

THE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION

**STATED, AND SET IN THE
SCRIPTURE LIGHT**

By

JOHN GILL, 1752

**IN OPPOSITION TO JOHN WESLEY'S
"PREDESTINATION CALMLY CONSIDERED," with a
Reply to the Exceptions of the said Writer to "THE
DOCTRINE OF THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS".**

Mr. Wesley having declared himself the author of the Serious Thoughts upon the Perseverance of the Saints, to which I lately returned an answer; has been pleased to shift the controversy from perseverance to predestination: contenting himself with some low, mean and impertinent exceptions to a part of what I have written on the subject of perseverance; not attempting to answer any one argument advanced by me in vindication of it; and yet he has the assurance in the public papers, to call this miserable piece of his, chiefly written on another subject, A full answer to Dr. Gill's pamphlet on perseverance; any other man but Mr. Wesley would, upon reflection, be covered with shame and confusion; though to give him his due, in his great modesty, he has left out the word full in some after-papers; as being conscious to himself, or it may be, some of his friends pointed it to him, that it was an imposition on the public, and intended greatly to expose himself and his cause; since he has left me in full possession of all my arguments; which I will not say are "unanswerable," though I think they are; and it looks as if Mr. Wesley thought so too, seeing he has not attempted to answer one of them; yet this I may say, that as yet they are not answered at all, and much less in a full answer given unto them.

[Reference is made to Gill's 1752 booklet on "Final Perseverance" that was written to refute John Wesley's first effort on "Serious Thoughts on Perseverance of the Saints," that denied eternal security of the elect. – Ed.]

And now, though I might be very well excused following him in this wild pursuit against the subject of Predestination; since he has not meddled with my argument from it for the saints' perseverance; since he has not pursued that subject, as his title promises; and since throughout the whole he does not argue, only harangue upon it; and that only a part of it, Reprobation, which he thought would best serve his purpose; yet for the sake of weak and honest minds, lest through his subtlety, they should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ; I shall endeavor to state the doctrine of predestination, and set it in a true light according to the Scriptures, with the proofs of it from thence; and take notice of the principal objections raised by Mr. Wesley in his harangue on that part of it which respects reprobation; and then close this treatise with a reply to his trifling exceptions to what I have written on the subject of the saints' perseverance.

As to the doctrine of Predestination, it may be considered either, In general as respecting ALL THINGS that have been, are, or shall be, or done in the world; every thing comes under the determination and appointment of God; "He did," as the assembly of divines say in their confession, "from all eternity, unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass;" or, as they express it in their catechism, "God's decrees are the wise, free and holy acts of the counsel of His will; whereby, from all eternity, He hath, for His own glory, unchangeably foreordained whatsoever comes to pass in time:" and this predestination and fore-appointment of all things, may be concluded from the foreknowledge of God. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world (Greek: "from eternity") Acts 15:18. They are known by Him as future, as

what would be, which became so by His determination of them. The reason why He knew they would be, is, because He determined they should be: also from the Providence of God, and His government of the world, which is all "according to the counsel of His own will" (Ephesians 1:11). He does every thing according to that, or as He has determined in His own mind. Eternal predestination in this sense is no other than eternal providence, of which actual providence in time is the execution.

To deny this, is to deny the providence of God, and, His government of the world, which none but Deists and Atheists will do; at least it is to think and speak unworthily of God, as not being the all-knowing and all-wise and sovereign ruler of the world, He is. Once more, the very wonderful thing, prophecy, or foretelling things to come, could not be without a predestination of them; of which there are so many instances in Scripture; such as the stay of the Israelites in Egypt exactly 430 years as prophesied, and their departure from thence; the seventy years captivity of the Jews in Babylon as foretold, and their return at the end of that time; the exact coming of the Messiah at such a certain time which was prophesied; with many others, and some seemingly the most casual and contingent; as the birth of persons by name a hundred or hundreds of years before they were born, as were Josiah and Cyrus; and of a man's carrying a pitcher of water, at such a time, to such a place (1 Kings 13:2): how could these things be foretold with certainty, unless it was determined and appointed they should be? There is nothing comes by chance to God, nothing done without His knowledge, nor without His will, and nothing without His determination. Every thing, even the most minute thing, respecting His creatures, and what is done in this world in all periods and ages of time, is by His appointment. For the proof of which see the following passages.

