirm. The reader may well find themselves wondering how the “divines” missed it so badly! Further, the reader will discover that Russell’s main arguments are an effective, valid and true assessment of Biblical eschatology. And make no mistake, eschatology matters.

**THE TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN**

The Total Depravity of Man: Total Corruption of Human Nature  
Paperback – 6 Jun 2016

by Arthur Pink (Author), David Clarke (Author)

Paperback: 338 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (6 Jun.  
2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1533196028

ISBN-13: 978-1533196026

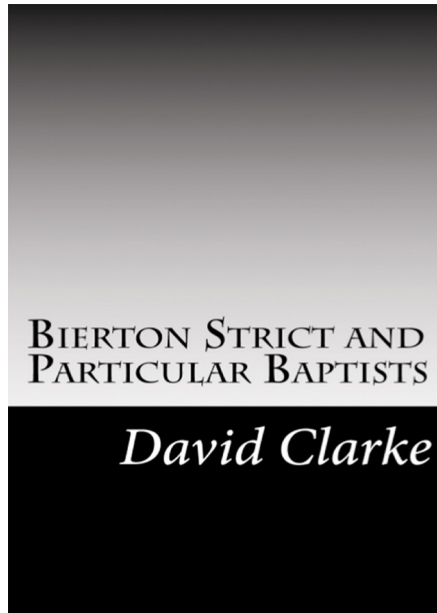
Product Dimensions: 13.3 x 2 x 20.3 cm

This republication of A.W. Pink's work, *The Total Depravity of Man*, is intended to introduce Christians, of this generation, to those truths that seem to have been lost among Evangelical Christians. It is believed that a right understanding of man's fall in Adam will lead the believer to see the necessity salvation by the a sovereign choice, by God, of men to salvation and the reality of particular redemption. These doctrines are known as the doctrines of grace some times referred to as Calvinism. These truth are held by Particular Baptists

to this day as can be read in the First London Baptist Confession of faith, of 1644. These truths have met with opposition from various quarters resulting in controversy not only from Arminian's but also among Calvinists. It is intended that his book will help the believer come to a biblical understanding of the total depravity and inability for man to save him self and that mans salvation depended entirely upon the grace and mercy of God alone. That the gospel of Christ declares this truth very clearly and is the antidote to all false religion.

## **BIERTON STRICT AND PARTICULAR BAPTISTS**

**2nd Edition**



Paperback: 356 pages

2 edition (16 Feb. 2015)

ISBN-10: 1519553285

ISBN-13: 978-1519553287

Product Dimensions: 13.3 x 2.1 x 20.3 cm

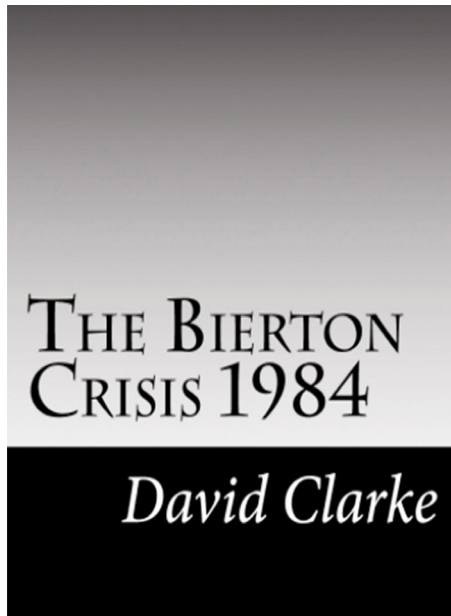
[www.Amazon.co.uk](http://www.Amazon.co.uk)

This book tells the story and life of David Clarke in the form of an autobiography. It is no ordinary book in that David and his brother were both notorious criminals in the 60's, living in Aylesbury,

