

The 5 Points Of Calvinism Explained¹

By Loraine Boettner

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Total Inability

1. Statement Of The Doctrine

In the Westminster Confession the doctrine of Total Inability is stated as follows: -- "Man, by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation; so as a natural man, being altogether averse from good, and dead in sin, is not able, by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto." (Ch. IX, sec. III.)

Paul, Augustine, and Calvin have as their starting point the fact that all mankind sinned in Adam and that all men are "without excuse," Rom. 2:1. Time and again Paul tells us that we are dead in trespasses and sins, estranged from God, and helpless. In writing to the Ephesian Christians he reminded them that before they received the Gospel they were "separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of the promise, having no hope and without God in the world," 2:12. There we notice the five-fold emphasis as he piles phrase on top of phrase to stress this truth.

2. The Extent And Effects Of Original Sin

This doctrine of Total Inability, which declares that men are dead in sin, does not mean that all men are equally bad, nor that any man is as bad as he could be, nor that any one is entirely destitute of virtue, nor that human nature is evil in itself, nor that man's spirit is inactive, and much less does it mean that the body is dead. What it does mean is that since the fall man rests under the curse of sin, that he is actuated by wrong principles, and that he is wholly unable to love God or to do anything meriting salvation. His corruption is extensive but not necessarily intensive.

It is in this sense that man since the fall "is utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite to all good, and wholly inclined to all evil." He possesses a fixed bias of the will against God, and instinctively and willingly turns to evil. He is an alien by birth, and a sinner by choice. The inability under which he labors is not an inability to exercise volitions, but an inability to be willing to exercise holy volitions. And it is this phase of it which led Luther to declare that "Free-will is an empty term, whose reality is lost. And a lost liberty, according to my grammar, is no liberty at all." In matters pertaining to his salvation, the unregenerate man is not at liberty to choose between good and evil, but only to choose between greater and lesser evil, which is not properly free will. The fact that fallen man still has ability to do certain acts morally good in themselves does not prove that he can do acts meriting salvation, for his motives may be wholly wrong.

Man is a free agent but he cannot originate the love of God in his heart. His will is free in the sense that it is not controlled by any force outside of himself. As the bird with a broken wing is "free" to fly but not able, so the natural man is free to come to God but not able. How can he repent of his sin when he loves it? How can he come to God when he hates Him? This is the inability of the will under which man labors. Jesus said, "And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil," John 3:19; and again, "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life," John 5:40. Man's ruin lies mainly in his own perverse will. He cannot come because he will not. Help enough is provided if he were only willing to accept it. Paul tells us, "The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can it be. So they that are in the flesh cannot please God: Rom. 8:7.

To assume that because man has ability to love he therefore has ability to love God, is about as wise as to assume that since water has the ability to flow, it therefore has the ability to flow up hill; or to reason that because a man has power to cast himself from the top of a precipice to the bottom, he therefore has equal power to transport himself from the bottom to the top.

Fallen man sees nothing desirable in "the One who is altogether lovely, the fairest among ten thousand." He may admire Jesus as a man, but he wants nothing to do with Him as God, and he resists the outward holy influences of the Spirit with all his power. Sin, and not righteousness, has become his natural element so that he has no desire for salvation.

Man's fallen nature gives rise to a most obdurate blindness, stupidity, and opposition concerning the things of God. His will is under the control of a darkened understanding, which puts sweet for bitter, and bitter for sweet, good for evil, and evil for good. So far as his relations with God are concerned, he wills only that which is evil, although he wills it freely. Spontaneity and enslavement actually exist together.

In other words, fallen man is so morally blind that he uniformly prefers and chooses evil instead of good, as do the fallen angels or demons. When the Christian is completely sanctified he reaches a state in which he uniformly prefers and chooses good, as do the holy angels. Both of these states are consistent with freedom and responsibility of moral agents. Yet while fallen man acts thus uniformly he is never compelled to sin, but does it freely and delights in it. His dispositions and desires are so inclined, and he acts knowingly and willingly from the spontaneous motion of the heart. This natural bias or appetite for that which is evil is characteristic of man's fallen and corrupt nature, so that, as Job says, he "drinketh iniquity like water," 15:16.

We read that "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned," I Cor. 2:14. We are at a loss to understand how anyone can take a plain common sense view of this passage of Scripture and yet contend for the doctrine of human ability. Man in his natural state cannot even see the kingdom of God, much less can he get into it. An uncultured person may see a beautiful work of art as an object of vision, but he has no appreciation of its excellence. He may see the figures of a complex mathematical equation, but they have no meaning for him. Horses and cattle may see the same beautiful sunset or other phenomenon in nature that men see, but they are blind to all of the artistic beauty. So it is when the Gospel of the cross is presented to the unregenerate man. He may have an intellectual knowledge of the facts and doctrines of the Bible, but he lacks all spiritual discernment of their excellence, and finds no delight in them. The same Christ is to one man without form or comeliness that he should desire Him; to another He is the Prince of life and the Savior of the world, God manifest in the flesh, whom it is impossible not to adore, love and obey.

This total inability, however, arises not merely from a perverted moral nature, but also from ignorance. Paul wrote that the Gentiles "walk in the vanity of their mind, being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart," Eph. 4:17, 18. And again, "The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God," I Cor. 1:18. When he wrote of "Things which eye saw not, and ear heard not, And which entered not into the heart of man, Whatsoever things God hath prepared for them that love Him," he had reference, not to the glories of the heavenly state as is commonly supposed, but to the spiritual realities in this life which cannot be seen by the unregenerate mind, as is made plain by the words of the following verse: "But unto us God revealed them through the Spirit," I Cor. 2:9, 10. On one occasion Jesus said, "No one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any know the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him," Matt. 11:27. Here we are plainly told that man in his unregenerate, unenlightened nature does not know God in any sense worthy the name, and that the Son is sovereign in choosing who shall come into this saving knowledge of God.

Fallen man then lacks the power of spiritual discernment. His reason or understanding is blinded, and the taste and feelings are perverted. And since this state of mind is innate, as a condition of man's nature, it is beyond the power of the will to change it. Rather it controls both the affections and volitions. The effect of regeneration is clearly taught in the divine commission which Paul received at his conversion when he was told that he was to be sent to the Gentiles "to open their eyes, that they might turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God," Acts 26:18.

Jesus taught the same truth under a different figure when He said to the Pharisees, "Why do ye not understand my speech? Even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father the Devil, and the lusts of your father it is your will to do," John 8:43, 44. They could not understand, nor even hear His words in any intelligible way. To them His words were only foolishness, madness; and they accused Him of being demon possessed (vss. 48, 52). Only His disciples could know the truth (vss. 31, 32); the Pharisees were children of the Devil (vss. 42, 44), and bondservants of sin (vs. 34). although they thought themselves free (vs. 33).

At another time Jesus taught that a good tree could not bring forth evil fruit, nor an evil tree good fruit. And since in this similitude the good and evil trees represent good and evil men, what does It mean but that one class of men is governed by one set of basic principles, while the other class is governed by another set of basic principles? The fruits of these two trees are acts, words, thoughts, which if good proceed from a good nature, and if evil proceed from an evil nature. It is impossible, then, for one and the same root to bring forth fruit of different kinds. Hence we deny the existence in man of a power which may act either way, on the logical ground that both virtue and vice cannot come out of the same moral condition of the agent. And we affirm that human actions which relate to God proceed either out of a moral condition which necessarily produces good actions or out of a moral condition which necessarily produces evil actions.

"In the Epistle to the Ephesians Paul declares that Prior to the quickening of the Spirit of God each individual soul lies dead in trespasses and sins. Now it will surely be admitted that to be dead, and to be dead in sin, is clear and positive evidence that there is neither aptitude nor Power remaining for the performance of any spiritual action. If a man were dead, in a natural and physical sense, it would at once be readily granted that there is no further Possibility of that man being able to perform any physical actions. A corpse cannot act in any way whatever, and that man would be reckoned to have taken leave of his senses who asserted that it could. If a man is dead spiritually, therefore, it is surely equally as evident that he is unable to perform any spiritual actions, and thus the doctrine of man's moral inability rests upon strong Scriptural evidence." (Warburton, Calvinism, p. 48)

"On the principle that no clean thing can come out of what is unclean (Job 14:4), all that are born of woman are declared 'abominable and corrupt,' to whose nature iniquity alone is attractive (Job 15:14-16). Accordingly, to become sinful, men do not wait until the age of accountable action arrives. Rather, they are apostates from the womb, and as soon as they are born go astray, speaking lies (Ps. 58:3); they are even shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin (Ps. 51:5). The propensity of their heart is evil from their youth (Gen. 8:21), and it is out of the heart that all the issues of life proceed (Prov. 4-23; 20-11). Acts of sin are therefore but the expression of the natural heart, which is deceitful above all things and exceedingly corrupt (Jer. 17:9)." (Warfield, Biblical Doctrines, p.440)

Ezekiel presents this same truth in graphic language and gives us the picture of the helpless infant which was cast out in its blood and left to die, but which the Lord graciously found and cared for (Ch. 16).

This doctrine of original sin supposes that fallen men have the same kind and degree of liberty in sinning under the influence of a corrupt nature as have the Devil and the demons, or that the saints in glory and the

holy angels have in acting rightly under the influence of a holy nature. That is, men and angels act according to their natures. As the saints and angels are confirmed in holiness, -- that is, possessed of a nature which is wholly inclined to righteousness and adverse to sin, --so the nature of fallen men and of demons is such that they cannot perform a single act with right motives toward God. Hence the necessity that God shall sovereignly change the person's character in regeneration.

The Old Testament ceremonies of circumcision of the new-born child, and of purification of the mother, were designed to teach that man comes into the world sinful that since the fall human nature is corrupt in its very origin. Paul stated this truth in another and, if possible, even stronger way in 11 Cor. 4-,3.4: "And if our Gospel is veiled it is veiled to them that perish; in whom the god of this world (by which he means the Devil) hath blinded the minds of the unbelieving, that the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ who is the image of God, should not dawn upon them." In a word, then, fallen men without the operations of The Spirit of God, are under the rule of Satan. They are led captive by him at his will, 11 Tim. 2:26. So long as this "strong man fully armed" is not molested by the "stronger than he." he keeps his kingdom in peace and his captives willingly do his bidding. But the "stronger than he" has overcome him, has taken his armor from him, and has liberated a part of his captives (Luke 11:21, 22). God now exercises the right of releasing whom He will; and all born again Christians are ransomed sinners from that kingdom.

The Scriptures declare that fallen man is a captive, a willing slave to sin, and entirely unable to deliver himself from its bondage and corruption. He is incapable of understanding, and much less of doing, the things of God. There is what we might term "the freedom of slavery,"--a state in which the subject is free only to do the will of his master, which in this case is sin. It was this to which Jesus referred when He said, "Every one that committeth sin is the bondservant of sin," John 8:34.

And such being the depth of man's corruption it is wholly beyond his own power to cleanse himself. His only hope of an amendment of life lies accordingly in a change of heart, which change is brought about by the sovereign re-creative power of the Holy Spirit who works when and where and how He pleases. As well might one attempt to pump a leaking ship while the leak is still unattended, as to reform the unregenerate without this inward change. Or as well might the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots, as he who is accustomed to do evil correct his ways. This transfer from spiritual death to spiritual life we call "regeneration." It is referred to in Scripture by various terms: "regeneration," a "making alive," a "calling out of darkness into light," a "quickenings," a "renewing," a taking away of the heart of stone and giving the heart of flesh, etc., which work is exclusively that of the Holy Spirit. As a result of this change a man comes to see the truth and gladly accepts it. His very instincts and intimate impulses are transferred to the side of law, obedience to which becomes but the spontaneous expression of his nature. Regeneration is said to be wrought by that same supernatural power which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. 1:18-20). Man does not possess the power of self-regeneration, and until this inward change takes place, he cannot be convinced of the truth of the Gospel by any amount of external testimony. "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead."

3. The Defects In Man's Common Virtues

The unregenerate man can, through common grace, love his family and he may be a good citizen. He may give a million dollars to build a hospital, but he cannot give even a cup of cold water to a disciple in the name of Jesus. If a drunkard, he may abstain from drink for utilitarian purposes, but he cannot do it out of love for God. All of his common virtues or good works have a fatal defect in that his motives which prompt them are not to glorify God, -- a defect so vital that it throws any element of goodness as to man wholly into the shade. It matters not how good the works may be in themselves, for so long as the doer of them is out of harmony with God, none of his works are spiritually acceptable. Furthermore, the good works of the

unregenerate have no stable foundation, for his nature is still unchanged: and as naturally and as certainly as the washed sow returns to her wallowing in the mire, so he sooner or later returns to his evil ways.

In the realm of morals it is a rule that the morality of the man must precede the morality of the action. One may speak with the tongues of men and of angels; yet if he is lacking that inward principle of love toward God, he is become as sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. He may give all his goods to feed the poor, and may give his body to be burned; yet if he lacks that inward principle, it profits him nothing. As human beings we know that an act of service rendered to us (by whatever utilitarian motives prompted) by someone who is at heart our enemy, does not merit our love and approbation. The Scripture statement that "Without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto God," finds its explanation in this, that faith is the foundation of all the other virtues, and nothing is acceptable to God which does not flow from right feelings.

A moral act is to be judged by the standard of love to God, which love is, as it were, the soul of all other virtue, and which is bestowed upon us only through grace. Augustine did not deny the existence of natural virtues, such as moderation, honesty, generosity, which constitute a certain merit among men; but he drew a broad line of distinction between these and the specific Christian graces (faith, love and gratitude to God, etc.), which alone are good in the strict sense of the word, and which alone have value before God. This distinction is very plainly illustrated in an example given by W. D. Smith. Says he: "In a gang of pirates we may find many things that are good in themselves. Though they are in wicked rebellion against the laws of the government, they have their own laws and regulations, which they obey strictly. We find among them courage and fidelity, with many other things that will recommend them as pirates. They may do many things, too, which the laws of the government require, but they are not done because the government has so required, but in obedience to their own regulations. For instance the government requires honesty and they may be strictly honest, one with another, in their transactions, and the division of all their spoil. Yet, as respects the government, and the general principle, their whole life is one of the most wicked dishonesty. Now, it is plain, that while they continue in their rebellion they can do nothing to recommend them to the government as citizens. Their first step must be to give up their rebellion, acknowledge their allegiance to the government, and sue for mercy. So all men, in their natural state, are rebels against God, and though they may do many things which the law of God requires, and which will recommend them as men, yet nothing is done with reference to God and His law. Instead, the regulations of society, respect for public opinion, self-interest, their own character in the sight of the world, or some other worldly or wicked motive, reigns supremely; and God, to whom they owe their heart and lives, is forgotten; or, if thought of at all, His claims are wickedly rejected, His counsels spurned, and the heart, in obstinate rebellion, refuses obedience. Now it is plain that while the heart continues in this state the man is a rebel against God, and can do nothing to recommend him to His favor. The first step is to give up his rebellion, repent of his sins, turn to God, and sue for pardon and reconciliation through the Savior. This he is unwilling to do, until he is made willing. He loves his sins, and will continue to love them, until his heart is changed."

The good actions of unregenerate men, Smith continues, "are not positively sinful in themselves, but sinful from defect. They lack the principle which alone can make them righteous in the sight of God. In the case of the pirates it is easy to see that all their actions are sin against the government. While they continue pirates, their sailing, mending, or rigging the vessel and even their eating and drinking, are all sins in the eyes of the government, as they are only so many expedients to enable them to continue their piratical career, and are parts of their life of rebellion. So with sinners. While the heart is wrong, it vitiates everything in the sight of God, even their most ordinary occupations; for the plain, unequivocal language of God is, 'Even the lamp of the wicked, is sin,' Prov. 21:4." (What is Calvinism. pp. 125-127)

It is this inability which the Scriptures teach when they declare that "They that are in the flesh cannot please God," Rom. 8:8; "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Rom. 14:23; and "Without faith it is impossible to be

well-pleasing to Him," Heb. 11:6. Hence even the virtues of the unregenerate man are but as plucked and fading flowers. It was because of this that Jesus said to His disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." And because those virtues are of this nature, they are only temporary. The one who possesses them is like the seed which falls on the stony soil, which perhaps springs up with promise of fruitage, but soon withers in the sun because it has no root in itself.

It follows also from what has been said that salvation to ABSOLUTELY AND SOLELY OF GRACE, -- that God Is free, in consistency with the infinite perfections of His nature, to save none, few, many, or all, according to the sovereign good pleasure of His will. It also follows that salvation is not based on any merits in the creature, and that it depends on God, and not on men, who are, and who are not, to be made partakers of eternal life. God acts as a sovereign in saving some and passing by others who are left to the just recompense of their sins. Sinners are compared to dead men, or even to dry bones in their entire helplessness. In this they are all alike. The choice of some to eternal life is as sovereign as if Christ were to pass through a graveyard and bid one here and another there to come forth, the reason for restoring one to life and leaving another in his grave could be found only in His good pleasure, and not in the dead themselves. Hence the statement that we are foreordained according to the good pleasure of His will, and not after the good inclinations of our own; and in order that we might be holy, not because we were holy (Eph. 1:41 5). "Since all men alike deserved only God's wrath and curse the gift of His only begotten Son to die in the stead of malefactors, as the only possible method of expiating their guilt, is the most stupendous exhibition of undeserved favor and personal love that the universe has ever witnessed." (A. A. Hodge, pamphlet, Presbyterian Doctrine, p. 23.)

4. The Fall Of Man

The fall of the human race into a state of sin and misery is the basis and foundation of the system of redemption which is set forth in the Scriptures, as it is the basis and foundation of the system which we teach. Only Calvinists seem to take the doctrine of the fall very seriously. Yet the Bible from beginning to end declares that man is ruined --totally ruined -- that he is in a state of guilt and depravity from which he is utterly unable to deliver himself, and that God might in justice have left him to perish. In the Old Testament the narrative concerning the fall is found in the third chapter of Genesis; and in the New Testament direct references are made to it in Romans 5:12-21; 1 Cor. 15:22; 11 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:13, 14, etc., although the New Testament emphasizes not the historic fact that man fell, but the ethical fact that he is fallen. The New Testament writers interpreted it literally and based their theology upon it. To Paul Adam was as real as Christ, the fall as real as the atonement. It may be maintained that the apostles were in error, but that this was their position cannot be denied.

Dr. A. A. Hodge has given us a very good statement of the doctrine of the fall which we shall take the privilege of quoting: -- "As a fair probation could not, in the nature of the case, be given to every new member in person as it comes into existence an undeveloped infant, God, as guardian of the race and for its best interests, gave all its members a trial in the person of Adam under the most favorable circumstances - making him for that end the representative and personal substitute of each one of his natural descendants. He formed with him a covenant of works and of life; i.e., He gave to him for himself, and in behalf of all whom he represented, a promise of eternal life, conditioned upon perfect obedience, -- that is, upon works. The obedience demanded was a specific test for a temporary period, which period of trial must necessarily be closed either by the reward consequent upon obedience, or the death consequent upon disobedience. The 'reward' promised was eternal life, which was a grace including far more than was originally bestowed upon Adam at his creation, the grant of which would have elevated the race into a condition of indefeasible holiness and happiness forever. The 'penalty' threatened and executed was death; 'The day thou eatest thereof

thou shalt surely die.' The nature of the death threatened can be determined only from a consideration of all that was involved in the curse actually inflicted. This we know to have included the instant withdrawal of the divine favor and spiritual intercommunion upon which man's life depended. Hence the alienation and curse of God; the sense of guilt and corruption of nature; consequent actual transgressions, the miseries of life, the dissolution of the body, the pains of hell." (A.A. Hodge, pamphlet, Presbyterian Doctrine, pp. 19, 20.)

The consequences of Adam's sin are all comprehended under the term death, in its widest sense. Paul gives us the summary statement that "The wages of sin is death." The full import of the death which was threatened to Adam can only be seen by considering all the evil consequences which have since befallen man. It was primarily spiritual death, or eternal separation from God, which was threatened; and physical death, or the death of the body, is but one of the first fruits and relatively unimportant consequences of that greater penalty. Adam did not die physically for 930 years after the fall, but he did die spiritually the very moment he fell into sin. He died just as really as the fish dies when taken from the water, or as the plant dies when taken from the soil.

"In general we cherish a very wrong idea as to how Adam fell...Adam was not tempted by Satan in a direct way ... Eve was tempted by Satan, and Eve fell being deceived. But we have inspired evidence to prove that Adam was not deceived (I Tim. 2:14). He was caught by no wiles of Satan, but that which he did, he did willfully and deliberately. And in the full consciousness of what he was doing, and with a perfect realization of the solemn consequences which were involved, he deliberately chose to follow his wife in her act of sinful disobedience. It was this deliberate willfulness of man's sin which constituted its heinous character. Had he been attacked by Satan, and forced to yield through some overwhelming power being brought against him, we might have tried to find some excuse for his fall. But when, with eyes wide open, and with mind perfectly conscious and fully aware of the awful nature of his act, he used his free will to respond to the claims of the creature in defiance of the Creator, no excuse can he found for his fall. His act, in reality, was willful, defiant rebellion, and by it he openly transferred his allegiance from God to Satan." (Warburton, Calvinism, p.34.)

And has there not been a fall - a fearful fall? The more we see of human nature as it is manifested in the world about us, the easier it is to believe in this great doctrine of original sin. Consider the world as a whole, filled as it is with murders, robberies, drunkenness, wars, broken homes, and crimes of all kinds. The thousand ingenious forms which crime and vice have assumed in the hands of regular practitioners are all tokens telling a fearful tale. A large portion of the human race today, as in all past ages, is left to live and die in the darkness of heathenism, hopelessly astray from God. Modernism and denial of every kind is rampant even in the Church. Even the religious press, so called, is strongly tinged with unbelief. Observe the general disinclination to pray, or to study the Bible, or to speak of spiritual things. Is not man now, as his progenitor Adam, fleeing from the presence of God, not wanting communion with Him, and with enmity in his heart for his Creator? Surely man's nature is radically wrong. The daily newspaper accounts of events, even in such an enlightened land as America, show that man is sinful, lost from God, and actuated by unholy principles. And the only adequate explanation of all this is that the penalty of death, which was threatened on man before the fall, now rests on the human race.

We live in a lost world, a world which if left to itself would fester in its corruption from eternity to eternity, - a world reeking with iniquity and blasphemy. The effects of the fall are such that man's will in itself tends only downward to sets of sin and folly. As a matter of fact God does not permit the race to become as corrupt as it naturally would if left to itself. He exercises restraining influences, inciting men to love one another, to be honest, philanthropic, and considerate of each others welfare. Unless God exercised these influences, wicked men would become worse and worse, overlapping conventions and social barriers, until the very zenith of lawlessness would soon be reached, and the earth would become so utterly corrupt that the elect could not live on it.

5. The Representative Principle

It is easy for us to understand how a person may act through a representative, The people of a state act in and through their representatives in the Legislature, If a country has a good president or king, all of the people share the good results; if a bad president or king, all suffer the consequences. In a very real sense parents stand representative for, and to a large extent decide the destinies of, their children. If the parents are wise, virtuous, thrifty, the children reap the blessings; but if they are indolent and immoral the children suffer. In a thousand ways the well-being of individuals is conditioned by the acts of others, so inwrought is this representative principle into our human life. Hence in the Scripture doctrine that Adam stood as the official head and representative of his people we have only the application of a principle which we see at work all about us.

Dr. Charles Hodge has very ably treated this subject in the following section: --

"This representative principle pervades the whole Scriptures. The imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity is not an isolated fact. It is only an illustration of a general principle which characterizes the dispensations of God from the beginning of the world. God declared Himself to Moses as one who visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation, Ex. 34:6, 7 The curse pronounced on Canaan fell on his posterity. Esau's selling his birthright, shut out his descendants from the covenant of promise. The children of Moab and Ammon were excluded from the congregation of the Lord forever, because their ancestors opposed the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. In the case of Nathan and Abiram, as in that of Achan, 'their wives, and their sons, and their little children perished for the sins of their parents. God said to Eli, that the iniquity of his house should not be purged with sacrifice and offering forever. To David it was said, 'The sword shall never depart from thy house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.' To the disobedient Gehazi it was said: 'The leprosy of Naaman shall cleave unto thee and unto thy seed forever.' The sin of Jeroboam and of the men of his generation determined the destiny of the ten tribes for all time. The imprecation of the Jews, when they demanded the crucifixion of Christ, 'His blood be on us and on our children,' still weighs down the scattered people of Israel This principle runs through the whole Scriptures. When God entered into covenant with Abraham, it was not for himself only but also for his posterity. They were bound by all the stipulations of the covenant. They shared its promises and its threatenings, and in hundreds of cases the penalty of disobedience came upon those who had no personal part in the transgressions. Children suffered equally with adults in the judgments, Whether famine, pestilence, or war, which came upon the people for their sins And the Jews to this day are suffering the penalty of the sins of their fathers for their rejection of Him of whom Moses and the prophets spoke. The whole plan of redemption rests on this same principle. Christ is the representative of His people, and on this ground their sins are imputed to Him and His righteousness to them No man who believes the Bible, can shut his eyes to the fact that it everywhere recognizes the representative character of parents, and that the dispensations of God have from the beginning been founded on the principle that the children bear the iniquities of their fathers. This is one of the reasons which infidels assign for rejecting the divine origin of the Scriptures. But infidelity furnishes no relief. History is as full of this doctrine as the Bible is. The punishment of the felon involves his family in his disgrace and misery. The spendthrift and drunkard entail poverty and wretchedness upon all connected with them. There is no nation now existing on the face of the earth, whose condition for weal or woe is not largely determined by the character and conduct of their ancestors ...The idea of the transfer of guilt or of vicarious punishment lies at the foundation of all the expiatory offerings under the Old Testament, and of the great atonement under the new dispensation. To bear sin, is in Scriptural language to bear the penalty of sin. The victim bore the sin of the offerer. Hands were imposed upon the head of the animal about to be slaughtered, to express the transfer of guilt. That animal must be free from all defect or blemish to make it the more apparent that its blood was shed not for its own deficiencies but for the sin of

another. All this was symbolical and typical And this is what the Scriptures teach concerning the Atonement of Christ. He bore our sins; He was made a curse for us; He suffered the penalty of the law in our stead. All this proceeds on the ground that the sins of one man can be justly, on some adequate ground, imputed to another." (Systematic Theology, II, pp. 198, 199, 201.)

The Scriptures tell us that, "By one man's disobedience the many were made sinners," Rom. 5:19. "Through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned," Rom. 5:12. "Through one trespass the judgment came unto all men to condemnation" Rom. 5:18. It is as if God had said: If sin is to enter, let it enter by one man, so that righteousness also may enter by one man.

Adam was made not only the father but also the representative of the whole human race. And if we fully understood the closeness of the relation between him and them we would fully realize the justice of the transmission of his sin to them. Adam's sin is imputed to his descendants in the same way that Christ's righteousness is imputed to those who believe in Him. Adam's descendants are, of course, no more personally guilty of his sin than Christ's redeemed are personally meritorious of His righteousness.