Eccl. 3:1, 2. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven; a time to be born and a time to die," &c.

a time fixed by the purpose of God for each of these.

Job 14:5. "Seeing his days are determined, the number of his months are with Thee, Thou hast appointed his bounds that he cannot pass."

Job 23:14. "He performeth the thing that is appointed for me, and many such things are with Him. "

Daniel 4:35. "And He doth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what dost Thou? "

Ephesians 1:11. Being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh ALL THINGS after the counsel of His own will.

" Acts 15:18. "Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world "

Acts 17:26. "and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation."

Matthew 10: 29 ,30. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father; but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. "

II. Predestination may be considered as special and as relating to particular persons, and to things spiritual and eternal; whereas predestination in general respects all creatures and things, even things temporal and civil.

First, Christ Himself is the object of predestination; He was fore-ordained to be the Mediator between God and man; to be the propitiation for sin; to be the Redeemer and Savior of His people; to be the Head of the church; King of saints, and Judge of the world: hence He is called, God's elect, and His chosen one; and whatsoever befell Him, or was done to Him, was by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God; even all things relating to His sufferings and death: in proof of which read the following Scriptures.

Romans 3:25. "Whom God hath set forth (Greek: fore-ordained) to be a propitiation. "

1 Peter 1:20. "Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world," that is, to be the Lamb slain. (See chapter 2:4)

Luke 22:29. "And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me. "

Acts 27:31. Because He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath appointed (See also chapter 10:42).

Isaiah 43:1. "Behold My servant, whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth. (See also Matthew 12:18)

Luke 22:22. "And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined,

but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed" (See also Psalm 109) Acts 2:23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and

foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hand, " &c. Chapter 4:28. "For to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done.

Secondly, Angels also are the objects of predestination, both good and bad; the blessed angels are chosen unto life, and to continue in their happy state to all eternity: and their perseverance therein, and eternal felicity, are owing to the eternal choice of them in Christ their Head; "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things," (1 Timothy 5:21). The evil angels are rejected of God, and left in that miserable estate their apostasy brought them into, without any provision of grace and mercy for them: they are "delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved to the judgment of the great day; and everlasting fire is prepared .(or. them, according to the determinate counsel and will of God (2 Peter 2:4, Matthew 25: 41).

Thirdly, Predestination which the Scriptures chiefly treat of, is what respects men, and consist of two parts, election and reprobation; the one is a predestination unto life, the other unto death.

First. Election, which is a predestination unto life, is an act of the

free grace of God, of His sovereign and immutable will, by which from all eternity He has chosen in Christ, out of the common mass of mankind, some men, or a certain number of them, to partake of spiritual blessings here, and happiness hereafter, for the glory of His grace.

Second. The objects of election are some men, not all which a choice supposes; to take all would be no choice; called therefore, a "remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5). These are a certain number, which though unknown to us, how many, and who they are, are known to God. "the Lord knows them that are His" (2 Timothy 2:19). And though they are in themselves a "great multitude, which no man can number" (Revelation 7:9), yet when compared with those from whom they are chosen, they are but few; "many are called, but few chosen," (Matthew 20:16). These are chosen out of the same common mass of mankind, be it considered as corrupt or pure; all were on an equal level when the choice was made: "hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor?" (Romans 9:21). These are not whole nations, churches, and communities, but particular persons, whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life; "Jacob have I loved," & c. "salute Rufus chosen in the Lord," and "according as He has chosen us in Him," etc c. (Romans 9:13 and Ephesians 1:4). Election is not a set of propositions, but persons; not characters, but men; or not men under such and such characters, as believers, holy, &c., but men as having done "neither good or evil;" before they had done either, (Romans 8:11).

