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The Plan of Salvation

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by Charles Hodge

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1. God has such a Plan

The Scriptures speak of an Economy of Redemption; the plan or purpose of God in relation to the salvation of men. They call it in reference to its full revelation at the time of the advent, the

οἰκονομία τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν, "The economy of the fulness of times." It is declared to be the plan of God in relation to his gathering into one harmonious body, all the objects of redemption, whether in heaven or earth, in Christ. Eph. 1:10. It is also called the οἰκονομία τοῦ μυστηρίου, the mysterious purpose or plan which had been hidden for ages in God, which it was the great design of the gospel to reveal, and which was intended to make known to principalities and powers, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God. Eph. 3:9. A plan supposes: (1.) The selection of some definite end or object to be accomplished. (2.) The choice of appropriate means. (3.) At least in the case of God, the effectual application and control of those means to the accomplishment of the contemplated end. As God works on a definite plan in the external world, it is fair to infer that the same is true in reference to the moral and spiritual world. To the eye of an uneducated man the heavens are a chaos of stars. The astronomer sees order and system in this confusion; all those bright and distant luminaries have their appointed places and fixed orbits; all are so arranged that no one interferes with any other, but each is directed according to one comprehensive and magnificent conception. The innumerable forms of vegetable life, are not a confused mass, but to the eye of science arrange themselves into regular classes, orders, genera, and species, exhibiting a unity of design pervading the whole. The zoölogist sees in the hundreds of thousands of animals which inhabit our globe, four, and only four original typical forms, of which all the others are the development in an ascending order, no one ever passing into the other, but all presenting one great comprehensive system carried out in all its details. At the head of these innumerable lower forms of animal life, stands man, endowed with powers which elevate him above the class of mere animals and bring him into fellowship with angels and with God himself. As in all these lower departments of his works, God acts according to a preconceived plan, it is not to be supposed that in the higher sphere of his operations, which concerns the destiny of men, everything is left to chance and allowed to take its undirected course to an undetermined end. We accordingly find that the Scriptures distinctly assert in reference to the dispensations of grace not only

that God sees the end from the beginning, but that He works all things according to the counsel of his own will, or, according to his eternal purpose.

The Importance of a Knowledge of this Plan

If there be such a plan concerning the redemption of man, it is obviously of the greatest importance that it should be known and correctly apprehended. If in looking at a complicated machine we are ignorant of the object it is designed to accomplish, or of the relation of its several parts, we must be unable to understand or usefully to apply it. In like manner if we are ignorant of the great end aimed at in the scheme of redemption, or of the relation of the several parts of that scheme; or if we misconceive that end and that relation, all our views must be confused or erroneous. We shall be unable either to exhibit it to others or to apply it to ourselves. If the end of redemption as well as of creation and of providence, is the production of the greatest amount of happiness, then Christianity is one thing; if the end be the glory of God, then Christianity is another thing. The whole character of our theology and religion depends on the answer to that question. In like manner, if the special and proximate design of redemption is to render certain the salvation of the people of God, then the whole Augustinian system follows by a logical necessity; if its design is simply to render the salvation of all men possible, the opposite system must be received as true. The order of the divine decrees, or in other words, the relation in which the several parts of the divine plan stand to each other, is therefore very far from being a matter of idle speculation. It must determine our theology, and our theology determines our religion.

How the Plan of God can be known

If there be such a preconceived divine scheme relating to the salvation of men; and if the proper comprehension of that scheme be thus important, the next question is, How can it be ascertained? The first answer to this question is that in every system of facts which are

really related to each other, the relation is revealed in the nature of the facts. The astronomer, the geologist, and the zoölogist very soon discover that the facts of their several sciences stand in a certain relation to each other, and admit of no other. If the relation be not admitted the facts themselves must be denied or distorted. The only source of mistake is either an incomplete induction of the facts, or failing to allow them their due relative importance. One system of astronomy has given place to another, only because the earlier astronomers were not acquainted with facts which their successors discovered. The science has at last attained a state which commands the assent of all competent minds, and which cannot be hereafter seriously modified. The same, to a greater or less extent, is true in all departments of natural science. It must be no less true in theology. What the facts of nature are to the naturalist, the facts of the Bible and of our moral and religious consciousness, are to the theologian. If, for example, the Bible and experience teach the fact of the entire inability of fallen men to anything spiritually good, that fact stubbornly refuses to harmonize with any system which denies efficacious grace or sovereign election. It of itself determines the relation in which the eternal purpose of God stands to the salvation of the individual sinner. So of all other great Scriptural facts. They arrange themselves in a certain order by an inward law, just as certainly and as clearly as the particles of matter in the process of crystallization, or in the organic unity of the body of an animal. It is true here as in natural science, that it is only by an imperfect induction of facts, or by denying or perverting them, that their relative position in the scheme of salvation can be a matter of doubt or of diversity of opinion. But secondly, we have in theology a guide which the man of science does not possess. We have in the Scriptures not only the revelation of the grand design of God in all his works of creation, providence, and redemption, which is declared to be his own glory, but we have, in many cases, the relation which one part of this scheme bears to other parts expressly stated. Thus, for example, it is said, that Christ died in order that He might save his people from their sins. We are elected to holiness. Therefore election precedes sanctification. We are chosen to be made holy, and not because we

are holy: These revelations concerning the relation of the subordinate parts of the scheme of redemption, of necessity determine the nature of the whole plan. This will become plain from what follows. As men differ in their understanding of the facts of Scripture, and as some are more careful than others to gather all the facts which are to be considered, or more faithful in submitting to their authority, so they differ in their views of the plan which God has devised for the salvation of men. The more important of the views which have been adopted on this subject are,—

2. Supralapsarianism

First, the supralapsarian scheme. According to this view, God in order to manifest his grace and justice selected from creatable men (i.e., from men to be created) a certain number to be vessels of mercy, and certain others to be vessels of wrath. In the order of thought, election and reprobation precede the purpose to create and to permit the fall. Creation is in order to redemption. God creates some to be saved, and others to be lost. This scheme is called supralapsarian because it supposes that men as unfallen, or before the fall, are the objects of election to eternal life, and foreordination to eternal death. This view was introduced among a certain class of Augustinians even before the Reformation, but has not been generally received. Augustine himself, and after him the great body of those who adopt his system of doctrine, were, and are, infralapsarians. That is, they hold that it is from the mass of fallen men that some were elected to eternal life, and some for the just punishment of their sins, foreordained to eternal death. The position of Calvin himself as to this point has been disputed. As it was not in his day a special matter of discussion, certain passages may be quoted from his writings which favour the supralapsarian and other passages which favour the infralapsarian view. In the "Consensus Genevensis," written by him, there is an explicit assertion of the infralapsarian doctrine. After saying that there was little benefit in speculating on the foreordination of the fall of man, he adds, "Quod

ex damnata Adæ sobole Deus quos visum est eligit, quos vult reprobat, sicuti ad fidem exercendam longe aptior est, ita majore fructu tractatur." In the "Formula Consensus Helvetica," drawn up as the testimony of the Swiss churches in 1675, whose principal authors were Heidegger and Turretin, there is a formal repudiation of the supralapsarian view. In the Synod of Dort, which embraced delegates from all the Reformed churches on the Continent and in Great Britain, a large majority of the members were infralapsarians, Gomarus and Voetius being the prominent advocates of the opposite view. The canons of that synod, while avoiding any extreme statements, were so framed as to give a symbolical authority to the infralapsarian doctrine. They say: "Cum omnes homines in Adamo peccaverint et rei sint facti maledictionis et mortis æternæ, Deus nemini fecisset injuriam, si universum genus humanum in peccato et maledictione relinquere, ac propter peccatum damnare voluisset." The same remark applies to the Westminster Assembly. Twiss, the Prolocutor of that venerable body, 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,"² 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 dishonour 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 answers 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.

Objections to Supralapsarianism

The most obvious objections to the supralapsarian theory are, (1.) That it seems to involve a contradiction. Of a Non Ens, as Turretin says, nothing can be determined. The purpose to save or condemn, of necessity must, in the order of thought, follow the purpose to create. The latter is presupposed in the former. (2.) It is a clearly revealed Scriptural principle that where there is no sin there is no condemnation. Therefore there can be no foreordination to death which does not contemplate its objects as already sinful. (3.) It seems plain from the whole argument of the Apostle in Rom. 9:9–21, that the "mass" out of which some are chosen and others left, is the mass of fallen men. The design of the sacred writer is to vindicate the sovereignty of God in the dispensation of his grace. He has mercy upon one and not on another, according to his own good pleasure, because all are equally unworthy and guilty. The vindication is drawn, not only from the relation of God to his creatures as their Creator, but also from his relation to them as a sovereign whose laws they have violated. This representation pervades the whole Scriptures. Believers are said to be chosen "out of the world;" that is, out of the mass of fallen men. And everywhere, as in Rom. 1:24, 26, 28, reprobation is declared to be judicial, founded upon the sinfulness of its objects. Otherwise it could not be a manifestation of the justice of God. (4.) Creation is never in the Bible represented as a means of executing the purpose of election and reprobation. This, as just remarked, cannot be so. The objects of election are definite individuals, as in this controversy is admitted. But the only thing which distinguishes between merely possible or "creatable" men and definite individuals, certain to be created and saved or lost, is the divine purpose that they shall be created. So that the purpose to create of necessity, in the order of nature, precedes the purpose to