Buckinghamshire, where they were MODs and were both sent to prison for and malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license . They were however both converted from crime to Christ and turned their lives around. This story tells of David's conversion to Christianity in 1970 and that of Michael's conversion, 1999 some 30 years later. It tells of their time in HMP Canterbury Prison and David's time in HMP Wormwood Scrubs and Dover Borstal. It also tells of David's criminal activity and the crimes he committed before his miraculous conversion from crime to Christ, during a bad experience on LSD, in 1970. It tells how he became a Christian over night and how he learned to read in order to come to a fuller knowledge of the gospel. He learned to read through reading the bible and classical Christian literature. David tells of the events that led to him making a confession to the police about 24 crimes he had committed since leaving Dover Borstal in 1968 and of the court case where he was not sentenced. It tells how David's educated himself and went on to Higher education, and graduated with a Certificate in Education and how he went on to teach Electronics, for over 20 years, in colleges of Higher and Further Education. It tells of his life as a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church, which was a Gospel Standard cause, and how he was called by the Lord and sent by the church to preach the gospel. David tells of the various difficulties that he faced once he discovered the many doctrinal errors amongst the various Christian groups he met and of the opposition that he experience when he sought to correct them. David recorded his experience and finding in his book "The Bierton Crisis" 1984, written to help others. David's tells how his brother Michael was untouched by his conversion in 1970 and continued his flamboyant lifestyle ending up doing a 16 year prison sentence, in the Philippines, in 1996. David tells how Michael too was converted to Christianity through reading C.S. Lewis's book, "Mere Christianity", and him being convinced that Jesus was the Christ the Son of the living God. David then tells of his mission to the Philippines, to bring help and assistance to Michael, in 2001 and of their joint venture in helping in the rehabilitation of many former convicted criminals, not only in New Bilibid Prison but other Jails in the Philippines. David tells how

he felt compelled to write this story in his book , “Converted On LSD Trip”. once he got news of his brothers arrest, in the Philippines, via ITN Television news broadcast, in 1995. This book was published when he got news of his brothers conversion from crime to Christ in 1999, which was after serving 5 years of his 16 year sentence. This story is told in their joint book, “Trojan Warriors”, that contains the testimonies of 66 notorious criminals who too had turned there lives around, from crime to Christ, 22 of which testimonies are men on Death Row. David say he believes his story could be of great help to any one seeking to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but sadly Michael died in New Bilibid Prison of tuberculosis, in 2005 before their vision of bringing help to many was realized.

### **THE BIERTON CRISIS**



List Price: \$11.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

256 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1508465959

ISBN-10: 1508465959

## BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / Apologetics

The Bierton Crisis is the personal story of David Clarke a member of the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptist church. He was also the church secretary and minister sent by the church to preach the gospel in 1982.

The Bierton Church was formed in 1832 and was a Gospel Standard cause who's rules of membership are such that only the church can terminate ones membership.

This tells of a crisis that took place in the church in 1984, which led to some members withdrawing support. David, the author, was one of the members who withdrew but the church did not terminate his membership as they wished him return.

This story tells in detail about those errors in doctrine and practices that had crept into the Bierton church and of the lengths taken to put matters right. David maintained and taught Particular Redemption and that the gospel was the rule of life for the believer and not the law of Moses as some church members maintained.

This story tells of the closure of the Bierton chapel when David was on mission work in the Philippines in December 2002 and when the remaining church members died. It tells how David was encouraged by the church overseer to return to Bierton and re-open the chapel.

On David's return to the UK he learned a newly unelected set of trustees had take over the responsibility for the chapel and were seeking to sell it. The story tells how he was refused permission to re open or use the chapel and they sold it as a domestic dwelling, in 2006.

These trustees held doctrinal views that opposed the Bierton church and they denied David's continued membership of the church in order to lay claim too and sell the chapel, using the money from the sale of the chapel for their own purposes.

David hopes that his testimony will promote the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set out in the doctrines of grace, especially Particular Redemption and the rule of life for the believer being the gospel of Christ, the royal law of liberty, and not the law of Moses as some reformed Calvinists teach, will be realized by the reader.



His desire is that any who are called to preach the gospel should examine their own standing and ensure that they can derive from scripture the doctrines and practices they teach and advance and that they can derive the truths they teach from scripture alone and not from the traditions of men or their opinions however well they may be thought of.

