

# The Project Gutenberg eBook of A Solemn Caution Against the Ten Horns of Calvinism

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A

## SOLEMN CAUTION

AGAINST THE

## TEN HORNS OF CALVINISM.

BY PHILALETHES,

LATELY ESCAPED.

FOURTH EDITION, CORRECTED.

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TO

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

REVEREND SIR,

THE author of the following strictures hopes your candour will pardon his addressing you in this public manner. Who he is, or what he is, signifies very little; only he begs leave to intimate, that he hopes he is a follower of that Saviour who "gave himself a ransom for all." He was convinced when young in years, in a great measure, by reading "Alleine's Alarm;" and the Calvinists being the only professing people near him, he soon got acquainted with them, and was, for some time, in their connexion. Being young in years, experience, and knowledge, he saw with their eyes, and heard with their ears; yet not without many scruples concerning the truth of several of their tenets. Sometimes he proposed his doubts, yet seldom had much satisfaction; but rather was a little brow-beaten for being muddy-headed. He often paused, and pondered, and read, and rubbed his head, and wondered what he ailed. Cole on "God's Sovereignty" was put into his hands to clear his dull head, and make him quite orthodox; but still he could not see how God could be just in condemning men for exactly doing what he had decreed them to do. After many conflicts, your little piece, entitled, "Predestination Calmly Considered" fell into his hands; he read it over with that attention which both the doctrine and performance deserve; and never had a doubt, from that day to this, that God is loving to every man. You will, dear sir, excuse the liberty which he has taken in recommending that little useful piece, as well as some others, which are published in your catalogue. But, perhaps, you will say, "Who hath required this performance at your hands? Are there not already better books written upon the subject than yours?" He answers, Yes; there are books much better written: They are really written too well for the generality of readers. He wanted to adapt something to the genius and pockets of the people. The generality of such as profess religion are poor, and have little time, little capacity, little money. If they read and understand this, perhaps they may be capable of relishing something better. However, the writer throws in his mite, and hopes it will be acceptable. In the meantime may you, who have much to cast into the divine treasury, go on and abound until you finish your course with joy. I am, Reverend Sir, your obedient and humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

*December 5th, 1779.*

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A

SOLEMN CAUTION,

WHEN the forerunner of our blessed Lord came preaching his dispensation among men, it is said, "the same came for a witness, to bear witness of the light, THAT ALL MEN through him might believe. He was not the light, but was sent to bear witness of the light. That was the true light which LIGHTETH EVERY MAN which cometh into the world." It is farther added, "this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, but men love darkness rather than light."

One would think such express testimonies were sufficient to convince any man who attentively considers what is here spoken, and who spake these words, "that Christ tasted death for every man;" and that he "would have all men to be saved, and come to the knowledge of the truth." Yet it is well known, men have found the art of torturing these and many other scriptures to death, so as to leave neither life nor meaning in them. For many years I did not see the bad tendency which unconditional predestination has; for though I was convinced that it was not a scriptural doctrine, yet knowing some who held it to be gracious souls, I was ready to conclude that all or the greater part were thus happily inconsistent, and so, contrary to the genius and tendency of their doctrine, were perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. But latter years have convinced me to the contrary; and though many are either afraid or ashamed to hold it forth in its full extent, and have kept its chief features out of sight, yet it is still like that second beast which is mentioned in the Revelation,—its horns are like a lamb; but attend closely to it, and it speaks like the true dragon, and with its ten horns is pushing at the saints of the Most High; and, I fear, has cast down many, and is still pushing every way to the great danger of many more. Many who were simply going on their way, rejoicing in a crucified Saviour, denying themselves, and taking up their cross,—no sooner has this beast obstructed their way, but they have unwarily been seduced from the path of life. Having now their eyes opened, they are become wise in their own conceits, and are no longer the same simple, patient followers of the Lamb; but soon become positive, self-conceited, and gradually fall back into the world again.