redeem. Accordingly, in Rom. 8:29, 30, πρόγνωσις is declared to precede προορισμός. "Whom he did foreknow he also did predestinate." But foreknowledge implies the certain existence of its objects; and certainty of existence supposes on the part of God the purpose to create. Nothing is or is to be but in virtue of the decree of Him who foreordains whatever comes to pass. All futurity, therefore, depends on foreordination; and foreknowledge supposes futurity. We have, therefore, the express authority of the Apostle for saying that foreknowledge, founded on the purpose to create, precedes predestination. And, therefore, creation is not a means to execute the purpose of predestination, for the end must precede the means; and, according to Paul, the purpose to create precedes the purpose to redeem, and therefore cannot be a means to that end. Our Lord, we are told, was delivered to death "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." But his death, of necessity, supposed his incarnation, and therefore in the order of thought, or in the plan of God, the purpose to prepare Him a body preceded the purpose to deliver Him to the death of the cross. The only passage of the Bible which appears to teach explicitly that creation is a means for the execution of the purpose of predestination is Eph. 3:9, 10. There, according to some it is said that God created all things in order that (ἵνα) his manifold wisdom might be known through the Church. If this be the relation between the several clauses of these verses the Apostle does teach that the universe was created in order that through redeemed men (the Church) the glory of God should be revealed to all rational creatures. In this sense and in this case creation is declared to be a means to redemption; and therefore the purpose to redeem must precede the purpose to create. Such, however, is not the logical connection of the clauses in this passage. Paul does not say that God created all things in order that. He is not speaking of the design of creation, but of the design of the gospel and of his own call to the apostleship. To me, he says, is this grace given that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to enlighten all men in the knowledge of the mystery (of redemption, i.e., the gospel) in order that by the Church should be made known the manifold wisdom of God. Such is the natural

connection of the passage, and such is the interpretation adopted by modern commentators entirely irrespective of the bearing of the passage on the supralapsarian controversy. (5.) It is a further objection to the supralapsarian scheme that it is not consistent with the Scriptural exhibition of the character of God. He is declared to be a God of mercy and justice. But it is not compatible with these divine attributes that men should be foreordained to misery and eternal death as innocent, that is, before they had apostatized from God. If passed by and foreordained to death for their sins, it must be that in predestination they are contemplated as guilty and fallen creatures.

3. Infralapsarianism

According to the infralapsarian doctrine, God, with the design to reveal his own glory, that is, the perfections of his own nature, determined to create the world; secondly, to permit the fall of man; thirdly, to elect from the mass of fallen men a multitude whom no man could number as "vessels of mercy;" fourthly, to send his Son for their redemption; and, fifthly, to leave the residue of mankind, as He left the fallen angels, to suffer the just punishment of their sins. The arguments in favour of this view of the divine plan have already been presented in the form of objections to the supralapsarian theory. It may, however, be further remarked,— 1. That this view is self-consistent and harmonious. As all the decrees of God are one comprehensive purpose, no view of the relation of the details embraced in that purpose which does not admit of their being reduced to unity can be admitted. In every great mechanism, whatever the number or complexity of its parts, there must be unity of design. Every part bears a given relation to every other part, and the perception of that relation is necessary to a proper understanding of the whole. Again, as the decrees of God are eternal and immutable, no view of his plan of operation which supposes Him to purpose first one thing and then another can be consistent with their nature. And as God is absolutely sovereign and independent, all his purposes must be determined from within or according to the counsel of his

own will. They cannot be supposed to be contingent or suspended on the action of his creatures, or upon anything out of Himself. The infralapsarian scheme, as held by most Augustinians, fulfils all these conditions. All the particulars form one comprehensive whole. All follow in an order which supposes no change of purpose; and all depend on the infinitely wise, holy, and righteous will of God. The final end is the glory of God. For that end He creates the world, allows the fall; from among fallen men He elects some to everlasting life, and leaves the rest to the just recompense of their sins. Whom He elects He calls, justifies, and glorifies. This is the golden chain the links of which cannot be separated or transposed. This is the form in which the scheme of redemption lay in the Apostle's mind as he teaches us in Rom. 8:29, 30.

Different Meanings assigned the Word Predestination

2. There is an ambiguity in the word predestination. It may be used, first, in the general sense of foreordination. In this sense it has equal reference to all events; for God foreordains whatever comes to pass. Secondly, it may refer to the general purpose of redemption without reference to particular individuals. God predetermined to reveal his attributes in redeeming sinners, as He predetermined to create the heavens and the earth to manifest his power, wisdom, and benevolence. Thirdly, it is used in theology generally to express the purpose of God in relation to the salvation of individual men. It includes the selection of one portion of the race to be saved, and the leaving the rest to perish in sin. It is in this sense used by supralapsarians, who teach that God selected a certain number of individual men to be created in order to salvation, and a certain number to be created to be vessels of wrath. It is in this way they subordinate creation to predestination as a means to an end. It is to this that infralapsarians object as inconceivable, repugnant to the nature of God, and unscriptural. Taking the word predestination, however, in the second of the senses above mentioned, it may be admitted that it precedes in the order of thought the purpose to create. This view is perfectly consistent with the doctrine which

makes man as created and fallen the object of predestination in the third and commonly received meaning of the word. The Apostle teaches in Col. 1:16, that all things visible and invisible were created by and for Him who is the image of the invisible God, who is before all things, by whom all things consist, and who is the head of the body, the Church. The end of creation, therefore, is not merely the glory of God, but the special manifestation of that glory in the person and work of Christ. As He is the Alpha, so also is He the Omega; the beginning and the end. Having this great end in view, the revelation of Himself in the person and work of his Son, He purposed to create, to permit the fall, to elect some to be the subjects of his grace and to leave others in their sin. This view, as it seems, agrees with the representations of the Scriptures, and avoids the difficulties connected with the strict supralapsarian doctrine. It is to be borne in mind that the object of these speculations is not to pry into the operation of the divine mind, but simply to ascertain and exhibit the relation in which the several truths revealed in Scripture concerning the plan of redemption bear to each other.

4. "Hypothetical Redemption."

According to the common doctrine of Augustinians, as expressed in the Westminster Catechism, "God, having ... elected some to everlasting life, did enter into a covenant of grace, to deliver them out of the estate of sin and misery, and to bring them into an estate of salvation by a Redeemer." In opposition to this view some of the Reformed theologians of the seventeenth century introduced the scheme which is known in the history of theology as the doctrine of hypothetical redemption. The principal advocate of this doctrine was Amyraut (died 1664), Professor in the French Protestant Seminary at Saumur. He taught, (1.) That the motive impelling God to redeem men was benevolence, or love to men in general. (2.) From this motive He sent His Son to make the salvation of all men possible. (3.) God, in virtue of a decretum universale hypotheticum, offers salvation to all men if they believe in Christ. (4.) All men have a

natural ability to repent and believe. (5.) But as this natural ability was counteracted by a moral inability, God determined to give his efficacious grace to a certain number of the human race, and thus to secure their salvation. This scheme is sometimes designated as "universalismus hypotheticus." It was designed to take a middle ground between Augustinianism and Arminianism. It is liable to the objections which press on both systems. It does not remove the peculiar difficulties of Augustinianism, as it asserts the sovereignty of God in election. Besides, it leaves the case of the heathen out of view. They, having no knowledge of Christ, could not avail themselves of this decretum hypotheticum, and therefore must be considered as passed over by a decretum absolutum. It was against this doctrine of Amyraut and other departures from the standards of the Reformed Church that, in 1675, the "Formula Consensus Helvetica" was adopted by the churches of Switzerland. This theory of the French theologians soon passed away as far as the Reformed churches in Europe were concerned. Its advocates either returned to the old doctrine, or passed on to the more advanced system of the Arminians. In this country it has been revived and extensively adopted. At first view it might seem a small matter whether we say that election precedes redemption or that redemption precedes election. In fact, however, it is a question of great importance. The relation of the truths of the Bible is determined by their nature. If you change their relation you must change their nature. If you regard the sun as a planet instead of as the centre of our system you must believe it to be something very different in its constitution from what it actually is. So in a scheme of thought, if you make the final cause a means, or a means the final cause, nothing but confusion can be the result. As the relation of election to redemption depends on the nature of redemption the full consideration of this question must be reserved until the work of Christ has been considered. For the present it is sufficient to say that the scheme proposed by the French theologians is liable to the following objections.