Suffering and death are declared to be the consequence of sin; and the reason that all die is that "all sinned." Now we know that many suffer and die in infancy, before they have committed any sin themselves. It follows that either God is unjust in punishing the innocent, or that those infants are in some way guilty creatures. And if guilty, how have they sinned? It is impossible to explain it on any other supposition than that they sinned in Adam (I Cor. 15:22; Rom. 5:12, 18); and they could not have sinned in him in any other way than by representation.

But while we are not personally guilty of Adam's sin, we are, nevertheless, liable to punishment for it. "The guilt of Adam's public sin," says Dr. A. A. Hodge, "is by a judicial act of God immediately charged to the account of each and every one of his descendants from the moment he begins to exist, and antecedently to any act of his own. Hence all men come into existence deprived of all those influences of the Holy Spirit upon which their moral and spiritual life depends and with an antecedent prevailing tendency in their natures to sin; which tendency in them is itself of the nature of sin, and worthy of punishment. Human nature since the fall retains its constitutional faculties of reason, conscience and free agency, and hence man continues to be a responsible moral agent. Yet he is spiritually dead, and totally averse to and incapable of the discharge of any of these duties which spring out of his relation to God, and entirely unable to change his own evil dispositions or innate moral tendencies, or to dispose himself to such a change, or to co-operate with the Holy Spirit in effecting such a change." (Presbyterian Doctrine, p. 21.)

And to the same general effect, Dr. R. L. Dabney, the outstanding theologian of the southern Presbyterian Church, says. "The explanation presented by the doctrine of imputation is demanded by all except Pelagians and Socinians. Man's is a spiritually dead and a condemned race. See Eph. 2:1-5, et passim. He is obviously under a curse for something, from the beginning of his life. Witness the native depravity of infants, and their inheritance of woe and death. Now, either man was tried and fell in Adam, or he has been condemned without trial. He is either under the curse (as it rests on him at the beginning of his existence) for Adam's guilt, or for no guilt at all. Judge which is most honorable to God, a doctrine which, although a profound mystery, represents Him as giving man an equitable and most favored probation in his federal head; or that which makes God condemn him untried, and even before he exists." (Theology, p. 330.)

6. The Goodness And Severity Of God

A survey of the fall and its extent is humiliating work. It proves to man that all his claims of goodness are unfounded, and it shows him that his only hope is in the sovereign grace of Almighty God. The "graciously restored ability" of which the Arminian talks is not consistent with the facts. The Scriptures, history, and Christian experience by no means warrant such a favorable view of the natural moral condition of man as the Arminian system teaches. On the contrary each of these gives us a very gloomy picture of a fearful corruption and universal inclination to evil, which can only be overcome by the intervention of divine grace. The Calvinistic system teaches a far deeper fall into sin and a far more glorious manifestation of redeeming grace. From these depths the Christian is led to despair of himself, to throw himself unconditionally into the arms of God, and to lay hold on unmerited grace, which alone can save him.

We should see God's mercy and also His severity in the spiritual and physical realms. Life is full of hard facts which, unpleasant though they may be, must simply be faced and admitted. Throughout the Scriptures, and especially in the words of Christ Himself, the final torments of the wicked are described in such ways as to show us that they are indescribably awful. In the gospel of Matthew alone see 5:29, 30; 7:19; 10:28; 11:21-24; 13:30, 41, 42, 49, 50; 18:8, 9, 34; 21:41; 22:14; 24:51; 25:12, 30, 41; and 26:24. Surely a doctrine which received such emphasis from the lips of Christ Himself cannot be passed over in silence distasteful though it may be. In the next world the wicked, with all restraint removed, will go headlong into sin, blaspheming and cursing God, growing worse and worse as they sink deeper and deeper into the bottomless pit. Endless punishment is the penalty of ENDLESS sinning. Furthermore, it is as much the glory of God that He punishes the wicked as that He rewards the righteous. Much of the easy-going indifference toward Christianity in our day is due to the failure of Christian ministers to emphasize these doctrines which Christ taught so repeatedly.

In the physical realm we see God's severity in wars, famines, floods, disasters, diseases, sufferings, deaths, and crimes of all kind which come upon the just and the unjust alike. All of these exist in a world which is under the complete control of a God who is infinite in His perfections.

"Behold then the goodness and severity of God," Rom, 11:22. Naturalism does justice to neither of these. Arminianism magnifies the first but neglects the second. Calvinism is the only system which does justice to both. It alone adequately sets forth the facts in regard to the eternal and infinite love of God which caused Him to provide redemption for His people, even at the great cost of sending His only begotten Son to die on the cross; and also in regard to the awful abyss which exists between sinful man and the holy God. It is true that "God is love," but along with this must be placed the other statement that "our God is a consuming fire," Heb. 12:29. Any system which omits or under-emphasizes either of these truths will be a mutilated system, no matter how plausible it may sound to men.

This doctrine of the Total Inability of man is terribly stern, severe, forbidding. But it is to be remembered that we are not at liberty to develop a new system suited to our liking. We must take the facts as we find them. Such exhibitions of the true state of mankind are, of course, offensive to unregenerate men generally; and many have tried to find out a system of doctrines more palatable to the popular mind. The state of fallen man is such that he readily listens to any theory which makes him even partly independent of God; he wishes to be the master of his fate and the captain of his soul. The lost, ruined, and helpless state of the sinner needs to be constantly set before him; for until he is brought to feel it, he will never seek help where alone it is to be found. Poor man! truly carnal and sold under sin, not only without power but without inclination to move toward God; and what is more awful still, an actual rebel presumptuous, blasphemous rival of the Great Jehovah.

This doctrine of Total Inability, or Original Sin, has been treated at some length in order to set forth the fundamental basis upon which the doctrine of Predestination rests. This side of the picture is dark, very dark indeed; but its supplement is the glory of God in redemption. Each of these truths must be seen in its true light before the other can be adequately appreciated.

7. Scripture Proof

I Cor. 2:14: The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him; and he cannot know them, because they are spiritually judged.

Gen. 2:17: But of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

Rom.5:12: Therefore, as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin; and so death passed unto all men, for that all sinned.

11 Cor. 1:9: Yea, we ourselves had the sentence of death within ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God who raiseth the dead.

Eph. 2:1-3: And you did He make alive, when ye were dead through your trespasses and sins, wherein ye once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the powers of the air, of the spirit that now worketh in the sons of disobedience; among whom ye also all once lived in the lusts of your flesh, doing the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

Eph. 2:12: Ye were at that time separate from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise having no hope and without God in the world.

Jer. 13:23: Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Ps. 51:5: Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me.

John3:3: Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Rom. 3:10-12: As it is written, There is none righteous, no not one; There is none that understandeth, There is none that seeketh after God; They have all turned aside, they are together become unprofitable; There is none that doeth good. no, not so much as one.

Job 14:4: Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one.

I Cor. 1:18: For the word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God.

Acts 13:41: Behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish; For I work a work in your days, A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you.

Prov. 30:12: There is a generation that are pure in their own eye, And yet are not washed from their filthiness.

John 5:21: For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom He will.

John 6:53: Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves.

John 8:19: They said therefore unto Him, Where is thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye know neither me, nor my Father; if ye knew me, ye would know my Father also.

Matt. 11:25: I thank thee, O Father Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes.

II Cor. 5:17: If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature.

John 14:16: (And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,) even the Spirit of truth: whom the world cannot receive; for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you.

John 3:19: And this is the judgment, that light is come unto the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.

Unconditional Election

1. Statement Of The Doctrine

The doctrine of Election is to be looked upon as only a particular application of the general doctrine of Predestination or Foreordination as it relates to the salvation of sinners; and since the Scriptures are concerned mainly with the redemption of sinners, this part of the doctrine is naturally thrown up into a place of special prominence. It partakes of all the elements of the general doctrine; and since it is the act of an infinite moral Person, it is represented as being the eternal, absolute, immutable, effective determination by His will of the objects of His saving operations. And no aspect of this elective choice is more constantly emphasized than that of its absolute sovereignty.

The Reformed Faith has held to the existence of an eternal, divine decree which, antecedently to any difference or desert in men themselves separates the human race into two portions and ordains one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting death. So far as this decree relates to men it designates the counsel of God concerning those who had a supremely favorable chance in Adam to earn salvation, but who lost that chance. As a result of the fall they are guilty and corrupted; their motives are wrong and they cannot work out their own salvation. They have forfeited all claim upon God's mercy, and might justly have been left to suffer the penalty of their disobedience as all of the fallen angels were left. But instead the elect members of this race are rescued from this state of guilt and sin and are brought into a state of blessedness and holiness. The non-elect are simply left in their previous state of ruin, and are condemned for their sins. They suffer no unmerited punishment, for God is dealing with them not merely as men but as sinners.

The Westminster Confession states the doctrine thus: "By the decree of God, for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated to everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death.

"These angels and men, thus predestinated and foreordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their number is so certain and definite that it cannot be either increased or diminished.

"Those of mankind that are predestinated unto life, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to His eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of His will, hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory, out of His mere grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature, as conditions, or causes moving Him thereunto; and all to the praise of His glorious grace.

"As God hath appointed the elect unto glory, so hath He, by the eternal and most free purpose of His will, foreordained all the means thereunto. Whereby they who are elected, being fallen in Adam, are redeemed by Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only.

"The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice."

It is important that we shall have a clear understanding of this doctrine of divine Election, for our views in regard to it determine our views of God, man, the world, and redemption. As Calvin rightly says, "We shall never be clearly convinced as we ought to be that our salvation flows from the fountain of God's free mercy, till we are acquainted with this eternal election, which illustrates the grace of God by this comparison, that He adopts not all promiscuously to the hope of salvation but gives to some what he refuses to others. Ignorance of this principle evidently detracts from the divine glory, and diminishes real humility." Calvin admits that this doctrine arouses very perplexing questions in the minds of some, for, says he, "they consider nothing more unreasonable than that of the common mass of mankind, some should be predestinated to salvation; and others to destruction."

The Reformed theologians consistently applied this principle to the actual experience of spiritual phenomena which they themselves felt and saw in others about them. The divine purpose, or Predestination, alone could explain the distinction between good and evil, between the saint and the sinner.

2. Proof From Scripture

The first question which we need to ask ourselves then, is, Do we find this doctrine taught in the Scriptures? Let us turn to Paul's letter to the Ephesians. There we read: "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blemish before Him in love; having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will," 1:4, 5. In Romans 8:29, 30 we read of that golden chain of redemption which stretches from the eternity that is past to the eternity that is to come, -- "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren; and whom He foreordained, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified." Foreknown, foreordained, called, justified, glorified, with always the same people included in each group; and where one of these factors is present, all the others are in principle present with it.

Paul has cast the verse in the past tense because with God the purpose is in principle executed when formed, so certain is it of fulfillment. "These five golden links," says Dr. Warfield, "are welded together in one unbreakable chain, so that all who are set upon in God's gracious distinguishing view are carried on by His

grace, step by step, up to the great consummation of that glorification which realizes the promised conformity to the image of God's own Son. It is 'election,' you see, that does all this; for 'whom He foreknew...them He also glorified'."

The Scriptures represent election as occurring in past time, irrespective of personal merit, and altogether sovereign, -- "The children being not yet born, neither having done anything good or bad, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said to her, The elder shall serve the younger. Even as it is written, Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated," Rom. 9:11, 12. Now if the doctrine of election is not true, we may safely challenge any man to tell us what the apostle means by such language. "We are pointed illustratively to the sovereign acceptance of Isaac and rejection of Ishmael, and to the choice of Jacob and not of Esau before their birth and therefore before either had done good or bad; we are explicitly told that in the matter of salvation it is not of him that wills, or of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy, and that He has mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardens; we are pointedly directed to behold in God the potter who makes the vessels which proceed from His hand each for an end of His appointment, that He may work out His will upon them. It is safe to say that language cannot be chosen better adapted to teach Predestination at its height."

Even if we were without any other inspired utterances than those quoted from Paul, so clear and unambiguous are those that we should be constrained to admit that the doctrine of Election finds a place in Scripture. By looking at the Scripture references in the Confession of Faith, we find that it is abundantly sustained in the Bible. If we admit the inspiration of the Bible; if we admit that the writings of the prophets and apostles were breathed by the Spirit of God, and are thus infallible, then what we find there will be sufficient; and thus on the irrefutable testimony of the Scriptures we must acknowledge Election, or Predestination, to be an established truth, and one which we must receive if we are to possess the whole counsel of God. Every Christian must believe in some kind of election; for while the Scriptures leave unexplained many things about the doctrine of Election, they make very plain the FACT that there has been an election.

Christ explicitly declared to His disciples, "Ye did not choose me, but I chose you, and appointed you, that ye should go and bear fruit," John 15:16, by which He made God's choice primary and man's choice only secondary and a result of the former. The Arminian, however, in making salvation depend upon man's choice to use or abuse proffered grace reverses this order and makes man's choice the primary and decisive one. There is no place in the Scriptures for an election which is carefully adjusted to the foreseen actions of the creature. The divine will is never made dependent on the creaturely will for its determinations.

Again the sovereignty of this choice is clearly taught when Paul declares that God commended His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8), and that Christ died for the ungodly (Rom. 5:6). Here we see that His love was not extended toward us because we were good, but in spite of the fact that we were bad. It is God who chooses the person and causes him to approach unto Him (Ps. 65:4). Arminianism takes this choice out of the hands of God and places it in the hands of man. Any system which substitutes a man-made election falls below the Scripture teaching on this subject.

In the darkest days of Israel's apostasy, as in every other age, it was this principle of election which made a difference between mankind and kept a remnant secure. "Yet will I leave me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him," I Kings 19:18. These seven thousand did not stand by their own strength; it is expressly said that God reserved them to Himself, that they might be a remnant.

It is for the sake of the elect that God governs the course of all history (Mark 13:20). They are "the salt of the earth," and "the light of the world;" and so far at least in the world's history they are the few through whom the many are blessed, -- God blessed the household of Potiphar for Joseph's sake; and ten righteous people would have saved the city of Sodom. Their election, of course, includes the opportunity of hearing the gospel and receiving the gifts of grace, for without these means the great end of election would not be attained. They are, in fact, elected to all that is included in the idea of eternal life.

Apart from this election of individuals to life, there has been what we may call a national election, or a divine predestination of nations and communities to a knowledge of true religion and to the external privileges of the Gospel. God undoubtedly does choose some nations to receive much greater spiritual and temporal blessings than others. This form of election has been well illustrated in the Jewish nation, in certain European nations and communities, and in America. The contrast is very striking when we compare these with other nations such as China, Japan, India, etc.

Throughout the Old Testament it is repeatedly stated that the Jews were a chosen people. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," Amos 3:2. "He hath not dealt so with any (other) nation; And as for His ordinances, they have not known them," Ps. 147:20. "For thou art a holy people unto Jehovah thy God: Jehovah thy God hath chosen thee to be a people for His own possession, above all the peoples that are upon the face of the earth," Deut. 7:6. It is made equally plain that God found no merit or dignity in the Jews themselves which moved Him to choose them above others. "Jehovah did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any other people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: but because Jehovah loveth you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore unto your fathers, hath Jehovah brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondage from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt." Deut. 7:7, 8. And again, "Only Jehovah had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even above all peoples," Deut. 10:15. Here it is carefully explained, that Israel was honored with the divine choice in contrast with the treatment accorded all the other peoples of the earth, that the choice rested solely on the unmerited love of God, and that It had no foundation in Israel itself.

When Paul was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the Gospel in the province of Asia, and was given the vision of a man in Europe calling across the waters, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," one section of the world was sovereignly excluded from, and another section was sovereignly given, the privileges of the Gospel. Had the divinely directed call been rather from the shores of India, Europe and America might today have been less civilized than the natives of Tibet. It was the sovereign choice of God which brought the Gospel to the people of Europe and later to America, while the people of the east, and north, and south were left in darkness. We can assign no reason, for instance, why it should have been Abraham's seed, and not the Egyptians or the Assyrians, who were chosen; or why Great Britain and America, which at the time of Christ's appearance on earth were in a state of such complete ignorance, should today possess so largely for themselves, and be disseminating so widely to others, these most important spiritual privileges. The diversities in regard to religious privileges in the different nations is to be ascribed to nothing else than the good pleasure of God.

A third form of election taught in Scripture is that of individuals to the external means of grace, such as hearing and reading the Gospel, association with the people of God, and sharing the benefits of the civilization which has arisen where the Gospel has gone. No one ever had the chance to say at what particular time in the world's history, or in what country, he would be born, whether or not he would be a member of the white race, or of some other. One child is born with health, wealth, and honor, in a favored land, in a Christian home, and grows up with all the blessings which attend the full light of the Gospel. Another is born in poverty and dishonor, of sinful and dissipated parents, and destitute of Christian

influences. All of these things are sovereignly decided for them. Surely no one would insist that the favored child has any personal merit which could be the ground for this difference. Furthermore, was it not of God's own choosing that He created us human beings, in His own image, when He might have created us cattle or horses or dogs? Or who would allow the dumb brutes to revile God for their condition in life as though the distinction was unjust? All of these things are due to God's overruling providence, and not to human choice. "Arminians have labored to reconcile all this, as a matter of fact, with their defective and erroneous views of the Divine sovereignty, and with their unscriptural doctrines of universal grace and universal redemption; but they have not usually been satisfied themselves with their own attempts at explanation, and have commonly at last admitted, that there were mysteries in this matter which could not be explained, and which must just be resolved into the sovereignty of God and the unsearchableness of His counsels."

We may perhaps mention a fourth kind of election, that of individuals to certain vocations, -- the gifts of special talents which fit one to be a statesman, another to be a doctor, or lawyer, or farmer, or musician, or artisan, gifts of personal beauty, intelligence, disposition, etc. These four kinds of election are in principle the same. Arminians escape no real difficulty in admitting the second, third, and fourth, while denying the first. In each instance God gives to some what He withholds from others. Conditions in the world at large and our own experiences in everyday life show us that the blessings bestowed are sovereign and unconditional, irrespective of any previous merit or action on the part of those so chosen. If we are highly favored, we can only be thankful for His blessings; if not highly favored, we have no grounds for complaint. Why precisely this or that one is placed in circumstances which lead to saving faith, while others are not so placed, is indeed, a mystery. We cannot explain the workings of Providence; but we do know that the Judge of all the earth shall do right, and that when we attain to perfect knowledge we shall see that He has sufficient reasons for all His acts.

Furthermore, it may be said that in general the outward conditions with which the individual is surrounded do determine his destiny, -- at least to this extent, that those from whom the Gospel is withheld have no chance for salvation. Cunningham has stated this very well in the following paragraph: -- "There is an invariable connection established in God's government of the world, between the enjoyment of outward privileges, or the means of grace, on the one hand, and faith and salvation on the other; in this sense, and to this extent, that the negation of the first implies the negation of the second. We are warranted by the whole tenor of Scripture, in maintaining that where God, in His sovereignty, withholds from men the enjoyment of the means of grace, -- an opportunity of becoming acquainted with the only way of salvation, -- He at the same time, and by the same means, or ordination, withholds from them the opportunity and power of believing and being saved."

Calvinists maintain that God deals not only with mankind in the mass but with the individuals who are actually saved, that He has elected particular persons to eternal life and to all the means necessary for attaining that life. They admit that some of the passages in which election is mentioned teach only an election of nations, or an election to outward privileges, but they maintain that many other passages teach exclusively and only an election of individuals to eternal life.

There are some, of course, who deny that there has been any such thing as an election at all. They start at the very word as though it were a spectre just come from the shades and never seen before. And yet, in the New Testament alone, the words *eklektos*, *ekloga*, and *eklego*, elect, election, choose, are found some forty-seven or forty-eight times (see Young's Analytical Concordance for complete lists). Others accept the word but attempt to explain away the thing. They profess to believe in a "conditional election," based, as they suppose, upon foreseen faith and evangelical obedience in its objects. This, of course, destroys election in any intelligible sense of the term, and reduces it to a mere recognition or prophecy that at some future time certain persons will be possessed of those qualities. If based on faith and evangelical obedience, then, as it

has been cynically phrased, God is careful to elect only those whom He foresees will elect themselves. In the Arminian system election is reduced to a mere word or name, the use of which only tends to involve the subject in greater obscurity and confusion. A mere recognition that those qualities will be present at some future time is, of course, an election falsely so-called, or simply no election at all. And some Arminians, consistently carrying out their own doctrine that the person may or may not accept, and that if he does accept he may fall away again, identify the time of this decree of election with the death of the believer, as if only then his salvation became certain.

Election extends not only to men but also and equally to the angels since they also are a part of God's creation and are under His government. Some of these are holy and happy, others are sinful and miserable. The same reasons which lead us to believe in a predestination of men also lead us to believe in a predestination of angels. The Scriptures confirm this view by references to "elect angels," I Tim. 5:21, and "holy angels," Mark 8:38, which are contrasted with wicked angels or demons. We read that God "spared not angels when they sinned, but cast them down to hell, and committed them to pits of darkness to be reserved unto judgment," 1 Peter 2:4; of the "eternal fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels," Matt. 25:41; of "angels that kept not their own principality, but left their former habitation, He hath kept in everlasting bonds under darkness unto the Judgment of the great day," Jude 6; and of "Michael and his angels going forth to war with the dragon; and the dragon warred and his angels," Rev. 12:7. A study of these passages shows us that, as Dabney says, "there are two kinds of spirits of that order; holy and sinful - angels, servants of Christ and servants of Satan; that they were created in an estate of holiness and happiness, and abode in the region called Heaven (God's holiness and goodness are sufficient proof that He would never have created them otherwise) ; that the evil angels voluntarily forfeited their estate by sinning, and were excluded forever from heaven and holiness; that those who maintained their estate were elected thereto by God, and that their estate of holiness and blessedness is now forever assured."

Paul makes no attempt to explain how God can be just in showing mercy to whom He will and in passing by whom He will. In answer to the objector's question, "Why doth He still find fault?" (with those to whom He has not extended saving mercy), he (Paul) simply resolves the whole thing into the sovereignty of God, by replying, "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus ? Or hath not the potter a right over the clay, from the same lump to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" Rom. 9:19-21. (And let it be noticed here that Paul says that it is not from different kinds of clay, but "from the same lump," that God, as the potter, makes one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor.) Paul does not drag God from His throne and set Him before our human reason to be questioned and examined. These secret counsels of His, which even the angels adore with trembling and desire to look into, are left unexplained, except that they are said to be according to His own good pleasure. And after Paul has stated this, he puts forth his hand, as it were, to forbid us from going any further. Had the Arminian assumption been true, namely, that all men are given sufficient grace and that each one is rewarded or punished according to his own use or abuse of this grace, there would have been no difficulty for which to account.

Further Scripture Proof

II Thess:2:13: God chose you from the beginning unto salvation in sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

Matt. 24:24: There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Matt. 24:31: And they (the angels) shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Mark 13:20: For the elect's sake, whom He chose, He shortened those days (at the destruction of Jerusalem).

I Thess 1:4: Knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election.

Rom. 11:7: The election obtained it, and the rest were hardened.

I Tim. 5:21: I charge thee in the sight of God, and Jesus Christ, and the elect angels.

Rom. 8:33: Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?

Rom. 11:5: (In comparison with Elijah's time) Even so at the present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

II Tim. 2:10: I endure all things for the elect's sake.

Titus 1:1: Paul, a servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect.

I Peter 1:1: Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the elect.

I Peter 5:13: She that is in Babylon, elect together with you.

I Peter 2:9: But ye are an elect race.

I Thess 5:9: For God appointed us not unto wrath, but unto the obtaining of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 18:48: And as the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

John 17:9: I (Jesus) pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine.

John 6:37: All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me.

John 6:65: No man can come unto me. except it be given unto him of the Father.

John 13:18: I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen.

John 15:16: Ye did not choose me, but I chose you.

Ps 105:6: Ye children of Jacob, His chosen ones.

Rom. 9:23: Vessels of mercy, which He afore prepared unto glory. (See also references already quoted in this chapter; Eph. 1:4, 5, 11; Rom. 9:11-13; 8:29, 30; etc.)

3. Proof From Reason

If the doctrine of Total Inability or Original Sin be admitted, the doctrine of unconditional Election follows by the most inescapable logic. If, as the Scriptures and experience tell us, all men are by nature in a state of guilt and depravity from which they are wholly unable to deliver themselves and have no claim whatever on God for deliverance, it follows that if any are saved God must choose out those who shall be the objects of His grace. His love for fallen men expressed itself in the choice of an innumerable multitude of them for salvation, and in the provision of a redeemer, who, acting as their federal head and representative, assumed their guilt, paid their penalty, and earned their salvation. It is always to the love of God that the Scriptures ascribe the elective decree, and they are never weary of raising our eyes from the decree itself to the motive which lay behind it. The doctrine that men are saved only through the unmerited love and grace of God finds its full and honest expression only in the doctrines of Calvinism.

Through the election of individuals the truly gracious character of salvation is most clearly shown. Those who declare that salvation is entirely by the grace of God, and yet deny the doctrine of election, hold an inconsistent position. The inspired writers leave no means unused to drive home the fact that God's election of men is an absolutely sovereign one, founded solely upon His unmerited love, and designed to exhibit before men and angels His grace and saving mercy.

As Ruler and Judge, God is at liberty to deal with a world of sinners according to His own good pleasure. He can rightfully pardon some and condemn others; can rightfully give His saving grace to one and not to another. Since all have sinned and come short of His glory, He is free to have mercy on whom He will have mercy. It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God who showeth mercy; and the reason why any are saved, and why one rather than another is saved, is to be found alone in the good pleasure of Him who ordereth all things after the counsel of His own will. It is for this reason that before God created the world He chose all those to whom He would freely give the inheritance of eternal blessedness, and the Biblical writers take special pains to give each individual believer in all the enormous multitude of the saved the assurance that from all eternity he has been the peculiar object of the divine choice, and is only now fulfilling the high destiny designed for him from the foundation of the world.

This doctrine of eternal and unconditional election has sometimes been called the "heart" of the Reformed Faith. It emphasizes the sovereignty and grace of God in salvation, while the Arminian view emphasizes the work of faith and obedience in the man who decides to accept the offered grace. In the Calvinistic system it is God alone who chooses those who are to be the heirs of heaven, those with whom He will share His riches in glory; while in the Arminian system it is, in the ultimate analysis, man who determines this, -- a principle somewhat lacking in humility to say the least.

It may be asked, Why does God save some and not others? But that belongs to His secret counsels. Precisely why this man receives, and that man does not receive, when neither deserves to receive, we are not told. That God was pleased to set upon us in this His electing grace must ever remain for us a matter of adoring wonder. Certainly there was nothing in us, whether of quality or deed, which could attract His favorable notice or make Him partial to us; for we were dead in trespasses and sins and children of wrath even as others (Eph. 2:1-3). We can only admire, and wonder, and exclaim with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past tracing out!" The marvel of marvels is not that God, in His infinite love and justice, has not elected all of this guilty race to be saved, but that He has elected any. When we consider, on the one hand, what a heinous thing sin is, together with its desert of punishment, and on the other, what holiness is, together with God's perfect hatred for sin, the marvel is that God could get the consent of His holy nature to save a single sinner. Furthermore, the reason that God did not choose all to eternal life was not because He did not wish to save all, but that for

reasons which we cannot fully explain a universal choice would have been inconsistent with His perfect righteousness.