It is true, many excellent checks have been given to this growing plague; several of which are mentioned in the subsequent part of this little performance: Yet they are really too well written, and too large, for the generality of readers. Such arguments as Mr. Toplady and Mr. Hill have made use of, that is, being pretty liberal in calling foul names, are far more taking than rational scriptural reasoning. I could not prevail upon myself to stoop so low; truth does not require it. Yet a few plain strictures, just giving a concise view of some of the principal features of this beast, is what is pretended to here. I think I shall avoid all railing accusations, all personal abuse; there being something so low and mean in scurrility, that it can never help the cause of pure and undefiled religion. The following positions, concerning absolute predestination, I hope to make appear.

The sum of Calvinism is contained in that article in "the Assembly's Catechism," viz., "that God, from all eternity, hath ordained whatsoever comes to pass in time." From hence naturally follow the ensuing ten blasphemous absurdities:—

I. If it is so, that, God has from all eternity ordained whatsoever comes to pass in time; then it is certain, nothing can come to pass but what he hath ordained or appointed.—But, we are sensible, the most shocking things have come to pass; such is the rebellion and fall of the angels, who kept not their stations, but are become the enemies of God and man, and seeking to do all the mischief they can in the world. But if God has, by an express decree, ordained whatsoever shall come to pass, he has ordained that these angels should sin, and fall, and become devils; they could not help it; and all the mischief they do in the world is but fulfilling the divine decree. Likewise it was ordained, that they should seduce man, and that he should fall, and propagate a race of sinful creatures like himself, and that all the shocking consequences should follow; that Cain should murder his brother; that the old world should be immersed in sin and sensuality, and then be drowned; and, though Noah was a preacher of righteousness a hundred and twenty years, that none should believe and be saved; likewise the arriving of the Sodomites to such an enormous pitch of wickedness, was ordained; and that they should burn in lust, working that which was unseemly, and perish by fire; also that the Israelites should murmur, tempt God, commit fornication in the wilderness, and their carcasses should then fall; in like manner, after they were settled in the promised land, that they should fall in with the various abominations, such as burning their children to Moloch, use enchantments, witchcrafts, and every other abomination which we find them charged with. Then was not the cruelty exercised by Pagans, or Papists, or Mahometans all ordained?—also all the massacres, treacheries, plundering, burning of towns and cities, dashing poor infants to pieces, or starving them to death, ripping up their mothers, together with all the rapes, murders, and sacrileges which have ever come or shall come to pass? I say, this doctrine charges the blessed, the merciful God with it all, by ordaining from all eternity whatsoever shall come to pass in time. Here is no overstraining, no forcing things; it is the unavoidable consequence, as much as a man charging, pointing, and firing a cannon at any one or number of men is the cause of their death. The powder, cannon, and ball only do what the men appoint them to do. Reader, is not this shocking? Does not thy blood chill at reading all this blasphemy? I am sure mine does at writing. I know, great care is taken to hide their monstrous visage; but as it is there, I am determined to drag it out to light.

II. This doctrine makes the day of judgment past;—a heresy which very early found its way into the church of God, and thereby overthrew the faith of some. If God from all eternity ordained whatsoever shall come to pass in time, then he ordained who should, and who should not, be damned.

Now if there be anything in the day of judgment analogous to what is transacted in courts of justice here, then causes are to be tried by the law or word, and such as have voluntarily committed crimes are to be punished accordingly, and every cause is to have a fair hearing, Rev. xx. 12. But, according to the scheme of absolute predestination, all is settled and fixed already; then there is no judging of every man "according to his works," but according to what is before ordained concerning him. So that the clay of judgment is a solemn farce, or rather we may call it THE DAY OF EXECUTION, seeing it is only to execute what was long ago determined. What a ridiculous idea does this give us of the proceedings of that great and awful day! Should the king

summon a number of cannons to take their trial in Westminster-Hall for blowing down some city, which cannon had been fired by his secret orders, would not every one who knew the affair both despise, and in their judgment condemn, such a foolery? But how does judging men for doing that which He has before determined they should do, reflect upon the wisdom and goodness of the Almighty? It is said of Nero, that he secretly ordered Rome to be set on fire, and then laid the blame upon the Christians, and ordered them to be persecuted for the same. But is it not horrid beyond conception to represent the God of wisdom, mercy, and goodness, even worse and more ridiculous than Nero? Such is the consequence of absolute predestination.