1. This act of election, is an act of God's free grace, to which He is not moved by any motive or condition in the object chosen, nor by His foresight of them: wherefore it is called "the election of grace;" concerning which the Apostle's reasoning is strong and invincible; and "if by grace, then it is no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace; but if it be of works, then is it no more

grace; otherwise work is no more work," (Romans 11:5,6). It is according to the sovereign and unchangeable will of God, and not according to the will or works of men; "having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, (Ephesians 1:5 and again, verse 11), "being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; " hence it stands immutably firm and sure, even "the purpose of God according to election, not of works but of Him that calleth" (Romans 9:11).

2. This act of election is irrespective of faith, holiness, and good works, as causes or conditions of it; faith flows from it; is a fruit and effect of it, is secured by it, and is had in consequence of it: "as many as ordained unto eternal life believed," (Acts 13:48) hence it is called "the faith of God's elect," (Titus_ 1:1) and though holiness is a means proved in the act of election, it is not the cause of it; men are chosen, not because they are holy, but "that they should be holy," (Ephesians 1:4); good works do not go before, but follow after election; it is denied to be of them, as before observed, and it passed before any were done, (Romans 9:11 and 11:5,6) they are the effects of God's decree, and not the cause of it; "God hath fore-ordained" them "that we should walk in them," (Ephesians 2:10).

3. The act of election was made IN Christ, (not in Adam) as the Head, in whom all the elect were chosen, and into whose hands, by this act of grace, were put their persons, grace, and glory; and this is an eternal act of God in Him; "according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world," (Ephesians 1:4) and so the Apostle tells the Thessalonians, that "God hath from the beginning chosen you unto salvation; " (2 Thessalonians 2:13) not from the first preaching of the gospel to them, or from the time of their conversion by it, but from the beginning of time, even from all eternity, as the phrase is used in Proverbs 7:23. Hence nothing done in time could be the cause or condition of it. What men are

chosen unto by this act are, grace here, and glory hereafter; all spiritual blessings, adoption, justification, sanctification, belief of the truth, and salvation by Jesus Christ. Salvation is the end proposed with respect to men; sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth are the means appointed and prepared for that end. "He hath chosen us in Him, - that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children, &c." (Ephesians 1: 4,5). "We are bound to give thanks to God always for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord; because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth" (2 Thessalonians 2:13). "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:2). "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Thessalonians 5:9).

3. Both means and end are sure to the chosen ones _since this is an act of God's immutable will; these are redeemed by the blood of Christ: He died for their sins, and made satisfaction for them: they are justified by His righteousness and no charge can be laid against them; they are effectually called by the grace of God; they are sanctified by His Spirit; they persevere to the end, and cannot totally and finally be deceived and fall away, but shall be everlastingly glorified. "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth! " that is the elect (Roman's 8:33). "It is Christ that died," that died for them. "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called: and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He glorified"(Romans 8:30). "For there shall arise false Christ's, and false Prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that f it were possible they shall deceive the very elect "(Matthew 24:24); but that is not possible.

4. The ultimate end of all this, with respect to God, is His own

glory; the glory of all His divine perfections; the glory of His wisdom in forming such a scheme, in fixing on an end, and preparing means suitable unto it; the glory of His justice and holiness, in the redemption and salvation of the chosen ones, through the blood, righteousness, and sacrifice of His Son; and the glory of His rich grace and mercy exhibited in His kindness to them through Him; and the whole of it is, "To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

This now is the Scripture doctrine of predestination, or that part of it that is called election; from whence it appears to be ABSOLUTE AND UNCONDITIONAL, irrespective of any thing in man as the cause and condition of it in time or eternity. Mr. Wesley believes, that, "election is a divine appointment of some men to eternal happiness;" so that he owns a particular and personal election, and calls it an eternal decree; but believes that it is conditional: but if it is conditional, the condition is to be named; let him name the condition of it: let him point it out to us, and in what passage of Scripture it is; this lies upon him to do so, and I insist upon it, or else he ought to give up his unscriptural notion of conditional election. Mark 16:16 is no expression of this decree, but a declaration of the revealed will of God: and points out to us what will be the everlasting state of believers and unbelievers: but believers, as such, that they who are real believers, are the elect of God; but then the reason why they are the elect of God is not because they are believers, but they become believers, because they are the elect of God; their faith is not the cause or condition of their election, but their election the cause of their faith; they were chosen when they had done neither good nor evil, and so before they believed: and they believe in time, in consequence of their being ordained unto eternal life, from eternity: faith is in time, election before the world was; nothing temporal can be the cause or condition of what is eternal. This is the doctrine of the Scriptures. If Mr. Wesley will not attend to these, let him hear the