Nor may any one object that this view represents God as acting arbitrarily and without reason. To assert that is to assert more than any man knows. His reasons for saving particular ones while passing others by have not been revealed to us. "He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth," Dan. 4:35. Some are foreordained as sons, "according to the good pleasure of His will," Eph. 1:5; but that does not mean that He has no reasons for choosing one and leaving another. When a regiment is decimated for insubordination, the fact that every tenth man is chosen for death is for reasons; but the reasons are not in the men.

Undoubtedly God has the best of reasons for choosing one and rejecting another, although He has not told what they are.

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

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

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

4. Faith And Good Works Are The Fruits And Proof, Not The Basis, Of Election

Neither predestination in general, nor the election of those who are to be saved, is based on God's foresight of any action in the creature. This tenet of the Reformed Faith has been well stated in the Westminster Confession, where we read: "Although God knows whatsoever may or can come to pass upon all supposed conditions; yet hath He not decreed anything because He foresaw it as future, or as that which would come to pass upon such conditions." And again, "These good works, done in obedience to God's commandments, are the fruits and evidences of a true and lively faith; and by them believers manifest their thankfulness, strengthen their assurance, edify their brethren, adorn the profession of the gospel, stop the mouths of the adversaries, and glorify God, whose workmanship they are, created in Christ Jesus thereunto; that, having their fruit unto holiness, they may have the end, eternal life.

"Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. And that they may be enabled thereunto, besides the graces they already received, there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure; yet are they not hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit; but they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them."

Foreseen faith and good works, then, are never to be looked upon as the cause of the Divine election. They are rather its fruits and proof. They show that the person has been chosen and regenerated. To make them the

basis of election involves us again in a covenant of works, and places God's purposes in time rather than in eternity. This would not be pre-destination but post-destination, an inversion of the Scripture account which makes faith and holiness to be the consequents, and not the antecedents, of election (Eph. 1:4; John 15:16; Titus 3:5). The statement that we were chosen in Christ "before the foundation of the world," excludes any consideration of merit in us; for the Hebrew idiom, "before the foundation of the world," means that the thing was done in eternity. And when to Paul's statement that it is "not of works, but of Him that calleth," the Arminian replies that it is of future works, he flatly contradicts the apostle's own words.

That the decree of election was in any way based on foreknowledge is refuted by Paul when he says that its purpose was "that we should be holy," Eph. 1:4. He insists that salvation is "not of works, that no man should glory." In II Tim. 1:9 we read that it is God "who saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before times eternal." Calvinists therefore hold that election precedes, and is not based upon, any good works which the person does. The very essence of the doctrine is that in redemption God is moved by no consideration of merit or goodness in the objects of His saving mercy. "That it is not of him that runs, nor of him that wills, but of God who shows mercy, that the sinner obtains salvation, is the steadfast witnesses of the whole body of Scripture, urged with such reiteration and in such varied connections as exclude the possibility that there may lurk behind the act of election consideration of foreseen characters or acts or circumstances -- all of which appear as results of election."

Foreordination in general cannot rest on foreknowledge; for only that which is certain can be foreknown, and only that which is predetermined can be certain. The Almighty and all-sovereign Ruler of the universe does not govern Himself on the basis of a foreknowledge of things which might haply come to pass. Through the Scriptures the divine foreknowledge is ever thought of as dependent on the divine purpose, and God foreknows only because He has pre-determined. His foreknowledge is but a transcript of His will as to what shall come to pass in the future, and the course which the world takes under His providential control is but the execution of His all-embracing plan. His foreknowledge of what is yet to be, whether it be in regard to the world as a whole or in regard to the, detailed life of every individual, rests upon His pre-arranged plan (Jer. 1:5; Ps. 139:14-16; Job 23:13, 14; 28:26, 27; Amos 3:7).

There is, however, one Scripture passage which is often pointed out as teaching that election or even foreordination in general is based on foreknowledge, and we shall now give our attention to it. In Romans 8:29, 30 we read: "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren; and whom He foreordained, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." The word "know" is sometimes used in a sense other than that of having merely an intellectual perception of the thing mentioned. It occasionally means that the persons so "known" are the special and peculiar objects of God's favor, as when it was said of the Jews, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," Amos 3:2. Paul wrote, "If any man loveth God, the same is known of Him," I Cor. 8:3. Jesus is said to "know" His sheep, John 10:14, 27; and to the wicked He is to say, "I never knew you," Matt. 7:23. In the first Psalm we read, "Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous, But the way of the wicked shall perish."

In all of these passages more than a mental recognition is involved, for God has that of the wicked as well as of the righteous. It is a knowing which has as its objects the elect only, and it is connected with, or is rather the same as love, favor, and approbation. Those in Romans 8:29 are foreknown in the sense that they are fore-appointed to be the special objects of His favor. This is shown more plainly in Rom. 11:2-5, where we read, "God did not cast off His people whom He foreknew." A comparison is made with the time of Elijah when God "left for Himself" seven thousand who did not bow the knee to Baal. And then in the fifth verse he adds, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Those

who were foreknown in verse two and those who are of the election of grace are the same people; hence they were foreknown in the sense that they were fore-appointed to be the objects of His gracious purposes. Notice especially that Rom. 8:29 does not say that they were foreknown as doers of good works, but that they were foreknown as individuals to whom God would extend the grace of election. And let it be noticed further that if Paul had here used the term "foreknow" in the sense that election was based on mere foreknowledge, it would have contradicted his statement elsewhere that it is according to the good pleasure of God.

The Arminian view takes election out of the hands of God and puts it into the hands of man. This makes the purposes of Almighty God to be conditioned by the precarious wills of apostate men and makes temporal events to be the cause of His eternal acts. It means further that He has created a set of sovereign beings upon whom to a certain extent His will and actions are dependent. It represents God as a good old father who endeavors to get his children to do right, but who is usually defeated because of their perverse wills; nay, it represents Him as having evolved a plan which through the ages has been so generally defeated that it has sent innumerable more persons to hell than to heaven. A doctrine which leads to such absurdities is not only un-Scriptural but unreasonable and dishonoring to God. In contrast to all this, Calvinism offers us a great God who is infinite in His perfections, who dispenses mercy and justice as He sees best, and who actually rules in the affairs of men.

The Scriptures and Christian experience teach us that the very faith and repentance through which we are saved are themselves the gifts of God. "By grace have ye been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God," Eph. 2:8. The Christians in Achaia had "believed through grace," Acts 18:27. A man is not saved because he believes in Christ; he believes in Christ because he is saved. Even the beginning of faith, the disposition to seek salvation, is itself a work of grace and the gift of God. Paul often says that we are saved "through" faith (that is, as the instrumental cause), but never once does he say that we are saved "on account of" faith (that is, as the meritorious cause). And to the same effect we may say that the redeemed shall be rewarded in proportion to their good works, but not on account of them. And in accordance with this, Augustine says that "The elect of God are chosen by Him to be His children, in order that they might be made to believe, not because He foresaw that they would believe."

Repentance is equally declared to be a gift. "Then to the Gentiles also hath God granted repentance unto life," Acts 11:18. "Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and remission of sins," Acts 5:31. Paul rebuked those who did not realize that it was the goodness of God which led them to repentance, Rom. 2:4. Jeremiah cried, "Turn thou me and I shall be turned; for thou art Jehovah my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed," Jer. 31:18, 19. What, for instance, had the infant John the Baptist to do with his being "filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb?" Luke 1:15. Jesus told His disciples that to them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but that to others it was not given (Matt. 13:11). To base election on foreseen faith is to say that we are ordained to eternal life because we believe, whereas the Scriptures declare the contrary: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed," Acts 13:48.

Our salvation is "not by works done in righteousness which we did ourselves. but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit," Titus 3:5. We are encouraged to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh in us, both to will and to do of His good pleasure. And just because God is working in us, we strive to develop and to work out our own salvation (Phil. 2:12, 13). The Psalmist tells us that the Lord's people offer themselves willingly in the day of His power (110:3). Hence conversion is a peculiar and sovereign gift of God. The sinner has no power to turn himself unto God, but is turned or renewed by divine grace before he can do anything spiritually good. In accordance with this Paul teaches that love, joy, peace, goodness, faithfulness, self-control, etc., are not the meritorious basis of salvation, but rather "the fruits of the Spirit," Gal. 5:22, 23. Paul

himself was chosen that he might know and do the will of God, not because it was foreseen that he would do it, Acts 22:14, 15. Augustine tells us that, "The grace of God does not find men fit to be elected, but makes them so"; and again, "The nature of the Divine goodness is not only to open to those that knock, but also to cause them to knock and ask." Luther expressed the same truth when he said, "God alone by His Spirit works in us the merit and reward." John tells us that, "We love because He first loved us," I John 4:19. These passages unmistakably teach that faith and good works are the fruits of God's work in us. We were not chosen because we were good, but in order that we might become good.

But while good works are not the ground of salvation, they are absolutely essential to it as its fruits and evidences. They are produced by faith as naturally as grapes are produced by the grape vine. And while they do not make us righteous before God, yet they are so united with faith that true faith cannot be found without them. Nor can good works, in the strict sense, be found anywhere without faith. Our salvation is not "of works," but "for good works," Eph. 2:9, 10; and the genuinely saved Christian will feel himself in his natural element only when producing good works, James points out that a man's faith is spurious if it does not issue in good works. This is the same principle which Jesus set forth when He declared that the character of a tree is shown by its fruits, and that a good tree could not bear evil fruits. Good works are as natural for the Christian as is breathing; he does not breathe to get life; he breathes because he has life, and for that reason cannot help breathing. Good works are his glory; hence Jesus says, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify (not you, but) your Father who is in heaven," to whom the credit is really due.

The Calvinistic view is the only logical one if we accept the Scriptural declaration that salvation is by grace. Any other involves us in a hopeless chaos of views which are contradictory to the Scriptures. There are, of course, mysteries connected with this view; and it is certainly not the view which the natural man would have hit upon if he had been called upon to suggest a plan. But to throw overboard the Scripture doctrine of Predestination simply because it does not fit in with our prejudices and preconceived notions is to act foolishly. To do this is to arraign the Creator at the bar of human reason, to deny the wisdom and righteousness of His dealings just because we cannot fathom them, and then to declare His revelation to be false and deceptive.

"It is a dangerous presumption for men to take upon themselves, with unwashed hands, to unriddle the deep mysteries of God with their carnal reason, where the great apostle stands at the gaze, crying, 'O the depth, how unsearchable' and, 'Who knoweth the mind of the Lord!' Had Paul been of the Arminian persuasion he would have answered, 'Those are elected that are foreseen to believe and persevere!'" There would have been no mystery at all if salvation had been based on their good works.

Here we have a system in which all boasting is excluded, and in which salvation in all of its parts is seen to be the product of unalloyed grace, not founded on, but issuing in, good works.

5. Reprobation

Statement -- Comments by Calvin, Luther, and Warfield -- Proof from Scripture -- Based on the Doctrine of Original Sin -- No Injustice is Done to the Non-Elect -- State of the Heathens -- Purposes of the Decree of Reprobation -- Arminians Center Attack on this Doctrine -- Under no Obligation to Explain all These Things.

The doctrine of absolute Predestination of course logically holds that some are foreordained to death as truly as others are foreordained to life. The very terms "elect" and "election" imply the terms "non-elect" and "reprobation." When some are chosen out others are left not chosen. The high privileges and glorious destiny

of the former are not shared with the latter. This, too, is of God. We believe that from all eternity God has intended to leave some of Adam's posterity in their sins, and that the decisive factor in the life of each is to be found only in God's will. As Mozley has said, the whole race after the fall was "one mass of perdition," and "it pleased God of His sovereign mercy to rescue some and to leave others where they were; to raise some to glory, giving them such grace as necessarily qualified them for it, and abandon the rest, from whom He withheld such grace, to eternal punishments."

The chief difficulty with the doctrine of Election of course arises in regard to the unsaved; and the Scriptures have given us no extended explanation of their state. Since the mission of Jesus in the world was to save the world rather than to judge it, this side of the matter is less dwelt upon.

In all of the Reformed creeds in which the doctrine of Reprobation is dealt with at all it is treated as an essential part of the doctrine of Predestination. The Westminster Confession, after stating the doctrine of election, adds: "The rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the inscrutable counsel of His own will, whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice."

Those who hold the doctrine of Election but deny that of Reprobation can lay but little claim to consistency. To affirm the former while denying the latter makes the decree of predestination an illogical and lop-sided decree. The creed which states the former but denies the latter will resemble a wounded eagle attempting to fly with but one wing. In the interests of a "mild Calvinism" some have been inclined to give up the doctrine of Reprobation, and this term (in itself a very innocent term) has been the entering wedge for harmful attacks upon Calvinism pure and simple. "Mild Calvinism" is synonymous with sickly Calvinism, and sickness, if not cured, is the beginning of the end.

Comments by Calvin, Luther, and Warfield

Calvin did not hesitate to base the reprobation of the lost, as well as the election of the saved, on the eternal purpose of God. We have already quoted him to the effect that "not all men are created with a similar destiny but eternal life is foreordained for some, and eternal damnation for others. Every man, therefore, being created for one or the other of these ends, we say, he is predestinated either to life or to death." And again he says, "There can be no election without its opposite, reprobation." That the latter raises problems which are not easy to solve, he readily admits, but advocates it as the only intelligent and Scriptural explanation of the facts.

Luther also as certainly as Calvin attributes the eternal perdition of the wicked, as well as the eternal salvation of the righteous, to the plan of God. "This mightily offends our rational nature," he says, "that God should, of His own mere unbiased will, leave some men to themselves, harden them and condemn them; but He gives abundant demonstration, and does continually, that this is really the case; namely, that the sole cause why some are saved, and others perish, proceeds from His willing the salvation of the former, and the perdition of the latter, according to that of St. Paul, 'He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth.'" And again, "It may seem absurd to human wisdom that God should harden, blind, and deliver up some men to a reprobate sense; that He should first deliver them over to evil, and condemn them for that evil; but the believing, spiritual man sees no absurdity at all in this; knowing that God would be never a whit less good, even though He should destroy all men." He then goes on to say that this must not be understood to mean that God finds men good, wise, obedient, and makes them evil, foolish, and obdurate, but that they are already depraved and fallen and that those who are not regenerated, instead of becoming better under the divine commands and influences, only react to become worse. In reference to Romans IX, X,

XI, Luther says that "all things whatever arise from and depend upon the Divine appointment, whereby it was preordained who should receive the word of life and who should disbelieve it, who should be delivered from their sins and who should be hardened in them, who should be justified and who condemned."

"The Biblical writers," says Dr. Warfield, "are as far as possible from obscuring the doctrine of election because of any seemingly unpleasant corollaries that flow from it. On the contrary, they expressly draw the corollaries which have often been so designated, and make them a part of their explicit teaching. Their doctrine of election, they are free to tell us, for example, does certainly involve a corresponding doctrine of preterition. The very term adopted in the New Testament to express it -- eklegomai, which, as Meyer justly says (Eph. 1:4), 'always has, and must of logical necessity have, a reference to others to whom the chosen would, without the ekloga, still belong' -- embodies a declaration of the fact that in their election others are passed by and left without the gift of salvation; the whole presentation of the doctrine is such as either to imply or openly to assert, on its very emergence, the removal of the elect by the pure grace of God, not merely from a state of condemnation, but out of the company of the condemned -- a company on whom the grace of God has no saving effect, and who are therefore left without hope in their sins; and the positive just reprobation of the impenitent for their sins is repeatedly explicitly taught in sharp contrast with the gratuitous salvation of the elect despite their sins."

And again he says: "The difficulty which is felt by some in following the apostle's argument here (Rom. 11 f), we may suspect, has its roots in part in a shrinking from what appears to them an arbitrary assignment of men to diverse destinies without consideration of their desert. Certainly St. Paul as explicitly affirms the sovereignty of reprobation as election, -- if these twin ideas are, indeed, separable even in thought; if he represents God as sovereignly loving Jacob, he represents Him equally as sovereignly hating Esau; if he declares that He has mercy on whom He will, He equally declares that He hardens whom He will. Doubtless the difficulty often felt here is, in part, an outgrowth of an insufficient realization of St. Paul's basal conception of the state of men at large as condemned sinners before an angry God. It is with a world of lost sinners that he represents God as dealing; and out of that world building up a Kingdom of Grace. Were not all men sinners, there might still be an election, as sovereign as now; and there being an election, there would still be as sovereign a rejection; but the rejection would not be a rejection to punishment, to destruction, to eternal death, but to some other destiny consonant to the state in which those passed by should be left. It is not indeed, then, because men are sinners that men are left unelected; election is free, and its obverse of rejection must be equally free; but it is solely because men are sinners that what they are left to is destruction. And it is in this universalism of ruin rather than in a universalism of salvation that St. Paul really roots his theodicy. When all deserve death it is a marvel of pure grace that any receive life; and who shall gainsay the right of Him who shows this miraculous mercy, to have mercy on whom He will, and whom He will to harden?"

Proof from Scripture

This is admittedly an unpleasant doctrine. It is not taught to gain favor with men, but only because it is the plain teaching of the Scriptures and the logical counterpart of the doctrine of Election. We shall find that some Scripture passages do teach the doctrine with unmistakable clearness. These should be sufficient for anyone who accepts the Bible as the word of God. "Jehovah hath made everything for its own end; Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," Prov. 16:4. Christ is said to be to the wicked, "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence; for they stumble at the word, being disobedient; whereunto also they were appointed," I Peter 2:8. "For there are certain men crept in privily, even they who were of old written of beforehand to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ," Jude 4. "But these, as creatures without reason, born mere animals to be taken and destroyed, railing in matters whereof they are ignorant, shall in their destroying surely be destroyed," II Peter

2:12. "For God did put in their heart to do His mind, and to come to one mind, and to give their kingdom unto the beast, until the word of God should be accomplished," Rev. 17:17. Concerning the beast of St. John's vision it is said, "All that dwell on the earth shall worship him, every one whose name hath not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the lamb that hath been slain," Rev. 13:8. and we may contrast these with the disciples whom Jesus told to rejoice because their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20), and with Paul's fellow workers. "whose names are in the book of life," Phil. 4:3.

Paul declares that the "vessels of wrath" which by the Lord were "fitted unto destruction," were "endured with much long suffering" in order that He might "show His wrath, and make His power known"; and with these are contrasted the "vessels of mercy, which He afore prepared unto glory" in order "that He might make known the riches of His glory" upon them (Rom. 9:22, 23). Concerning the heathen it is said that "God gave them up unto a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting," Rom. 1:28; and the wicked, "after his hardness and impenitent heart treasures up for himself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God," Rom. 2:5.

In regard to those who perish Paul says, "God sendeth them a working of error, that they should believe a lie," II Thess. 2:11. They are called upon to behold these things in an external way, to wonder at them, and to go on perishing in their sins. Hear the words of Paul in the synagogue at Antioch in Pisidia: "Behold, ye despisers, and wonder, and perish; For I work a work in your days, A work which ye shall in no wise believe, if one declare it unto you," Acts 13:41.

The apostle John, after narrating that the people still disbelieved although Jesus had done so many signs before them, adds, "For this cause they could not believe, for that Isaiah said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and He hardened their heart; Lest they should see with their eyes, and perceive with their heart, And should turn, And I should heal them," John 12:39, 40.

Christ's command to the wicked in the final judgment, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into the eternal fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels," Matt. 25:41, is the strongest possible decree of reprobation; and it is the same in principle whether issued in time or eternity. What is right for God to do in time it is not wrong for Him to include in His eternal plan.

On one occasion Jesus Himself declared: "For judgment came I into this world, that they that see not may see; and that they that see may become blind," John 9:39. On another occasion He said, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes," Matt. 11:25. It is hard for us to realize that the adorable Redeemer and only Savior of men is, to some, a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence; yet that is what the Scriptures declare Him to be. Even before His birth it was said that He was set (that is, appointed) for the falling, as well as for the rising, of many in Israel (Luke 2:34). And when, in His intercessory prayer in the garden of Gethsemane, He said, "I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me," the non-elect were repudiated in so many words.

Jesus Himself declared that one of the reasons why He spoke in parables was that the truth might be concealed from those for whom it was not intended. We shall let the sacred history speak for itself: "And the disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? And He answered and said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but unto them it is not given. For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that which he hath. Therefore speak I unto them in parables; because seeing they see not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And unto them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah, which saith,

"By hearing ye shall hear, and shall In no wise understand;
 And seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive;
 For this people's heart is waxed gross.
 And their ears are dull of hearing.
 And their eyes they have closed;
 Lest haply they should perceive with their eyes,
 And hear with their ears,
 And understand with their heart,
 And, should turn again,
 And I should heal them." Matt. 13:10-15; Is. 6:9. 10.

In these words we have an application of Jesus' words, "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine," Matt. 7:6. He who affirms that Christ designed to give His saving truth to every one flatly contradicts Christ Himself. To the non-elect, the Bible is a sealed book; and only to the true Christian is it "given" to see and understand these things. So important is this truth that the Holy Spirit has been pleased to repeat six times over in the New Testament this passage from Isaiah (Matt. 13:14, 15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:27; Rom. 11:9, 10). Paul tells us that through grace the "election" received salvation, and that the rest were hardened; then he adds, "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear." And further, he quotes the words of David to the same effect:

"Let their table be made a snare and a trap,
 And a stumbling-block, and a recompense unto them;
 Let their eyes be darkened, that they may not see,
 And bow down their backs always," Rom. 11:8-10.

Hence as regards some, the evangelical proclamations were designed to harden, and not to heal.

This same doctrine finds expression in numerous other parts of Scripture. Moses said to the children of Israel, "But Sihon king of Heshbon would not let you pass by him; for Jehovah thy God hardened his spirit, and made his heart obstinate, that He might deliver him into thy hand, as at this day," Deut. 2:30. In regard to the Canaanitish tribes who came against Joshua it is written, "For it was of Jehovah to harden their hearts, to come against Israel in battle, that He might utterly destroy them, as Jehovah commanded Moses." Joshua 11:20. Hophni and Phinebas, the sons of Eli, when reprov'd for their wickedness, "hearkened not unto the voice of their father, because Jehovah was minded to slay them," I Sam. 2:25. Though Pharaoh acted very arrogantly and wickedly toward the Israelites, Paul assigns no other reason than that he was one of the reprobate whose evil actions were to be overruled for good: "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, For this very purpose did I raise thee up, that I might show in thee my power, and that my name might be published abroad in all the earth," Rom. 9:17 (see also Ex. 9:16). In all the reprobate there is a blindness and an obstinate hardness of heart; and when any, like Pharaoh, are said to have been hardened of God we may be sure that they were already in themselves worthy of being delivered over to Satan. The hearts of the wicked are, of course, never hardened by the direct influence of God, -- He simply permits some men to follow out the evil impulses which are already in their hearts, so that, as a result of their own choices, they become more and more calloused and obstinate. And while it is said, for instance, that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, it is also said that Pharaoh hardened his own heart (Ex. 8:15; 8:32; 9:34). One description is given from the divine view-point, the other is given from the human view-point. God is ultimately responsible for the hardening of the heart in that He permits it to occur, and the inspired writer in graphic language simply says that God does it; but never are we to understand that God is the immediate and efficient cause.

Although this doctrine is harsh, it is, nevertheless, Scriptural. And since it is so plainly taught in Scripture, we can assign no reason for the opposition which it has met other than the pure ignorance and unreasoned prejudice with which men's minds have been filled when they come to study it. How applicable here are the words of Rice: -- "Happily would it be for the Church of Christ and for the world, if Christian ministers and Christian people could be contented to be disciples, -- LEARNERS; if, conscious of their limited faculties, their ignorance of divine things, and their proneness to err through depravity and prejudice, they could be induced to sit at the feet of Jesus and learn of Him. The Church has been corrupted and cursed in almost every age by the undue confidence of men in their reasoning powers. They have undertaken to pronounce upon the reasonableness or unreasonableness of doctrines infinitely above their reason, which are necessarily matters of pure revelation. In their presumption they have sought to comprehend 'the deep things of God,' and have interpreted the Scriptures, not according to their obvious meaning, but according to the decisions of the finite reason." And again he says, "No one ever studied the works of Nature or the Book of Revelation without finding himself encompassed on every side by difficulties he could not solve. The philosopher is obliged to be satisfied with facts; and the theologian must content himself with God's declarations."

Strange to say, many of those who insist that when people come to study the doctrine of the Trinity they should put aside all preconceived notions and should not rely simply upon the unaided human reason to decide what can or cannot be true of God, and who insist that the Scriptures should be accepted here as the unquestioned and authoritative guide, are not willing to follow those rules in the study of the doctrine of Predestination.

The Doctrine of Reprobation is Based on the Doctrine of Original Sin; No Injustice is Done to the Non-elect

It is obvious that this part of the doctrine of Predestination which affirms that God has, by a sovereign and eternal decree, chosen one portion of mankind to salvation while leaving the other portion to destruction, strikes us at first as being opposed to our common ideas of justice and hence needs a defense. The defense of the doctrine of Reprobation rests upon the preceding doctrine of Original Sin or Total Inability. This decree finds the whole race fallen. None have any claim on God's grace. But instead of leaving all to their just punishment, God gratuitously confers undeserved happiness upon one portion of mankind, -- an act of pure mercy and grace to which no one can object, -- while the other portion is simply passed by. No undeserved misery is inflicted upon this latter group. Hence no one has any right to object to this part of the decree. If the decree dealt simply with innocent men, it would be unjust to assign one portion to condemnation; but since it deals with men in a particular state, which is a state of guilt and sin, it is not unjust. "The conception of the world as lying in the evil one and therefore judged already (John 8:18), so that upon those who are not removed from the evil of the world the wrath of God is not so much to be poured out but simply abides (John 3:36, cf. I John 3:14), is fundamental to this whole presentation. It is therefore, on the one hand, that Jesus represents Himself as having come not to condemn the world, but to save the world (John 8:17; 8:12; 9:5; 12:47; cf. 4:42), and all that He does as having for its end the introduction of life into the world (John 6:33, 51); the already condemned world needs no further condemnation, it needs saving."

Guilty man has lost his rights and falls under the will of God. God's absolute sovereignty now comes in and when He shows mercy in some cases we cannot object to His justice in others unless we would call in question His government of the universe. Viewed in this light the decree of Predestination finds mankind one mass of perdition and allows only a portion of it to remain such. When all antecedently deserved punishment it was not unjust for some to be antecedently consigned to it; otherwise the execution of a just sentence would be unjust.

"When the Arminian says that faith and works constitute the ground of election we dissent," says Clark. "But if he says that foreseen unbelief and disobedience constitute the ground of reprobation we assent readily enough. A man is not saved on the ground of his virtues but he is condemned on the ground of his sin. As strict Calvinists we insist that while some men are saved from their unbelief and disobedience, in which all are involved, and others are not, it is still the sinner's sinfulness that constitutes the ground of his reprobation. Election and reprobation proceed on different grounds; one the grace of God, the other the sin of man. It is a travesty on Calvinism to say that because God elects to save a man irrespective of his character or deserts, that therefore He elects to damn a man irrespective of his character or deserts."