### **About the Author**

David Clarke was born in Oldham Lancashire, in 1949. He was educated and trained as a lecturer, at Wolverhampton Polytechnic, and graduated with a Certificate in Education, awarded by Birmingham University, in 1978. He became a Christian after a bad experience on LSD and joined the Bierton Strict and Particular Baptists church, in 1976. The church became a Gospel Standard cause on 16th January 1981. He became the church secretary and was called by the Lord and sent to preach by the church in 1982. The Bierton Chapel closed in 2002.

However his earlier life had been rather different. He and his brother Michael were both convicted criminals living in Aylesbury in then 60's and were sent to prison for malicious wounding and carrying a fire arm without a license.

On the 16th January 1970, David had a bad trip on LSD, during which time he called out to God to help him and Jesus spoke to him. He learned to read to educate himself and went on to Higher Education and for the next 14 years read the bible, various classical Christian literature it was then he joined the Bierton Church.

Due to errors in doctrine and practice David withdrew from the Bierton church over issues of conscience however due to the strict rules of membership he remained in membership of the church. Those issues of conscience are discussed in this book "The Bierton Crisis".

Michael, was unaffected by David's conversion and continued his flamboyant style and was arrested 25 years later and sentenced to prison for a 16 years prison, in the Philippines. When David got news of brother's conversion from crime to Christ, in 1999, he published their story in his book, "Converted on LSD Trip".

David then went on a mission of help to his brother and they

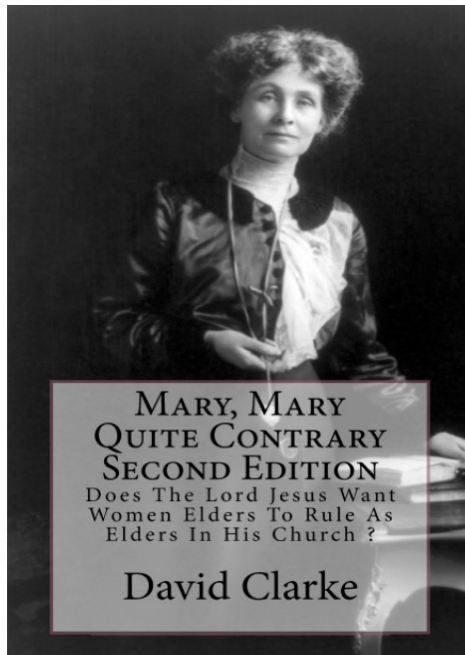
worked together in assisting many former criminals in New Bilibid Prison, on their road of reformation, This story is told in their book, “Trojan Warriors”.

On his return from mission work in the Philippines in 2003, he was encouraged, by the Bierton church overseer, to re open the chapel. To his dismay he discovered that the unregistered trust deed of the chapel had been passed on to a set of trustees that were not elected by the church. They were not sympathetic to the doctrinal views of the Bierton church and refused permission for him to reopen the chapel. They also denied his church membership in London Central County Court, in 2006. They sold the chapel and used the money from the sale for their own use. This book relates this story.

## **MARY, MARY QUITE CONTRARY**

### **Second Edition:**

DOES THE LORD JESUS WANT WOMEN TO RULE  
As Elders In His Church ?



(This is the foreword by Dr. Ken Matto)  
Scion of Zion Internet Ministry

[www.scionofzion.com](http://www.scionofzion.com)

ist Price: \$8.99

5.25" x 8" (13.335 x 20.32 cm)

Black & White on White paper

154 pages

ISBN-13: 978-1514206812

ISBN-10: 1514206811

BISAC: Religion / Christian Theology / General

This second edition is a true story telling how David Clarke, the author, encountered opposition from the elders of a church, in England who were intent on appointing women as elders. David believed this was wrong and clearly going against the word of God. The New Testament forbids a woman from teaching and being appointed as an elder in a church, with good reason this is not chauvinism but the wisdom of God. It is hoped this book will be a help to many. It is written due to the various responses already received, some in positive favour and others the complete opposite. Your response would be valued.

Some believe we live in a day of rank apostasy, that was spoken about in scripture, that would occur before the coming again of the Lord Jesus Christ and is now not limited to the unbelieving nominal Christian society because much of it is accepted by the professing Christian world. David Clarke hits head on one of the tenets of the apostasy, which has exploded internationally. It is believed by some that a time like this had been prophesied by Isaiah. Isaiah 3:12 (KJV), "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths".