Articles of his own church [The Church of England, or Episcopal Church]; the seventh of which runs thus:

"Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God whereby (before the foundation of the world were laid) He hath constantly decreed by His counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom He hath chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels of honor. Wherefore they which be endued with so excellent a benefit of God, be called according to God's purpose by His Spirit working in due season: they through grace obey the calling: they be justified freely: they be made sons of God by adoption: they be made like the image of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ: they walk religiously in good works, and at length by God's mercy, they attain to everlasting felicity." This is an Article agreeable to the Scripture; an Article which he as a true son of the church, has treacherously departed from; an Article which Mr. Wesley must have subscribed and sworn to; an Article which will stare him in the face as long as subscriptions and oaths of office stand for any thing with him.

The doctrine of election, as above stated, standing in so glaring a light in the sacred Scriptures, and appearing with such evidence, as is impossible for all the art and sophistry of men to set aside; the other branch of predestination necessarily follows, which we deny not, but maintain. Mr. Wesley would have an election found out which does not imply reprobation; but what election that can be, the wit of man cannot devise; for if some are chosen, others must be rejected; and Mr. Wesley's notion of election itself implies it; for if, as he says, "election means a divine appointment of some men to eternal happiness;" then others must of necessity be left out of that choice, and rejected. I proceed therefore,

I. To the other branch of predestination commonly called Reprobation; which is an immutable decree of God, according to

His sovereign will, by which He has determined to leave some men in the common mass of mankind, out of which He has chosen others, and to justly punish them for sin with everlasting destruction, for the glory of His power and justice. This decree consists of two parts, a negative and a positive; the former is by some called preterition, or a passing by, a leaving some when others are chosen; which is no other than non-election; the latter is called pre-damnation, being God's decree to condemn or damn men for sin.

First, Preterition is God's act of passing by, or leaving some men when He chose others, according to His sovereign will and pleasure; of which act of God there is clear evidence in the Sacred Scripture; as well as it is necessarily implied in God's act of election which has such clear and incontestable proof. These are "the rest", those that remain unelected while others are chosen; "the election hath obtained it, and the rest are blinded" (Romans 9:7), or elect persons obtain righteousness, life and salvation, in consequence of their being chosen and the rest being left, they remain in their native darkness and ignorance, and for their sins are given up to judicial blindness and hardness of heart. These are they that are left out of the book of life, while others have their names written there from the foundation of the world; of whom it is said, "whose names are not written in the book of life (of the Lamb) from the foundation of the world" (Revelations 13:8 and chapter 17:8).

Secondly, Pre-damnation, is God's decree to condemn men for sin, or to punish them with everlasting damnation for it: and this is the sense of the Scriptures; and this is the view that they give us of this doctrine. "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Proverb 16:4). Not that God made man to damn him; the Scripture says no such thing, nor do we; nor is it the sense of the doctrine we plead for; nor is it inferred from it. God made man neither to damn him, or to save him, but for His

own glory, that is His ultimate end in making him, which is answered whether he is saved or lost: but the meaning is, that God has appointed the wicked man to the day of ruin and destruction for his wickedness. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation": But who are they? They are after described, "ungodly men, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ" (Jude 4). Hence the objects of this decree are called "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," that is, by sin, (Romans 9:22). And now what is there shocking in this doctrine, or disagreeable to the perfections of God? God damns no man but for sin, and He decreed to damn none but for sin.

