

**Arminian Errors**  
Rev. William MacLean

---

The cardinal doctrines of the everlasting gospel which Arminians wrest to their own destruction are:

**I. THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD IN HIS GRACE**

God could have justly left all mankind to perish in their sin and misery, as He left the angels which kept not their first estate, but according to the good pleasure of His will, He chose in Christ, before the foundation of the world, all whom He purposed to save. "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" (Ephesians 1:4,5). "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified them He also glorified" (Romans 8:28-30). These verses from among many which could be quoted, and the whole scheme of redemption from Genesis to Revelation, afford infallible and unqualified proof that salvation is of free and sovereign grace.

The ninth chapter of Romans is the Holy Spirit's commentary on the eternal decrees of God. In connection with these sublime mysteries it becomes us, as sinful finite creatures, to be still and to know that He is God, just in all His ways, holy in His works all, that His judgments are unsearchable and His ways past finding out. As the election of all whom He purposed to save flows from His sovereign good pleasure, so the passing by the rest of mankind has also its source in the unsearchable counsel of His sovereign will, in all the actings of which He is holy, just and true. "Election is the expression of the divine mercy; reprobation of the divine justice. Whoever hold the doctrine of election must hold the doctrine of reprobation. Reprobation implies that God simply passes by the sinner leaving him as he is. In election He makes choice of the sinner in His sovereign grace. Both are acts of the sovereignty of God." (Rev. D. Beaton, *Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 35: p. 244). The non-elect are ordained of God, according to the unsearchable counsel of His will "to dishonour and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice" ("Confession of Faith," Ch. 3, sec. 7). It is not for their being passed by that they are punished, but for their sins. Their being passed by is a sovereign act: their condemnation is a judicial act of God in His capacity as a judge. "Salvation is all of grace, damnation all of sin. Salvation of God from first to last—the Alpha and the Omega; but damnation of men not of God: and if you perish, at your own hands must your blood be required" (C. H. Spurgeon).

The Sovereignty of God is the stumbling block on which thousands fall and perish; and if we go contending with God about His sovereignty it will be our eternal ruin. It is absolutely

necessary that we should submit to God as an absolute sovereign, and the sovereign of our souls; as one who may have mercy on whom He will have mercy and harden whom He will" (Jonathan Edwards).

All God's people, sooner or later, are brought to this point—to see that God has a 'people,' 'a peculiar people,' a people separate from the world, a people whom He has 'formed for Himself, that they should show forth His praise.' Election sooner or later, is riveted in the hearts of God's people. And a man, that lives and dies against this blessed doctrine, lives and dies in his sins; and if he dies in that enmity, he will be damned in that enmity (J. C. Philpot).

"The Arminians, on the other hand, hold and teach conditional election on a ground of foreseen faith. This is contrary to the Truth. As long as men are unregenerate, they are in a state of unbelief, without hope in God and without faith in Christ. When saved by grace, they have faith, but that not of themselves. It is not of their own power or free-will, but the gift of God through the efficacious teaching of the Holy Spirit. Faith, therefore, cannot be the cause of election. It is the effect of it and is insured by it. 'As many as were ordained to eternal life believed' (Acts 13:48). 'For by grace are ye saved through faith: and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them' (Ephesians 2:8-10).

The text quoted by Arminians in support of their doctrine of conditional election on the ground of foreseen faith, is 'Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate, etc.' (Romans 8:29). Such a view is superficial and untenable. "The word 'foreknow' in the New Testament usage, as pointed out by Dr. W. G. T. Shedd, is employed in the sense of the Hebrew yada (know) which denotes love and favour. 'Not foreknowledge as bare prescience,' says Calvin, 'but the adoption by which God had always from eternity distinguished His children from the reprobate.' The Scriptures represent election as occurring in the past, irrespective of personal merit. 'The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth, it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated' (Romans 9:11-13). The sovereignty of God's choice comes out clearly in the Pauline statement that Christ died for His people while they were yet sinners (Romans 5:8). It has been well said that Arminians take the choice out of the hands of God and place it in the hands of men" (The Reformed Faith by the Rev. D. Beaton, p. 24). 'But of Him and through Him and to Him are all things to whom be glory for ever. Amen' (Romans 11:36).

Another subterfuge resorted to by the Arminians in order to explain away the particular election of individuals, is to say that the text 'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated' (Romans 9:13) means a national election, not particular persons, but Jacob's children and Esau's children—the children of Israel and the children of Edom. "Now, we ask them by everything reasonable," comments C. H. Spurgeon, "is it not equally unjust of God to choose one nation and leave another? The argument which they imagine overthrows us overthrows them also. There never was a more foolish subterfuge than that of trying to bring out national election. What is the election of a nation, but the election of so many units, of so many people?—and it is tantamount to the same thing as the particular election of individuals. In thinking, men cannot see clearly that if—which we do not for a moment believe—there be any injustice in God choosing one man and not another, how much more must there be