III. It contradicts the plain word of God.—To quote all the texts of Scripture which it contradicts, would quite swell this little performance too large. A few, however, shall be selected. "The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works," Psalm cxlv. 9. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways: For why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

These two testimonies from the Old Testament cut off all absolute predestination at a stroke. If God is good to all, or if he is loving to every man, how can this consist with his

"Consigning their unborn souls to hell,  
Or damning them from their mother's womb?"

If his tender mercies are over all his works, how can this consist with fore-ordaining that the greatest part of mankind should sin and be damned for ever? Now, what loving tender heart can take any satisfaction in any such broad blasphemies?

Again: if God takes no pleasure in the death of a sinner, certainly he affords him proper means of living; but that he takes no pleasure in the death of such, we have not only his word, but his oath for it; and, as he could swear by no greater, he has sworn by himself. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked," &c. Now, must he not have a large stock of impudence who can give the God of truth here the lie? What kind of brass must his brow be cased with? For me to see a poor creature hanging over a dreadful fiery furnace, and have it in my power to help him with a word, and will not help him, nay, order him secretly to be pushed in, and yet stand, and in the most solemn manner cry, "As I live, I have no pleasure in your death," yea, passionately cry out, "Why will ye die? turn ye, turn ye;"—now I say, where would be my sincerity all the time? When I have pushed the contenders for reprobation in this manner, the cry has been, "O, that is your carnal, human reason!" Indeed I think the other is devilish, inhuman reason.

I shall now select a few witnesses from the New Testament. Hear the lip of truth expostulating with the unhappy Jerusalem, a little before it suffered: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Luke xiii. 34. "Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons; but in every nation, he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him," Acts x. 34, 35. "For God hath concluded THEM ALL in unbelief that he might have mercy upon ALL," Rom. xi. 32. "Who will have ALL MEN TO BE SAVED, and come unto the knowledge of the truth," 1 Tim. ii. 4. "Who gave himself a ransom for ALL, to be testified in due time," 1 Tim. ii. 6. "For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to ALL MEN," Titus ii. 11. "He, by the grace of God, should taste death for EVERY MAN," Heb. ii. 9.

I shall multiply no more quotations; these are sufficient. Only I would ask, Is there any meaning in language? Or are words intended to convey any fixed and determined meaning? If that is the case, then absolute predestination manifestly contradicts the plain testimony of Scripture, and therefore must spring from the father of lies; and, as such, is to be abhorred.

IV. It has a tendency to render all means useless.—I know it is asserted, that He who has ordained the end, has appointed the means thereunto: And this observation, understood rightly, is a great truth. But has God so ordained, that there is no liberty left for free agency? Has he appointed that one must be a preacher, and another a curser and swearer? that one must give his goods to feed the poor, and another must steal and plunder, and so live upon spoil and rapine? Or has the Lord given a power to every man either to choose or refuse? This is what the Bible maintains, or otherwise the many exhortations, reproofs, expostulations, and threatenings are in vain. Now we are exhorted to pray: "To pray! for what?" Such things as we are sensible we stand in need of. Yea, and it is said, "Ye have not:" "And why had they not? Was it because God had decreed to give them nothing?" No such thing; they have not, because they did not ask. For if God had decreed to give them nothing, then they had not been to blame; but they are charged with neglect in not asking, and that is assigned as the reason of their not receiving. This is perfectly consistent with what our Lord has said, "Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened." Well, but all this asking, knocking, seeking, is all lost labour, if there be any such decree as is mentioned above. For can all this praying, and asking, and seeking, alter what is irreversibly decreed to be done? Indeed this borders upon deism; for the deists argue, "Do you think that praying will make God change his mind?" Now if we believe the Bible, we must ask God to give us the blessings we stand in need of, and cannot warrantably expect to receive without asking. The same holds good with regard to family prayer. I ask eternal life for my wife, children, or friends. How vain is all my labour! For if God has decreed to give them eternal life, they shall have it in the way, time, place, and manner it is decreed for them, whether I pray or not. And if God has not decreed to give it unto them, all my praying can never change the decree.