Thirdly, This decree, we say, is according to the sovereign will of God, for nothing can be the cause of His decree but His own will: let the object of that part of the decree, which is called Preterition, be considered either in the corrupt or pure mass of mankind, as fallen or unfallen creatures, they are to be considered in the same view, and as on an equal foot and level with those that are chosen; and therefore no other reason can be given, but the will of God, that He should take one, and leave another. And though in that branch of it, which is an appointment of men to condemnation, sin is the cause of the thing decreed, damnation; yet it is the will of God that is the cause of the decree itself, for this invincible reason; or otherwise He must have appointed all men to damnation, since all men are sinners; let any other reason be assigned if it can be, why He has appointed to condemn some men for their sin, and not others,

Fourthly, God's end in all this is the glorify in Himself, His power and His justice; all His appointments are "for Himself, " for His own glory, and this among the rest; "What if God willing to shew His wrath," His vindictive justice, "and to make His power known," in the punishment of sinners for their sin, "endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction!"

(Romans 9:22).

The doctrine of reprobation, considered in this light, has nothing in it contrary to the nature and perfections of God. Harsh expressions, and unguarded phrases, that some may have used in speaking or writing about this doctrine, I will not take upon me to defend: but as it is thus stated, I think it is a defensible one, equally as the doctrine of election, and is demonstrable by it. The Scriptures are indeed more sparing of the one than of the other, and have left us to conclude the one from the other, in a great measure, though not without giving us clear and full evidence: for though reprobation is not so plentifully spoke of, yet it is clearly spoken of in sacred writings; wherefore, upon this consideration we judge it most proper and prudent, not so much to insist on this subject in our discourses and writings; not from any consciousness of want of evidence, but because of the awfulness of the subject. This our opponents are aware of; and therefore press us upon this head, in order to bring the doctrine of election into contempt with weak and carnal men; and make their first attacks upon this branch of predestination, which is beginning wrong; since reprobation is no other than non-election, or what is opposed to election; let the doctrine of election be demolished, and the other will fall of course; but that will cost too much pains; and they find a better account with weak minds in taking the other method; a method which the Dutch Remonstrants (Arminius' followers) formerly were desirous of, at the synod of Dort, could it have been allowed, a method which Dr. Whitby has taken in his discourse of the Five points of Calvinism; and this is the method which Mr. Wesley has thought fit to take, and indeed he confines himself wholly to this subject: for though he calls his pamphlet, "Predestination Calmly Considered;" yet it only considers one part of it, Reprobation, and that not in a way of argument, but harangue; not taking notice of our arguments from Scripture or reason, only making some caviling exceptions to it: such as have the face of an objection, I shall gather up, as well as I can, from this wild and immethodical

performance, and make answer to. And,

First, Mr. Wesley desires it may be impartially considered, how it is possible to reconcile reprobation with the following Scriptures: Genesis 3:17 and chapter 4:7; Deuteronomy 7:9, 12 and chapter 12: 26-28, and chapter 30: 15, II Chronicles 15: 1, Ezra 9:12,14, Job 36: 5, Psalm 145:9, Proverb 1:23; Isaiah 65:2, Ezekiel 18:26, Matthew 7:26 and chapter 11:20, and chapter 12:41, and chapter 13: 11, 12, and chapter 22:8, and chapter 25. John 3:18 and chapter 5:44, Acts 8:20, Romans 1:20, II Thessalonians 2:10. In all which there is not one word that militates against the doctrine of reprobation; nor is any thing pointed at worthy of consideration. We know very well, nor is it contrary to this doctrine, that the curse came upon all men for sin; and that it is that which renders them unacceptable to God, and is the reason why at last they shall find none with Him, or Him favorable to them. There is a repentance that may be found in non-elect persons; instances of that kind do not at all weaken the doctrine. Matthew 8:11,12 proves it. The word any is not in the original text in Job 36:5. It is certain there are some whom God despises (Psalm 53:5 and 63:20). It is pity but he had transcribed two or three hundred more passages when his hand was in; even the whole books of Chronicles, and the book of Esther, that would have been as much to his purpose as those he has produced.