This reprobation or passing by of the non-elect is not founded merely upon a foresight of their continuance in sin; for if that had been a proper cause, reprobation would have been the fate of all men, for all were foreseen as sinners. Nor can it be said that those who were passed by were in all cases worse sinners than those who were brought to eternal life. The Scriptures always ascribe faith and repentance to the good pleasure of God and to the special gracious operation of His Spirit. Those who conceive of mankind as innocent and deserving of salvation are naturally scandalized when any portion of the race is antecedently consigned to punishment. But when the doctrine of Original Sin, which is taught so clearly and repeatedly in the Scriptures, is seen in its proper setting, the objections to predestination disappear and the condemnation of the wicked seems only just and natural. Thus salvation is of the Lord alone, and damnation wholly from ourselves. Men perish because they will not come to Christ; yet if they have a will to come, it is God who works the will in them. Grace, electing grace, both draws the will and keeps it steady; and to grace be all the praise.

Furthermore, out of a world of sinful and rebellious subjects, none of whom were in themselves worthy of saving, God has graciously chosen some when he might have passed by all as He did the fallen angels (II Peter 2:4; Jude 6). He has taken it altogether upon Himself to provide the redemption through which His people are saved. The atonement, therefore, is His own property; and He certainly may, as He most assuredly will, do what He pleases with His own. Grace is given to one and withheld from another as He sees best. It is to be noticed also that the withholding of His grace from the non-elect is but the negative cause of their perishing, just as the absence of a physician from the sick man is the occasion, not the efficient cause, of his death. "In the sight of an infinitely good and merciful God," says Dr. Charles Hodge, "it was necessary that some of the rebellious race of man should suffer the penalty of the law which all have broken. It is God's prerogative to determine who shall be vessels of mercy, and who shall be left to the just recompense of their sins."

Since man has brought himself into this state of sin, his condemnation is just, and every demand of justice would be met in his punishment. Conscience tells us that man perishes justly, since he chooses to follow Satan rather than God. "Ye will not come to me, that ye may have life," said Jesus (John 5:40). And in this connection the words of Prof. F. E. Hamilton are very appropriate: "All God does is to let him (the unregenerate) alone and allow him to go his own way without interference. It is his nature to be evil, and God simply has foreordained to leave that nature unchanged. The picture often painted by opponents of Calvinism, of a cruel God refusing to save those who long to be saved, is a gross caricature. God saves all who want to be saved, but no one whose nature is unchanged wants to be saved." Those who are lost are lost because they deliberately choose to walk in the ways of sin; and this will be the very hell of hells, that men have been self-destroyers.

Many people talk as if salvation were a matter of human birthright. And, forgetful of the fact that man had and lost his supremely favorable chance in Adam, they inform us that God would be unjust if He did not give all guilty creatures an opportunity to be saved. In regard to the idea that salvation is given in return for something done by the person, Luther says, "But let us, I pray you, suppose that God ought to be such a one,

who should have respect unto merit in those who are damned. Must we not, in like manner, also require and grant that He ought to have respect unto merit in those who are to be saved? For if we are to follow reason, it is equally unjust, that the undeserving should be crowned, as that the deserving should be damned."

No one with proper ideas of God supposes that He suddenly does something which He had not thought of before. Since His is an eternal purpose, what He does in time is what He purposed from eternity to do. Those whom He saves are those whom He purposed from eternity to save, and those whom He leaves to perish are those whom He purposed from eternity to leave. If it is just for God to do a certain thing in time, it is, by parity of argument, just for Him to resolve upon and decree it from eternity, for the principle of the action is the same in either case. And if we are justified in saying that from all eternity God has intended to display His mercy in pardoning a vast multitude of sinners why do some people object so strenuously when we say that from all eternity God has intended to display His justice in punishing other sinners?

Hence if it is just for God to forbear saving some persons after they are born, it was just for Him to form that purpose before they were born, or in eternity. And since the determining will of God is omnipotent, it cannot be obstructed or made void. This being true, it follows that He never did, nor does He now, will that every individual of mankind should be saved. If He willed this, not one single soul could ever be lost, "for who hath resisted His will?" If He willed that none should be lost, He would surely give to all men those effectual means of salvation without which it cannot be had. Now, God could give those means as easily to all mankind as to some only, but experience proves that He does not. Hence it logically follows that it is not His secret purpose or decretive will that all should be saved. In fact, the two truths, that what God does He does from eternity, and that only a portion of the human race is saved, is enough to complete the doctrines of Election and Reprobation.

State of the Heathens

The fact that, in the providential working of God, some men are left without the Gospel and the other means of grace virtually involves the principle set forth in the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination. We see that in all ages the greater portion of mankind has been left destitute even of the external means of grace. For centuries the Jews, who were very few in number, were the only people to whom God was pleased to make any special revelation of Himself. Jesus confined His public ministry almost exclusively to them and forbade his disciples to go among others until after the day of Pentecost (Matt. 10:5, 6; 28:19; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:4). Multitudes were left with no chance to hear the Gospel, and consequently died in their sins. If God had intended to save them undoubtedly he would have sent them the means of salvation. If he had chosen to Christianize India and China a thousand years ago, He most certainly could have accomplished His purpose. Instead, they were left in gross darkness and unbelief. The past and present state of the world with all its sin, misery, and death, can have no other explanation than that given in Scripture, -- namely, that the race fell in Adam and that in mercy God has sovereignly chosen to bring an innumerable multitude to salvation through a redemption which He has Himself provided. It is a perverted and dishonoring view of God to imagine Him struggling along with disobedient men, doing the best He can to convert them, but not able to accomplish His purpose.

If the Arminian theory were true, namely, that Christ died for all men and that the benefits of His death are actually applied to all men we would expect to find that God had made some provision for the Gospel to be communicated to all men. The problem of the heathens, who live and die without the Gospel, has always been a thorny one for the Arminians who insist that all men have sufficient grace if they will but make use of it. Few will deny that salvation is conditioned on the person hearing and accepting the Gospel. The Christian Church has been practically of one mind in declaring that the heathens as a class are lost. That such is the clear teaching of the Bible we can easily show: --

"And in none other is there salvation; for neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved," Acts 4:12. "As many as have sinned without the law shall also perish without the law: and as many as have sinned under the law shall be judged by the law," Rom. 2:12. "Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ," I Cor. 3:11. "I am the vine, ye are the branches; apart from me ye can do nothing," John 15:5. "I am the way, and the truth, and the life: no one cometh unto the Father, but by me," John 14:6. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him," John 3:36. "He that hath the Son hath life; he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life," I John 5:12, "And this is eternal life, that they should know thee the only true God, and Him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ," John 17:3. "Without faith it is Impossible to be well-pleasing to God," Heb. 11,6. "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" Rom. 10:13, 14 (or, in other words, how can the heathens possibly be saved when they have never even heard of Christ who is the only means of salvation ?). "Jesus therefore said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, ye have not life in yourselves," John 6:53. When the watchman sees danger coming but does not give the people warning they perish in their iniquity, Ezek. 33:8, -- true, the watchman will be held responsible, yet that does not change the fate of the people. Jesus declared that even the Samaritans who had far higher privileges than the nations outside of Palestine, worshipped they knew not what, and that salvation was of the Jews. See also the first and second chapters of Romans. The Scriptures, then, are plain in declaring that under ordinary conditions those who have not Christ and the Gospel are lost.

And in accordance with this the Westminster Confession, after stating that those who reject Christ cannot be saved, adds: "Much less can men, not professing the Christian religion, be saved in any other way whatsoever, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature, and the law of that religion they do profess . . ." (X:4).

In fact the belief that the heathens without the Gospel are lost has been one of the strongest arguments in favor of foreign missions. If we believe that their own religions contain enough light and truth to save them, the importance of preaching the Gospel to them is greatly lessened. Our attitude toward foreign missions is determined pretty largely by the answer which we give to this question.

We do not deny that God can save some even of the adult heathen people if He chooses to do so, for His Spirit works when and where and how He pleases, with means or without means. If any such are saved, however, it is by a miracle of pure grace. Certainly God's ordinary method is to gather His elect from the evangelized portion of mankind, although we must admit the possibility that by an extraordinary method some few of His elect may be gathered from the unevangelized portion. (The fate of those who die in infancy in heathen lands will be discussed under the subject, "Infant Salvation," # 11 of this article).

It is unreasonable to suppose that people can appropriate to themselves something concerning which they know nothing. We readily see that so far as the pleasures and joys and opportunities in this world are concerned the heathens are largely passed by; and on the same principle we would expect them to be passed by in the next world also. Those who are providentially placed in the pagan darkness of western China can no more accept Christ as Savior than they can accept the radio, the airplane, or the Copernican system of astronomy, things concerning which they are totally ignorant. When God places people in such conditions we may be sure that He has no more intention that they shall be saved than He has that the soil of northern Siberia, which is frozen all the year round, shall produce crops of wheat. Had he intended otherwise He would have supplied the means leading to the designed end. There are also multitudes in the nominally

Christian lands to whom the Gospel has never been presented in any adequate way, who have not even the outward means of salvation, to say nothing of the helpless state of their heart.

This, of course, does not mean that all of the lost shall suffer the same degree of punishment. We believe that from a common zero point there will be all degrees of reward and all degrees of punishment, and that a person's reward or punishment will, to a certain extent, be based on the opportunity that he has had in this world. Jesus Himself declared that in the day of judgment it would be more tolerable for the heathen city of Sodom than for those cities of Palestine which had heard and rejected His message (Luke 10:12-14); and He closed the parable of the faithful and unfaithful servants with the words: "And that servant, who knew his lord's will, and made not ready, nor did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes; but he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. And to whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required; and to whom they commit much, of him will they ask the more," Luke 12:47, 48. So while the heathens are lost, they shall suffer relatively less than those who have heard and rejected the Gospel.

Hence in regard to this problem of the heathen races, Arminians are, at the very outset, involved in difficulties which subvert their whole scheme, difficulties from which they have never been able to extricate themselves. They admit that only in Christ is there salvation; yet they see that multitudes die without ever having heard of Christ or the Gospel. Holding that sufficient grace or opportunity must be given to every man before he can be condemned, many of them have been led to postulate a future probation -- this however is not only without Scripture support, but is contrary to Scripture. As Cunningham says, "Calvinists have always regarded it as a strong argument against the Arminian doctrines of universal grace and universal redemption, and in favor of their own views of the sovereign purposes of God, that, in point of fact, so large a portion of the human race have been always left in entire ignorance of God's mercy, and of the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel; nay, in such circumstances as, to all appearances, throw insuperable obstacles in the way of their attaining to that knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ, which is eternal life."

Only in Calvinism, with its doctrine of the guilt and corruption of all mankind through the fall, and its doctrine of grace through which some are sovereignly rescued and brought to salvation while others are passed by, do we find an adequate explanation of the phenomenon of the heathen world.

Purposes of the Decree of Reprobation

The condemnation of the non-elect is designed primarily to furnish an eternal exhibition, before men and angels, of God's hatred for sin, or, in other words, it is to be an eternal manifestation of the justice of God. (Let it be remembered that God's justice as certainly demands the punishment of sin as it demands the rewarding of righteousness.) This decree displays one of the divine attributes which apart from it could never have been adequately appreciated. The salvation of some through a redeemer is designed to display the attributes of love, mercy, and holiness. The attributes of wisdom, power and sovereignty are displayed in the treatment accorded both groups. Hence the truth of the Scripture statement that, "Jehovah hath made everything for its own end; Yea, even the wicked for the day of evil," Prov. 16:4; and also the statement of Paul that this arrangement was intended on the one hand, to "make known the riches of His glory upon vessels of mercy, which He afore prepared unto glory," and on the other, "to show His wrath, and to make His power known" upon "vessels of wrath fitted unto destruction," Rom. 9:22, 23.

This decree of reprobation also serves subordinate purposes in regard to the elect; for, in beholding the rejection and final state of the wicked, (1) they learn what they too would have suffered had not grace stepped in to their relief, and they appreciate more deeply the riches of divine love which raised them from sin and brought them into eternal life while others no more guilty or unworthy than they were left to eternal

destruction. (2) It furnishes a most powerful motive for thankfulness that they have received such high blessings. (3) They are led to a deeper trust of their heavenly Father who supplies all their needs in this life and the next. (4) The sense of what they have received furnishes the strongest possible motive for them to love their heavenly Father, and to live as pure lives as possible. (5) It leads them to a greater abhorrence of sin. (6) It leads them to a closer walk with God and with each other as specially chosen heirs of the kingdom of heaven. (7) In regard to the sovereign rejection of the Jews, Paul destroys at the source any accusation that they were cast off without reason. "Did they stumble that they might fall? God forbid: for by their fall salvation is come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy," Rom. 11:11. Thus we see that God's rejection of the Jews was for a very wise and definite purpose; namely, that salvation might be given to the Gentiles, and that in such a way that it would react for the salvation of the Jews themselves. Historically we see that the Christian Church has been almost exclusively a Gentile Church. But in every age some Jews have been converted to Christianity, and we believe that as time goes on much larger numbers will be "provoked to jealousy" and caused to turn to God. Several verses in the eleventh chapter of Romans indicate that considerable numbers are to be converted and that they will be extremely zealous for righteousness.

Arminians Center Attack on This Doctrine

This doctrine of Reprobation is one upon which the Arminians are very fond of dwelling. They often single it out and emphasize it as though it was the sum and substance of Calvinism, while the other doctrines such as the Sovereignty of God, the purely gracious character of Election, the Perseverance of the saints, etc., which give so much glory to God, are passed by with little or no comment. At the Synod of Dort the Arminians insisted on first discussing the subject of Reprobation, and complained of it as a great hardship when the Synod refused to concede this. To the present day they have generally pursued this same policy. Their object is plain, for they know that it is easy to misrepresent this doctrine and to set it forth in a light that will prejudice men's feelings against it. They often distort the views which are held by Calvinists, then after alleging all that they can against it, they argue that since there can be no such thing as Reprobation, neither can there be any such thing as Election. The unfair over-emphasis on this doctrine indicates anything but an unprejudiced and sincere search for truth. Let them turn rather to the positive side of the system; let them answer and dispose of the large amount of evidence which has been collected in favor of this system.

On the other hand Calvinists usually produce first the evidence in favor of the doctrine of Election and then, having established this, they show that what they hold concerning the doctrine of Reprobation naturally follows. They do not, indeed, regard the latter as wholly dependent on the former for its proof. They believe that it is sustained by independent Scripture proof; yet they do believe that if what they hold concerning the doctrine of Election is proven true, then what they hold concerning the doctrine of Reprobation will follow of logical necessity. Since the Scriptures give us much fuller information about what God does in producing faith and repentance in those who are saved than they give us in regard to His procedure with those who continue in impenitence and unbelief, reason demands that we shall first investigate the doctrine of Election, and then consider the doctrine of Reprobation. This last consideration shows the utter unfairness of Arminians in giving such prominence to the doctrine of Reprobation. As has been said before, this is admittedly an unpleasant doctrine. Calvinists do not shrink from discussing it; yet naturally, because of its awful character, they find no satisfaction in dwelling upon it. They also realize that here men must be particularly careful not to attempt to be wise above what is written, as many are inclined to do when they indulge in presumptuous speculations about matters which are too high for them.

Under No Obligation to Explain All These Things

Let it be remembered that we are under no obligation to explain all the mysteries connected with these doctrines. We are only under obligation to set forth what the Scriptures teach concerning them, and to

vindicate this teaching so far as possible from the objections which are alleged against it. The "yea, Father, for so it was well pleasing in thy sight," (Matt. 11:26; Luke 10:21), was, to our Lord, an all-sufficient theodicy in the face of all God's diverse dealings with men. The sufficient and only answer which Paul gives to vain reasoners who would penetrate more deeply into these mysteries is that they are to be resolved into the divine wisdom and sovereignty. The words of Toplady are especially appropriate here: "Say not, therefore, as the opposers of these doctrines did in St. Paul's days: 'Why doth God find fault with the wicked? for who bath resisted His will? If He, who only can convert them, refrains from doing it, what room is there for blaming them that perish, seeing it is impossible to resist the will of the Almighty?' Be satisfied with St. Paul's answer, 'Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?' The apostle hinges the whole matter entirely on God's absolute sovereignty. There he rests it, and there we ought to leave it."

Man cannot measure the justice of God by his own comprehension, and our modesty should be such that when the reason for some of God's works lies hidden we nevertheless believe Him to be just. If anyone thinks that this doctrine represents God as unjust, it is only because he does not realize what the Scripture doctrine of Original Sin is, nor to what it commits him. Let him fix his mind upon the existence of real ill-desert antecedent to actual sin, and the condemnation will appear just and natural. The first step mastered, the second presents no real difficulty.

It is hard for us to realize that many of those right around us (in some cases our close friends and relatives) are probably foreordained to eternal punishment; and so far as we do realize it we are inclined to have a certain sympathy for them. Yet when seen in the light of eternity our sympathy for the lost will be found to have been an undeserved and a misplaced sympathy. Those who are finally lost shall then be seen as they really are, enemies of God, enemies of all righteousness, and lovers of sin, with no desire for salvation or the presence of the Lord. We may add further that, since God is perfectly just, none shall be sent to hell except those who deserve to go there; and when we see their real characters we shall be fully satisfied with the disposition that God has made.

As a matter of fact the Arminians do not escape any real difficulty here. For since they admit that God has foreknowledge of all things they must explain why He creates those who He foresees will lead sinful lives, reject the Gospel, die impenitent, and suffer eternally in hell. The Arminians really have a more difficult problem here than do the Calvinists; for the Calvinists maintain that the ones whom God thus creates, knowing that they will be lost, are the non-elect who voluntarily choose sin and in whose merited punishment God designs to manifest His justice, while the Arminians must say that God deliberately creates those who He foresees will be such poor, miserable creatures that without serving any good purpose they will bring destruction upon themselves and will spend eternity in hell in spite of the fact that God Himself earnestly wishes to bring them to heaven, and that God shall be forever grieved in seeing them where He wishes they were not. Does not this represent God as acting most foolishly in bringing upon Himself such dissatisfaction and upon some of His creatures such misery when He could at least have refrained from creating those who, He foresaw, would be lost?

Perhaps there are some who, upon hearing of this doctrine of Predestination, will account themselves reprobate and will be inclined to go into further sin with the excuse that they are to be damned anyway. But to do so is to suck poison out of a sweet flower, to dash one's self against the Rock of Ages. No one has the right to judge himself reprobate in this life, and hence to grow desperate; for final disobedience (the only infallible sign of reprobation) cannot be discovered until death. No unconverted person in this life knows for certain that God will not yet convert him and save him, even though he is aware that no such change has yet taken place. Hence he has no right to number himself definitely among the non-elect. God has not told us who among the unconverted He yet proposes to regenerate and save. If any man feels the pangs of conscience working in him, these may be the very means which God is using to draw him.

We have given considerable space to the discussion of the doctrine of Reprobation because it has been the great stumbling block for most of those who have rejected the Calvinistic system. We believe that if this doctrine can be shown to be Scriptural and reasonable the other parts of the system will be readily accepted.

6. Infralapsarianism And Supralapsarianism

Among those who call themselves Calvinists there has been some difference of opinion as to the order of events in the Divine plan. The question here is, When the decrees of election and reprobation came into existence were men considered as fallen or as unfallen? Were the objects of these decrees contemplated as members of a sinful, corrupt mass, or were they contemplated merely as men whom God would create? According to the infralapsarian view the order of events was as follows: God proposed (1) to create; (2) to permit the fall; (3) to elect to eternal life and blessedness a great multitude out of this mass of fallen men, and to leave the others, as He left the Devil and the fallen angels, to suffer the just punishment of their sins; (4) to give His Son, Jesus Christ, for the redemption of the elect; and (5) to send the Holy Spirit to apply to the elect the redemption which was purchased by Christ. According to the supralapsarian view the order of events was: (1) to elect some creatable men (that is, men who were to be created) to life and to condemn others to destruction; (2) to create; (3) to permit the fall; (4) to send Christ to redeem the elect; and (5) to send the Holy Spirit to apply this redemption to the elect. The question then is as to whether election precedes or follows the fall.

One of the leading motives in the supralapsarian scheme is to emphasize the idea of discrimination and to push this idea into the whole of God's dealings with men. We believe, however, that supralapsarianism over-emphasizes this idea. In the very nature of the case this idea cannot be consistently carried out, e. g., in creation, and especially in the fall. It was not merely some of the members of the human race who were objects of the decree to create, but all mankind, and that with the same nature. And it was not merely some men, but the entire race, which was permitted to fall. Supralapsarianism goes to as great an extreme on the one side as does universalism on the other. Only the infralapsarian scheme is self-consistent or consistent with other facts.

In regard to this difference Dr. Warfield writes: "The mere putting of the question seems to carry its answer with it. For the actual dealing with men which is in question, is, with respect to both classes alike, those who are elected and those who are passed by, conditioned on sin; we cannot speak of salvation any more than of reprobation without positing sin. Sin is necessarily precedent in thought, not indeed to the abstract idea of discrimination, but to the concrete instance of discrimination which is in question, a discrimination with regard to a destiny which involves either salvation or punishment. There must be sin in contemplation to ground a decree of salvation, as truly as a decree of punishment. We cannot speak of a decree discriminating between men with reference to salvation and punishment, therefore, without positing the contemplation of men as sinners as its logical prius."

And to the same effect Dr. Charles Hodge says: "It is a clearly revealed Scriptural principle that where there is no sin there is no condemnation He hath mercy upon one and not on another, according to His own good pleasure, because all are equally unworthy and guilty. . . Everywhere, as in Romans 1:24, 26, 28, reprobation is declared to be judicial, founded upon the sinfulness of its object. Otherwise it could not be a manifestation of the justice of God."

It is not in harmony with the Scripture ideas of God that innocent men, men who are not contemplated as sinners, should be foreordained to eternal misery and death. The decrees concerning the saved and the lost should not be looked upon as based merely on abstract sovereignty. God is truly sovereign, but this sovereignty is not exercised in an arbitrary way. Rather it is a sovereignty exercised in harmony with His

other attributes, especially His justice, holiness, and wisdom. God cannot commit sin; and in that respect He is limited, although it would be more accurate to speak of His inability to commit sin as a perfection. There is, of course, mystery in connection with either system; but the supralapsarian system seems to pass beyond mystery and into contradiction.

The Scriptures are practically infralapsarian, -- Christians are said to have been chosen "out of" the world, John 15:19; the potter has a right over the clay, "from the same lump," to make one part a vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor, Rom. 9:21; and the elect and the non-elect are regarded as being originally in a common state of misery. Suffering and death are uniformly represented as the wages of sin. The infralapsarian scheme naturally commends itself to our ideas of justice and mercy; and it is at least free from the Arminian objection that God simply creates some men in order to damn them. Augustine and the great majority of those who have held the doctrine of Election since that time have been and are infralapsarians, -- that is, they believe that it was from the mass of fallen men that some were elected to eternal life while others were sentenced to eternal death for their sins. There is no Reformed confession which teaches the supralapsarian view; but on the other hand a considerable number do explicitly teach the infralapsarian view, which thus emerges as the typical form of Calvinism. At the present day it is probably safe to say that not more than one Calvinist in a hundred holds the supralapsarian view. We are Calvinists strongly enough, but not "high Calvinists." By a "high Calvinist" we mean one who holds the supralapsarian view.

It is of course true that in either system the sovereign choice of God in election is strewed and salvation in its whole course is the work of God. Opponents usually stress the supralapsarian system since it is the one which without explanation is more likely to conflict with man's natural feelings and impressions. It is also true that there are some things here which cannot be put into the time mould, -- that these events are not in the Divine mind as they are in ours, by a succession of acts, one after another, but that by one single act God has at once ordained all these things. In the Divine mind the plan is a unit, each part of which is designed with reference to a state of facts which God intended should result from the other parts. All of the decrees are eternal. They have a logical, but not a chronological, relationship. Yet in order for us to reason intelligently about them we must have a certain order of thought. We very naturally think of the gift of Christ in sanctification and glorification as following the decrees of the creation and the fall.

In regard to the teaching of the Westminster Confession, Dr. Charles Hodge makes the following comment: "Twiss, the Prolocutor of that venerable body (the Westminster Assembly), was a zealous supralapsarian; the great majority of its members, however, were on the other side. The symbols of that Assembly, while they clearly imply the infralapsarian view, were yet so framed as to avoid offence to those who adopted the supralapsarian theory. In the 'Westminster Confession,' it is said that God appointed the elect unto eternal life, and the rest of mankind, God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of His own will whereby He extendeth or withholdeth mercy as He pleaseth, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice: It is here taught that those whom God passes by are 'the rest of mankind; not the rest of ideal or possible men, but the rest of those human beings who constitute mankind, or the human race. In the second place, the passage quoted teaches that the non-elect are passed by and ordained to wrath 'for their sin.' This implies that they were contemplated as sinful before this foreordination to judgment. The infralapsarian view is still more obviously assumed in the answer to the 19th and 20th questions in the 'Shorter Catechism.' It is there taught that all mankind by the fall lost communion with God, and are under His wrath and curse, and that God out of His mere good pleasure elected some (some of those under His wrath and curse), unto everlasting life. Such has been the doctrine of the great body of Augustinians from the time of Augustine to the present day."²⁷

7. Many Are Chosen

When the doctrine of Election is mentioned many people immediately assume that this means that the great majority of mankind will be lost. But why should anyone draw that conclusion? God is free in election to choose as many as He pleases, and we believe that He who is infinitely merciful and benevolent and holy will elect the great majority to life. There is no good reason why He should be limited to only a few. We are told that Christ is to have the preeminence in all things, and we do not believe that the Devil will be permitted to emerge victor even in numbers.

Our position in this respect has been very ably stated by Dr. W. G. T. Shedd in the following words: "Let it be noticed that the question, how many are elected and how many are reprobated, has nothing to do with the question whether God may either elect or reprobate sinners. If it is intrinsically right for Him either to elect or not to elect, either to save or not to save free moral agents who by their own fault have plunged themselves into sin and ruin, numbers are of no account in establishing the rightness. And if it is intrinsically wrong, numbers are of no account in establishing wrongness. Neither is there any necessity that the number of the elect should be small, and that of the non-elect great; or the converse. The election and the non-election, and also the numbers of the elect and the non-elect, are all alike a matter of sovereignty and optional decision. At the same time it relieves the solemnity and awfulness which overhangs the decree of reprobation, to remember that the Scriptures teach that the number of the elect is much greater than that of the non-elect. The kingdom of the Redeemer in this fallen world is always described as far greater and grander than that of Satan. The operation of grace on earth is uniformly represented as mightier than that of sin. 'Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.' And the final number of the redeemed is said to be a 'number which no man can number,' but that of the lost is not so magnified and emphasized."²⁸

There is, however, a very common practice among Arminian writers to represent Calvinists as tending to consign to everlasting misery a large portion of the human race whom they would admit to the enjoyment of heaven. It is a mere caricature of Calvinism to represent it as based on the principle that the saved will be a mere handful, or only a few brands plucked from the burning. When the Calvinist insists upon the doctrine of Election, his emphasis is upon the fact that God deals personally with each individual soul instead of dealing merely with mankind in the mass; and this is a thing altogether apart from the relative proportion which shall exist between the saved and the lost. In answer to those who are inclined to say, "According to this doctrine God alone can save the soul; there will be few saved," we can reply that they might as well reason, "Since God alone can create stars, there can be but few stars." The objection is not well taken. The doctrine of Election taken in itself tells us nothing about what the ultimate ratio shall be. The only limit set is that not all will be saved.