Arguments against this Scheme

1. It supposes mutability in the divine purposes; or that the purpose of God may fail of accomplishment. According to this scheme, God, out of benevolence or philanthropy, purposed the salvation of all men, and sent his Son for their redemption. But seeing that such purpose could not be carried out, He determined by his efficacious grace to secure the salvation of a certain portion of the human race. This difficulty the scheme involves, however it may be stated. It cannot however be supposed that God intends what is never accomplished; that He purposes what He does not intend to effect; that He adopts means for an end which is never to be attained. This cannot be affirmed of any rational being who has the wisdom and power to secure the execution of his purposes. Much less can it be said of Him whose power and wisdom are infinite. If all men are not saved, God never purposed their salvation, and never devised and put into operation means designed to accomplish that end. We must assume that the result is the interpretation of the purposes of God. If He foreordains whatsoever comes to pass, then events correspond to his purposes; and it is against reason and Scripture to suppose that there is any contradiction or want of correspondence between what He intended and what actually occurs. The theory, therefore, which assumes that God purposed the salvation of all men, and sent his Son to die as a means to accomplish that end, and then seeing, or foreseeing that such end could not or would not be attained, elected a part of the race to be the subjects of efficacious grace, cannot be admitted as Scriptural. 2. The Bible clearly teaches that the work of Christ is certainly efficacious. It renders certain the attainment of the end it was designed to accomplish. It was intended to save his people, and not merely to make the salvation of all men possible. It was a real satisfaction to justice, and therefore necessarily frees from condemnation. It was a ransom paid and accepted, and therefore certainly redeems. If, therefore, equally designed for all men, it must secure the salvation of all. If designed specially for the elect, it renders their salvation certain, and therefore election precedes redemption. God, as the Westminster Catechism teaches, having elected some to eternal life, sent his Son to redeem them. 3. The Scriptures further teach that the gift of Christ secures the gift of all

other saving blessings. "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things." (Rom. 8:32.) Hence they are certainly saved for whom God delivered up his Son. The elect only are saved, and therefore He was delivered up specially for them, and consequently election must precede redemption. The relation, therefore, of redemption to election is as clearly determined by the nature of redemption as the relation of the sun to the planets is determined by the nature of the sun. 4. The Bible in numerous passages directly asserts that Christ came to redeem his people; to save them from their sins; and to bring them to God. He gave Himself for his Church; He laid down his life for his sheep. As the end precedes the means, if God sent his Son to save his people, if Christ gave Himself for his Church, then his people were selected and present to the divine mind, in the order of thought, prior to the gift of Christ. 5. If, as Paul teaches (Rom. 8:29, 30), foreknowledge precedes predestination, and if the mission of Christ is the means of accomplishing the end of predestination, then of necessity predestination to eternal life precedes the gift of Christ. Having, as we are taught in Eph. 1:4, 5, predestinated us to the adoption of sons, God chose us before the foundation of the world, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. This is the order of the divine purposes, or the mutual relation of the truths of redemption as presented in the Scriptures. 6. The motive (so to speak) of God in sending his Son is not, as this theory assumes, general benevolence or that love of which all men are equally the objects, but that peculiar, mysterious, infinite love in which God, in giving his Son, gives Himself and all conceivable and possible good. All these points, however, as before remarked, ask for further consideration when we come to treat of the nature and design of Christ's work.

5. The Lutheran Doctrine as to the Plan of Salvation

It is not easy to give the Lutheran doctrine on this subject, because it is stated in one way in the early symbolical books of that Church, and in a somewhat different way in the "Form of Concord," and in the writings of the standard Lutheran theologians. Luther himself taught the strict Augustinian doctrine, as did also Melancthon in the first edition of his "Loci Communes." In the later editions of that work Melancthon taught that men coöperate with the grace of God in conversion, and that the reason why one man is regenerated and another not is to be found in that coöperation. This gave rise to the protracted and vehement synergistic controversy, which for a long time seriously disturbed the peace of the Lutheran Church. This controversy was for a time authoritatively settled by the "Form of Concord," which was adopted and enjoined as a standard of orthodoxy by the Lutherans. In this document both the doctrine of coöperation and that of absolute predestination were rejected. It taught the entire inability of the natural man for anything spiritually good; and therefore denied that he could either prepare himself for regeneration or coöperate with the grace of God in that work. It refers the regeneration of the sinner exclusively to the supernatural agency of the Holy Spirit. It is the work of God, and in no sense or degree the work of man. But it teaches that the grace of God may be effectually resisted, and that the reason why all who hear the gospel are not saved is that some do thus resist the influence which is brought to bear upon them, and others do not. While, therefore, regeneration is exclusively the work of the Spirit, the failure of salvation is to be referred to the voluntary resistance of offered grace. As this system was illogical and contrary to the clear declarations of Scripture, it did not long maintain its ground. Non-resistance to the grace of God, passively yielding to its power, is something good. It is something by which one class is favourably distinguished from another; and therefore the reason why they, rather than others, are saved, is to be referred to themselves and not to God, who gives the same grace to all. The later Lutheran theologians, therefore, have abandoned the ground of the "Form of Concord," and teach that the objects of election are those whom God foresaw would believe and persevere in faith unto the end. According to this scheme, God, (1.)

From general benevolence or love to the fallen race of man, wills their salvation by a sincere purpose and intention. "Benevolentia Dei universalis," says Hollaz, "non est inane votum, non sterilis velleitas, non otiosa complacentia, qua quis rem, quæ sibi placet, et quam in se amat, non cupit efficere aut consequi adeoque mediis ad hunc finem ducentibus non vult uti; sed est voluntas efficax, qua Deus salutem hominum, ardentissime amatam, etiam efficere atque per media sufficientia et efficacia consequi serio intendit." (2.) To give effect to this general purpose of benevolence and mercy towards men indiscriminately, God determined to send his Son to make a full satisfaction for their sins. (3.) To this follows (in the order of thought) the purpose to give to all men the means of salvation and the power to avail themselves of the offered mercy. This is described as a "destinatio mediorum, quibus tum æterna salus satisfactione Christi parta, tum vires credendi omnibus hominibus offeruntur, ut satisfactionem Christi ad salutem acceptare et sibi applicare queant." (4.) Besides this, voluntas generalis (as relating to all men) and antecedens, as going before any contemplated action of men, there is a voluntas specialis, as relating to certain individual men, and consequens, as following the foresight of their action. This voluntas specialis is defined as that "quæ peccatores oblata salutis media amplectentes æterna salute donare constituit." So Hutter³ says, "Quia (Deus) prævidit ac præscivit maximam mundi partem mediis salutis locum minime relicturam ac proinde in Christum non credituram, ideo Deus de illis tantum salvandis fecit decretum, quos actu in Christum credituros prævidit." Hollaz expresses the same view: "Electio hominum, peccato corruptorum, ad vitam æternam a Deo misericordissimo facta est intuitu fidei in Christum ad finem usque vitæ perseverantis." Again: "Simpliciter quippe et categorice decrevit Deus hunc, illum, istum hominem salvare, quia perseveranter ipsius in Christum fidem certo prævidit."⁵ The Lutheran doctrine, therefore, answers the question, Why one man is saved and another not? by saying, Because the one believes and the other does not. The question, Why God elects some and not others, and predestinates them to eternal life? is answered by saying, Because He foresees that some will believe unto the end, and others

will not. If asked, Why one believes and another not? the answer is, Not that one coöperates with the grace of God and the other does not; but that some resist and reject the grace offered to all, and others do not. The difficulty arising from the Lutheran doctrine of the entire corruption of our fallen nature, and the entire inability of the sinner to do anything spiritually good, is met by saying, that the sinner has power to use the means of grace, he can hear the word and receive the sacraments, and as these means of grace are imbued with a divine supernatural power, they produce a saving effect upon all who do not voluntarily and persistently resist their influence. Baptism, in the case of infants, is attended by the regeneration of the soul; and therefore all who are baptized in infancy have a principle of grace implanted in them, which, if cherished, or, if not voluntarily quenched, secures their salvation. Predestination in the Lutheran system is confined to the elect. God predestinates those whom He foresees will persevere in faith unto salvation. There is no predestination of unbelievers unto death.

6. The Remonstrant Doctrine

In the early part of the seventeenth century Arminius introduced a new system of doctrine in the Reformed churches of Holland, which was formally condemned by the Synod of Dort which sat from November 1618 to May 1619. Against the decisions of that Synod the advocates of the new doctrine presented a Remonstrance, and hence they were at first called Remonstrants, but in after years their more common designation has been Arminians. Arminianism is a much lower form of doctrine than Lutheranism. In all the points included under Anthropology and Soteriology it is a much more serious departure from the system of Augustinianism which in all ages has been the life of the church. The Arminians taught,— 1. That all men derive from Adam a corrupt nature by which they are inclined to sin. But they deny that this corruption is of the nature of sin. Men are responsible only for their own voluntary acts and the consequences of such acts. "Peccatum originale nec habent (Remonstrantes) pro

peccato proprie dicto ... nec pro malo, quod per modum proprie dictæ pœnæ ab Adamo in posteros dimanet, sed pro malo infirmitate." Limborch² says, "Atqui illa physica est impuritas (namely, the deterioration of our nature derived from Adam), non moralis: et tantum abest ut sit vere ac proprie dictum peccatum." 2. They deny that man by his fall has lost his ability to good. Such ability, or liberty as they call it, is essential to our nature, and cannot be lost without the loss of humanity. "Innatam arbitrii humani libertatem (i.e., ability) olim semel in creatione datam, nunquam ... tollit (Deus)." 3. This ability, however, is not of itself sufficient to secure the return of the soul to God. Men need the preventing, exciting, and assisting grace of God in order to their conversion and holy living. "Gratiam Dei statuimus esse principium, progressum et complementum omnis boni: adeo ut ne ipse quidem regnitus absque præcedente ista, sive præveniente, excitante, prosequente et coöperante gratia, bonum ullum salutare cogitare, velle, aut peragere possit." 4. This divine grace is afforded to all men in sufficient measure to enable them to repent, believe, and keep all the commandments of God. "Gratia efficax vocatur ex eventu. Ut statuatur gratia habere ex se sufficientem vim, ad producendum consensum in voluntate, sed quia vis illa partialis est, non posse exire in actum sive effectum sortiri sine coöperatione liberæ voluntatis humanæ, ac proinde ut effectum habeat, ... pendere a libera voluntate." This grace, says Limborch, "incitat, exstimulat, adjuvat et corroborat, quantum satis est, ut homo reipsa Deo obediat et ad finem in obedientia perseveret." And again: "Sufficiens vocatio, quando per coöperationem liberi arbitrii sortitur suum effectum, vocatur efficax." 5. Those who of their own free will, and in the exercise of that ability which belongs to them since the fall, coöperate with this divine grace, are converted and saved. "Etsi vero maxima est gratiæ disparitas, pro liberrima scilicet voluntatis divinæ dispensatione tamen Spiritus Sanctus omnibus et singulis, quibus verbum fidei ordinarie prædicatur, tantum gratiæ confert, aut saltem conferre paratus est, quantum ad fidem ingenerandum, et ad promovendum suis gradibus salutarem ipsorum conversionem sufficit." The Apology for the Remonstrance, and especially the