Secondly, Mr. Wesley proposes the following Scriptures which declare God's willingness that all should be saved, to be reconciled to the doctrine of reprobation: (Matthew 21:9, Mark 16:15; John 5:34; Acts 17:24, Romans 5:18 and chapter 10: 12, I Timothy 2:3,4, James 1:5, II Peter 3:9, and I John 4:14.) Some of which do not respect eternal salvation at all, but the temporal salvation of the Jews; and others have nothing to do with salvation in either sense; some speak only of God's will to save His elect, to whom He is long-suffering; and others of His will, that Gentiles as well as Jews, should be saved; and that it is His pleasure that some of all

sorts should be saved by Christ; neither of which militate against the doctrine of reprobation.

Thirdly, He thinks this doctrine is irreconcilable with the following Scriptures, which declare that Christ came to save all men; that He died for all; that He atoned for all, even for those that finally perish! (Matthews 17:11, John 1:29, and chapter 3:17, and chapter 12:47, Romans 14:15, I Corinthians 8:11, II Corinthians 5:14, I Timothy 2:6, Hebrews 2:9, II Peter 2:1, and I John 2:1,2.) But these Scriptures say not that Christ came to save all that are lost; or that He came to save all men, or died for all men, for all the individuals of human nature; there is not one text of Scripture in the whole Bible that says this: that which seems most like it, is Hebrews 2:9, "That He might taste death for every man; " but the word "man" is not in the original text; it is only (Greek for) "for every one;" for every one of the sons of God, of the children, of the brethren of Christ, and seed of Abraham in a spiritual sense, as the context determines it. As for the above-cited passages, they regard either the world of God's elect; or the Gentiles, as distinguished from the Jews; or all sorts of men ["all" is an indefinite pronoun]; but not all the individuals of mankind: and those who are represented as such that should perish, or in danger of it, are either such who only professed to be bought by Christ; or real Christians whose peace and comfort were in danger of being destroyed, but not their persons; and none of the passages militate against the doctrine of reprobation.

Fourthly, This doctrine is represented as contrary to, and irreconcilable with the justice of God, and with those Scriptures that declare it, particularly Ezekiel 18. This chapter in Ezekiel concerns the people of the Jews only, and not all mankind; and regards only the providential dealing of God with them, with respect to civil and temporal things, a vindication of them from inequality and injustice; and not spiritual and eternal things: or the salvation and damnation of men; and therefore is impertinently

produced by Mr. Wesley. If any one does but seriously and impartially consider the doctrine as above stated, they will see no reason to charge God with injustice, or find any difficulty in reconciling it to His justice.

In the first branch of this decree, called preterition, let the objects be creatures fallen or unfallen, it puts nothing into them; it leaves them as it finds them; and therefore does them no injustice: in the other branch of the decree, appointment to condemnation, this is only but for sin; "is there unrighteousness with God" on that account? No surely not; if it is not injustice in Him to condemn men for sin, it certainly can be no injustice in Him to decree to condemn them for sin: and if it would have been no unrighteousness in Him to have condemned all men for sin, and to have determined to have done it, as He doubtless might; it can be no ways contrary to His justice to condemn some men for, and to determine so to do; wherefore all that is said under this head is all harangue, mere noise, and stands for nothing. Let the above argument be disproved if it can.

Fifthly, This doctrine of reprobation is represented as contrary to the general judgment; and that upon this scheme there can be no judgment to come, nor any future state of reward and punishment: but why so? How does this appear? Why, according to our views, "God of old ordained them to this condemnation: " (Jude 4) but then it was for sin; and if for sin, how does this preclude, a future judgment? It rather makes one necessary; and certain it is, that a future judgment is agreeable to it, and quite inevitable by it; God decrees to condemn men for sin; men sin, are brought to the judgment-seat of God, and are justly condemned for it. The judgment of God takes place, and the just reward of punishment pursuant to the righteous purpose of God, and according to the rules of justice. But Mr. Wesley has the assurance to affirm, that we say, that "God sold men to work "wickedness, even from their mother's womb; and "gave them up to a reprobate mind, or ever