I find a love to poor perishing sinners in some town or village, and I go to persuade them to be reconciled to God: Many of them use me ill, not only with reviling language, but even with sticks, or stones, or clods, or rotten eggs. Why, what a fool was I to expose myself on any such account! If they are decreed to be saved, they shall be saved; or lost, they shall be lost: So that my suffering and preaching are entirely in vain.—See that pert young man, he has just left his loom or his plough, and he is going to hammer at a bit of Latin; by and by, he becomes a mighty smatterer: With his little sense, little grace, and next to no learning, he harangues famously about a decree and a covenant, and puffs and parades, and shouts out amain, "O the sweetness of God's electing love!" Having by this time acquired a pretty good stock of assurance, he looks out for a shop, that is, in the quaint phrase, "he waits for a call;" by and by the desired object appears, the bargain is struck, and the stipend is settled, and now we have our pert youngster a Reverend Sir!—"Well, but what is he to do?" Why, we should think, call sinners to repentance, and comfort mourners, and establish

believers, and help their faith. But, alas! this is all in vain. This Reverend Sir might as well have stayed at his loom or plough, as take the poor people's money for watching over their souls, when all from first to last was settled by an unalterable decree.

Such is the consistency of predestinarian teachers. Poor simple souls, who are thus led, do not you see that if such a decree is gone forth, you are supporting an idle man in vain?<sup>1</sup>—What end is preaching to answer? Let him lecture with ever such state and assurance, if the time, the place, the manner be all fixed: I say he is an ignorant, lazy drone, who is picking his poor people's pockets; but, perhaps, it was decreed that it should be so.<sup>2</sup>

V. It makes promises and threatenings useless.—I apprehend promises are intended to encourage the fainthearted, and such as are ready to be discouraged in their way; and the Lord who has made them, no doubt, designs to fulfil the same. They are not mere baubles, but the firm and never-failing words of God. Yet they are conditional. I know no promise made to us, in the way of experience, but there is a condition either expressed or implied. The only promises which can in any measure be said to be unconditional, are such as respect Christ's coming into the world, the pouring out of the Spirit, or the preaching of the Gospel. But as for such as respect the forgiveness of sins, consolation, sanctification, or glorification, they are all conditional, and, as such, are intended to encourage all who are travelling to Mount Zion.

So with regard to the threatenings; they are intended to warn the unruly, and put a check upon the disobedient; so that no sinner may rush upon his own damnation, without being duly apprised of the same. "And why is he apprised? Barely to torment him before the time?" No, verily; but, like the citizen's hearing the sound of the trumpet, that he may take the warning, and escape the danger. But if there is an irrevocable decree, if all things are so ordered and fixed from eternity, then are the threatenings mere scare-crows; they can answer no valuable end at all, and might as well be given to stocks and stones as to human beings, if they have no power to take the awful warning. And does not this make the word of God of none effect? Certainly; if promises have no power to allure and encourage, that is, if the human race are not to be moved by them, and if their power of obeying is wholly taken from them, it is in vain for God to call out, "How long, ye simple ones, will you love simplicity? Turn ye at my reproof. Unto you, O men, I call! and my voice is unto the sons of men." It is in vain for him to say, "Come, let us reason together; though your sins be like scarlet, they shall be white as wool: And though they be red like crimson, they shall be as snow. Come, let us reason together!" "Reason! with what?" Brutes, nay stocks and stones! How absurd! Would a wise man make such a proposal? How does this inconsistent scheme reflect upon the infinitely wise and gracious God? Shall vain man throw such an odium upon his Maker? God forbid! But such an odium does this decree throw upon unerring wisdom; and all the quibbles in the world cannot clear it of the same. Again: let God speak like thunder, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the people that forget God!" yet if the sinner is incapable of taking the warning, what empty bombast does it make of the awful threatening! But let God be true, and every man a liar who can cast such vile reflections upon his righteous proceedings.