So far as the principles of sovereignty and personal election are concerned there is no reason why a Calvinist might not hold that all men will finally be saved; and some Calvinists have actually held this view. "Calvinism," wrote W. P. Patterson, of the University of Edinburgh, "is the only system which contains principles -- in its doctrines of election and irresistible grace -- that could make credible a theory of universal salvation." And Dr. S. G. Craig, Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, and one of the outstanding men in the Presbyterian Church at the present time, says: "No doubt many Calvinists, like many not Calvinists, have, in obedience to the supposed teachings of the Scriptures, held that few will be saved, but there is no good reason why Calvinists may not believe that the saved will ultimately embrace the immensely greater portion of the human race. At any rate, our leading theologians -- Charles Hodge, Robert L. Dabney, W. G. T. Shedd, and B. B. Warfield -- have so held."

As stated by Patterson, Calvinism, with its emphasis on the intimate personal relation between God and each individual soul, is the only system which would offer a logical basis for universalism if that view were not

contradicted by the Scriptures. And in contrast with this, must not the Arminian admit that on his principles only comparatively few actually are saved? He must admit that so far in human history the great proportion of adults, even in nominally Christian lands, exercising their "free will" with a "graciously restored ability" have died without accepting Christ. And unless God is bringing the world to an appointed goal, what grounds are there to suppose that, so long as human nature remains as it is, the situation would be materially different even if the world lasted a billion years?

8. A REDEEMED WORLD OR RACE

Since it was the world, or the race, which fell in Adam, it was the world, or the race, which was redeemed by Christ. This, however, does not mean that every individual will be saved, but that the race as a race will be saved. Jehovah is no mere tribal deity, but is "the God of the whole earth"; and the salvation which He had in view cannot be limited to that of a little select group or favored few. The Gospel was not merely local news for a few villages in Palestine, but was a world message; and the abundant and continuous testimony of Scripture is that the kingdom of God is to fill the earth, "from sea to sea, and from the River unto the ends of the earth." Zech. 9:10.

Early in the Old Testament we have the promise that "all the earth shall be filled with the glory of Jehovah," Nu. 14:21; and Isaiah repeats the promise that all flesh shall see the glory of Jehovah (40:5). Israel was set as "a light to the Gentiles," and "for salvation unto the uttermost part of the earth," Is. 49:6; Acts 13:47. Joel made the clear declaration that in the coming days of blessing, the Spirit hitherto given only to Israel would be poured out upon the whole earth. "And it shall come to pass afterward," said the Lord through His prophet, "that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh," 2:28; and Peter applied that prophecy to the outpouring which was begun at Pentecost (Acts 2:16).

Ezekiel gives us the picture of the increasing flow of the healing waters which issue from under the threshold of the temple; waters which were first only to the ankles, then to the knees, then to the loins, then a great river, waters which could not be passed through (47:1-5). Daniel's interpretation of King Nebuchadnezzar's dream taught this same truth. The king saw a great image, with various parts of gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay. Then he saw a stone cut out without bands, which stone smote the image so that the gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay were carried away like the chaff of the summer threshing floor. These various elements represented great world empires which were to be broken in pieces and completely carried away, while the stone cut out without bands represented a spiritual kingdom which God Himself would set up and which would become a great mountain and fill the whole earth. "And in the days of those kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever," Dan. 2:44. In the light of the New Testament we see that this kingdom was the one which Christ set up. In the vision which Daniel saw, the beast made war with the saints and prevailed against them for a time, -- but, "the time came when the saints possessed the kingdom," 7:22.

Jeremiah gives the promise that the time is coming when it will no longer be necessary for a man to say to his brother or to his neighbors "Know Jehovah"; "for they shall all know Him, from the least to the greatest of them," 31:34. "Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance, And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possessions," said the psalmist (2:8). The last book of the Old Testament contains a promise that "from the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles, saith Jehovah of hosts," Malachi 1:11.

In the New Testament we find the same teaching. When the Lord does finally shower spiritual blessings on His people, "the residue of men," and "all the Gentiles," are to "seek after the Lord," Acts 15:17. "Christ is

the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the whole world," I John 2:2. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him" John 3:16, 17. "The Father hath sent the Son to be the Savior of the world," I John 4:14. "Behold the lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world I" John 1:29. "We have heard for ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Saviour of the world' John 4:42. "I am the light of the world," John 8:12. "I came not to judge the world, but to save the world," John 12:47. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,' John 12:32. "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," II Cor. 5:19. The kingdom of heaven is said to be "like unto leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal till it was all leavened," Matt. 13:33.

In the eleventh chapter of Romans we are told that the acceptance of the Gospel by the Jews shall be as "life from the dead" in its spiritual blessings to the world. By their fall the Gospel was given to the Gentiles - "now if their fall is the riches of the world, and their loss the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fullness? ... For if the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" The universal and complete dominion of Christ is taught again when we are told that He is to sit at the right hand of the Father until all enemies have been placed under His feet.

Thus a strong emphasis is thrown on the universality of Christ's work of redemption, and we are taught that our eyes are yet to behold a Christianized world. And since nothing is told us as to how long the earth shall continue after this goal is reached, possibly we may look forward to a great "golden age" of spiritual prosperity, continuing for centuries, or even millenniums, during which time Christianity shall be triumphant over all the earth, and during which time the great proportion even of adults shall be saved. It seems that the number of the redeemed shall then be swelled until it far surpasses that of the lost.

We cannot, of course, fix even an approximate date for the end of the world. In several places in Scripture we are told that Christ is to return at the end of this present world order; that His coming will be personal, visible, and with great power and glory; that the general resurrection and the general judgment shall then take place; and that heaven and hell shall then be ushered in in their fullness. But it has been expressly revealed that the time of our Lord's coming is "among the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God." "For of that day or that hour knoweth no one, not even the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only," said Jesus before His crucifixion; and after the resurrection He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath set within His own authority," Acts 1:7. Hence those who presume to tell us when the end of the world is coming are simply speaking without knowledge. In view of the fact that it has now been nearly 2,000 years since Christ came the first time, it may, for all we know, be another 2,000 years before He comes again -- perhaps a much longer, perhaps a much shorter, time.

In this connection Dr. S. G. Craig has well said: "We are told that certain events, such as the preaching of the Gospel among all the nations (Matt. 24:14), the conversion of the Jews (Rom. 11:25-27), the overthrow of 'every rulership and every authority and power' opposed to Christ (I Cor. 15:24), are to take place before the return of our Lord. It seems clear, therefore, that while the time of our Lord's return is unknown, yet it still lies some distance in the future. Just how far in the future we have no means of knowing. No doubt, if events move as slowly in the future as in the past, the coming of our Lord lies far in the future. In view of the fact, however, that events move so much more swiftly than formerly, so that what formerly was accomplished in centuries is now accomplished in a few years, it is quite possible that the return of Christ lies in the comparatively near future. Whether it comes in the near or remote future as measured in the scale of human lives, we may be certain that it lies in the near future as measured in the scales of God according to whom a thousand years is as one day. In view of present conditions, however, there seems to be little or nothing in the Scriptures to warrant the notion that Jesus will return within the lifetime of the present generation."29

The world is perhaps yet young. Certainly God has not yet given any adequate exhibition of what He can do with a world truly converted to righteousness. What we have seen so far appears to be only the preliminary stage, a temporary triumph of the Devil, whose work is to be completely overthrown. God's work spans the centuries. Even the millenniums are insignificant to Him who inhabits eternity. When we associate our theology with our astronomy we find that God works on an unbelievably vast scale. He has spaced millions, perhaps even billions, of fiery suns throughout the universe, -- something like ten million have already been catalogued. Astronomers tell us, for instance, that the earth is 92,000,000 miles from the sun and that the light traveling at the rate of 186,000 miles per second requires only eight minutes to traverse that distance. They go on to tell us that the nearest fixed star is so far away that four years are required for its light to reach us; that the light which we now see coming from the North Star has been on its journey for 450 years; and that the light from some of the most distant stars has been on its way for millions of years. In view of what modern science reveals we find that the period during which man has lived on earth has been comparatively insignificant. God may have developments in store for the race which shall be quite startling, -- developments of which we have scarcely dreamed.

9. THE VASTNESS OF THE REDEEMED MULTITUDE

The decree of God's electing and predestinating love, though discriminating and particular, is, nevertheless, very extensive. "I saw, and behold, a great multitude, which no man could number, out of every nation and of all tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, arrayed in white robes, and palms in their hands; and they cried with a great voice, saying, Salvation unto our God who sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb," Rev. 7:9, 10. God the Father has elected untold millions of the human race to everlasting salvation and eternal happiness. Just what proportion of the human family He has included in His purpose of mercy, we have not been informed; but, in view of the future days of prosperity which are promised to the Church, it may be inferred that much the greater part will eventually be found among the number of His elect.

In the nineteenth chapter of John's Revelation a vision is recorded setting forth in figurative terms the struggle between the forces of good and evil in the world. Concerning the description there given Dr. Warfield says: "The section opens with a vision of the victory of the Word of God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords over all His enemies. We see Him come forth from heaven girt for war, followed by the armies of heaven; the birds of the air are summoned to the feast of corpses that shall be prepared for them; the armies of the enemy -- the beasts and the kings of the earth -- are gathered against Him and are totally destroyed; and 'all the birds are filled with their flesh' (19:11-21). It is a vivid picture of a complete victory, an entire conquest, that we have here; and all the imagery of war and battle is employed to give it life. This is the symbol. The thing symbolized is obviously the complete victory of the Son of God over all the hosts of wickedness. Only a single hint of this signification is afforded by the language of the description, but that is enough. On two occasions we are carefully told that the sword by which the victory is won proceeds out of the mouth of the conqueror (verses 15 and 21). We are not to think, as we read, of any literal war or manual fighting, therefore; the conquest is wrought by the spoken word -- in short, by the preaching of the Gospel. In fine, we have before us here a picture of the victorious career of the Gospel of Christ in the world. All the imagery of the dread battle and its hideous details are but to give us the impression of the completeness of the victory. Christ's Gospel is to conquer the earth; He is to overcome all His enemies."30

To us who live between the first and second coming of Christ it is given to see the conquest taking place. As to how long the conquest continues before it is crowned with victory, or as to how long the converted world is to await her coming Lord, we are not told. Today we are living in a period that is relatively golden as compared with the first century of the Christian era, and this progress is to go on until those on this earth shall see a practical fulfillment of the prayer, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in

heaven." As we get the broader view of God's gracious dealings with the sinful world, we see that He has not distributed His electing grace with niggard hand, but that His purpose has been the restoration to Himself of the whole world.

The promise was given to Abraham that his posterity should be a vast multitude, -- "In blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heavens, and as the sand which is upon the sea-shore," Gen. 22:17; "I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth; so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then may thy seed also be numbered," Gen. 13:16. And in the New Testament we discover that this promise refers not merely to the Jews as a separate people, but that those who are Christians are in the highest sense the true "sons of Abraham." "Know therefore, that they that are of faith, the same are sons of Abraham"; and again, "If ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, heirs according to promise," Gal. 3:7, 29.

Isaiah declared that the pleasure of Jehovah should prosper in the hands of the Messiah, that He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. And in view of what He suffered on Calvary we know that He will not be easily satisfied.

The idea that the saved shall far outnumber the lost is also carried out in the contrasts drawn in Scripture language. Heaven is uniformly pictured as the next world, as a great kingdom, a country, a city; while on the other hand hell is uniformly represented as a comparatively small place, a prison, a lake (of fire and brimstone), a pit (perhaps deep, but narrow), (Luke 20:35; 1 Tim. 6:17; Rev. 21:1; Matt. 5:3; Heb. 11:16; I Peter 3:19; Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8-27). When the angels and saints are mentioned in Scripture they are said to be hosts, myriads, an innumerable multitude, ten thousand times ten thousand and many more thousands of thousands; but no such language is ever used in regard to the lost, and by contrast their number appears to be relatively insignificant (Luke 2:13; Is. 6:3; Rev. 5:11). "The circle of God's election," says Shedd, "is a great circle of the heavens and not that of a treadmill. The kingdom of Satan is insignificant in contrast with the kingdom of Christ. In the immense range of God's dominion, good is the rule, and evil is the exception. Sin is a speck upon the azure of eternity; a spot upon the sun. Hell is only a corner of the universe."

Judging from these considerations it thus appears (if we may hazard a guess) that the number of those who are saved may eventually bear some such proportion to those who are lost as the number of free citizens in our commonwealth today bears to those who are in the prisons and penitentiaries; or that the company of the saved may be likened to the main stalk of the tree which grows and flourishes, while the lost are but as the small limbs and prunings which are cut off and which perish in the fires. Who even among non-Calvinists would not wish that this were true?

But, it may be asked, do not the verses, "Narrow is the gate, and straightened the way, that leadeth unto life, and few are they that find it," and, "Many are called, but few chosen," Matt. 7:14; 22:14, teach that many more are lost than saved? We believe these verses are meant to be understood in a temporal sense, as describing the conditions which Jesus and His disciples saw existing in Palestine in their day. The great majority of the people about them were not walking in the ways of righteousness, and the words are spoken from the standpoint of the moment rather than from the standpoint of the distant Judgment Day. In these words we have presented to us a picture which was true to life as they saw it, and which would, for that matter, describe the world as it has been even up to the present time. But, asks Dr. Warfield, "As the years and centuries and ages flow on, can it never be -- is it not to be -- that the proportion following 'the two ways' shall be reversed?"

These verses are also designed to teach us that the way of salvation is a way of difficulty and of sacrifice, and that it is our duty to address ourselves to it with diligence and persistence. No one is to assume his salvation as a matter of course. Those who enter into the kingdom of heaven do so through many tribulations; hence the command, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door," Luke 13:24. The choice in life is represented as a choice between two roads, one is broad, smooth, and easy to travel, but leads to destruction. The other is narrow and difficult, and leads to life. "There is no more reason to suppose that this similitude teaches that the saved shall be fewer than the lost than there is to suppose that the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1 ff) teaches that they shall be precisely equal in number; and there is far less reason to suppose that this similitude teaches that the saved shall be few comparatively to the lost than there is to suppose that the parable of the Tares in the corn (Matt. 13:24 ff) teaches that the lost shall be inconsiderable in number in comparison with the saved -- for that, indeed, is an important part of the teaching of that parable."³¹ And we may add that there is no more reason to suppose that this reference to the two ways teaches that the number of the saved shall be fewer than the number of the lost than there is to suppose that the parable of the lost sheep teaches that only one out of a hundred goes astray and that even it shall eventually be brought back, which would indeed be absolute restorationism.

10. THE WORLD IS GROWING BETTER

The redemption of the world is a long, slow process, extending through the centuries, yet surely approaching an appointed goal. We live in the day of advancing victory and see the conquest taking place.

There are periods of spiritual prosperity and periods of depression; yet over all there is progress. Looking back across the two thousand years since Christ came, we can see that there has been marvelous progress. This course shall ultimately be completed, and before Christ comes again we shall see a Christianized world. This does not mean that all sin shall ever be eradicated -- there shall always be some tares among the wheat until the time of the harvest, and even the righteous, while they remain in this world, sometimes fall victims to sin and temptation. But it does mean that as today we see some Christianized groups and communities, so eventually we shall see a Christianized world.

"The true way of judging the world is to compare its present with its past condition and note in which direction it is moving. Is it going backward, or forward, is it getting worse or better? It may be wrapped in gloomy twilight, but is it the twilight of the evening, or of the morning? Are the shadows deepening into starless night, or are they fleeing before the rising sun? ... One glance at the world as it is today compared with what it was ten or twenty centuries ago shows us that it has swept through a wide arc and is moving toward the morning."³²

Today there is much more wealth consecrated to the service of the Church than ever before; and, in spite of the sad defection toward Modernism in many places, we believe there is far more really earnest evangelistic and missionary activity than has ever been known before. The number of Bible schools, Christian colleges, and seminaries in which the Bible is systematically studied is growing much more rapidly than the population. Last year over 11,000,000 copies or portions of the Bible in various languages were distributed in the home and foreign lands by the American Bible Society alone -- a fact which means that the Bible is being broadcast over the earth as never before.

The Christian Church has made great progress in many parts of the world, and especially during the last two or three centuries it has developed thousands upon thousands of individual churches and has been a powerful influence for good in the lives of millions of people. It has established innumerable schools and hospitals. Under its benign influence ethical culture and social service have greatly advanced in the world, and the moral standards of the nations are much higher today than when the Church was first planted here.

"Already the Church has penetrated every continent and planted itself on every island and flung its outposts around the equator and from pole to pole. It is now the greatest organization on earth, the one world enterprise. And it has results to show that are not unpromising. In our own country Christianity has grown at least five times faster than the population. One hundred years ago there was one professing Christian in every fifteen of the population, and there now is one in every three, and excluding children, one in every two. In the world at large the results are astonishing. In 1500 A. D. there were 100,000,000 nominal Christians in the world; in 1800 there were 200,000,000, and the latest statistics show that, out of a total world population of 1,646,491,000 there are now 564,510,000 nominal Christians, or about one-third of the population of the globe. Christianity has grown more in the last one hundred years than in the preceding eighteen hundred."33

The statement that Christianity has grown more in the last one hundred years than in the preceding eighteen hundred seems to be approximately correct. According to late statistics, 1950, Christianity has a considerably larger number of nominal adherents than the combined total of any other two world religions. These figures state that there are approximately 640,000,000 Christians, 300,000,000 Confucianists (including Taoists), 230,000,000 Hindus, 220,000,000 Mohammedans, 150,000,000 Buddhists, 125,000,000 Animists, 20,000,000 Shintoists, and 15,000,000 Jews. (And while many of those who are listed as Christians are only "nominally" such, the proportion of true Christians is probably as great or greater than is the proportion in any of the pagan religions). All of these other religions, with the exception of Mohammedanism, are much older than Christianity. Furthermore, Christianity alone is able to grow and flourish under modern civilization, while all of the other religions soon disintegrate when brought under its glaring light.

Only within the last one hundred years have foreign missions really come into their own. As they have recently been developed, with great church organizations behind them, they are in position to carry on a work of evangelism in heathen lands such as the world has never yet seen. It is safe to say that the present generation living in India, China, Korea, and Japan, has seen greater changes in religion, society, and government than occurred in the preceding two thousand years. And when we contrast the rapid spread of Christianity in recent years with the rapid disintegration that is taking place in all of the other world religions, it appears very plain that Christianity is the future world religion. In the light of these facts we face the future confident that the best is yet to be.

11. INFANT SALVATION

Most Calvinistic theologians have held that those who die in infancy are saved. The Scriptures seem to teach plainly enough that the children of believers are saved; but they are silent or practically so in regard to those of the heathens. The Westminster Confession does not pass judgment on the children of heathens who die before coming to years of accountability. Where the Scriptures are silent, the Confession, too, preserves silence. Our outstanding theologians, however, mindful of the fact that God's "tender mercies are over all His works," and depending on His mercy widened as broadly as possible, have entertained a charitable hope that since these infants have never committed any actual sin themselves, their inherited sin would be pardoned and they would be saved on wholly evangelical principles.

Such, for instance, was the position held by Charles Hodge, W. G. T. Shedd, and B. B. Warfield. Concerning those who die in infancy, Dr. Warfield says: "Their destiny is determined irrespective of their choice, by an unconditional decree of God, suspended for its execution on no act of their own; and their salvation is wrought by an unconditional application of the grace of Christ to their souls, through the immediate and irresistible operation of the Holy Spirit prior to and apart from any action of their own proper wills . . . And if death in infancy does depend on God's providence, it is assuredly God in His providence who selects this vast multitude to be made participants of His unconditional salvation . . . This is but to say that they are unconditionally predestinated to salvation from the foundation of the world. If only a single infant dying in

irresponsible infancy be saved, the whole Arminian principle is traversed. If all infants dying such are saved, not only the majority of the saved, but doubtless the majority of the human race hitherto, have entered into life by a non-Arminian pathway."³⁴

Certainly there is nothing in the Calvinistic system which would prevent us from believing this; and until it is proven that God could not predestinate to eternal life all those whom He is pleased to call in infancy we may be permitted to hold this view.

Calvinists, of course, hold that the doctrine of original sin applies to infants as well as to adults. Like all other sons of Adam, infants are truly culpable because of race sin and might be justly punished for it. Their "salvation" is real. It is possible only through the grace of Christ and is as truly unmerited as is that of adults. Instead of minimizing the demerit and punishment due to them for original sin, Calvinism magnifies the mercy of God in their salvation. Their salvation means something, for it is the deliverance of guilty souls from eternal woe. And it is costly, for it was paid for by the suffering of Christ on the cross. Those who take the other view of original sin, namely, that it is not properly sin and does not deserve eternal punishment, make the evil from which infants are "saved" to be very small and consequently the love and gratitude which they owe to God to be small also.

The doctrine of infant salvation finds a logical place in the Calvinistic system; for the redemption of the soul is thus infallibly determined irrespective of any faith, repentance or good works, whether actual or foreseen. It does not, however, find a logical place in Arminianism or any other system. Furthermore, it would seem that a system such as Arminianism, which suspends salvation on a personal act of rational choice, would logically demand that those dying in infancy must either be given another period of probation after death, in order that their destiny may be fixed, or that they must be annihilated.

In regard to this question Dr. S. G. Craig has written: "We take it that no doctrine of infant salvation is Christian that does not assume that infants are lost members of a lost race for whom there is no salvation apart from Christ. It must be obvious to all, therefore, that the doctrine that all dying in infancy are saved will not fit into the Roman Catholic or Anglo-Catholic system of thought with their teaching of baptismal regeneration; as clearly most of those who have died in infancy have not been baptized. It is obvious also that the Lutheran system of thought provides no place for the notion that all dying in infancy are saved because of the necessity it attaches to the means of grace, especially the Word and the Sacraments. If grace is only in the means of grace -- in the case of infants in baptism -- it seems clear that most of those who have died in infancy have not been the recipients of grace. Equally clear is it that the Arminian has no right to believe in the salvation of all dying in infancy; in fact, it is not so clear that he has any right to believe in the salvation of any dying in infancy. For according to the Arminians, even the evangelical Arminians, God in His grace has merely provided men with an opportunity for salvation. It does not appear, however, that a mere opportunity for salvation can be of any avail for those dying in infancy."³⁵

Though rejecting the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and turning the baptism of the non-elect into an empty form, Calvinism, on the other hand, extends saving grace far beyond the boundaries of the visible Church. If it is true that all of those who die in infancy, in heathen as well as in Christian lands, are saved, then more than half of the human race even up to the present time has been among the elect. Furthermore, it may be said that since Calvinists hold that saving faith in Christ is the only requirement for salvation on the part of adults, they never make membership in the external Church to be either a requirement or a guarantee of salvation. They believe that many adults who have no connection with the external Church are nevertheless saved. Every consistent Christian will, of course, submit himself for baptism in accordance with the plain Scripture command and will become a member of the external Church; yet many others, either because of weakness of faith or because they lack the opportunity, do not carry out that command.

It has often been charged that the Westminster Confession in stating that "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ" (Chap. X. Sec. 3), implies that there are non-elect infants, who, dying in infancy, are lost, and that the Presbyterian Church has taught that some dying in infancy are lost. Concerning this Dr. Craig says: "The history of the phrase 'Elect infants dying in infancy' makes clear that the contrast implied was not between 'elect infants dying in infancy' and 'non-elect infants dying in infancy,' but rather between 'elect infants dying in infancy' and 'elect infants living to grow up.'" However, in order to guard against misunderstanding, furthered by unfriendly controversialists, the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A. adopted in 1903 a Declaratory Statement which reads as follows: "With reference to Chapter X, Section 3, of the Confession of Faith, that it is not to be regarded as teaching that any who die in infancy are lost. We believe that all dying in infancy are included in the election of grace, and are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, who works when and where and how He pleases."

Concerning this Declaratory Statement Dr. Craig says: "It is obvious that the Declaratory Statement goes beyond the teaching of Chapter X, Section 3 of the Confession of Faith inasmuch as it states positively that all who die in infancy are saved. Some hold that the Declaratory Statement goes beyond the Scripture in teaching that all those dying in infancy are saved; but, be that as it may, it makes it impossible for any person to even plausibly maintain that Presbyterians teach that there are non-elect infants who die in infancy. No doubt there have been individual Presbyterians who held that some of those who die in infancy have been lost; but such was never the official teaching of the Presbyterian Church and as matters now stand such a position is contradicted by the Church's creed."³⁶

It is sometimes charged that Calvin taught the actual damnation of some of those who die in infancy. A careful examination of his writings, however, does not bear out that charge. He explicitly taught that some of the elect die in infancy and that they are saved as infants. He also taught that there were reprobate infants; for he held that reprobation as well as election was eternal, and that the non-elect come into this life reprobate. But nowhere did he teach that the reprobate die and are lost as infants. He of course rejected the Pelagian view which denied original sin and grounded the salvation of those who die in infancy on their supposed innocence and sinlessness. Calvin's views in this respect have been quite thoroughly investigated by Dr. R. A. Webb and his findings are summarized in the following paragraph: "Calvin teaches that all the reprobate 'procure' -- (that is his own word) -- 'procure' their own destruction; and they procure their destruction by their own personal and conscious acts of 'impiety,' 'wickedness,' and 'rebellion.' Now reprobate infants, though guilty of original sin and under condemnation, cannot, while they are infants, thus 'procure' their own destruction by their personal acts of impiety, wickedness, and rebellion. They must, therefore, live to the years of moral responsibility in order to perpetrate the acts of impiety, wickedness and rebellion, which Calvin defines as the mode through which they procure their destruction. While, therefore, Calvin teaches that there are reprobate infants, and that these will be finally lost, he nowhere teaches that they will be lost as infants, and while they are infants; but, on the contrary, he declares that all the reprobate 'procure' their own destruction by personal acts of impiety, wickedness and rebellion. Consequently, his own reasoning compels him to hold (to be consistent with himself), that no reprobate child can die in infancy; but all such must live to the age of moral accountability, and translate original sin into actual sin."³⁷

In none of Calvin's writings does he say, either directly or by good and necessary inference, that any dying in infancy are lost. Most of the passages which are brought forth by opponents to prove this point are merely assertions of his well-known doctrine of original sin, in which he taught the universal guilt and depravity of the entire race. Most of these are from highly controversial sections where he is discussing other doctrines and where he speaks unguardedly; but when taken in their context the meaning is not often in doubt. Calvin simply says of all infants what David specifically said of himself: "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity; And in sin did my mother conceive me," Ps. 51:5; or what Paul said, "In Adam all die," I Cor. 15:22; or again, that all are "by nature, the children of wrath," Eph. 2:3.