they "hung upon their mother's breasts." This is entirely false. We say no such thing. We say, with the Scripture, that men "sell themselves to work wickedness" as they grow up; and that God gives men up to a reprobate mind after a long train and course of sinning; and it must be a righteous thing with God to bring such persons to judgment, and condemn them for their wickedness. [Note: This viewpoint is referred to as infralapsarianism. The viewpoint held to by Jonas Sikes is called supralapsarianism — for you that discern the difference — editor.] But then it is said they are condemned "for not having that grace which God hath decreed they never should have." This is false again; we say no such thing; nor does the doctrine we hold oblige us to it; we say, indeed, that the grace of God is His own; and whether it is the sense of the text in Matthew or no, it matters not, it is a certain truth He "may do what he will with His own" grace: we own that He has determined to give it to some and not to others, as we find in fact He does. It is self evident all around us. But then we say, He will condemn no man for want of this grace He does not think fit to give them; or for their not believing that Christ died for them; but for their sins and transgressions of His righteous law. And is not here enough to open the righteous judgment and proceed upon? Besides, the sovereign decrees of God respecting the final state of men, are so far from rendering the future judgment unnecessary, that that will proceed according to them, along with other things: for with other books that will be opened then, the book of life will be one, in which some men's names are written, and others are not; "and the dead" will be judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. — And whosoever is not found written in the book of life," shall "be cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:12,15). "I never knew you, depart from Me" (Matthew 7:23).

Sixth, The doctrine is said to agree very ill with the truth and sincerity of God, in a thousand declarations, such as these: Ezekiel 18:23, chapter 32: 32, Deuteronomy 5: 29, Psalm 81: 12, Acts 17:

30, Mark 16: 15. To which I reply, that some of those declarations, concern the Jews only, and not all mankind; and are only compassionate enquiries and vehement desires after their civil and temporal welfare: and at most only shew what is grateful to God, and approved of by Him, and what was wanting in them; with which they are upbraided, notwithstanding their vain boasts to the contrary. Others only shew what is God's will of command, or what He has made the duty of man; not what are His purposes man shall do, or what He will bestow upon him; and neither of them suggests any insincerity in God, supposing the doctrine of reprobation. The gospel is indeed ordered to be preached to "every creature" to whom it is sent and comes; but as yet, it has never been brought to all the individuals of human nature; there have been multitudes in all ages that have not heard it. And that there are universal offers of grace and salvation made to all men I utterly deny; nay, I deny they are made to any; no, not to God's elect; grace and salvation are provided for them in the everlasting covenant, procured for them in Christ, published and revealed in the gospel, and applied by the Spirit; much less are they made to others; wherefore this doctrine is not chargeable with insincerity on that account. Let the patrons of universal offers defend themselves from this objection; I have nothing to do with it; till it is proved there are such universal offers in the Bible, then Dr. Watts's reasoning on that head, will require some attention; but not till then.

Seventhly, Mr. Wesley said that the doctrine of election and reprobation least of all agree with the Scriptural account of the love and goodness of God, Predestination, page 35. The doctrine of election surely can never disagree with the love and goodness of God; since His choosing men to salvation is the fruit and effect of His everlasting love and free grace; the reason why any are chosen is, because they are loved of God; election pre-supposes love: this the Apostle points out clearly to us, when he says, "we are bound to give thanks always to God, for you brethren, beloved of the