VI. It is contrary to every attribute in the Deity.—Now his justice is the severest attribute of the blessed God; that is manifest when its sword awaked against the Man who was his fellow, when the great Mediator bled for human crimes. Yet even this attribute must be consistent with mercy and goodness; nay, the very term itself implies there is no wrong in it. But how can we clear the justice of God, if he has ordained that man shall sin; nay, is made for that very end, and then to be damned for it? There is nothing equal to this in the whole compass of history. That which bears the nearest resemblance is the well-known instance of Tiberius; when determined to destroy a noble family root and branch, finding a young virgin who could not, by the Roman laws, be put to death, he ordered the hangman to ravish the poor innocent, young and helpless creature, and then to strangle her. Such a horrid picture do these low advocates draw of the justice of the Supreme Being!—And what shall we say of his love? Nay, hear what David said of it, namely, that "He is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works." Hear what the lip of truth himself hath said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "God so loved the world;" "that is," say they, the "elect world." And what proof do they bring for such an interpretation? None; nay, that is a circumstance which is often forgotten. But we need go no farther than the text itself, to confute that rugged interpretation; only let the grammatical sense of the words be attended unto,—"God so loved the *elect* world, that whosoever of the *elect* world believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Then what is become of the elect world which do not believe in him? According to this scheme, there are some of the elect world which will not believe in him, and so perish. See what consequences follow such absurdities! St. John says, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." But the poor reprobates may argue, "Behold what manner of hate and destruction the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should thus by his decree be called reprobates, children of darkness, enemies to God, strangers to the commonwealth of Israel, and enemies to the cross of Christ."

And what can we say, upon such principles, for the pity of Him whose bowels melt with tenderness? Who are the objects of his pity? Are not poor miserable objects, who are plunged into a hopeless, helpless situation through the fall, and become offenders through the original transgression? The doctrine under consideration is so far from representing any pity to such unavoidable objects, that it really represents God, of his own sovereign good-will and pleasure, bringing them into that deplorable situation, and then leaving them to perish without remedy, and taking a horrid pleasure in their everlasting destruction. O thou pitiful anti-compassionate Lord God, what a picture of vindictive cruelty does this sad doctrine exhibit of thy tenderness and pity to poor sinners!

And what plea is there for the goodness of God, upon the same gloomy doctrine? I can see none. Now goodness does not seem to be so much any one attribute, as a blessed assemblage of them all put together. It seems a collection of all the glorious and blessed qualities in the adorable Deity, shining out in countless rays on every side; an image of which is the sun which shines on the evil and good, and the innumerable drops of rain which fall on the just and the unjust.

Some have asked me, "Do you not think that God might have justly passed you by, and left you without his grace or help at all?" I answered, No; I think he could not have done any such thing. That I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin conceived, I allow; its woeful effects I feel to this day. But then that was not my fault. I

could not help it; and certain I am, that God never demands the taking up of that which he never laid down, or reaping where he has not sown. That I have, times without number, rejected that grace which brings salvation to all, and abused it again and again, I do with shame and confusion acknowledge; and that he might have taken away the abused talents, and, from my so frequently turning a deaf ear to his loving voice, have sworn I should not enter into his rest, is a truth which I feelingly confess. But that he could or would leave me a slave to everlasting misery on account of my original depravity, I utterly deny.