Remonstrant Theologians, as Episcopius and Limborch, go farther than this. Instead of limiting this sufficient grace to those who hear the gospel, they extend it to all mankind. 6. Those who thus believe are predestinated to eternal life, not however as individuals, but as a class. The decree of election does not concern persons, it is simply the purpose of God to save believers. "Decretum vocant Remonstrantes decretum prædestinationis ad salutem, quia eo decernitur, qua ratione et conditione Deus peccatores saluti destinet. Enunciatur autem hoc decretum Dei hac formula: Deus decrevit salvare credentes, non quasi credentes quidam re ipsa jam sint, qui objiciantur Deo salvare volenti, sive prædestinanti; nihil minus; sed, ut quid in iis, circa quos Deus prædestinans versatur, requiratur, ista enunciatione clare significetur. Tantundem enim valet atqui si diceres, Deus decrevit homines salvare sub conditione fidei... Etiamsi hujusmodi prædestinatio non sit prædestinatio certarum personarum, est tamen omnium hominum prædestinatio, si modo credant et in virtute prædestinatio certarum personarum, quæ et quando credunt."

7. Wesleyan Arminianism

The Arminian system received such modifications in the hands of Wesley and his associates and followers, that they give it the designation of Evangelical Arminianism, and claim for it originality and completeness. It differs from the system of the Remonstrants,—

1. In admitting that man since the fall is in a state of absolute or entire pollution and depravity. Original sin is not a mere physical deterioration of our nature, but entire moral depravity.
2. In denying that men in this state of nature have any power to coöperate with the grace of God. The advocates of this system regard this doctrine of natural ability, or the ability of the natural man to coöperate with the grace of God as Semi-pelagian, and the doctrine that men have the power by nature perfectly to keep the commandments of God, as pure Pelagianism.
3. In asserting that the guilt brought upon all men by the sin of Adam is removed by the justification which has come

upon all men by the righteousness of Christ. 4. That the ability of man even to coöperate with the Spirit of God, is due not to anything belonging to his natural state as fallen, but to the universal influence of the redemption of Christ. Every infant, therefore, comes into the world free from condemnation on the ground of the righteousness of Christ and with a seed of divine grace, or a principle of a new life implanted in his heart. "That by the offence of one," says Wesley, "judgment came upon all men (all born into the world) unto condemnation, is an undoubted truth, and affects every infant, as well as every adult person. But it is equally true, that by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men (all born into the world—infants and adults) unto justification." And Fletcher,³ says, "As Adam brought a general condemnation and a universal seed of death upon all infants, so Christ brings upon them a general justification and a universal seed of life." "Every human being," says Warren, "has a measure of grace (unless he has cast it away), and those who faithfully use this gracious gift, will be accepted of God in the day of judgment, whether Jew or Greek, Christian or Heathen. In virtue of the mediation of Jesus Christ, between God and our fallen race, all men since the promise Gen. 3:15, are under an economy of grace, and the only difference between them as subjects of the moral government of God, is that while all have grace and light enough to attain salvation, some, over and above this, have more and others less." Wesley says, "No man living is without some preventing grace, and every degree of grace is a degree of life." And in another place, "I assert that there is a measure of free will supernaturally restored to every man, together with that supernatural light which enlightens every man that cometh into the world."² According to this view of the plan of God, he decreed or purposed, (1.) To permit the fall of man. (2.) To send his Son to make a full satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. (3.) On the ground of that satisfaction to remit the guilt of Adam's first transgression and of original sin, and to impart such a measure of grace and light to all and every man as to enable all to attain eternal life. (4.) Those who duly improve that grace, and persevere to the end, are ordained to be saved; God purposes from eternity, to save those whom He foresees will thus persevere in faith

and holy living. It is plain that the main point of difference between the later Lutheran, the Arminian, and the Wesleyan schemes, and that of Augustinians is, that according to the latter, God, and according to the former, man, determines who are to be saved. Augustine taught that out of the fallen family of men, all of whom might have been justly left to perish in their apostasy, God, out of his mere good mercy, elected some to everlasting life, sent his Son for their redemption, and gives to them the Holy Spirit to secure their repentance, faith, and holy living unto the end. "Cur autem non omnibus detur [donum fidei], fidelem movere non debet, qui credit ex uno omnes isse in condemnationem, sine dubio justissimam: ita ut nulla Dei esset justa reprehensio, etiamsi nullus inde liberaretur. Unde constat, magnam esse gratiam, quod plurimi liberantur." It is God, therefore, and not man, who determines who are to be saved. Although this may be said to be the turning point between these great systems, which have divided the Church in all ages, yet that point of necessity involves all the other matters of difference; namely, the nature of original sin; the motive of God in providing redemption; the nature and design of the work of Christ; and the nature of divine grace, or the work of the Holy Spirit. Thus, in a great measure, the whole system of theology, and of necessity the character of our religion, depend upon the view taken of this particular question. It is, therefore, a question of the highest practical importance, and not a matter of idle speculation.

8. The Augustinian Scheme

Preliminary Remarks

It is to be remembered that the question is not which view of the plan of God is the freest from difficulties, the most agreeable to our natural feelings, and therefore the most plausible to the human mind. It may be admitted that it would appear to us more consistent

with the character of God that provision should be made for the salvation of all men, and that sufficient knowledge and grace should be granted to every human being to secure his salvation. So it would be more consistent with the natural understanding and feelings, if like provision had been made for the fallen angels; or if God had prevented the entrance of sin and misery into the universe; or if, when they had entered, He had provided for their ultimate elimination from the system, so that all rational creatures should be perfectly holy and happy for eternity. There would be no end to such plans if each one were at liberty to construct a scheme of divine operation according to his own views of what would be wisest and best. We are shut up to facts: the facts of providence, of the Bible, and of religious experience. These facts must determine our theory. We cannot say that the goodness of God forbids the permission of sin and misery, if sin and misery actually exist. We cannot say that justice requires that all rational creatures should be treated alike, have the same advantages, and the same opportunity to secure knowledge, holiness, and happiness, if, under the government of a God of infinite justice, the greatest disparity actually exists. Among all Christians certain principles are admitted, according to which the facts of history and of the Scriptures must be interpreted. 1. It is admitted that God reigns; that his providence extends to all events great and small, so that nothing does or can occur contrary to his will, or which He does not either effect by his own power, or permit to be done by other agents. This is a truth of natural religion as well as of revelation. It is (practically) universally recognized. The prayers and thanksgivings which men by a law of their nature address to God, assume that He controls all events. War, pestilence, and famine, are deprecated as manifestations of his displeasure. To Him all men turn for deliverance from these evils. Peace, health, and plenty, are universally recognized as his gifts. This truth lies at the foundation of all religion, and cannot be questioned by any Theist, much less by any Christian. 2. No less clear and universally admitted is the principle that God can control the free acts of rational creatures without destroying either their liberty or their responsibility. Men universally pray for deliverance from the wrath

of their enemies, that their enmity may be turned aside, or that the state of their minds may be changed. All Christians pray that God would change the hearts of men, give them repentance and faith, and so control their acts that his glory and the good of others may be promoted. This again is one of those simple, profound, and far-reaching truths, which men take for granted, and on which they act and cannot avoid acting, whatever may be the doubts of philosophers, or the speculative difficulties with which such truths are attended. 3. All Christians admit that God has a plan or purpose in the government of the world. There is an end to be accomplished. It is inconceivable that an infinitely wise Being should create, sustain, and control the universe, without contemplating any end to be attained by this wonderful manifestation of his power and resources. The Bible, therefore, teaches us that God works all things after the counsel of his own will. And this truth is incorporated in all the systems of faith adopted among Christians, and is assumed in all religious worship and experience. 4. It is a necessary corollary from the foregoing principles that the facts of history are the interpretation of the eternal purposes of God. Whatever actually occurs entered into his purpose. We can, therefore, learn the design or intention of God from the evolution or development of his plan in the history of the world, and of every individual man. Whatever occurs, He for wise reasons permits to occur. He can prevent whatever He sees fit to prevent. If, therefore, sin occurs, it was God's design that it should occur. If misery follows in the train of sin, such was God's purpose. If some men only are saved, while others perish, such must have entered into the all comprehending purpose of God. It is not possible for any finite mind to comprehend the designs of God, or to see the reasons of his dispensations. But we cannot, on that account, deny that He governs all things, or that He rules according to the counsel of his own will. The Augustinian system of doctrine is nothing more than the application of these general and almost universally recognized principles to the special case of the salvation of man.