Lord; because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation," (II Thessalonians 2:13). And the goodness of God greatly appears in consequence of this decree in the redemption of the chosen ones by Christ, in the regeneration and sanctification of them by the Spirit, and in bringing them at last to eternal glory and happiness according to His original design. But it may be, it is the doctrine of reprobation only, although both are joined together by Mr. Wesley, that so ill agrees with the love and goodness of God. It is not inconsistent with His providential goodness; in which sense "the Lord is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His

works; " and notwithstanding this decree, all men have a large share of this goodness of God; and though they may abuse this goodness, which will be an aggravation of their condemnation; this is their own sin and fault, and not to be charged on the decree of God, as this writer falsely does; who says, that God, according to us, gives men this world's goods on purpose to enhance their damnation; and every one of their comforts is, by an eternal decree of God, to cost them a thousand pangs in hell; whereas the abuse of mercies given, which will enhance their damnation, flows not from the decree, but from their own wickedness. The special mercy and goodness of God is denied to such indeed, which is at His sovereign will to give to whom He pleases; who "will have mercy on whom" He "will have mercy "(Romans 9:18, and Exodus 34: 6-7), the act of election is an act of God's love, and flows from it; reprobation indeed flows from His hatred, which is an appointment to wrath; but then it is from His hatred of sin, which is no ways contrary to His being a God of love and goodness: besides there is a much greater display of the love, grace, mercy, and goodness of God in choosing some men to salvation and infallibly securing it unto them, and bringing them safely to the enjoyment of it, than in the contrary scheme: according to which not one man is absolutely chosen to salvation; salvation is not insured to any one single person; it is left to the precarious and fickle will of man: and it is possible, according to that scheme, that not one man may be

certainly saved; nay, it is impossible that any one man should be saved by the power of his own supposed free-will. Let it be judged then, which scheme is most merciful and kind to men, and most worthy of the God of love and goodness. Upon the whole, the doctrine of reprobation, though set in so ill a light, and represented in such an odious manner, is a defensible doctrine when stated and cleared; nor are we afraid to own and maintain it.

This cloven foot does not affright us; so Mr. Wesley calls, as he thinks, beautifully, but most blasphemously, an act of the divine will; nor is this a "millstone that hangs about the neck of" our "hypothesis," as he no doubt very elegantly expresses it; but let me tell him, it will be His distinguishing mercy, if it is not a millstone about his own neck. From hence he wanders to free-will and resistible grace: sometimes he is for free-will, sometimes for free-grace; sometimes for resistible, and sometimes for irresistible grace. When he can agree with himself, he will appear in a better light, and may be more worthy of notice. What he says of free-will on the one side and reprobation on the other, as agreeing or disagreeing with the perfections of God, may be reduced to one or another of the above objections, where they have had their answer.

It is scarcely worth my while to observe what he says of the covenant of grace; which he owns he has no understanding of; and I believe him, for he says, "God the Father made a covenant with His Son before the world began, wherein the Son agreed to suffer such and such things; and the Father to give Him such and such souls for a recompense, in consequence of which these must be saved " And then Mr. Wesley asks where it is written? And in what part of Scripture this covenant is to be found?

Now not to inform or instruct Mr. Wesley, but for the sake of such who are willing to be informed and instructed, read Psalm 40:6-8; Isaiah 49:1-6 and chapter 53:10-12; Psalm 89:3, 4, 28, 36; in which will appear plain traces and footsteps of a covenant, or agreement,

of a stipulation and re-stipulation, between the Father and the Son; in which the Father proposes a work to His Son, and calls Him to it, even the full redemption of His people; to which the Son agrees, and says, "Lo I come to do Thy will, O my God! " and for a recompense of His being an offering for sin, and pouring out His soul unto death; it is promised He should "see His seed and prolong His days," and have a portion divided Him with the great, and a spoil with the strong. That there was such a covenant subsisting before the world began is clear; for could there be a Mediator set up from everlasting, as there was, and a promise of life before the world began made to Christ and put into His hand, and all spiritual blessings provided, and all grace given to His people in Him, before the foundation of the world; and yet no covenant in being? See Proverb 8:23; Titus 1:2; II Timothy 1:9; and Ephesians 1:3.

The covenant of circumcision made with Abraham, and that made with the Israelites on Mount Sinai, are no instances of the covenant of grace; but are covenants that are "waxen old, and vanished away; " and do not concern us today who are not under the law, but under grace; but however these covenants were conditional to the Jews that were under them; the covenant of grace is absolute and unconditional to us, being made with Christ our Head, who has fulfilled all the conditions of it.

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