Where shall we find the mercy of God, according to this merciless doctrine? It is said that "mercy is his darling attribute, and that judgment is his strange work." But according to this scheme, we must reverse this sentence, and say that "*judgment*, or rather everlasting destruction, is his darling attribute; and that mercy is his strange work." It is said, that "his tender mercies are over all his works." This must mean over such as have sinned; for such as have not sinned, do not stand in need of mercy. But this narrow limited doctrine does not make his mercy extend to a tenth part of his works. If I see a multitude of poor wretches hanging over a dreadful fiery furnace, and can extend my help to them all as easily as to one, but will not, this speaks but little for my mercy; and as little does this doctrine speak for the unbounded mercy of God.<sup>3</sup>

VII. It contradicts common sense.—There is something of a light in the breast of every one, which the Author of our being has planted, and which we call "the understanding." By this we are enabled to see things in common life which are consistent or inconsistent; so even in religious matters there may be asserted some things so shockingly inconsistent as may affront even what we call common sense, and perhaps may be a stumbling-block in the way of many. Should the legislative power of England give out laws or acts of parliament to be obeyed, and rewards promised to the obedient, and punishments denounced to the disobedient; but at the same time, by some secret springs of management, should so order it, that a certain number should be constrained to obey, in some particular time, called a day of power; and the remaining part should be under an unavoidable necessity of disobeying, either by being constrained to disobedience, or for want of that ability to obey which the government could only give, but it was denied them: now must it not shock all common sense, and all degrees of truth and justice, to find these poor impotent wretches brought to the stake to be burnt alive, because they could not do impossibilities? And does not every one see the case is parallel, when the great Judge shalt pass the sentence of condemnation at the last day, "Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire?"—"Why, what for? Because I have decreed it shall be so?" No: "I was hungry, but ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, but ye gave me no drink." We do not find them objecting any such decree being made against them; if there had, how could they have been furnished with a better plea? They might have said, "Lord, thou knowest we could not reverse thy decree, nor avoid our impending doom. Didst thou not ordain that we should just do as we have done, seeing thou hast fore-ordained from eternity whatsoever should come to pass in time? So that we have just fulfilled thy counsel, and done all thy pleasure." Here it seems pretty plain that such a scheme must fill the prisoner's mouth with undeniable arguments, while the judge has his mouth stopped. How horrid the bare thought appeared, in so much as it shocks me to make the supposition! And yet it is no more than what this uncouth system inevitably holds forth; it is the plain undeniable consequence. Let them shift it off that can; and if they cannot, let them renounce so unscriptural, so absurd a scheme, which fathers such broad blasphemies upon the Father of mercies, and the God of truth.

VIII. It has a tendency to licentiousness.<sup>4</sup>—It is well known that the human heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; that it is prone to every vice, and is glad to catch at anything to keep itself in countenance. But can anything be better calculated to cause a poor fallen creature to sing to his lusts, and sound a requiem to his sensual soul, than a doctrine which informs him, that "all things are ordained from eternity," and he must sit still, and, if he is a chosen vessel, he will some time or another be called upon; and, if otherwise, all his striving or seeking will avail nothing at all. Besides, if he feels propensities to any sensual appetites, like a true free-thinker, he may say, "What are these passions or appetites for, but that I may gratify them? Or, why should I endeavour to deny myself, seeing I cannot alter what God has decreed? I may eat, drink, dance, sing, swear, live in uncleanness, just as my inclinations lead me. To stem the torrent is in vain, seeing it is fixed, unalterably fixed, nor is it in my power to reverse the same." Nor do there want instances in history of such as have died under the grossest delusions, affirming, if they were deceived, it was God who had deceived them. All the calls to repentance, all the invitations to Christ, all the exhortations to holiness, self-denial, and mortification, plainly imply a capacity to prevent them in the parties addressed, or their labour is absurd; but absolute predestination supposes no such thing, any more than if the stones in the street were exhorted to arise and run, or the sign-posts were exhorted to take up arms and defend the city.