Statement of the Doctrine

The Augustinian scheme includes the following points: (1.) That the glory of God, or the manifestation of his perfections, is the highest and ultimate end of all things. (2.) For that end God purposed the creation of the universe, and the whole plan of providence and redemption. (3.) That He placed man in a state of probation, making Adam, their first parent, their head and representative. (4.) That the fall of Adam brought all his posterity into a state of condemnation, sin, and misery, from which they are utterly unable to deliver themselves. (5.) From the mass of fallen men God elected a number innumerable to eternal life, and left the rest of mankind to the just recompense of their sins. (6.) That the ground of this election is not the foresight of anything in the one class to distinguish them favourably from the members of the other class, but the good pleasure of God. (7.) That for the salvation of those thus chosen to eternal life, God gave his own Son, to become man, and to obey and suffer for his people, thus making a full satisfaction for sin and bringing in everlasting righteousness, rendering the ultimate salvation of the elect absolutely certain. (8.) That while the Holy Spirit, in his common operations, is present with every man, so long as he lives, restraining evil and exciting good, his certainly efficacious and saving power is exercised only in behalf of the elect. (9.) That all those whom God has thus chosen to life, and for whom Christ specially gave Himself in the covenant of redemption, shall certainly (unless they die in infancy), be brought to the knowledge of the truth, to the exercise of faith, and to perseverance in holy living unto the end. Such is the great scheme of doctrine known in history as the Pauline, Augustinian, or Calvinistic, taught, as we believe, in the Scriptures, developed by Augustine, formally sanctioned by the Latin Church, adhered to by the witnesses of the truth during the Middle Ages, repudiated by the Church of Rome in the Council of Trent, revived in that Church by the Jansenists, adopted by all the Reformers, incorporated in the creeds of the Protestant Churches of Switzerland, of the Palatinate, of France, Holland, England, and Scotland, and unfolded in the Standards framed by the Westminster Assembly, the common representative of Presbyterians in Europe and America. It is a historical fact that this scheme of doctrine has

been the moving power in the Church; that largely to it are to be referred the intellectual vigour and spiritual life of the heroes and confessors who have been raised up in the course of ages; that it has been the fruitful source of good works, of civil and religious liberty, and of human progress. Its truth may be evinced from many different sources.

Proof of the Doctrine

In the first place, it is a simple, harmonious, self-consistent scheme. It supposes no conflicting purposes in the divine mind; no willing first one thing, and then another; no purposing ends which are never accomplished; and no assertion of principles in conflict with others which cannot be denied. All the parts of this vast plan admit of being reduced to one comprehensive purpose as it was hid for ages in the divine mind. The purpose to create, to permit the fall, to elect some to everlasting life, while others are left, to send his Son to redeem his people, and to give the Spirit to apply that redemption, are purposes which harmonize one with all the others, and form one consistent plan. The parts of this scheme are not only harmonious, but they are also connected in such a way that the one involves the others, so that if one be proved it involves the truth of all the rest. If Christ was given for the redemption of his people, then their redemption is rendered certain, and then the operations of the Spirit must, in their case, be certainly efficacious; and if such be the design of the work of Christ, and the nature of the Spirit's influence, then those who are the objects of the one, and the subjects of the other, must persevere in holiness unto the end. Or if we begin with any other of the principles aforesaid, the same result follows. If it be proved or conceded that the fall brought mankind into an estate of helpless sin and misery, then it follows that salvation must be of grace; that it is of God and not of us, that we are in Christ; that vocation is effectual; that election is of the good pleasure of God; that the sacrifice of Christ renders certain the salvation of his people; and that they cannot fatally fall away from God. So of all the rest. Admit that the death of Christ renders certain the salvation of his people, and all the

rest follows. Admit that election is not of works, and the whole plan must be admitted as true. Admit that nothing happens contrary to God's purposes, then again the whole Augustinian scheme must be admitted. There can scarcely be a clearer proof that we understand a complicated machine than that we can put together its several parts, so that each exactly fits its place; no one admitting of being transferred or substituted for another; and the whole being complete and unimpeded in its action. Such is the order of God's working, that if you give a naturalist a single bone, he can construct the whole skeleton of which it is a part; and such is the order of his plan of redemption, that if one of the great truths which it includes be admitted, all the rest must be accepted. This is the first great argument in support of the Pauline or Augustinian scheme of doctrine.

Argument from the Facts of Providence

In the second place, this scheme alone is consistent with the facts of God's providence. Obvious as the truth is, it needs to be constantly repeated, that it is useless to contend against facts. If a thing is, it is vain to ignore it, or to deny its significance. We must conform our theories to facts, and not make the facts conform to our theories. That view of divine truth, therefore, is correct which accords with the facts of God's providence; and that view of doctrine must be false which conflicts with those facts. Another principle no less plain, and no less apt to be forgotten, is the one assumed above as admitted by all Christians, namely, that God has a plan and that the events of his providence correspond with that plan. In other words, that whatever happens, God intended should happen; that to Him nothing can be unexpected, and nothing contrary to his purposes. If this be so, then we can learn with certainty what God's plan is, what He intended to do or to permit, from what actually comes to pass. If one portion of the inhabitants of a given country die in infancy, and another portion live to mature age; such was, for wise reasons, the purpose of God. If some are prosperous, and others miserable, such also is in accordance with his holy will. If one season is abundant, another the

reverse, it is so in virtue of his appointment. This is a dictate even of natural religion. As much as this even the heathen believe. It can hardly be doubted that if these simple principles be granted, the truth of the Augustinian scheme must be admitted. It is a fact that God created man; it is a fact that the fall of Adam involved our whole race in sin and misery; it is a fact that of this fallen family, some are saved and others perish; it is a fact that the salvation of those who actually attain eternal life, is secured by the mediation of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit. These are providential facts admitted by all Christians. All that Augustinianism teaches is, that these facts were not unexpected by the divine mind, but that God foreknew they would occur, and intended that they should come to pass. This is all. What actually does happen, God intended should happen. Although his purposes or intentions cannot fail, He uses no influence to secure their accomplishment, which is incompatible with the perfect liberty and entire responsibility of rational creatures. As God is infinite in power and wisdom, He can control all events, and therefore the course of events must be in accordance with his will, because He can mould or direct that course at pleasure. It is, therefore, evident, first, that events must be the interpretation of his purposes, i.e., of what He intends shall happen; and secondly, that no objection can bear against the purpose or decrees of God, which does not bear equally against his providence. If it be right that God should permit an event to happen, it must be right that He should purpose to permit it, i.e., that He should decree its occurrence. We may suppose the Deistic or Rationalistic view of God's relation to the world to be true; that God created men, and left them without any providential guidance, or any supernatural influence, to the unrestrained exercise of their own faculties, and to the operation of the laws of nature and of society. If this were so, a certain course of events in regular succession, and in every variety of combination, would as a matter of fact, actually occur. In this case there could be no pretence that God was responsible for the issue. He had created man, endowed him with all the faculties, and surrounded him by all the circumstances necessary for his highest welfare. If he chose to abuse his faculties, and neglect his opportunities, it would be his own fault. He could bring no just

complaint against his maker. We may further suppose that God, overlooking and foreseeing how men left to themselves would act, and what would be the issue of a universe conducted on this plan, should determine, for wise reasons, that it should become actual; that just such a world and just such a series of events should really occur. Would this be wrong? Or, would it make any difference, if God's purpose as to the futurity of such a world, instead of following the foresight of it, should precede it? In either case God would purpose precisely the same world, and the same course of events. Augustinianism supposes that God for his own glory, and therefore for the highest and most beneficent of all ends, did purpose such a world and such a series of events as would have occurred on the Deistical hypothesis, with two important exceptions. First, He interposes to restrain and guide the wickedness of men so as to prevent its producing unmitigated evil, and to cause it to minister to the production of good. And secondly, He intervenes by his providence, and by the work of Christ and of the Holy Spirit, to save innumerable souls from the deluge of destruction. The Augustinian system, therefore, is nothing but the assumption that God intended in eternity what He actually does in time. That system, therefore, is in accordance with all the facts of divine providence, and thus is founded on an immovable basis.

Sovereignty of God in the Dispensations of his Providence

There is, however, another view which must be taken of this subject. Augustinianism is founded on the assumption of the sovereignty of God. It supposes that it belongs to Him, in virtue of his own perfection, in virtue of his relation to the universe as its creator and preserver, and of his relation to the world of sinners as their ruler and judge, to deal with them according to his own good pleasure; that He can rightfully pardon some and condemn others; can rightfully give his saving grace to one and not to another; and, therefore, that it is of Him, and not of man, that one and not another is made a partaker of eternal life. On the other hand, all anti-Augustinian systems assume that God is bound to provide salvation

for all; to give sufficient grace to all; and to leave the question of salvation and perdition to be determined by each man for himself. We are not condemned criminals of whom the sovereign may rightfully pardon some and not others; but rational creatures, having all an equal and valid claim on our Maker to receive all that is necessary for our salvation. The question is not which of these theories is the more agreeable, but which is true. And to decide that question one method is to ascertain which accords best with providential facts. Does God in his providential dealings with men act on the principles of sovereignty, distributing his favours according to the good pleasure of his will; or on the principle of impartial justice, dealing with all men alike? This question admits of but one answer. We may make as little as we please of mere external circumstances, and magnify as much as we can the compensations of providence which tend to equalize the condition of men. We may press to the extreme the principle that much shall be required of those who receive much, and less of those who receive less. Notwithstanding these qualifications and limitations, the fact is patent that the greatest inequalities do exist among men; that God deals far more favourably with some than with others; that He distributes his providential blessings, which include not only temporal good but also religious advantages and opportunities, as an absolute sovereign according to his own good pleasure, and not as an impartial judge. The time for judgment is not yet. This sovereignty of God in the dispensation of his providence is evinced in his dealings both with nations and with individuals. It cannot be believed that the lot of the Laplanders is as favourable as that of the inhabitants of the temperate zone; that the Hottentots are in as desirable a position as Europeans; that the people of Tartary are as well off as those of the United States. The inequality is too glaring to be denied; nor can it be doubted that the rule which God adopts in determining the lot of nations is his own good pleasure, and not the relative claims of the people affected by his providence. The same fact is no less obvious as concerns individuals. Some are happy, others are miserable. Some have uninterrupted health; others are the victims of disease and suffering. Some have all their faculties, others are born blind or deaf.