We believe that we have now shown that the doctrine of election is in every point Scriptural and a plain dictate of common sense. Those who oppose this doctrine do so because they neither understand nor consider the majesty and holiness of God, nor the corruption and guilt of their own nature. They forget that they stand before their Maker not as those who may justly claim His mercy, but as condemned criminals who deserve only punishment. Furthermore, they want to be independent to work out their own scheme of salvation rather than to accept God's plan which is by grace. This doctrine of election will not harmonize with any covenant of works, nor with a mongrel covenant of works and grace; but it is the only possible outcome of a covenant of pure grace.

12.SUMMARY OF THE REFORMED DOCTRINE OF ELECTION

1. Election is a sovereign free act of God, through which He determines who shall be made heirs of heaven.
2. The elective decree was made in eternity.
3. The elective decree contemplates the race as already fallen.
4. The elect are brought from a state of sin and into a state of blessedness and happiness.
5. Election is personal determining what particular individuals shall be saved.
6. Election includes both means and ends, -- election to eternal life includes election to righteous living here in this world.
7. The elective decree is made effective by the efficient work of the Holy Spirit, who works when, and where, and how He pleases.
8. God's common grace would incline all men to good if not resisted.
9. The elective decree leaves others who are not elected -- others who suffer the just consequences of their sin.
10. Some men are permitted to follow the evil which they freely choose, to their own destruction.
11. God, in His sovereignty, could regenerate all men if He chose to do so.
12. The Judge of all the earth will do right, and will extend His saving grace to multitudes who are undeserving.
13. Election is not based on foreseen faith or good works, but only on God's sovereign good pleasure.
14. Much the larger portion of the human race has been elected to life.
15. All of those dying in infancy are among the elect.
16. There has also been an election of individuals and of nations to external and temporal favors and privileges -- an election which falls short of salvation.
17. The doctrine of election is repeatedly taught and emphasized throughout the Scriptures.

Limited Atonement

1. Statement Of The Doctrine

The question which we are to discuss under the subject of "Limited Atonement" is, Did Christ offer up Himself a sacrifice for the whole human race, for every individual without distinction or exception; or did His death have special reference to the elect? In other words, was the sacrifice of Christ merely intended to make the salvation of all men possible, or was it intended to render certain the salvation of those who had been given to Him by the Father? Arminians hold that Christ died for all men alike, while Calvinists hold that in the intention and secret plan of God Christ died for the elect only, and that His death had only an incidental reference to others in so far as they are partakers of common grace. The meaning might be brought out more clearly if we used the phrase "Limited Redemption" rather than "Limited Atonement." The Atonement is, of course, strictly an infinite transaction; the limitation comes in, theologically, in the

application of the benefits of the atonement, that is in redemption. But since the phrase "Limited Atonement" has become well established in theological usage and its meaning is well known we shall continue to use it.

Concerning this doctrine the Westminster Confession says: ". . . Wherefore they who are elected being fallen in Adam, are redeemed in Christ, are effectually called unto faith in Christ by His Spirit working in due season; are justified, adopted, sanctified, and kept by His power through faith unto salvation. Neither are any other redeemed by Christ, effectually called, justified, adopted, sanctified, and saved, but the elect only."

It will be seen at once that this doctrine necessarily follows from the doctrine of election. If from eternity God has planned to save one portion of the human race and not another, it seems to be a contradiction to say that His work has equal reference to both portions, or that He sent His Son to die for those whom He had predetermined not to save, as truly as, and in the same sense that He was sent to die for those whom He had chosen for salvation. These two doctrines must stand or fall together. We cannot logically accept one and reject the other. If God has elected some and not others to eternal life, then plainly the primary purpose of Christ's work was to redeem the elect.

2. The Infinite Value Of Christ's Atonement

This doctrine does not mean that any limit can be set to the value or power of the atonement which Christ made. The value of the atonement depends upon, and is measured by, the dignity of the person making it; and since Christ suffered as a Divine-human person the value of His suffering was infinite. The Scripture writers tell us plainly that the "Lord of glory" was crucified, I Cor. 2:8; that wicked men "killed the Prince of life," Acts 3:15; and that God "purchased" the Church "with His own blood," Acts 20:28. The atonement, therefore, was infinitely meritorious and might have saved every member of the human race had that been God's plan. It was limited only in the sense that it was intended for, and is applied to, particular persons; namely for those who are actually saved.

Some misunderstanding occasionally arises here because of a false assumption that Calvinists teach that Christ suffered so much for one soul, and so much for another, and that He would have suffered more if more were to have been saved. We believe, however, that even if many fewer of the human race were to have been pardoned and saved, an atonement of infinite value would have been necessary in order to have secured for them these blessings; and though many more, or even all men were to have been pardoned and saved, the sacrifice of Christ would have been amply sufficient as the ground or basis of their salvation. Just as it is necessary for the sun to give off as much heat if only one plant is to grow upon the earth as if the earth is to be covered with vegetation, so it was necessary for Christ to suffer as much if only one soul was to be saved as if a large number or even all mankind were to be saved. Since the sinner had offended against a Person of infinite dignity, and had been sentenced to suffer eternally, nothing but a sacrifice of infinite value could atone for him. No one assumes that since the sin of Adam was the ground for the condemnation of the race, he sinned so much for one man and much for another and would have sinned more if there were to have been more sinners. Why then should they make the assumption in regard to the suffering of Christ?

3. The Atonement Is Limited In Purpose And Application

While the value of the atonement was sufficient to save all mankind, it was efficient to save only the elect. It is indifferently well adapted to the salvation of one man to that of another, thus making the salvation of every man objectively possible; yet because of subjective difficulties, arising on account of the sinners own inability either to see or appreciate the things of God, only those are saved who are regenerated and sanctified by the Holy Spirit. The reason why God does not apply this grace to all men has not been fully revealed.

When the atonement is made universal its inherent value is destroyed. If it is applied to all men, and if some are lost, the conclusion is that it makes salvation objectively possible for all but that it does not actually save anybody. According to the Arminian theory the atonement has simply made it possible for men to co-operate with divine grace and thus save themselves -- if they will. But tell us of one cured of disease and yet dying of cancer, and the story will be equally luminous with that of one eased of sin and yet perishing through unbelief. The nature of the atonement settles its extent. If it merely made salvation possible, it applied to all men. If it effectively secured salvation, it had reference only the elect. As Dr. Warfield says, "The things we have to choose between are an atonement of high value, or an atonement of wide extension. The two cannot go together." The work of Christ can be universalized only by evaporating its substance.

Let there be no misunderstanding at this point. The Arminian limits the atonement as certainly as does the Calvinist. The Calvinist limits the extent of it in that he says it does not apply to all persons (although as has already been shown, he believes that it is efficacious for the salvation of the large proportion of the human race); while the Arminian limits the power of it, for he says that in itself it does not actually save anybody. The Calvinist limits it quantitatively, but not qualitatively; the Arminian limits it qualitatively, but not quantitatively. For the Calvinist it is like a narrow bridge which goes all the way across the stream; for the Arminian it is like a great wide bridge which goes only half-way across. As a matter of fact, the Arminian places more severe limitations on the work of Christ than does the Calvinist.

4. Christ's Work As A Perfect Fulfillment Of The Law

If the benefits of the atonement are universal and unlimited, it must have been what the Arminians represent it to have been -- merely a sacrifice to blot out the curse which rested upon the race through the fall in Adam, a mere substitute for the execution of the law which God in His sovereignty saw fit to accept in lieu of what the sinner was bound to render, and not a perfect satisfaction which fulfilled the demands of justice. It would mean that God no longer demands perfect obedience as He did of Adam, but that He now offers salvation on lower term. God, then, would remove legal obstacles and would accept such faith and evangelical obedience as the person with a graciously restored ability could render if he chose, the Holy Spirit of course aiding in a general way. Thus grace would be extended in that God offers an easier way of salvation -- He accepts fifty cents on the dollar, so to speak, since the crippled sinner can pay no more.

On the other hand Calvinists hold that the law of perfect obedience which was originally given to Adam was "permanent, that God has never done anything which would convey the impression that the law was too rigid in its requirements, or too severe in its penalty, or that it stood in need either of abrogation or of derogation. Divine justice demands that the sinner shall be punished, either in himself or in his substitute. We hold that Christ acted in a strictly substitutionary way for His people, that He made a full satisfaction for their sins, thus blotting out the curse from Adam and all their temporal sins; and that by His sinless life He perfectly kept for them the law which Adam had broken, thus earning for His people the reward of eternal life. We believe that the requirement for salvation now as originally is perfect obedience, that the merits of Christ are imputed to His people as the only basis of their salvation, and that they enter heaven clothed only with the cloak of His perfect righteousness and utterly destitute of any merit properly their own. Thus grace, pure grace, is extended not in lowering the requirements for salvation but in the substitution of Christ for His people. He took their place before the law and did for them what they could not do for themselves. This Calvinistic principle is fitted in every way to impress upon us the absolute perfection and unchangeable obligation of the law which was originally given to Adam. It is not relaxed or set aside, but is fittingly honored so that its excellence is shown. In behalf of those who are saved, for whom Christ acted, and in behalf of those who are subjected to everlasting punishment, the law in its majesty is enforced and executed.

If the Arminian theory were true it would follow that millions of those for whom Christ died are finally lost, and that salvation is thus never applied to many of those for whom it was earned. What benefits, for instance, can we point to in the lives of the heathens and say that they have received them from the atonement? It would also follow that God's plans many times have been thwarted and defeated by His creatures and that while He may do according to His will in the armies of heaven, He does not do so among the inhabitants of the earth.

"The sin of Adam," says Charles Hodge, "did not make the condemnation of all men merely possible; it was the ground of their actual condemnation. So the righteousness of Christ did not make the salvation of men merely possible, it secured the actual salvation of those for whom He wrought."

The great Baptist preacher Charles H. Spurgeon said: "If Christ has died for you, you can never be lost. God will not punish twice for one thing. If God punished Christ for your sins He will not punish you. 'Payment God's justice cannot twice demand; first, at the bleeding Saviour's hand, and then again at mine.' How can God be just if he punished Christ, the substitute, and then man himself afterwards?"

5. A Ransom

Christ is said to have been a ransom for his people "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many," Matt. 20:28. Notice, this verse does not say that He gave His life a ransom for all, but for many. The nature of a ransom is such that when paid and accepted it automatically frees the persons for whom it was intended. Otherwise it would not be a true ransom. Justice demands that those for whom it is paid shall be freed from any further obligation. If the suffering and death of Christ was a ransom for all men rather than for the elect only, then the merits of His work must be communicated to all alike and the penalty of eternal punishment cannot be justly inflicted on any. God would be unjust if He demanded this extreme penalty twice over, first from the substitute and then from the persons themselves. The conclusion then is that the atonement of Christ does not extend to all men but that it is limited to those for whom He stood surety; that is, to those who compose His true Church.

6. The Divine Purpose In Christ's Sacrifice

If Christ's death was intended to save all men, then we must say that God was either unable or unwilling to carry out His plans. But since the work of God is always efficient, those for whom atonement was made and those who are actually saved must be the same people. Arminians suppose that the purposes of God are mutable, and that His purposes may fail. In saying that He sent His Son to redeem all men, but that after seeing that such a plan could not be carried out He "elected" those whom He foresaw would have faith and repent, they represent Him as willing what never takes place, -- as suspending His purposes and plans upon the volitions and actions of creatures who are totally dependent on Him. No rational being who has the wisdom and power to carry out his plans intends what he never accomplishes or adopts plans for an end which is never attained. Much less would God, whose -- wisdom and power are infinite, work in this manner. We may rest assured that if some men are lost God never purposed their salvation, and never devised and put into operation means designed to accomplish that end.

Jesus Himself limited the purpose of His death when He said, "I lay down my life for the sheep." If, therefore, He laid down His life for the sheep, the atoning character of His work was not universal. On another occasion He said to the Pharisees, "Ye are not my sheep;" and again, "Ye are of your father the Devil." Will anyone maintain that He laid down His life for these, seeing that He so pointedly excludes them? The angel which appeared to Joseph told him that Mary's son was to be called JESUS, because His mission in the world was to save His people from their sins. He then came not merely to make salvation

possible but actually to save His people; and what He came to do we may confidently expect Him to have accomplished.

Since the work of God is never in vain, those who are chosen by the Father, those who are redeemed by the Son, and those who are sanctified by the Holy Spirit, -- or in other words, election, redemption and sanctification, -- must include the same persons. The Arminian doctrine of a universal atonement makes these unequal and thereby destroys the perfect harmony within the Trinity. Universal redemption means universal salvation.

Christ declared that the elect and the redeemed were the same people when in the intercessory prayer He said. "Thine they were, and thou gavest them to me," and "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine: and all things that are mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them," John 17:6, 9, 10. And again, "I am the good shepherd; and I know my own, and mine own know me, even as the Father knoweth me, and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep," John 10:14, 15. The same teaching is found when we are told to "feed the Church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood," Acts 20:28. We are told that "Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for it," Eph. 5:25; and that He laid down His life for His friends, John 15:13. Christ died for such as were Paul and John, not for such as were Pharaoh and Judas, who were "goats and not sheep. We cannot say that His death was intended for all unless we say that Pharaoh, Judas, etc., were of the sheep, friends, and Church of Christ.

Furthermore, when it is said that Christ gave His life for His Church, or for His people, we find it impossible to believe that He gave Himself as much for reprobates as for those whom He intended to save. Mankind is divided into two classes and what is distinctly affirmed of one is impliedly denied of the other. In each case something is said of those who belong to one group which is not true of those who belong to the other. When it is said that a man labors and sacrifices health and strength for his children, it is thereby denied that the motive which controls him is mere philanthropy, or that the design he has in view is the good of society. And when it is said that Christ died for His people it is denied that He died equally for all men.

7. The Exclusion Of The Non-Elect

It was not, then, a general and indiscriminate love of which all men were equally the objects, but a peculiar, mysterious, infinite love for His elect, which caused God to send His Son into the world to suffer and die. Any theory which denies this great and precious truth, and which would explain away this love as merely indiscriminate benevolence or philanthropy which had all men for its objects, many of whom are allowed to perish, must be un-Scriptural. Christ died not for an unorderedly mass, but for His people, His bride, His Church.

A farmer prizes his field. But no one supposes that he cares equally for every plant that grows there, for the "tares" as well as the "wheat." God's field is the world, Matt. 13:38, and he loves it with an exclusive eye to its "good seed," the children of the kingdom, and not the children of the wicked one. It is not the whole of mankind that is equally loved of God and promiscuously redeemed by Christ. God is not necessarily communicative of His goodness, as the sun of its light, or a tree of its cooling shade, which does not choose its objects, but serves all indifferently without variation or distinction. This would be to make God of no more understanding than the sun, which shines not where it pleases, but where it must. He is an understanding person, and has a sovereign right to choose His own objects.

In Genesis we read that God "put enmity" between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Now who were meant by the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent? On first thought we might suppose

that the seed of the woman meant the entire human race descended from Eve. But in Gal. 3:16 Paul uses this term "seed," and applies it to Christ as an individual. "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." On further investigation we also find that the seed of the serpent means not literal descendants of the Devil, but those non-elect members of the human race, who partake of his sinful nature. Jesus said of His enemies, "Ye are of your father, the Devil; and the lusts of your father it is your will to do," John 8:44. Paul denounced Elymas the sorcerer as a son of the Devil and an enemy of all righteousness. Judas is even called a devil, John 6:70. So the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent are each a part of the human race. In other parts of the Scriptures we find that Christ and His people are "one," that He dwells in them and is united with them as the vine and the branches are united. And since at the very beginning God "put enmity" between these two groups, it is plain that He never loved all alike, nor intended to redeem all alike. Universal redemption and God's sentence on the serpent can never go together.

There is also a parallel to be noticed between the high priest of ancient Israel and Christ who is our high priest; for the former, we are told, was a type of the latter. On the great day of atonement the high priest offered sacrifices for the sins of the twelve tribes of Israel. He interceded for them and for them only. Likewise, Christ prayed not for the world but for His people. The intercession of the high priest secured for the Israelites blessings from which all other peoples were excluded; and the intercession of Christ, which also is limited but of a much higher order, shall certainly be efficacious in the highest sense, for Him the Father heard always. Furthermore, it is not necessary that God's mercy shall extend to all men without exception before it can be truly and properly called infinite; for all men taken together would not constitute a multitude strictly and properly infinite. The Scriptures plainly tell us that the Devil and the fallen angels are left outside of His benevolent purposes. But His mercy is infinite in that it rescues the great multitude of His elect from indescribable and eternal sin and misery to indescribable and eternal blessedness.

While the Arminians hold that Christ died equally for all men and that He obtained sufficient grace to enable all men to repent, believe, and persevere, if they will only co-operate with it, they also hold that those who refuse to co-operate shall on that account and through all eternity be punished far more severely than if Christ had never died for them at all. We see that so far in the history of the human race the large proportion of the adult population have failed to co-operate and have thus been allowed to bring upon themselves greater misery than if Christ had never come. Surely a view which permits God's work of redemption to issue in such failure, and which sheds so little glory on the atonement of Christ, cannot be true. Vastly more of God's love and mercy for His people is seen in the Calvinistic doctrines of unconditional election and limited atonement than is seen in the Arminian doctrine of conditional election and unlimited atonement.

8. The Argument From The Foreknowledge Of God

The argument from the foreknowledge of God is of itself sufficient to prove this doctrine. Is not God's mind infinite? Are not His perceptions perfect? Who can believe that He, like a feeble mortal, would "shoot at the convoy without perceiving the individual birds?" Since He knew before-hand who they were that would be saved -- and the more evangelical Arminians admit that God does have exact foreknowledge of all events --

He would not have sent Christ intending to save those who he positively foreknew would be lost. For, as Calvin remarks, "Where would have been the consistency of God's calling to Himself such as He knows will never come?" If a man knows that in an adjoining room there are ten oranges, seven of which are good and three of which are rotten, he does not go into the room expecting to get ten good ones. Or if it is foreknown that out of a group of fifty men to whom invitations to a banquet might be sent a certain ten will not come, the host does not send out invitations expecting those ten as well as the others to accept. They do but deceive themselves who, admitting God's foreknowledge, say that Christ died for all men; for what is that but to attribute folly to Him whose ways are perfect? To represent God as earnestly striving to do what He knows He will not do is to represent Him as acting foolishly.

9. Certain Benefits Which Extend To Mankind In General

In conclusion let it be said that Calvinists do not deny that mankind in general receive some important benefits from Christ's atonement. Calvinists admit that it arrests the penalty which would have been inflicted upon the whole race because of Adam's sin; that it forms a basis for the preaching of the Gospel and thus introduces many uplifting moral influences into the world and restrains many evil influences. Paul could say to the heathen people of Lystra that God "left not Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, filling your hearts with food and gladness," Acts 14:17. God makes His sun to shine on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust. Many temporal blessings are thus secured for all men, although these fall short of being sufficient to insure salvation.

Cunningham has stated the belief of Calvinists very clearly in the following paragraph: - "It is not denied by the advocates of particular redemption, or of a limited atonement, that mankind in general, even those who ultimately perish, do derive some advantages or benefits from Christ's death; and no position they hold requires them to deny this. They believe that important benefits have accrued to the whole human race from the death of Christ, and that in these benefits those who are finally impenitent and unbelieving partake. What they deny is, that Christ intended to procure, or did procure, for all men these blessings which are the proper and peculiar fruits of His death, in its specific character as an atonement, -- that He procured or purchased redemption -- that in, pardon and reconciliation -- for all men. Many blessings flow to mankind at large from the death of Christ, collaterally and incidentally, in consequence of the relation in which men, viewed collectively, stand to each other. All these benefits were of course foreseen by God, when He resolved to send His Son into the world; they were contemplated or designed by Him, as what men should receive and enjoy. They are to be regarded and received as bestowed by Him, and as thus unfolding His glory, indicating His character, and actually accomplishing His purposes; and they are to be viewed as coming to men through the channel of Christ's mediation, -- of His suffering and death."

There is, then, a certain sense in which Christ died for all men, and we do not reply to the Arminian tenet with an unqualified negative. But what we do maintain is that the death of Christ had special reference to the elect in that it was effectual for their salvation, and that the effects which are produced in others are only incidental to this one great purpose.

Irresistible (Efficacious) Grace

1. Teaching Of The Westminster Confession

The Westminster Confession states the doctrine of Efficacious Grace thus: -- "All those whom God has predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by His Word and Spirit, out of that state of death, in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly, to understand the things of God; taking away their heart of stone, and giving them a heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ, yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace.

"This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man, who is altogether passive therein, until, being quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit, he is thereby enabled to answer this call, and to embrace the grace offered and conveyed by it." (Chapter 10 Section 1 and 2).

And the Shorter Catechism, in answer to the question "What is effectual calling?" says, "Effectual calling is the Work of God's Spirit, whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, He doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, freely offered to us in the Gospel." (Q. 31).

2. Necessity For The Chance

The merits of Christ's obedience and suffering are sufficient for, adapted to, and freely offered to all men. The question then arises, why is one saved, and another lost? What causes some men to repent and believe, while others, with the same external privileges, reject the Gospel and continue in impenitence and unbelief? The Calvinist says that it is God who makes this difference, that he efficaciously persuades some to come to Him; but the Arminian ascribes it to the men themselves.

As Calvinists we hold that the condition of men since the fall is such that if left to themselves they would continue in their state of rebellion and refuse all offers of salvation. Christ would then have died in vain. But since it was promised that He should see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, the effects of that sacrifice have not been left suspended upon the whim of man's changeable and sinful will. Rather, the work of God in redemption has been rendered effective through the mission of the Holy Spirit who so operates on the chosen people that they are brought to repentance and faith, and thus made heirs of eternal life.

The teaching of the Scriptures is such that we must say that man in his natural state is radically corrupt, and that he can never become holy and happy through any power of his own. He is spiritually dead, and must be saved by Christ if at all. Common reason tells us that if a man is so fallen so to be at enmity with God, that enmity must be removed before he can have any desire to do God's will. If a sinner is to desire redemption through Christ, he must receive a new disposition. He must be born again, and from above (John 3:3). It is easy enough for us to see that the Devil and the demons would have to be thus sovereignly changed if they were ever to be saved; yet the innate sinful principles which actuate fallen man are of the same nature, although not yet so intense, as are those which actuate fallen angels. If man is dead in sin, then nothing short of this supernatural life-giving power of the Holy Spirit will ever cause him to do that which is spiritually good. If it were possible for him to enter heaven while still possessed of the old nature, then, for him, heaven would be as bad as hell; for he would be out of harmony with his environment. He would loathe its very atmosphere and would be in misery when in the presence of God. Hence the necessity for the inward work of the Holy Spirit.

In the nature of the case the first movement toward salvation can no more come from man than his body if dead could originate its own life. Regeneration is a sovereign gift of God, graciously bestowed on those whom He has chosen; and for this great re-creative work God alone is competent. It cannot be granted on the foresight of anything good in the subjects of this saving change, for in their unrenewed nature they are incapable of acts with right motives toward God; hence none could possibly be foreseen. In his unregenerate state man never adequately realizes his utterly helpless condition. He imagines that he is able to reform himself and turn to God if he chooses. He even imagines that he is able to counteract the designs of infinite Wisdom, and to defeat the agency of Omnipotence itself. As Dr. Warfield says, "Sinful man stands in need, not of inducements or assistance to save himself, but precisely of saving; and Jesus Christ has come not to advise, or urge, or woo, or help him to save himself, but to save him."

3. An Inward Change Wrought By Supernatural Power

In the Scriptures this change is called a regeneration (Titus 3:5), a spiritual resurrection which is wrought by the same mighty power with which God wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead (Eph. 1:19,

20), a calling out of darkness into God's marvelous light (1 Peter 2:9), a passing out of death into life (John 5:24), a new birth (John 3:3), a making alive (Col. 2:13), a taking away of the heart of stone and giving of a heart of flesh (Ezek. 11:19), and the subject of the change is said to be a new creature (II Cor. 5:17). Such descriptions completely refute the Arminian notion that regeneration is primarily man's act, induced by moral persuasion or the mere influence of the truth as presented in a general way by the Holy Spirit. And just because this change is produced by power from on high which is the living spring of a new and re-created life, it is irresistible and permanent.

The regeneration of the soul is something which is wrought in us, and not an act performed by us. It is an instantaneous change from spiritual death to spiritual life. It is not even a thing of which we are conscious at the moment it occurs, but rather something which lies lower than consciousness. At the moment of its occurrence the soul is as passive as was Lazarus when he was called back to life by Jesus. Concerning the soul in regeneration Charles Hodge says: "It is the subject, and not the agent of the change. The soul co-operates, or, is active in what precedes and in what follows the change, but the change itself is something experienced, and not something done. The blind and the lame who came to Christ, may have undergone much labor in getting into His presence, and they joyfully exerted the new power imparted to them, but they were entirely passive in the moment of the healing. They in no way co-operated in the production of that effect. The same is true in regeneration." (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 2 p. 688). And again he says: "The same doctrine on this subject is taught in other words when regeneration is declared to be a new birth. At birth the child enters upon a new state of existence. Birth is not its own act. It is born. It comes from a state of darkness, in which the objects adapted to its nature cannot act on it or awaken its activities. As soon as it comes into the world all its faculties are awakened; it sees, feels, and hears, and gradually unfolds all its faculties as a rational and moral, as well as a physical being. The scriptures teach that it is thus in regeneration. The soul enters upon a new state. It is introduced into a new world. A whole class of objects before unknown or unappreciated are revealed to it, and exercise upon it their appropriate influence." (Vol. 2 p. 35).

Regeneration involves an essential change of character. It is a making the tree good in order that the fruit may be good. As a result of this change, the person passes from a state of unbelief to one of saving faith, not by any process of research or argument, but of inward experience. And as we had nothing to do with our physical birth, but received it as a sovereign gift of God, we likewise have nothing to do with our spiritual birth but receive it also as a sovereign gift. Each occurred without any exercise of our own power, and even without our consent being asked. We no more resist the latter than we resist the former. And as we go ahead and live our own natural lives after being born, so we go ahead and work out our own salvation after being regenerated.

The Scriptures pointedly teach that the pre-requisite for entrance into the Kingdom of God is a radical transformation wrought by the Spirit of God Himself. And since this work on the soul is sovereign and supernatural it may be granted or withheld according to the good pleasure of God. Consequently, salvation, to whomsoever it may be granted, is entirely of grace. The born-again Christian comes to see that God is in reality "the author and perfecter" of his faith (Heb. 12:2), and that in this respect He has done a work for him which He has not done for his unconverted neighbor. In answer to the question, "Who maketh thee to differ? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (I Cor. 4:7), he replies that it is God who has put the difference between men, especially between the redeemed and the lost. If any person believes, it is because God has quickened him; and if any person fails to believe, it is because God has withheld that grace which He was under no obligation to bestow. Strictly speaking there is no such thing as a "self-made" man; the highest type of man is the one who can say with Paul, "By the grace of God I am what I am."

When Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth," a mighty power went along with the command and gave effect to it. Lazarus, of course, was not conscious of any other than his own power working in him; but when he later understood the situation he undoubtedly saw that he had been called into life wholly by divine power. God's power was primary, his was secondary, and would never have been exerted except in response to the divine. It is in this manner that every redeemed soul is brought from spiritual death to spiritual life. And just as the dead Lazarus was first called back into life and then breathed and ate, so the soul dead in sin is first transferred to spiritual life and then exercises faith and repentance and does good works.

Paul emphasized this very point when he said that although Paul might plant and Apollos might water, it was God who gave the increase. Mere human efforts are unavailing. If a crop of wheat is to be raised, man can do only the most external and mechanical things toward that end. It is God who gives the increase through the sovereign control of forces which are entirely outside the sphere of man's influence. Likewise, in regard to the soul it matters not how eloquent the preacher may be, unless God opens the heart there will be no conversion. Here especially man does only the most external and mechanical things and it is the Holy Spirit who imparts the new principle of spiritual life.

The Scripture doctrine of the fall represents man as morally ruined, unable by nature to do any good thing. The truly converted Christian comes to see his inability and knows that he does not make himself eligible for heaven by his own good works and merits. He realizes that he cannot move spiritually but as he is moved; that like the branches of a tree, he can make no shoot, nor put forth leaves, nor bear fruit, except as he receives sap from the root. Or, as Calvin says, "No man makes himself a sheep, but is created such by divine grace." The elect hear the Gospel and believe -- not always at the first hearing, but at the divinely appointed time -- the non-elect hear but disbelieve, not because they lack sufficient evidence, but because their inward nature is opposed to holiness. The reason for the two kinds of response is to be traced to an external source. "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will make away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh," Ezek. 36:26. The "heart" in Biblical language includes the whole inner man.

Under the terms of the eternal covenant which was made between the Father and the Son, Christ has been exalted to be the mediatorial Ruler over the whole earth in order that He may direct the developing kingdom. This is one of the rewards of His obedience and suffering. His directing power is exerted through the agency of the Holy Spirit, through whom His purchased redemption is applied to all for whom it was intended and under the precise conditions of time and circumstance predetermined in the covenant. We are told that it is by no ordinary providence of God that a man believes but by the same mighty power that was exerted when Christ was raised from the dead (Eph. 1:19, 20). As certainly as it was effective in the resurrection of Christ it will be effective when put forth in an individual, whether in a physical or a spiritual resurrection.

The physical and the spiritual worlds are each the creation of God. In the physical world the water is sovereignly changed into wine, and the leper is healed by a touch. The Arminian readily admits God's miraculous power in the physical world; why, then, does he deny it in the spiritual world, as if the spirits of men were beyond His control? We believe that God can change a bad man into a good man when He pleases. That is one form of authority which it is the right of the Creator to exercise over the creature. It is one of the means by which the world is governed; and when God sees that it is best for the welfare of the individual and for the development of His kingdom to thus work, it is not only permissible but right that He should do so. The effect follows immediately upon the volition, as when He said, Let there be light. "The Divine saving act," says Mozley, "is the bestowal of this irresistible grace. The subject of the Divine predetermination is rescued by an act of absolute power from the dominion of sin, dragged from it, as it were, by force, converted, filled with the love of God and his neighbor, and qualified infallibly for a state of ultimate reward." (*The Augustinian Doctrine of Predestination*, p.8)

As the physical eye once blinded cannot be restored to sight by any amount or intensity of light falling upon it, so the soul dead in sin cannot acquire spiritual vision by any amount of Gospel truth presented to it. Unless the surgeon's knife or a miracle restore the eye to its normal condition, sight is impossible; and unless the soul be set right through regeneration it will never comprehend and accept the Gospel truth. In regeneration God bids the sinner live; and immediately he is alive, filled with a new spiritual life. Lydia, the seller of purple in the city of Thyatira, gave heed to the things which were spoken by Paul, because the Lord had first opened her heart (Acts 16:14). Christ taught this same truth when in His intercessory prayer He said concerning Himself that God "gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom thou hast given Him, He should give eternal life," John 17:2; and again, "For as the Father raiseth the dead and giveth them life, even so the Son also giveth life to whom He will," John 5:21.

Under the covenant made with Adam, man's destiny depended on his own works. We know the results of that trial. Now if man could not work out his salvation when he was upright, what chance has he to do so since he is fallen? Happily for us, God has this time taken the matter into His own hand. And if God again gave man free will by which to work out his own salvation, what would He be doing but again instituting the dispensation which has already been tried and which ended in failure? Suppose a man is carried away by a torrent which he is unable to master, would it be reasonable or wise to take him out only to recruit his strength for a second trial? Would it not be a mockery to save him only to repeat the process? Since God does not repeat His dispensations it follows that the second time He would order salvation on a different plan. If further works are to be wrought, then God, and not man, will be the author; and the new dispensation, like the old, is adjusted to the state in which it finds man.

We are very sure that no property does, or can, attach to the will of man, whether fallen or unfallen, that can take it beyond the reach of God's sovereign control. Saul was called at the height of his persecuting zeal and was transformed into the saintly Paul. The poor dying thief on the cross was called in the last hour of his earthly life. When Paul preached at Antioch "as many as were ordained to eternal life (and only they) believed," Acts 13:48. If God purposed that all men should be saved He most certainly could bring all to salvation. But for reasons which have been only partly revealed, He leaves many impenitent. Through all of His works, however, God does nothing which is inconsistent with man's nature as a rational and responsible being.

One of the great short-comings of Arminianism has been its failure to recognize the necessity for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit on the heart. Instead, it has resolved regeneration into a more or less gradual change which is carried out by the individual person, a mere change of purpose in the sinner's mind, which is a result of moral persuasion and the general force of truth. It has insisted upon "free will," "the power of contrary choice," etc., and has taught that ultimately the sinner determines his own destiny. In its more consistent forms it makes man a co-savior with Christ, as if the glory in redemption was to be divided between the grace of Christ and the will of man, the latter dividing the spoils with the former.

If, as Arminians say, God is earnestly trying to convert every person, He is making a great failure of His work; for among the adult population of the world up to the present time, where He has succeeded in saving one He has let perhaps twenty-five fall into hell. Such a view sheds little glory on the Divine Majesty. Concerning the Arminian doctrine of resistible grace Toplady says that it is "a doctrine which represents Omnipotence itself as wishing and trying and striving to no purpose. According to this tenet, God, in endeavoring (for it seems that it is only an endeavor) to convert sinners, may, by sinners, be foiled, defeated, and disappointed; He may lay close and long siege to the soul, and that soul can, from the citadel of impregnable free will, hang out a flag of defiance to God Himself, and by a continued obstinacy of defense, and a few vigorous sallies of free will compel Him to raise the siege. In a word, the Holy Spirit, after having for years perhaps, danced attendance on the free will of man, may at length, like a discomfited general, or an

unsuccessful politician, be either put to ignominious death, or contemptuously dismissed, *re infecta*, without accomplishing the end for which He was sent."

It is unreasonable to suppose that the sinner can thus defeat the creative power of Almighty God. "All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth," said the risen Lord. No limit is set to that authority. "Is anything too hard for Jehovah?" "He doeth according to His will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and no one can stay His hand, or say unto Him, What doest thou?" In view of these passages and many others to the same effect it ill becomes us to imagine that God is struggling along with man as best He can, persuading, exhorting, pleading, but unable to accomplish His purpose if His creatures will otherwise. If God does not effectually call, we may imagine Him saying, "I will that all men should be saved; nevertheless, it must finally be, not as I will but as they will." He is then put into the same extremity with Darius who would gladly have saved Daniel, but could not (Dan. 6:14). No Christian who is familiar with what the Scriptures teach about the sovereignty of God can believe that He is thus defeated in His creatures. Is it not necessary that a creature must have power to defy and thwart the purposes of Almighty God before his actions can be rewarded or punished. Furthermore, if God actually stood powerless before the majesty of man's lordly will, there would be but little use to pray for Him to convert any one. It would then be more reasonable for us to direct our petitions to the man himself.

4. The Effect Produced In The Soul

The immediate and important effect of this inward, purifying change of nature is that the person loves righteousness and trusts in Christ for salvation. Whereas his natural element was sin, it now becomes holiness; sin becomes repulsive to him, and he loves to do good. This effective and irresistible grace converts the will itself and forms a holy character in the person by a creative act. It removes a man's appetite for sinful things so that he refrains from sin, not as the dyspeptic refuses to eat the dainties for which he longs, lest his indulgence should be punished with the agonies of sickness, but rather because he hates sin for its own sake. The holy and thorough submission to God's will, which the convert before dreaded and resisted, he now loves and approves. Obedience has become not only the obligatory but the preferable good.

But so long as people remain in this world they are subject to temptations and they still have the remnants of the old nature clinging to them. Hence they are often deluded, and commit sin; yet these sins are only the death struggles and frenzied writhing of the old nature which has already received the death blow. The regenerate also suffer pain, disease, discouragement, and even death itself, although they are steadily advancing toward complete salvation.

At this point many people confuse regeneration and sanctification. Regeneration is exclusively God's work, and it is an act of His free grace in which He implants a new principle of spiritual life in the soul. It is performed by supernatural power and is complete in an instant. On the other hand sanctification is a process through which the remains of sin in the outward life are gradually removed, so that, as the Shorter Catechism says, we are enabled more and more to die unto sin and to live unto righteousness. It is a joint work of God and man. It consists in the gradual triumph of the new nature implanted in regeneration over the evil that still remains after the heart has been renewed. Or, in other words, we may say that complete sanctification lags behind after the life has been in principle won to God. Perfect righteousness is the goal which is set before us all through this life and every Christian should make steady progress toward that goal. Sanctification, however, is not fully completed until death, at which time the Holy Spirit cleanses the soul of every vestige of sin, making it holy and raising it above even the possibility of sinning.

Strictly speaking, we may say that redemption is not fully complete until the saved have received their resurrection bodies. In one sense it was complete when Christ died on Calvary; yet it is applied only

gradually by the Holy Spirit. And since the Holy Spirit does thus effectually apply to the elect the merits of Christ's sacrifice, their salvation is most infallibly certain and can by no means be prevented. Hence the certainty that the will of God for the salvation of his people is in no wise disappointed or made void by His creatures.

5. The Sufficiency Of Christ's Work -- Evangelicalism

We now come to discuss the sufficiency of Christ's work in the matter of redemption. We believe that by His vicarious suffering and death He fully paid the debt which His people owed to divine justice, thus releasing them from the consequences of sin, and that by keeping the law of perfect obedience and living a sinless life He vicariously earned for them the reward of eternal life. His work fully provided for their rescue from sin and for their establishment in heaven. These two phases of His work are sometimes referred to as His active and passive obedience. This doctrine of the sufficiency of His work is set forth in the Westminster Confession when we are told that by His perfect obedience and sacrifice of Himself He "fully satisfied the justice of His Father; and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father had given Him." (Chapter 8 Section 5) Had He only paid the penalty for sin without also earning the reward of eternal life, His people would then only have been raised up to the zero point. They would then have been on the same plane as was Adam before he fell, and would still have been under obligation to earn eternal life for themselves. To Paul's declaration that Christ is all in all in matters of salvation (Col. 3:11), we can add that man is nothing at all as to that work, and has not in himself anything which merits salvation. We should remember that the Gospel is not good advice, but good news. It does not tell us what we are to do to earn salvation, but proclaims to us what Christ has done to save us.

To doubt that any for whom Christ died will be saved, or that righteousness will eventually triumph, is to doubt the sufficiency of Jesus Christ for the work which He undertook in our behalf. On the cross Jesus declared that He had finished the work of redemption which the Father gave Him to do. But as Toplady remarks, "the person with power to accept or reject as he pleases must say: "No, thou didst not finish the work of redemption which was given thee to do; thou didst indeed a part of it, but I myself must add something to it or the whole of thy performance will stand for naught."

Only those views which ascribe to God all the power in the salvation of sinners are consistently evangelical, for the word "evangelical" means that it is God alone who saves. If faith and obedience must be added, depending upon the independent choice of man, we no longer have evangelicalism. Evangelicalism with a universal atonement leads to universal salvation; and in so far as Arminianism holds that Christ died for all men and that the Spirit strives to apply this redemption to all men but that only some are saved, it is not evangelical.

We may further illustrate this principle of evangelicalism by supposing a group of people who are stricken with a fatal disease. Then if a doctor administers to them a medicine which is a certain cure, all who get the medicine will recover. In the same manner, if the work of Christ is effective, and if it is applied to all men by the Spirit, all will be saved. Hence to become evangelical the Arminian must become a universalist. Calvinism alone, which holds to evangelicalism with a limited atonement and asserts that the work of Christ accomplishes what it was intended to accomplish, is consistent with the facts of Scripture and experience.

6. The Arminian View Of Universal Grace

The universalistic note is always prominent in the Arminian system. A typical example of this is seen in the assertion of Prof. Henry C. Sheldon, who for a number of years was connected with Boston University. Says he: "Our contention is for the universality of the opportunity of salvation, as against an exclusive and

unconditional choice of individuals to eternal life." (System of Christian Doctrine, p. 417). Here we notice not only (1) the characteristic Arminian stress on universalism, but also (2) the recognition that, in the final analysis, all that God does for the salvation of men does not actually save anybody, but that it only opens up a way of salvation so that men can save themselves, -- and then for all practical purposes we are back on the plane of pure naturalism!

Perhaps the strongest assertion of the Arminian construction is to be found in the creed of the Evangelical Union body, or so-called Morisonians, the very purpose of which was to protest against unconditional election. A summary of its "Three Universalities" is found in the creed thus: "The love of God the Father, in the gift and sacrifice of Jesus to all men everywhere without distinction, exception, or respect of persons; the love of God the Son, in the gift and sacrifice of Himself as a true propitiation for the sins of the whole world; the love of God the Spirit, in His personal and continuous work applying to the souls of all men the provisions of divine grace" (*The Religious Controversies of Scotland*, p. 187).

Certainly, if God loves all men alike, and if Christ died for all men alike, and the Holy Spirit applies the benefits of that redemption to all men alike, one of two conclusions follows. (1) All men alike are saved (which is contradicted by Scripture), or, (2) all that God does for man does not save him, but leaves him to save himself! What then becomes of our evangelicalism, which means that it is God alone who saves sinners? If we assert that after God has done all His work it is still left for man to "accept" or "not resist," we give man veto power over the work of Almighty God and salvation rests ultimately in the hand of man. In this system no matter how great a proportion of the work of salvation God may do, man is ultimately the deciding factor. And the man who does come to salvation has some personal merit of his own; he has some grounds to boast over those who are lost. He can point the finger of scorn and say, "You had as good chance as I had. I accepted and you rejected the offer. Therefore you deserve to suffer." How different is this from Paul's declaration that it is "not of works, that no man should glory," and "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord," Eph. 2:9; I Cor. 1 :31.

The tendency in all these universalistic systems in which man proudly seizes the helm and proclaims himself the master of his destiny is to reduce Christianity to a religion of works. Luther had this very point in mind when he satirically remarked concerning the moralists of his day, "Here we are always wanting to turn the tables and do good of ourselves to that poor man, our Lord God, from Whom we are rather to receive it."

Zanchius says that Arminianism gently whispers in the ear of man that even in his fallen state he has "both the will and the power to do what is good and acceptable to God: -- that Christ's death is accepted by God as a universal atonement for all men; in order that every one may, if he will, save himself by his own free will and good works: -- that in the exercise of our natural powers, we may arrive at perfection, even in the present state of life." "The issue," says Dr. Warfield, "is indeed a fundamental one and it is clearly drawn. Is it God the Lord who saves us, or is it we ourselves? And does God the Lord save us, or does He merely open up the way of salvation, and leave it, according to our choice, to walk in it or not? The parting of the ways is the old parting of the ways between Christianity and autosoterism. Certainly only he can claim to be evangelical who with full consciousness rests entirely and directly on God and on God alone for his salvation." (*The Plan of Salvation*, p. 108).

"Not the labors of my hands
Can fulfill Thy law's commands;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears forever flow,
All for sin could not atone
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

"Nothing in my hands I bring --
Simply to Thy cross I cling;
Naked come to Thee for dress --
Helpless look to Thee for grace;
Foul, I to thy fountain fly -
Wash me, Saviour, or I die!"

7. No Violation Of Man's Free Agency

It is a common thing for opponents to represent this doctrine as implying that men are forced to believe and turn to God against their wills, or, that it reduces men to the level of machines in the matter of salvation. This is a misrepresentation. Calvinists hold no such opinion, and in fact the full statement of the doctrine excludes or contradicts it. The Westminster Confession, after stating that this efficacious grace which results in conversion is an exercise of omnipotence and cannot be defeated, adds, "Yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace." The power by which the work of regeneration is effected is not of an outward and compelling nature. Regeneration does no more violence to the soul than demonstration does to the intellect, or persuasion the heart. Man is not dealt with as if he were a stone or a log. Neither is he treated as a slave, and driven against his own will to seek salvation. Rather the mind is illuminated, and the entire range of conceptions with regard to God, self, and sin, is changed. God sends His Spirit and, in a way which shall forever rebound to the praise of His mercy and grace, sweetly constrains the person to yield. The regenerated man finds himself governed by new motives and desires, and things which were once hated are now loved and sought after. This change is not accomplished through any external compulsion but through a new principle of life which has been created within the soul and which seeks after the food which alone can satisfy it.

The spiritual law, like the civil law, is "not a terror to the good work, but to the evil"; and we find a good analogy for this in human affairs. Compare the law-abiding citizen and the criminal. The law-abiding citizen goes about his affairs day after day unconscious of most of the laws of the state and nation in which he lives. He looks to the government officials and to the police as his friends. They represent constituted authority which he respects and in which he delights. He is a free man. For him the law exists only as the protector of his life, his loved ones, and his property. But when we look at the criminal the whole picture is changed. He probably knows more about the statutes than does the law-abiding man. He studies them in order that he may evade them and defeat their purpose. He lives in fear. He defends his secret room with bullet-proof doors, and carries a revolver for fear of what the police or other people may do to him. He is under a constant bondage. His idea of liberty is to eliminate the police, corrupt the courts, and bring into general disrepute the laws and customs of society on which he tries to prey.

All of us have had experiences in our everyday lives in which we refuse to do certain things, but upon the introduction of new factors we have changed our minds and have freely and gladly done what we before opposed. Certainly there is nothing in this doctrine to warrant the representation that, upon Calvinistic principles, men are forced to repent and believe whether or not they choose to do so.

But some may ask, Do not the many passages in the Bible such as, "If thou shalt obey," "If thou turn unto Jehovah," "If thou do that which is evil," and so forth, at least imply that man has free will and ability? It does not follow, however, that merely because God commands man is able to obey. Oftentimes parents play with their children in telling them to do this or that when their very purpose is to show them their inability and to induce them to ask for the parents' help. When men of the world hear such language they assume that they have sufficient power in themselves, and, like the self-conceited lawyer to whom Jesus said, "This do, and thou shalt live," they go away believing that they are able to earn salvation by good works. But when the

truly spiritual man hears such language he is led to see that he cannot fulfill the commandment, and so cries out to the Father to do the work for him. In these passages man is taught not what he can do, but what he ought to do; and woe to the one who is so blind that he cannot see this truth, for until he does see it he can never adequately appreciate the work of Christ. In answer to the despairing sinner's cry the Scriptures reveal a salvation which is all of grace, the free gift of God's love and mercy in Christ. And the one who sees himself thus saved by grace instinctively cries out with David, "Who am I, O Lord Jehovah, and what is my house, that thou hast brought me thus far?"

The special grace which we refer to as efficacious is sometimes called irresistible grace. This latter term, however, is somewhat misleading since it does suggest that a certain overwhelming power is exerted upon the person, in consequence of which he is compelled to act contrary to his desires, whereas the meaning intended, as we have stated before, is that the elect are so influenced by divine power that their coming is an act of voluntary choice.

8. Common Grace

Apart from this special grace which issues in the salvation of its objects, there is what we may call "common grace," or general influences of the Holy Spirit which to a greater or lesser degree are shared by all men. God causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain upon the just and the unjust. He sends fruitful seasons and gives many things which make for the general happiness of mankind. Among the most common blessings which are to be traced to this source we may name health, material prosperity, general intelligence, talents for art, music, oratory, literature, architecture, commerce, inventions, etc. In many instances the non-elect receive these blessings in greater abundance than do the elect, for we often find that the sons of this world are for their own generation wiser than the sons of light. Common grace is the source of all the order, refinement, culture, common virtue, etc., which we find in the world, and through it the moral power of the truth upon the heart and conscience is increased and the evil passions of men are restrained. It does not lead to salvation, but it keeps this earth from becoming a hell. It arrests the complete effectuation of sin, just as human insight arrests the fury of wild beasts. It prevents sin from being manifested in all its hideousness, and thus hinders the bursting forth of the flames from the smoking fire. Like the pressure of the atmosphere, it is universal and powerful though unfelt.

Common grace, however, does not kill the core of sin, and therefore it is not capable of producing a genuine conversion. Through the light of nature, the workings of conscience, and especially through the external presentation of the Gospel it makes known to man what he should do, but does not give that power which man stands in need of. Furthermore, all of these common influences of the Holy Spirit are capable of being resisted. The Scriptures constantly teach that the Gospel becomes effectual only when it is attended by the special illuminating power of the Spirit, and that without this power it is to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Gentiles foolishness. Hence the unregenerate man can never know God except in an outward way; and for this reason the external righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees is declared to be just no righteousness at all. Jesus said to His disciples that the world could not receive the Spirit of truth, "for it beholdeth Him not, neither knoweth Him;" yet in the same breath He added, "Ye know Him; for He abideth with you, and shall be in you," John 14:17. The Arminian doctrine destroys the distinction between efficacious and common grace, or at best makes efficacious grace to be assistance without which salvation is impossible, while the Calvinistic makes it to be an assistance by which salvation is made certain.

Concerning the reformations which are produced by common grace Dr. Charles Hodge says: -- "It not infrequently happens that men who have been immoral in their lives change their whole course of living. They become outwardly correct in their deportment, temperate, pure, honest, and benevolent. This is a great and praiseworthy change. It is in a high degree beneficial to the subject of it, and to all with whom he is

connected. It may be produced by different causes, by the force of conscience, or by a regard for the authority of God and a dread of His disapprobation, or by a regard to the good opinion of men, or by the mere force of an enlightened regard to one's own interest. But whatever may be the proximate cause of such reformation, it falls very far short of sanctification. The two things differ in nature as much as a clean heart from clean clothes. Such external reformation may leave a man's inward character in the sight of God unchanged. He may remain destitute of love to God, of faith in Christ, and of all holy exercises or affections." (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 3. P. 214). And says Dr. Hewlitt: "Can the corpse in the graveyard be aroused by the sweetest music that ever has been invented, or by the loudest thunder which seems to shake the poles? Just as soon shall the sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, be moved by the thunder of the law, or by the melody of the Gospel; can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil (Jer. 13:23)." (*Sound Doctrine*, p. 21).

The following paragraph by Dr. S. G. Craig very clearly sets forth the limitations of common grace: --
"Christianity realizes that education and culture, that leaves Jesus Christ out of consideration, while they may make men clever, polished, brilliant, have no power to change their characters. At the most these things of themselves only cleanse the outside of the cup; they do not affect the nature of its contents. Those who place their confidence in education, culture and such like assume that all that is needed to change the wild olive tree into a good olive tree is pruning, spraying, cultivation and such like, whereas what the tree needs first of all, is that it be grafted with a scion from a good olive tree. And until this is done all labor that is spent on the tree is for the most part wasted. We do not underestimate the value of education and culture, and yet one might as well suppose that he could purify the waters of a river by improving the scenery along the banks as suppose that these things of themselves are capable of transforming the hearts of the children of menAs an old Jewish proverb has it: "rake the bitter tree and plant it in the garden of Eden and water it with the waters there; and let the angel Gabriel be the gardener and the tree will still bear bitter fruit." (*Jesus as He Was and Is*, pp. 191, 199).

Perseverance of the Saints

1. Statement Of The Doctrine

The doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints is stated in the Westminster Confession in the following words: "They whom God hath accepted in His Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by His Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the state of grace; but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved."¹ Or in other words we believe that those who once become true Christians cannot totally fall away and be lost, --- that while they may fall into sin temporarily, they will eventually return and be saved.

This doctrine does not stand alone but is a necessary part of the Calvinistic system of theology. The doctrines of Election and Efficacious Grace logically imply the certain salvation of those who receive these blessings. If God has chosen men absolutely and unconditionally to eternal life, and if His Spirit effectively applies to them the benefits of redemption, the inescapable conclusion is that these persons shall be saved. And, historically, this doctrine has been held by all Calvinists, and denied by practically all Arminians.

Those who have fled to Jesus for refuge have a firm foundation upon which to build. Though floods of error deluge the land, though Satan raise all the powers of earth and all the iniquities of their own hearts against them, they shall never fail; but, persevering to the end, they shall inherit those mansions which have been prepared for them from the foundation of the world. The saints in heaven are happier but no more secure than are true believers here in this world. Since faith and repentance are gifts of God, the bestowing of these

gifts is a revelation of God's purpose to save those to whom they are given. It is an evidence that God has predestinated the recipients of these gifts to be conformed to the image of His Son, i.e. to be like Him in character, destiny, and glory, and that He will infallibly carry out His purpose. No one can pluck them out of His hands. Those who once become true Christians have within themselves the principle of eternal life, which principle is the Holy Spirit; and since the Holy Spirit dwells within them they are already potentially holy. True, they are still exercised by many trials, and they do not yet see what they shall be, but they should know that that which is begun in them shall be completed to the end, and that the very presence of strife within them is the sign of life and the promise of victory.

In regard to those who become true Christians, but who, as the Arminians allege, fall away, why does God not take them out of the world while they are in the saved state? Surely no one will say that it is because He cannot, or that it is because He does not foresee their future apostasy. Why, then, does He leave these objects of His affection here to fall back into sin and perish? His gift of continued life to these Christians amounts to an infinite curse placed upon them. But who can really believe that the heavenly Father takes no better care of His children than that? This mistaken doctrine of the Arminians teaches that a person may be a son of God today and a son of the Devil tomorrow, that he may change from one state to another as rapidly as he changes his mind. It teaches that he may be born of the Spirit, justified, sanctified, all but glorified, and that even then he may become reprobate and perish eternally, his own will and course of conduct being the determining factor. Certainly a sovereign loving God would not permit His ransomed children to thus fall away and perish.

In addition to this, if God knows that a certain Christian is going to rebel and perish, can He love him with any deep affection even before his apostasy? If we knew that someone who is our friend today would be led to become our enemy and betray us tomorrow, we could not receive him with the intimacy and trust which otherwise would be natural. Our knowledge of his future acts would in large measure destroy our present love for him.

No one denies that the redeemed in heaven will be preserved in holiness. Yet if God is able to preserve His saints in heaven without violating their free agency, may He not also preserve His saints on earth without violating their free agency?