IX. It makes the God of all grace and goodness worse than the devil.—One of the names given to satan is APOLLYON, that is, "a destroyer;" but then he is not destroying his own work, he is seeking to destroy the works of God, whose daring enemy he is, and thereby acts consistently with himself. But this gloomy scheme represents God bringing innumerable beings into existence, not barely to destroy them, but to torment them for ever. Can anything be greater blasphemy? But be it what it will, it is the natural consequence of all things being ordained from eternity, which are to come to pass in time. What a dismal picture of the blessed God! When I have read of some of the Popish massacres, I have been much shocked, and my very blood has run chill; much more so, when I have read of some religious rites of the heathens; such as their offering the captives, who were taken in war, sacrifices to their devil-gods, nay, even their own children that have been offered up in the flames; I have found it raise an unspeakable indignation against both them and their religion. And what idea must a person have of that God who has made on purpose millions of rationals to fulfil his decree here, censuring and frowning for ever over them, while they are tormented with endless flames, for just doing what he has ordained them to do? Lord, how is thy name blasphemed by doctrines so contrary to thy goodness, pity, and love?

X. Lastly. If the unconditional decree be a true doctrine, then there is no such thing as sin in the world.—Everything is just going on as he would have it to be; all are acting in the department of life which is appointed. Therefore go on, ye jolly drunkards, and jovial song-singers; proceed, ye numerous tribes of profane swearers and sabbath-breakers; curse on, ye horrid blasphemers and swarms of liars; ye murderers, plunderers, unclean profligates,—ye are all doing the will of God, answering the great ends for which you were made. What avails all the noise the preacher makes about the wicked being turned into hell, and all the nations which forget God? Let him cry out, till his face is black, "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways." If ye

be ordained to turn, ye shall turn; if not, all his zeal will avail no more than a tinkling cymbal. Therefore, he that is praying, and he that is preaching; he that is speaking the truth, and he that is lying; he that is labouring honestly, and he that is stealing; he that is chaste, and he that is impure; he that is over-reaching, and he that deals honestly; he that sings the songs of Zion, and he that sings the songs of satan; in a word, he that is converted, and he that is unconverted; he that is a believer, and he that is an unbeliever; are all doing the will of God, which none can acid to, and none can take from; but all things are just in the state and condition which God has appointed, and all are just doing what his will is, and then there is no such thing as sin in the world.

I should now have finished this small affair, only two or three objections, which have sometimes been made against Universal Redemption, may justly and with very great propriety be retorted upon the objectors.

First. "To assert that Christ died for every man, or, what is the very same thing, that all men may be saved if they will, is mere heathenism."

ANSWER. Whether it be heathenism or not, I am certain that absolute predestination is. For it is well known that the stoics were a very extensive sect among the heathens, and it is equally known that they held an absolute fatality, that is, absolute predestination. They even made Jupiter, their supreme deity, subject to the fates; and even that "father of gods and men," as they termed him, could not reverse what the fates had decreed to be done. Their fates determined what kingdoms should rise, and what should fall; what heroes should conquer, and what should be conquered. This doctrine runs throughout the poem of Homer called the Iliad; so that he makes the fates determine the ends of his two chief heroes, Hector and Achilles. And though the former was knocked down several times in the different engagements and dangerously wounded, yet as the fates had decreed that he should fall by the hand of Achilles, he is rescued from destruction by a deity, because the time of his death was not yet arrived. So that whether our asserting that "all may be saved, if it is not their own fault," be heathenism, it is certain that unconditional predestination is; and if that proves the untruth of it, then are their absolute decrees untrue.

Secondly. They say that "our doctrine is Popery."