Some are rich, others sunk in the misery and degradation of abject poverty. Some are born in the midst of civilized society and in the bosom of virtuous families, others are from the beginning of their being surrounded by vice and wretchedness. These are facts which cannot be denied. Nor can it be denied that the lot of each individual is determined by the sovereign pleasure of God. The same principle is carried out with regard to the communication of religious knowledge and advantages. God chose the Jews from among all the families of the earth to be the recipients of his oracles and of the divinely instituted ordinances of religion. The rest of the world was left for centuries in utter darkness. We may say that it will be more tolerable in the judgment for the heathen than for the unfaithful Jews; and that God did not leave even the Gentiles without a witness. All this may be admitted, and yet what the Apostle says stands true: The advantages of the Jews were great every way. It would be infatuation and ingratitude for the inhabitants of Christendom not to recognize their position as unspeakably more desirable than that of Pagans. No American Christian can persuade himself that it would have been as well had he been born in Africa; nor can he give any answer to the question, Why was I born here and not there? other than, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." It is therefore vain to adopt a theory which does not accord with these facts. It is vain for us to deny that God is a sovereign in the distribution of his favours if in his providence it is undeniable that He acts as a sovereign. Augustinianism accords with these facts of providence, and therefore must be true. It only assumes that God acts in the dispensation of his grace precisely as He acts in the distribution of his other favours; and all anti-Augustinian systems which are founded on the principle that this sovereignty of God is inconsistent with his justice and his parental relation to the children of men are in obvious conflict with the facts of his providence.

Argument from the Facts of Scripture

The third source of proof on this subject is found in the facts of the Bible, or in the truths therein plainly revealed. Augustinianism is the

only system consistent with those facts or truths. 1. This appears first from the clear revelation which the Scriptures make of God as infinitely exalted above all his creatures, and as the final end as well as the source of all things. It is because He is infinitely great and good that his glory is the end of all things; and his good pleasure the highest reason for whatever comes to pass. What is man that he should contend with God; or presume that his interests rather than God's glory should be made the final end? The Scriptures not only assert the absolute sovereignty of God, but they teach that it is founded, first, on his infinite superiority to all creatures; secondly, upon his relation to the world and all it contains, as creator and preserver, and therefore absolute proprietor; and, thirdly, so far as we men are concerned, upon our entire forfeiture of all claim on his mercy by our apostasy. The argument is that Augustinianism is the only system which accords with the character of God and with his relation to his creatures as revealed in the Bible. 2. It is a fact that men are a fallen race; that by their alienation from God they are involved in a state of guilt and pollution, from which they cannot deliver themselves. They have by their guilt forfeited all claim on God's justice; they might in justice be left to perish; and by their depravity they have rendered themselves unable to turn unto God, or to do anything spiritually good. These are facts already proved. The sense of guilt is universal and indestructible. All sinners know the righteous judgment of God, that they are worthy of death. The inability of sinners is not only clearly and repeatedly asserted in the Scriptures, but is proved by all experience, by the common consciousness of men, and, of course, by the consciousness of every individual man, and especially of every man who has ever been or who is truly convinced of sin. But if men are thus unable to change their own hearts, to prepare themselves for that change, or to coöperate in its production, then all those systems which assume the ability of the sinner and rest the distinction between one man and another as to their being saved or lost, upon the use made of that ability, must be false. They are contrary to facts. They are inconsistent with what every man, in the depth of his own heart, knows to be true. The point intended to be illustrated when the

Scriptures compare sinners to men dead, and even to dry bones, is their entire helplessness. In this respect they are all alike. Should Christ pass through a graveyard, and bid one here and another there to come forth, the reason why one was restored to life and another left in his grave could be sought only in his good pleasure. From the nature of the case it could not be found in the dead themselves. Therefore if the Scriptures, observation, and consciousness teach that men are unable to restore themselves to spiritual life, their being quickened must be referred to the good pleasure of God.

From the Work of the Spirit

3. This is confirmed by another obvious fact or truth of Scripture. The regeneration of the human heart; the conversion of a sinner to God is the work, not of the subject of that change, but of the Spirit of God. This is plain, first, because the Bible always attributes it to the Holy Ghost. We are said to be born, not of the will of man, but of God; to be born of the Spirit; to be the subjects of the renewing of the Holy Ghost; to be quickened, or raised from the dead by the Spirit of the Lord; the dry bones live only when the Spirit blows upon them. Such is the representation which pervades the Scriptures from beginning to end. Secondly, the Church, therefore, in her collective capacity, and every living member of that Church recognizes this truth in their prayers for the renewing power of the Holy Ghost. In the most ancient and universally recognized creeds of the Church the Spirit is designated as τὸ ζῳοποιόν, the life-giving; the author of all spiritual life. The sovereignty involved in this regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit is necessarily implied in the nature of the power exerted. It is declared to be the mighty power of God; the exceeding greatness of his power; the power which wrought in Christ when it raised Him from the dead. It is represented as analogous to the power by which the blind were made to see, the deaf to hear, and lepers were cleansed. It is very true the Spirit illuminates, teaches, convinces, persuades, and, in a word, governs the soul according to its nature as a rational creature. But all this relates to what is done in the case of the children of God after their regeneration. Imparting

spiritual life is one thing; sustaining, controlling, and cherishing that life is another. If the Bible teaches that regeneration, or spiritual resurrection, is the work of the almighty power of God, analogous to that which was exercised by Christ when He said, "I will, be thou clean;" then it of necessity follows that regeneration is an act of sovereignty. It depends on God the giver of life and not on those spiritually dead, who are to live, and who are to remain in their sins. The intimate conviction of the people of God in all ages has been and is that regeneration, or the infusion of spiritual life, is an act of God's power exercised according to his good pleasure, and therefore it is the gift for which the Church specially prays. But this fact involves the truth of Augustinianism, which simply teaches that the reason why one man is regenerated and another not, and consequently one saved and another not, is the good pleasure of God. He has mercy upon whom He will have mercy. It is true that He commands all men to seek his grace, and promises that those who seek shall find. But why does one seek and another not? Why is one impressed with the importance of salvation while others remain indifferent? If it be true that not only regeneration, but all right thoughts and just purposes come from God, it is of Him, and not of us, that we seek and find his favour.

Election is to Holiness

4. Another plainly revealed fact is, that we are chosen to holiness; that we are created unto good works; in other words, that all good in us is the fruit, and, therefore, cannot by possibility be the ground of election. In Eph. 1:3–6, the Apostle says: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the Beloved." In this passage the Augustinian doctrine of election is stated as clearly and

as comprehensively as it has ever been presented in human language. The Apostle teaches, (1.) That the end or design of the whole scheme of redemption is the praise of the glory of the grace of God, i.e., to exhibit to the admiration of intelligent creatures the glorious attribute of divine grace, or the love of an infinitely holy and just God towards guilty and polluted sinners. (2.) To this end, of his mere good pleasure, He predestinated those who were the objects of this love to the high dignity of being the children of God. (3.) That, to prepare them for this exalted state, He chose them, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blame in love. (4.) That in consequence of his choice, or in execution of this purpose, He confers upon them all spiritual blessings, regeneration, faith, repentance, and the indwelling of the Spirit. It is utterly incompatible with this fact that the foresight of faith and repentance should be the ground of election. Men, according to the Apostle, repent and believe, because they are elected; God has chosen them to be holy, and therefore their holiness or their goodness in any form or measure cannot be the reason why He chose them. In like manner the Apostle Peter says, believers are elect "unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 1:2.) Such is the clear doctrine of the Bible, men are chosen to be holy. The fact that God has predestinated them to salvation is the reason why they are brought to repentance and a holy life. "God," says Paul to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:13), "hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through (not on account of) sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God." (1 Thess. 1:2-4.) He recognizes their election as the source of their faith and love.