The tenet which David Clarke hits head on is the one of women preachers and women elders in the churches. Isaiah states that women were ruling over the people of God, when the men should have been in leadership roles. The Scripture states that "they which lead thee cause thee to err."

In this book you will find a confrontation between elders and the word of God. When church leaders neglect the truths of Scripture and base everything they believe on as their "personal opinion", then the paths have been destroyed for the Christian, as Isaiah teaches.

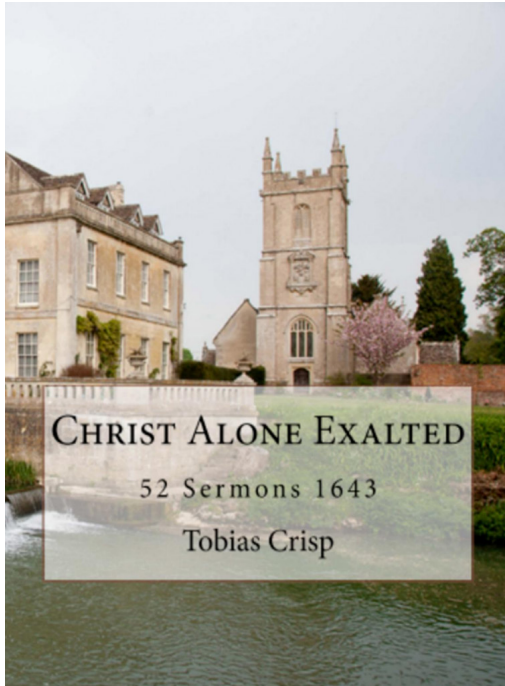
One of the outgrowths of the charismatic movement, is the teaching that women are just as qualified as men to be elders and pastors. This is not to say that women are lacking leadership qualities but the Bible is very clear that they are not to rule over men and are not to have rule in the churches. It is unfortunate that many feminized men in the church kowtow behind the concept that disallowing women rule in the churches is not showing them love. The reality is that being disobedient to the commands of Scripture is nothing more than rebellion against God. 1 Samuel 15:3 speaks about rebellion being as the sin of witchcraft. God has given specific instructions concerning the churches and their structure and who are we to claim that we know more than God.

The deep apostasy which many churches have accepted is made visible in this book but not only churches, Bible colleges have also acquiesced to disobeying the Bible and have endorsed women rulers in the church. It is a shame that those who bring the truth are considered the troublemakers in the churches. Tell me, what kind of love do you show someone when you actually help them to be disobedient to God? Will they still love you when they are in hell paying for their sins of rebellion?

It is time for Christian men to step up and be men. 1 Corinthians 16:13 (KJV), "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong".

David believes that if any believer, teacher, preacher or minister is wrong over this issues he testified too then he cannot help but be wrong in his teaching regarding salvation, church order, family order and eschatology. David would really value anyone who could prove him wrong.

This book needs to be in the library of all Christians to help them oppose the incursion of women rulers in the church. It is still not too late to bring about a repentance on the part of church leaders for allowing themselves to be swayed by false teaching. A strong church obeys God, a weak and dying one disobeys God, regardless of how many attend.

**CHRIST ALONE EXALTED**

Christ Alone Exalted: 52 Sermons 1643 Paperback – 28 Sep 2017  
 by Dr Tobias Crisp D.D. (Author), Bierton Particular Baptists  
 (Author), David Clarke (Author)

Paperback: 406 pages

Publisher: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform (28 Sept.  
 2017)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1977733166

ISBN-13: 978-1977733160

Product Dimensions: 21.6 x 2.3 x 27.9 cm

Tobias Crisp was preacher of the gospel in England. He was born in 1600 and died in 1643 at which time these 13 sermons were first published. Within 3 years further sermons were published in further volumes this is the first. He lived at the time when The First London

Baptist Confession of Faith 1644 was being prepared for publishing and it is clear from these sermons he taught Calvinistic truths. He preached the doctrines of grace and was charged with being an Antinomian and provoked opposition from various quarters. Dr John Gill in defence of Crisp republished these sermons along with his own notes showing that Tobias Crisps taught clearly the truths of the lord Jesus Christ