This has as frightful an aspect as the other, and perhaps more so; as many think there is less danger of their turning Heathens, than their turning Papists. But be not frightened at nothing; perhaps the tables again may be turned upon the objectors. Whether Christ's tasting death for every man be Popery or not, I am sure absolute predestination is; and it argues, that they who start that objection are ignorant of the tenets of the Papists. It is well known, that that large fraternity among the Papists called Dominicans, were all rigid predestinarians, as well as those called Jansenists. And I very much question if Calvin himself did not spring from the former stock; and, when he came from the church of Rome, brought that branch of Popery along with him, by which means the leaven spread among many of the Protestants. It would shock any mind which is not quite intoxicated with the absolute decrees, to read what some writers of the above-mentioned classes have said concerning God fore-ordaining sin and misery, and how much he is pleased with the same, nay, how he is glorified thereby, far more than by holiness. From hence it is very evident, that absolute predestination is downright Popery.

Again: the Mahometans are rigid predestinarians;—a doctrine which suits that cruel disposition for which they are so remarkable; the same leaven which spreads among the predestinarians among those which are called Christians. The same vindictive, sour spirit we find in Calvin; witness his conduct towards Servetus, who was by his means burned to death. The same savage turn we see in Knox. Let any one read the proceedings of the infamous Synod of Dort. Could any Popish tribunal be more boisterous or arbitrary? How were the poor Remonstrants dragooned from place to place! It seemed as if that time was come, when no man should buy or sell who had not the mark of the beast of predestination either in his forehead or in his right hand; that is, either public or private. Let any one read the book called the "Cloud of Witnesses." Did they die like true martyrs, calling for mercy upon their persecutors? No; the book is full of very dreadful execrations and horrible anathemas, pronounced with their dying breath. Does the spirit of Jesus breathe out threatening and slaughter in such a manner, so as to bind eternal vengeance upon any one? Let any one consult the spirit of the Seceders and Sandemonians, and they will see the same genuine Mahometan spirit, which is as contrary to that doctrine which says, "Let all bitterness, and malice, and anger be put away from you," as darkness is to light. Certain it is, that love worketh no ill to any one; nay, it thinketh no evil; it is the end of the commandment out of a pure heart.

Reader, weigh these things attentively; consult the Scriptures, comparing Scripture with Scripture; and consider the nature of that Deity whose essential character is LOVE.

THE END.



# Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> “I presume, nothing is intended here against any humble, pious, good man.” ED.

<sup>2</sup> It is easy to observe, that the above entirely refers to the predestinarians of the Dissenting party; whatever may be said of them, it must be acknowledged, they act a far more honest and ingenuous part than the predestinarians who are Ministers of the established Church. As Dissenting Ministers are maintained by the voluntary contributions of their hearers, their hearers are at liberty to withdraw their assistance; but then Ministers, who obtain parishes and lectureships, &c., yet being predestinarians, are preying upon the emoluments of the Church, and are real Dissenters within her own walls. But perhaps a half sheet may take a little farther notice of them shortly.

<sup>3</sup> It is not the design of this small dissertation to prove what is asserted at large, or answer the objections which have been made against God’s being loving to every man, or to explain the Scriptures which Calvinists bring in to defend their tenets. No, my design is only to present the reader, who has no better way of knowing, with a few of the principal features of Calvinism. But I wish to recommend “John Goodwin’s Redemption Redeemed;” or “Mr. Sellon’s answer to Cole,” or his “Arguments against General Redemption Considered.” Who or what this Sellon is, I know not, except from his writings, having never to my knowledge seen the gentleman in my life; but by his writings I find that he is an honest, consistent Minister of the establishment; and that he is a sensible man, and a scholar, one who has well studied the original Scriptures, and the nature of the controversy. Likewise I beg leave to recommend what entirely satisfied me on this head, “Mr. Wesley’s Predestination Calmly Considered.” That, and his Sermon on Free Grace, I wish every reader duly to consider.

“Mr. Sellon’s works have lately been published in 2 vols. 8vo. price 16s. by Blanshard, London.” ED.

<sup>4</sup> “Of this tendency we have but too many lamentable proofs.” ED.

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