From the Gratuitous Nature of Salvation

5. Another decisive fact is that salvation is of grace. The two ideas of grace and works; of gift and debt; of undeserved favour and what is

merited; of what is to be referred to the good pleasure of the giver, and what to the character or state of the receiver, are antithetical. The one excludes the other. "If by grace, then is it 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." Rom. 11:6. Nothing concerning the plan of salvation is more plainly revealed, or more strenuously insisted upon than its gratuitousness, from beginning to end. "Ye are saved by grace," is engraved upon almost every page of the Bible, and in the hearts of all believers. (1.) It was a matter of grace that a plan of salvation was devised for fallen man and not for fallen angels. (2.) It was a matter of grace that that plan was revealed to some portions of our race and not to others. (3.) The acceptance, or justification of every individual heir of salvation is a matter of grace. (4.) The work of sanctification is a work of grace, i.e., a work carried on by the unmerited, supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. (5.) It is a matter of grace that of those who hear the gospel some accept the offered mercy, while others reject it. All these points are so clearly taught in the Bible that they are practically acknowledged by all Christians. Although denied to satisfy the understanding, they are conceded by the heart, as is evident from the prayers and praises of the Church in all ages and in all its divisions. That the vocation or regeneration of the believer is of grace, i.e., that the fact of his vocation is to be referred to God, and not to anything in himself is specially insisted upon by the Apostle Paul in almost all his epistles. For example, in 1 Cor. 1:17–31. It had been objected to him that he did not preach "with the wisdom of words." He vindicated himself by showing, first, that the wisdom of men had not availed to secure the saving knowledge of God; and secondly, that when the gospel of salvation was revealed, it was not the wise who accepted it. In proof of this latter point, he appealed to their own experience. He referred to the fact that of their number God had not chosen the wise, the great, or the noble; but the foolish, the weak, and the despised. God had done this. It was He who decided who should be brought to accept the Gospel, and who should be left to themselves. He had a purpose in this, and that purpose was that those who glory should glory in the Lord, i.e., that no man should be able to refer his

salvation (the fact that he was saved while another was not saved) to himself. For, adds the Apostle, it is of Him that we are in Christ Jesus. Our union with Christ, the fact that we are believers, is to be referred to Him, and not to ourselves.

The Apostle's Argument in Romans 9

This also is the purpose of the Apostle in the whole of the ninth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He had asserted, agreeably to the predictions of the ancient prophets, that the Jews as a nation were to be cast off, and the blessings of the true religion were to be extended to the Gentiles. To establish this point, he first shows that God was not bound by his promise to Abraham to save all the natural descendants of that patriarch. On the contrary, that it was a prerogative which God, as sovereign, claimed and exercised, to have mercy on whom He would, and to reject whom He would. He chose Isaac and not Ishmael, Jacob and not Esau, and, in that case, to show that the choice was perfectly sovereign, it was announced before the birth of the children, before they had done good or evil. Pharaoh He had hardened. He left him to himself to be a monument of justice. This right, which God both claims and exercises, to choose whom He will to be the recipients of his mercy, involves, the Apostle teaches us, no injustice. It is a right of sovereignty which belongs to God as Creator and as moral Governor. No one had a right to complain if, for the manifestation of his mercy, he saved some of the guilty family of men; and to show his justice, allowed others to bear the just recompense of their sins. On these principles God, as Paul tells us, dealt with the Jews. The nation as a nation was cast off, but a remnant was saved. And this remnant was an "election of grace," i.e., men chosen gratuitously. Paul himself was an illustration of this election, and a proof of its entirely gratuitous nature. He was a persecutor and a blasphemer, and while in the very exercise of his malignant opposition, was suddenly and miraculously converted. Here, if in no other case, the election was of grace. There was nothing in Paul to distinguish him favourably from other unbelieving Pharisees. It could not be the foresight of his faith and repentance

which was the ground of his election, because he was brought to faith and repentance by the sovereign and irresistible intervention of God. What, however, was true of Paul is true of every other believer. Every man who is brought to Christ is so brought that it is revealed to his own consciousness, and openly confessed by the mouth, that his conversion is of God and not of himself; that he is a monument of the election of grace; that he, at least, was not chosen because of his deserts.

Argument from Experience

The whole history of the Church, and the daily observation of Christians, prove the sovereignty of God in the dispensation of saving blessings, for which Augustinians contend. It is true, indeed, first, that God is a covenant keeping God, and that his promise is to his people and to their seed after them to the third and fourth generations. It is, therefore, true that his grace is dispensed, although not exclusively, yet conspicuously, in the line of their descendants. Secondly, it is also true that God has promised his blessing to attend faithful instruction. He commands parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and promises that if thus trained in the way in which they should go, when they are old they will not depart from it. But it is not true that regeneration is the product of culture. Men cannot be educated into Christians, as they may be trained in knowledge or morals. Conversion is not the result of the development of a germ of spiritual life communicated in baptism or derived by descent from pious parents. Everything is in the hands of God. As Christ when on earth healed one and another by a word, so now by his Spirit, He quickens whom He will. This fact is proved by all history. Some periods of the Church have been remarkable for these displays of his powers, while others have passed with only here and there a manifestation of his saving grace. In the Apostolic age thousands were converted; many were daily added to the Church of such as were to be saved. Then in the Augustinian age there was a wide diffusion of the saving influences of the Spirit. Still more conspicuously was this the case at the Reformation. After a

long decline in Great Britain came the wonderful revival of true religion under Wesley and Whitefield. Contemporaneously the great awakening occurred throughout this country. And thus from time to time, and in all parts of the Church, we see these evidences of the special and sovereign interventions of God. The sovereignty of these dispensations is just as manifest as that displayed in the seven years of plenty and the seven years of dearth in the time of Moses. Every pastor, almost every parent, can bear witness to the same truth. They pray and labour long apparently without success; and then, often when they look not for it, comes the outpouring of the Spirit. Changes are effected in the state and character of men, which no man can produce in another; and which no man can effect in himself; changes which must be referred to the immediate agency of the Spirit of God. These are facts. They cannot be reasonably denied. They cannot be explained away. They demonstrate that God acts as a sovereign in the distribution of his grace. With this fact no other scheme than the Augustinian can be reconciled. If salvation is of grace, as the Scriptures so clearly teach, then it is not of works whether actual or foreseen.

Express Declarations of Scripture

6. The Scriptures clearly assert that God has mercy on whom He will have mercy, and compassion on him on whom He will have compassion. They teach negatively, that election to salvation is not of works; that it does not depend on the character or efforts of its objects; and affirmatively, that it does depend on God. It is referred to his good pleasure. It is declared to be of Him; to be of grace. Passages in which these negative and affirmative statements are made, have already been quoted. In Rom. 9 it is said that election is "not of works, but of Him that calleth." "So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." As in the time of Elias amid the general apostasy, God said, "I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed the knee unto Baal." (1 Kings, 19:18.) "So then," says the Apostle, "there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then

is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace." (Rom. 11:5, 6.) So in Rom. 8:30, it is said, "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called," i.e., He regenerated and sanctified. Regeneration follows predestination to life, and is the gift of God. Paul said of himself, "It pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me." (Gal. 1:15, 16.) To the Ephesians he says that those obtain the inheritance, who were "predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. 1:12.) In 2 Tim. 1:9, he says, we are saved "according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." The Apostle James, 1:18, says, "Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first-fruits of his creatures." The Apostle Peter speaks of those who "stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." (1 Pet. 2:8.) And Jude speaks of certain men who had "crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation." (Jude 4.) This foreordination to condemnation is indeed a judicial act, as is taught in Rom. 9:22. God condemns no man, and foreordains no man to condemnation, except on account of his sin. But the preterition of such men, leaving them, rather than others equally guilty, to suffer the penalty of their sins, is distinctly declared to be a sovereign act.

The Words of Jesus

Of all the teachers sent by God to reveal his will, no one more frequently asserts the divine sovereignty than our blessed Lord himself. He speaks of those whom the Father had "given Him." (John 17:2.) To these He gives eternal life. (John 17:2, 24.) For these He prays; for them He sanctified Himself. (John 17:19.) Of them He says, it is the Father's will that He should lose none, but raise them up at the last day. (John 6:39.) They are, therefore, perfectly safe. "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my

Father's hand." (John 10:27–29.) As the sheep of Christ are chosen out of the world, and given to Him, God is the chooser. They do not choose Him, but He chooses them. No one can be added to their number, and that number shall certainly be completed. "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6:37.) "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." (John 6:44.) "Every man therefore that hath heard, and learned of the Father, cometh unto me." (Verse 45.) "No man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." (Verse 65.) With God it rests who shall be brought to the saving knowledge of the truth. "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." (Matt. 13:11.) "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes." (Matt. 11:25.) In Acts 13:48, it is said, "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed." The Scriptures, therefore, say that repentance, faith, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost are gifts of God. Christ was exalted at the right hand of God to give repentance and remission of sins. But if faith and repentance are the gifts of God they must be the fruits of election. They cannot possibly be its ground. If the office of the theologian, as is so generally admitted, be to take the facts of Scripture as the man of science does those of nature, and found upon them his doctrines, instead of deducing his doctrines from the principles or primary truths of his philosophy, it seems impossible to resist the conclusion that the doctrine of Augustine is the doctrine of the Bible. According to that doctrine God is an absolute sovereign. He does what seems good in his sight. He sends the truth to one nation and not to another. He gives that truth saving power in one mind and not in another. It is of Him, and not of us, that any man is in Christ Jesus, and is an heir of eternal life. This, as has been shown, is asserted in express terms, with great frequency and clearness in the Scriptures. It is sustained by all the facts of providence and of revelation. It attributes to God nothing but what is proved, by his actual government of the world, to be his rightful prerogative. It only teaches that God purposes what, with our own