The nature of the change which occurs in regeneration is a sufficient guarantee that the life imparted shall be permanent. Regeneration is a radical and supernatural change of the inner nature, through which the soul is made spiritually alive, and the new life which is implanted is immortal. And since it is a change in the inner nature, it is in a sphere in which man does not have control. No creature is at liberty to change the fundamental principles of its nature, for that is the prerogative of God as Creator. Hence nothing short of another supernatural act of God could reverse this change and cause the new life to be lost. The born-again Christian can no more lose his sonship to the heavenly Father than an earthly son can lose his sonship to an earthly father. The idea that a Christian may fall away and perish arises from a wrong conception of the principle of spiritual life which is imparted to the soul in regeneration.

2. Our Perseverance Not Dependent On Our Own Good Works But On God's Grace

Paul teaches that believers are not under law, but under grace, and that since they are not under the law they cannot be condemned for having violated the law. "Ye are not under law but under grace," Rom. 6:14. Further sin cannot possibly cause their downfall, for they are under a system of grace and are not treated according to their deserts. "If it is by grace, it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace," Rom. 11:6. "The law worketh wrath; but where there is no law, neither is there transgression," Rom. 4:15. "Apart from the law sin is dead" (that is, where the law is abolished sin can no longer subject the person to

punishment), Rom. 7:8. "Ye were made dead to the law through the body of Christ," Rom. 7:4. The one who attempts to earn even the smallest part of his salvation by works becomes "a debtor to do the whole law" (that is, to render perfect obedience in his own strength and thus earn his salvation), Gal. 6:3. We are here dealing with two radically different systems of salvation, two systems which, in fact, are diametrically opposed to each other.

The infinite, mysterious, eternal love of God for His people is a guarantee that they can never be lost. This love is not subject to fluctuations but is as unchangeable as His being. It is also gratuitous, and keeps faster hold of us than we of it. It is not founded on the attractiveness of its objects. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins," I John 4:10. "God commendeth His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God through Him. For if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by His life," Rom. 5:8-10. Here the very point stressed is that our standing with God is not based on our deserts. It was "while we were enemies" that we were brought into spiritual life through sovereign grace; and if He has done the greater, will He not do the lesser? The writer of the book of Hebrews also teaches that it is impossible for one of God's chosen to be lost when he says that Christ is both "the Author and Perfecter of our faith." We are there taught that the whole course of our salvation is divinely planned and divinely guided. Neither the grace of God nor its continuance is given according to our merits. Hence if any Christian fell away, it would be because God had withdrawn His grace and changed His method of procedure ---or, in other words, because He had put the person back under a system of law.

Robert L. Dabney has expressed this truth very ably in the following paragraph: "The sovereign and unmerited love is the cause of the believer's effectual calling. Jer. 31:3; Rom. 8:30. Now, as the cause is unchangeable, the effect is unchangeable. That effect is, the constant communication of grace to the believer in whom God hath begun a good work. God was not induced to bestow His renewing grace in the first instance, by anything which He saw, meritorious or attractive, in the repenting sinner; and therefore the subsequent absence of everything good in him would be no new motive to God for withdrawing His grace. When He first bestowed that grace, He knew that the sinner on whom He bestowed it was totally depraved, and wholly and only hateful in himself to the divine holiness; and therefore no new instance of ingratitude or unfaithfulness, of which the sinner may become guilty after his conversion, can be any provocation to God, to change His mind, and wholly withdraw His sustaining grace. God knew all this ingratitude before. He will chastise it, by temporarily withdrawing His Holy Spirit, or His providential mercies; but if He had not intended from the first to bear with it, and to forgive it in Christ, He would not have called the sinner by His grace at first. In a word, the causes for which God determined to bestow His electing love on the sinner are wholly in God, and not at all in the believer; and hence, nothing in the believer's heart or conduct can finally change that purpose of love. Is. 54:10; Rom. 11:29. Compare carefully Rom. 5:8-10; 8:32, with the whole scope of Rom. 8:28-end. This illustrious passage is but an argument for our proposition; 'What shall separate us from the love of Christ?'"²

"God's love in this respect," says Dr. Charles Hodge "is compared to parental love. A mother does not love her child because it is lovely. Her love leads her to do all she can to render it attractive and to keep it so. So the love of God, being in like manner mysterious, unaccountable by anything in its objects, secures His adorning His children with the graces of His Spirit, and arraying them in all the beauty of holiness. It is only the lamentable mistake that God loves us for our goodness, that can lead any one to suppose that His love is dependent on our self-sustained attractiveness."³

Concerning the salvation of the elect, Luther says, "God's decree of predestination is firm and certain; and the necessity resulting from it is, in like manner, immovable, and cannot but take place. For we ourselves are

so feeble.' that if the matter were left in our hands, very few, or rather none, would be saved; but Satan would overcome us all."

The more we think of these matters, the more thankful we are that our perseverance in holiness and assurance of salvation is not dependent on our own weak nature, but upon God's constant sustaining power. We can say with Isaiah, "Except Jehovah of hosts had left us a very small remnant, we should have become as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Arminianism denies this doctrine of Perseverance, because it is a system, not of pure grace, but of grace and works; and in any such system the person must prove himself at least partially worthy.

3. Though Truly Saved The Christian May Temporarily Backslide And Commit Sin

This doctrine of Perseverance does not mean that Christians do not temporarily fall the victims of sin, for alas, this is all too common. Even the best of men backslide temporarily. But they are never completely defeated; for God, by the exercise of His grace on their hearts infallibly prevents even the weakest saint from final apostasy. As yet we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the exceeding greatness of the power (or the glory) may be of God, and not from ourselves (II Cor. 4:7).

Concerning his own personal experience even the great apostle Paul could write: "The good which I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I practice. But if what I would not, that I do, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me I find then the law, that to me who would do good, evil is present. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man; but I see a different law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity under the law of sin which is in my members. Wretched man that I am I who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then I of myself with the mind, indeed, serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Rom. 7:19-25. In these lines every true Christian reads his own experience.

It is, of course, inconsistent for the Christian to commit sin, and the writer of the book of Hebrews says that those who do sin "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame" (6:6). After David had committed sin and had repented he was told by the prophet Nathan that his sin would be forgiven, but that nevertheless through it he had "given great occasion to the enemies of Israel to blaspheme," II Sam. 12:14. David and Peter fell away temporarily, but the basic principles of their natures called them back. Judas fell away permanently because he lacked those basic principles.

As long as the believer remains in this world his state is one of warfare. He suffers temporary reverses and may for a time appear to have lost all faith; yet if he has been once truly saved, he cannot fall away completely from grace. If once he has experienced the inner change which comes through regeneration he will sooner or later return to the fold and be saved. When he comes to himself he confesses his sins and asks forgiveness, never doubting that he is saved. His lapse into sin may have injured him severely and may have brought destruction to others; but so far as he is personally concerned it is only temporary. Paul taught that the life work of many people should be burned since it is constructed of wrong materials, though they themselves shall be saved "so as by fire," I Cor. 3:12-15; and it was this teaching which Jesus brought out in the parable of the lost sheep which the shepherd sought and brought back to the fold.

If true believers fell away, then their bodies, which are called "temples of the Holy Spirit," would become the habitations of the Devil, which of course would make the Devil rejoice and insult over God (I Cor. 6:19). "The Christian is like a man making his way up hill, who occasionally slips back, yet always has his face set toward the summit. The unregenerate man has his face turned downwards, and he is slipping all the way," -

A. H. Strong. "The believer, like a man on shipboard, may fall again and again on the deck, but he will never fall overboard." -C. H. Spurgeon.

Each one of the elect is like the prodigal son in this, that for a time he is deluded by the world and is led astray by his own carnal appetite. He tries to feed on the husks, but they do not satisfy. And sooner or later he is obliged to say, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." And he meets with the same reception, tokens of unchanging love; and a father's welcome voice echoes through the soul, and melts the heart of the poor returning backslider, ---"This my son was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found." Let it be noticed that this is a thoroughly Calvinistic parable in that the prodigal was a son, and could not lose that relationship. Those who are not sons never have the desire to arise and go to the Father.

Our judgments may at times be wrong, as was that of the bewitched Galatians (3:1); and our affections may cool, as in the Ephesian Church (Rev. 2:4). The Church may become drowsy, yet her heart awakes (Song 5:2). Grace may at times seem to be lost to a child of God when it is indeed not so. The sun is eclipsed, but regains its former splendor. The trees lose all their leaves and fruit in winter, but has fresh buddings with the spring. Israel flees once, or even twice, before her enemies, and yet they conquer the land of promise. The Christian, too, falls many times, but is finally saved. It is unthinkable that God's elect should fail of salvation. "There is no possibility of their escaping the omnipotent power of God. so that, like Jonah, who fled from the will of God, which was to carry the message to Nineveh, yet was pursued even into the belly of the fish by the power of God until he willingly obeyed God's command, so they will eventually return to the Saviour, and after confession receive pardon for their sins and be saved."4

4. An Outward Profession Of Righteousness Not Always A Proof That The Person Is A True Christian

We have no great difficulty in disposing of those cases where apparently true believers have gone into final apostasy. Both Scripture and experience teach us that we are often mistaken in our judgment of our fellow men, that sometimes it is practically impossible for us to know for certain that they are true Christians. The tares were never wheat, and the bad fish were never good, in spite of the fact that their true nature was not at first recognized. Since Satan can so alter his appearance that he is mistaken for an angel of light (II Cor. 11:14), it is no marvel that sometimes his ministers also fashion themselves as doers of righteousness, with the most deceptive appearances of holiness, devotion, piety and zeal. Certainly an outward profession is not always a guarantee that the soul is saved. Like the Pharisees of old, they may only desire to "make a fair show in the flesh," and deceive many. Jesus warned His disciples, "there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect," Matt. 24:24; and He quoted the prophet Isaiah to the effect that, "This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men," Mark 7:6, 7. Paul warned against those who were "false apostles, deceitful workers, fashioning themselves into apostles of Christ," II Cor. 11:13. And to the Romans he wrote, "They are not all Israel, that are of Israel: neither, because they are Abraham's seed are they all children," Rom. 9:6, 7. John mentions those who "call themselves apostles, and they are not," Rev. 2:2; and a little later he adds, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and thou art dead," Rev. 3:1.

But however effectively these may deceive men, God all the time knows "the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and they are not, but are a synagogue of Satan," Rev. 2:9. We live in a day when multitudes claim the name of "Christian," who are destitute of Christian knowledge, experience, and character, - in a day when, in many quarters, the distinction between the Church and the world has been wiped out. Like Samuel, we are often deceived by the outward appearance, and say, "Surely the Lord's anointed is before us,"

when if we really knew the motives behind their works we would conclude otherwise. We are often mistaken in our judgment of others, in spite of the best precautions that we can take. John gave the true solution for these cases when he wrote: "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they all are not of us," I John 2:19. All of those who fall away permanently come under this class.

Some persons make a great profession of religion although they know nothing of the Lord Jesus in sincerity and in truth. These persons may outstrip many a humble follower in head-knowledge, and for a season they may quite deceive the very elect; yet all the time their hearts have never been touched. In the judgment day many of those who at some time in their lives have been externally associated with the Church will say, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works?" And then He will reply to them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity," Matt. 7:22,23; which, of course, would not be true if at some time He had known them as real Christians. When every man shall appear in his own colors, when the secrets of all hearts shall be manifest, many who at times appeared to be true Christians will be seen never to have been among God's people. Some fall away from a profession of faith, but none fall away from the saving grace of God. Those who do fall have never known the latter. They are the stony-ground hearers, who have no root in themselves, but who endure for a while; and when tribulation or persecution arises, straightway they stumble. They are then said to have given up or to have made shipwreck of that faith which they never possessed except in appearance. Some of these become sufficiently enlightened in the scheme of the doctrines of the Gospel that they are able to preach or to teach them to others, and yet are themselves entirely destitute of real saving grace. When such fall away they are no proofs, nor instances of the final apostasy of real saints.

Mere church membership, of course, is no guarantee that the persons are real Christians. Not every member of the Church militant will be a member of the Church triumphant. To answer certain purposes, they make an outward profession of the Gospel, which obliges them for a time to be outwardly moral and to associate themselves with the people of God. They appear to have true faith and continue thus for a while. Then either their sheep's clothing is stripped off, or they throw it off themselves, and return again to the world. If we could see the real motives of their hearts, we would discover that at no time were they ever actuated by a true love of God. They were all this while goats, and not sheep, ravening wolves, and not gentle lambs. Hence Peter says of them, "It has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog turning to his own vomit again, and the sow that had been washed to wallowing in the mire," II Peter 2:22. They thereby show that they never belonged to the number of the elect.

Many of the unconverted listen to the preaching of the Gospel as Herod listened to John the Baptist. We are told that "Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man, and kept him safe. And when he heard him he was much perplexed; and he heard him gladly," Mark 6:20. Yet no one who knows of Herod's decree to put John the Baptist to death, and of his life in general, will say that he was ever a Christian.

In addition to what has been said it is to be admitted that often times the common operations of the Spirit on the enlightened conscience lead to reformation and to an externally religious life. Those so influenced are often very strict in their conduct and diligent in their religious duties. To the awakened sinner the promises of the Gospel and the exhibition of the plan of salvation contained in the Scriptures appear not only as true but as suited to his condition. He receives them with joy, and believes with a faith founded on the moral force of truth. This faith continues as long as the state of mind by which it is produced continues. When that changes, he relapses into his usual state of insensibility, and his faith disappears. It is to this class of persons that Christ referred when He spoke of those who receive the Word in stony places or among thorns. Numerous examples of this temporary faith are found in the Scriptures and are often seen in everyday life. These

experiences often precede or accompany genuine conversion; but in many cases they are not followed by a real change of heart. They may occur repeatedly, and yet those who experience them return to their normal state of unconcern and worldliness. Often times it is impossible for an observer or even the person himself to distinguish these experiences from those of the truly regenerated. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is the test given by our Lord. Only when these experiences issue in a consistently holy life can their distinctive character be known.

5. Arminian Sense Of Insecurity

A consistent Arminian, with his doctrines of free will and of falling from grace, can never in this life be certain of his eternal salvation. He may, indeed, have the assurance of his present salvation, but he can have only a hope of his final salvation. He may regard his final salvation as highly probable, but he cannot know it as a certainty. He has seen many of his fellow Christians backslide and perish after making a good start. Why may not he do the same thing? So long as men remain in this world they have the remnants of the old sinful nature clinging to them; they are surrounded by the most alluring and deceptive pleasures of the world and the most subtle temptations of the Devil. In many of the supposedly Christian churches they hear the false teaching of modernistic, and therefore unchristian, ministers. If Arminianism were true, Christians would still be in very dangerous positions, with their eternal destiny suspended upon the probability that their weak, creaturely wills would continue to choose right. Furthermore, Arminianism would logically hold that no confirmation in holiness is possible, not even in heaven; for even there the person would still retain his free will and might commit sin any time he chose.

By comparison the Arminian is like the person who has inherited a fortune of, say, \$100,000. He knows that many others who have inherited such fortunes have lost them through poor judgment, fraud, calamity, etc., but he has enough confidence in his own ability to handle money wisely that he does not doubt but that he will keep his. His assurance is based largely on self-confidence. Others have failed, but he is confident that he will not fail. But what a delusion is this when applied to the spiritual realm! What a pity that anyone who is at all acquainted with his own tendency to sin should base his assurance of salvation upon such grounds! His system places the cause of his perseverance, not in the hands of an all-powerful, never-changing God, but in the hands of weak sinful man.

And does not the logic of the Arminian system tell us that the wise thing for the Christian to do is to die as soon as possible and thus confirm the inheritance which to him is of infinite value? In view of the fact that so many have fallen away, is it worthwhile for him to remain here and risk his eternal salvation for the sake of a little more life in this world? What would be thought of a business man who, in order to gain a few more dollars, would risk his entire fortune in some admittedly questionable venture? In fact, does it not at least suggest that the Lord has made many mistakes in not removing these people while they were true Christians? The writer, at least, is convinced that if he held the Arminian view and knew himself to be a saved Christian he would want to die as soon as possible and thus place his salvation beyond all possible doubt.

In regard to spiritual matters, a state of doubt is a state of misery. The assurance that Christians can never be separated from the love of God is one of the greatest comforts of the Christian life. To deny this doctrine is to destroy the grounds for any rejoicing among the saints on earth; for what kind of rejoicing can those have who believe that they may at any time be deceived and led astray? If our sense of security is based only on our changeable and wavering natures, we can never know the inward calm and peace which, should characterize the Christian. Says McFetridge, in his very illuminating little book, *Calvinism In History*, "I can well conceive of the terror to a sensitive soul of dark uncertainty as to salvation, and of that ever-abiding consciousness of the awful possibility of falling away from grace after a long and painful Christian life, which is taught by Arminianism. To me such a doctrine has terrors which would cause me to shrink away

from it forever, and which would fill me with constant and unspeakable perplexities. To feel that I were crossing the troubled and dangerous sea of life dependent for my final security upon the actings of my own treacherous nature were enough to fill me with a perpetual alarm. If it is possible, I want to know that the vessel to which I commit my life is seaworthy, and that, having once embarked, I shall arrive in safety at my destination." (P. 112.)

It is not until we duly appreciate this wonderful truth, that our salvation is not suspended on our weak and wavering love to God, but rather upon His eternal and unchangeable love to us, that we can have peace and certainty in the Christian life. And only the Calvinist, who knows himself to be absolutely safe in the hands of God, can have that inward sense of peace and security, knowing that in the eternal counsels of God he has been chosen to be cleansed and glorified and that nothing can thwart that purpose. He knows himself to be held to righteousness by a spiritual power which is as exhaustless and unvarying as the force of gravitation, and as necessary to the development of the spirit as sunshine and vitamins are to the body.

6. Purpose Of The Scripture Warnings Against Apostasy

Arminians sometimes bring forth from the Scriptures the warnings against apostasy or falling away, which are addressed to believers, and which, it is argued, imply a possibility of their failing away. There is, of course, a sense in which it is possible for believers to fail away,---when they are viewed simply in themselves, with reference to their own powers and capacities, and apart from God's purpose or design with respect to them. And it is admitted by all that believers can fall into sin temporarily. The primary purpose of these passages, however, is to induce men to co-operate willingly with God for the accomplishment of His purposes. They are inducements which produce constant humility, watchfulness, and diligence. In the same way a parent, in order to get the willing co-operation of a child, may tell it to stay out of the way of an approaching automobile, when all the time the parent has no intention of ever letting the child get into a position where it would be injured. When God plies a soul with fears of falling it is by no means a proof that God in His secret purpose intends to permit him to fall. These fears may be the very means which God has designed to keep him from falling. Secondly, God's exhortations to duty are perfectly consistent with His purpose to give sufficient grace for the performance of these duties. In one place we are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart; in another, God says, "I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." Now either these must be consistent with each other, or the Holy Spirit must contradict Himself. Plainly it is not the latter. Thirdly, these warnings are, even for believers, incitements to greater faith and prayer. Fourthly, they are designed to show man his duty rather than his ability, and his weakness rather than his strength. Fifthly, they convince men of their want of holiness and of their dependence upon God. And, sixthly, they serve as restraints on unbelievers, and leave them without excuse.

Nor is any more proven by the passages, "Destroy not with thy meat him for whom Christ died," Rom. 14:15; and, "For through thy knowledge he that is weak perisheth, the brother for whose sake Christ died," I Cor. 8:11. In the same manner the influence of a particular person, when looked at merely in itself, might be said to be destroying our American civilization; yet America goes ahead and prospers, because other influences more than offset that one. In these passages the principle asserted is simply this: Whatever their divine security, the responsibility of the one who casts a stumbling block in the path of his brother is not decreased; and that anyone who does cast a stumbling block in the way of his brother is doing all he can towards his brother's destruction.

7. Scripture Proof

The Scripture proof for this doctrine is abundant and clear.

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or anguish, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness or peril, or sword? Nay, In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. 8:35-39.

"Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace," Rom. 6:14. "He that believeth hath eternal life," John 6:47. "He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and cometh not into judgment, but hath passed out of death into life," John 5:24. The moment one believes, eternal life becomes a reality, a present possession, and not merely a conditional gift of the future. "I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever," John 6:51. He does not say that we have to eat many times, but that if we eat at all, we shall live forever. "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life," John 4:14.

"Being confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Jesus Christ," Phil. 1:6. "Jehovah will perfect that which concerneth me," Ps. 138:8. "The gifts and calling of God are not repented of:" Rom. 11:29. "The witness is this, that God gave unto us eternal life," I John 5:11. "These things have I written unto you that ye may know that ye have eternal life," I John 5:13. "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified," Heb. 10:14. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will save me unto His heavenly kingdom," II Tim. 4:18. "For whom He foreknew, He also foreordained and whom He foreordained, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified:" Rom. 8:29. "Having foreordained us unto adoption as sons through Jesus Christ unto Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will," Eph. 1:5.

Jesus declared, "I give unto them (the true followers, or 'sheep') eternal life; and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who hath given them unto me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand," John 10:28. Here we find that our security and God's omnipotence are equal; for the former is founded on the latter. God is mightier than the whole world, and neither men nor Devil can rob Him of one of His precious jewels. It would be as easy to pluck a star out of the heavens as to pluck a saint out of the Father's hand. Their salvation stands in His invincible might and they are placed beyond the peril of destruction. We have Christ's promise that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church; yet if the Devil could snatch one here and another there and large numbers in some congregations, the gates of hell would to a great extent prevail against it. In principle, if one could be lost, all might be lost, and thus Christ's assurance would be reduced to idle words.

When we are told that "There shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, who shall show great signs and wonders; so as to lead astray, IF POSSIBLE, even the elect," Matt. 24:24, the unprejudiced believing mind readily understands that it is IMPOSSIBLE to lead astray the elect.

The mystic union which exists between Christ and believers is a guarantee that they shall continue steadfast. "Because I live, ye shall live also," John 14:19. The effect of this union is that believers participate in His life. Christ is in us, Romans 8:10. It is not we that live, but Christ that liveth in us, Gal. 2:20. Christ and the believers have a common life such as that which exists in the vine and the branches. The Holy Spirit so dwells in the redeemed that every Christian is supplied with an inexhaustible reservoir of strength.

Paul warned the Ephesians, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption," Eph. 4:30. He had no fear of apostasy for he could confidently say, "Thanks be to God who always leadeth us in triumph in Christ," II Cor. 2:14. The Lord, speaking through the prophet Jeremiah said,

"I have loved thee with an everlasting love," 31:3, --- one of the best proofs that God's love shall have no end is that it has no beginning, but is eternal. In the parable of the two houses, the very point stressed was that the house which was founded on the rock (Christ) did not fall when the storms of life came. Arminianism sets up another system in which some of those who are founded on the rock do fall. In the twenty-third Psalm we read, "And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever." The true Christian is no temporary visitor, but a permanent dweller in the house of the Lord. How those rob this psalm of its deeper and richer meaning who teach that the grace of God is a temporary thing!

Christ makes intercession for His people (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25), and we are told that the Father hears Him always (John 11:42). Hence the Arminian, holding that Christians may fall away, must deny either the passages which declare that Christ does make intercession for His people, or he must deny those which declare that His prayers are always heard. Let us consider here how well protected we are: Christ is at the right hand of God pleading for us, and in addition to that, the Holy Spirit makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, Rom. 8:26.

In the wonderful promise of Jer. 32:40, God has promised to preserve believers from their own backslidings: "And I will make an everlasting covenant with them, and I will not turn away from following them, to do them good; and I will put my fear in their hearts, that they may not depart from me." And in Ezek. 11:19, 20, He promises to take from them the "stony heart," and to give them a "heart of flesh," so that they shall walk in his statutes and keep his ordinances, and so that they shall be His people and He their God. Peter tells us that Christians cannot fall away, for they "by the power of God are guarded through faith unto a salvation ready to be revealed at the last time," I Peter 1:5. Paul says, "God is able to make all grace to abound unto you; that ye, having always all sufficiency in everything, may abound unto every good work," II Cor. 9:8. He declares that the Lord's servant "shall be made to stand; for the Lord hath power to make him stand," Rom. 14:4.

And Christians have the further promise, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as man can bear: but God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation make also the way of escape, that ye may be able to endure it," I Cor. 10:13. Their removal from certain temptations which would be too strong for them is an absolute and free gift from God, since it is entirely an arrangement of His providence as to what temptations they encounter in the course of their lives, and what ones they escape. "The Lord is faithful and will establish you and guard you from the evil one," II Thess. 3:3. And again, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him and delivereth them," Ps. 34:7. Amid all his trials and hardships Paul could say, "We are pressed on every side, yet not straightened; perplexed, yet not unto despair; pursued, yet not forsaken; smitten down, yet not destroyed; knowing that He that raised up the Lord Jesus Christ shall raise us also with Jesus," II Cor. 4:8, 9, 14.

The saints, even in this world, are compared to a tree that does not wither, Ps. 1:3; to the cedars which flourish on Mount Lebanon, Ps. 92:12; to Mount Zion which cannot be moved, but which abideth forever, Ps. 125:1; and to a house built on a rock, Matt. 7:24. The Lord is with them in their old age, Is. 46:4, and is their guide even unto death, Ps 48:14, so that they cannot be totally and finally lost.

Another strong argument is to be noticed concerning the Lamb's book of life. The disciples were told to rejoice, not so much over the fact that the demons were subject to them, but that their names were written in the Lamb's book of life. This book is a catalogue of the elect, determined by the unalterable counsel of God, and can neither be increased nor diminished. The names of the righteous are found there; but the names of those who perish have never been written there from the foundation of the world. God does not make the mistake of writing in the book of life a name which He will later have to blot out. Hence none of the Lord's own ever perish. Jesus told His disciples to find their chief joy in the fact that their names were written in

heaven, Luke 10:20; yet there would have been small grounds for joy in this respect if their names written in heaven one day could have been blotted out the next. Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Our citizenship is in heaven," 3:20; and to Timothy he wrote, "The Lord knoweth them that are His," II Tim. 2:19. For the Scripture teaching concerning the book of life, see Luke 10:20; Phil 4:3; Rev. 3:5; 13:8; 17:8; 20:12-15; 21:27.

Here, then, are very simple and plain statements that the Christian shall continue in grace, the reason being that the Lord takes it upon Himself to preserve him in that state. In these promises the elect are secured on both sides. Not only will God not depart from them, but He will so put His fear into their hearts that they shall not depart from him. Surely no Spirit-taught Christian can doubt that this doctrine is taught in the Bible. It seems that man, poor, wretched and impotent as he is, would welcome a doctrine which secures for him the possessions of eternal happiness despite all attacks from without and all evil tendencies from within. But it is not so. He refuses it, and argues against it. And the causes are not far to seek. In the first place he has more confidence in himself than he has any right to have. Secondly, the scheme is so contrary to what he is used to in the natural world that he persuades himself that it cannot be true. Thirdly, he perceives that if this doctrine be admitted, the other doctrines of free grace will logically follow. Hence he twists and explains away the Scripture passages which teach it, and clings to some which appear on the surface to favor his preconceived views. In fact, a system of salvation by grace is so utterly at variance with his every-day experience, in which he sees everything and person treated according to works and merits, that he has great difficulty in bringing himself to believe that it can be true. He wishes to earn his own salvation, though certainly he expects very high wages for very sorry work.