eyes, we see He actually does, and ever has done, in the dispensations of his providence. The consistent opponent of this doctrine must, therefore, reject the truths even of natural religion. As Augustinianism agrees with the facts of providence it of course agrees with the facts of Scripture. The Bible declares that the salvation of sinful men is a matter of grace; and that the great design of the whole scheme of redemption is to display the glory of that divine attribute,—to exhibit to the admiration, and for the edification of the intelligent universe, God's unmerited love and boundless beneficence to guilty and polluted creatures. Accordingly, men are represented as being sunk into a state of sin and misery; from this state they cannot deliver themselves; for their redemption God sent his own eternal Son to assume their nature, obey, and suffer in their place; and his Holy Spirit to apply the redemption purchased by the Son. To introduce the element of merit into any part of this scheme vitiates its nature and frustrates its design. Unless our salvation from beginning to end be of grace it is not an exhibition of grace. The Bible, however, teaches that it was a matter of grace that salvation was provided; that it was revealed to one nation and not to another; and that it was applied to one person and not to another. It teaches that all goodness in man is due to the influence of the Holy Spirit, and that all spiritual blessings are the fruits of election; that we are chosen to holiness, and created unto good works, because predestinated to be the children of God. With these facts of Scripture the experience of Christians agrees. It is the intimate conviction of every believer, founded upon the testimony of his own consciousness, as well as upon the Scriptures, that his salvation is of God; that it is of Him, and not of himself, that he has been brought to the exercise of faith and repentance. So long as he looks within the believer is satisfied of the truth of these doctrines. It is only when he looks outward, and attempts to reconcile these truths with the dictates of his own understanding that he becomes confused and sceptical. But as our faith is not founded on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God, as the foolishness of God is wiser than men, the part of wisdom, as well as the path of duty and safety, is to receive as

true what God has revealed, whether we can comprehend his ways unto perfection or not.

9. Objections to the Augustinian Scheme

That there are formidable objections to the Augustinian doctrine of divine sovereignty cannot be denied. They address themselves even more powerfully to the feelings and to the imagination than they do to the understanding. They are therefore often arrayed in such distorted and exaggerated forms as to produce the strongest revulsion and abhorrence. This, however, is due partly to the distortion of the truth and partly to the opposition of our imperfectly or utterly unsanctified nature, to the things of the Spirit, of which the Apostle speaks in 1 Cor. 2:14. Of these objections, however, it may be remarked in general, in the first place, that they do not bear exclusively on this doctrine. It is one of the unfair devices of controversy to represent difficulties which press with equal force against some admitted doctrine as valid only against the doctrine which the objector rejects. Thus the objections against Augustinianism, on which special reliance is placed, bear with their full force against the decrees of God in general; or if these be denied, against the divine foreknowledge; against the permission of sin and misery, and especially against the doctrine of the unending sinfulness and misery of many of God's intelligent creatures. These are doctrines which all Christians admit, and which are arrayed by infidels and atheists in colours as shocking to the imagination and feelings as any which Anti-Augustinians have employed in depicting the sovereignty of God. It is just as difficult to reconcile to our natural ideas of God that He, with absolute control over all creatures, should allow so many of them to perish eternally as that He should save some and not others. The difficulty is in both cases the same. God does not prevent the perdition of those whom, beyond doubt, He has power to save. If those who admit God's providence say that He has wise reasons for permitting so many of our race to perish, the advocates of his sovereignty say that He has adequate reasons for

saving some and not others. It is unreasonable and unjust, therefore, to press difficulties which bear against admitted truths as fatal to doctrines which are matters of controversy. When an objection is shown to prove too much it is rationally refuted.

The same Objections bear against the Providence of God

A second general remark respecting these objections is, that they bear against the providence of God. This has already been shown. It is useless and irrational to argue against facts. It can avail nothing to say that it is unjust in God to deal more favourably with one nation than with another, with one individual than with another, if in point of fact He acts as a sovereign in the distribution of his favours. That He does so act is undeniable so far as providential blessings and religious advantages are concerned. And this is all that Augustinianism asserts in regard to the dispensations of his grace. If, therefore, the principle on which these objections are founded is proved to be false by the actual facts of providence the objections cannot be valid against the Augustinian scheme.

Founded on our Ignorance

A third obvious remark is that these objections are subjective; i.e., they derive all their force from the limitation of our powers and from the narrowness of our views. They assume that we are competent to sit in judgment on God's government of the universe; that we can ascertain the end which He has in view, and estimate aright the wisdom and justice of the means adopted for its accomplishment. This is clearly a preposterous assumption, not only because of our utter incapacity to comprehend the ways of God, but also because we must of necessity judge before the consummation of his plan, and must also judge from appearances. It is but right in judging of the plans even of a fellow mortal, that we should wait until they are fully developed, and also right that we should not judge without being certain that we can see his real intentions, and the connection between his means and end. Besides all this, it is to be observed that

these difficulties arise from our contemplating, so to speak, only one aspect of the case. We look only on the sovereignty of God and the absolute nature of his control over his creatures. We leave out of view, or are incapable of understanding the perfect consistency of that sovereignty and control, with the free agency and responsibility of his rational creatures. It is perfectly true, in one aspect, that God determines according to his own good pleasure the destiny of every human being; and it is equally true, in another aspect, that every man determines his own destiny. These truths can both be established on the firmest grounds. Their consistency, therefore, must be admitted as a fact, even though we may not be able to discover it. Of the multitudes who start in the pursuit of fame, wealth, or power, some succeed while others fail. Success and failure, in every case, are determined by the Lord. This is distinctly asserted in the Bible. "God," saith the Psalmist, "putteth down one and setteth up another." (Ps. 75:7.) "The LORD maketh poor, and maketh rich: He bringeth low, and lifteth up." (1 Sam. 2:7.) "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." (Job 1:21.) "It is He that giveth thee power to get wealth." (Deut. 8:18.) "He giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding." (Dan. 2:21.) "The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will." (Dan. 4:17.) This is a truth of natural religion. All men, whether Christians or not, pray for the success of their enterprises. They recognize the providential control of God over all the affairs of men. Nevertheless they are fully aware of the consistency of this control with their own free agency and responsibility. Every man who makes the acquisition of wealth his object in life, is conscious that he does it of his own free choice. He lays his own plans; adopts his own means; and acts as freely, and as entirely according to the dictates of his own will, as though there were no such thing as providence. This is not a delusion. He is perfectly free. His character expresses itself in the choice which he makes of the end which he desires to secure. He cannot help recognizing his responsibility for that choice, and for all the means which he adopts to carry it into effect. All this is true in the sphere of religion. God places life and death before every man who hears the

gospel. He warns him of the consequences of a wrong choice. He presents and urges all the considerations which should lead to a right determination. He assures the sinner that if he forsakes his sin, and returns unto the Lord, he shall be pardoned and accepted. He promises that if he asks, he shall receive; if he seeks he shall find. He assures him that He is more willing to give the Holy Spirit, than parents are to give bread unto their children. If, notwithstanding all this, he deliberately prefers the world, refuses to seek the salvation of his soul in the appointed way, and finally perishes, he is as completely responsible for his character and conduct, and for the perdition of his soul, as the man of the world is responsible for the pursuit of wealth. In both cases, and equally in both cases, the sovereign disposition of God is consistent with the freedom and responsibility of the agents. It is, therefore, by looking at only one half of the whole truth, that the difficulties in question are magnified into such importance. Men act as freely in religion as they do in any department of life; and when they perish it is the work of their own hands.

These Objections were urged against the Teachings of the Apostles

Another remark respecting these objections should not be overlooked. They were urged by the Jews against the doctrine of the Apostle. This at least proves that his doctrine is our doctrine. Had he not taught what all Augustinians hold to be true, there would have been no room for such objections. Had he denied that God dispenses salvation according to his own good pleasure, having mercy on whom He will have mercy, why should the Jews urge that God was unjust and that the responsibility of man was destroyed? What appearance of injustice could there have been had Paul taught that God elects those whom He foresees will repent and believe, and because of that foresight? It is only because he clearly asserts the sovereignty of God that the objections have any place. The answers which Paul gives to these difficulties should satisfy us for two reasons; first, because they are the answers dictated by the Spirit of God; and secondly, because

they are in themselves satisfactory to every rightly constituted mind. The first of these objections is that it is inconsistent with the justice of God to save one and not another, according to his own good pleasure. To this Paul answers, (1.) That God claims this prerogative. (2.) That He actually exercises it. It is useless to deny facts, or to say that what God really does is inconsistent with his nature. (3.) That it is a rightful prerogative, founded not only on the infinite superiority of God and in his proprietorship in all his creatures; but also in his relation as moral governor to the race of sinful men. If even a human sovereign is entitled to exercise his discretion in pardoning one criminal and not another, surely this prerogative cannot reasonably be denied to God. There can be no injustice in allowing the sentence of a just law to be executed upon an offender. And this is all that God does in regard to sinners. The further difficulty connected with this subject arising from the foreordination of sin, belongs to the subject of decrees, and has already been considered. The same remark applies to the objection that the doctrine in question destroys all motive to exertion and to the use of means of grace; and reduces the doctrine of the Scriptures to a purely fatalistic system. The practical tendency of any doctrine is to be decided from its nature, and from its effects. The natural effect of the conviction that we have forfeited all claims on God's justice, that we are at his mercy, and that He may rightfully leave us to perish in our sins, is to lead us to seek that mercy with earnestness and importunity. And the experience of the Church in all ages proves that such is the actual effect of the doctrine in question. It has not led to neglect, to stolid unconcern, or to rebellious opposition to God, but to submission, to the acknowledgment of the truth, and to sure trust in Christ as the appointed Saviour of those who deserve to perish.