injustice in choosing one nation and not another. No! The difficulty cannot be got rid of thus, but is greatly increased by this foolish wresting of God's Word. Besides here is the proof that it is not correct: read the verse preceding it. It does not say anything at all about nations; it says, 'For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth: It was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger referring to the children, not to the nation. Of course the threatening was afterwards fulfilled in the position of the two nations; Edom was made to serve Israel. But the text means just what it says; it does not mean nations, but it means the persons mentioned. 'Jacob'—that is the man whose name was Jacob—'Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.' Take care, my dear friends, how any of you meddle with God's Word. I have heard of folk altering passages they did not like. It will not do, you know, you cannot alter them; they are really just the same. Our only power with the Word of God is simply to let it stand as it is, and to endeavour by God's grace to accommodate ourselves to that. We must never try to make the Bible bow to us, in fact we cannot, for the truths of divine revelation are as sure and fast as the throne of God. If a man wants to enjoy a delightful prospect, and a mighty mountain lies in his path, does he commence cutting away at its base, in the vain hope that ultimately it will become a level plain before him? No, on the contrary, he diligently uses it for the accomplishment of his purpose by ascending it, well knowing this to be the only means of obtaining the end in view. So must we do; we cannot bring down the truths of God to our poor finite understanding; the mountain will never fall before us, but we can seek strength to rise higher and higher in our preception of divine things and in this way only may we hope to obtain the blessing." (From sermon on "Jacob and Esau" by C. H. Spurgeon).

#### *Caution against a Wrong Use of the Doctrine of Election*

The Westminster divines in Ch. 3 Sec. 8 of the "Confession of Faith" state that "the doctrine of this high mystery of predestination is to be handled with special prudence and care." It is as far removed from the dead and blind doctrine of fatalism as light is from darkness. The book of God's eternal decrees is in the hands of the Saviour (Rev. 5). In the days of His flesh He gave thanks to the Father for the sovereignty of His grace. 'I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth because Thou hast bid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight' (Matthew 11:25, 26). In the full light of that sovereignty which He as the eternal Son could fathom, and which to Him was the cause of praise and thanksgiving, He goes on in His mercy and love to give the gospel call, full, free and unfettered to sinners labouring and heavy laden to come unto Him as the One in whom alone they would find rest for their souls. If the sovereignty of God in His grace was a cause of praise and thanksgiving to the Great Prophet of the Church, who alone revealed to us the will of God for our salvation, how impious the cavillings of those who reject the doctrine of election, or explain it away by attributing it to the fickle will of man, and not as the Scriptures do, to the good pleasure of God's eternal will. When Christ gives thanks to the Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, let us seek to have the mind that was in Him, and to offer praise and adoration before the Sovereign will of the great I AM, on the one hand, and on the other to give the call and free offer of the gospel, which He by His Spirit is able to make effectual to salvation.

The Rev. R. M. McCheyne in his sermon on the words, 'Unto you, O men, I call: and my voice is to the sons of man' (Proverbs 8:4) says: "Very often awakened persons sit and listen to a lively description of Christ, and of His work of substitution in the stead of sinners; but

their question still is 'Is Christ a Saviour to me?' Now to this question I answer: Christ is offered freely to all the human race. 'Unto you, O men, I call.' There is no subject more misunderstood by unconverted souls than the unconditional freeness of Christ. So little idea have we naturally of free grace that we cannot believe that God can offer a Saviour to us, while we are in a wicked, hell-deserving condition. Oh, it is sad to think how men argue against their own happiness, and will not believe the very word of God!

"If I knew I were one of the elect, I would come; but I fear I am not! To you I answer: Nobody ever came to Christ because they knew themselves to be elect. It is quite true that God has of His mere good pleasure elected some to everlasting life, but they never knew it till they came to Christ. Christ nowhere invites the elect to Him. The question for you is not, Am I one of the elect? but, Am I of the human race?

"If I could repent and believe, then Christ would be free to me; but I cannot repent and believe. To you I say, Are you not a man, before you repent and believe? Then Christ is offered to you before you repent and believe. Christ is not offered to you because you repent, but because you are a vile, lost sinner. If Christ be freely offered to all men, then it is plain that all who live and die without accepting Christ shall meet with the doom of those who refuse the Son of God."

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, etc.' (Deut. 29:29). It belongs not to us as sinners to pry presumptuously into the secret things which belong to the Lord our God. Let us rather concern ourselves with what the Lord says belongs to us. The free offers and invitations and warnings of the gospel belong to us, that we repent and turn to the Lord. 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord and He will have mercy upon him and to our God for He will abundantly pardon' (Isaiah 55:7).

"No man," writes Christopher Ness, "may judge himself a reprobate in this life, and so grow desperate; for final disobedience (the only infallible evidence of reprobation) cannot be discovered till death." (*An Antidote Against Arminianism*, p. 51).

"No person who is seeking God and salvation through His Son," said the great divine, Dr. John Love, "ought to apply the doctrine of the divine sovereignty thus: God is sovereign and therefore though I am seeking salvation yet He may deny it to me. This is false. But thus, God is sovereign and therefore He might have left me as He left others not to seek Him, but to reject and despise Him, but this He has not done. That is the proper sphere of sovereignty. It is manifested in the wonderful working whereby in the course of His providence one sinner is made to seek after Him while another is left not to do so. But it is not manifested in this that any ever sought His face in vain, 'They shall praise the Lord that seek Him.' Yea, in every degree of seeking Him, this reflection should encourage and lead to say, 'Blessed be God who has brought me thus far, further than others.' The doctrine as to practice should be applied to things past, and not to anything that is to come. So it is always in Scripture. We know the divine determination concerning events by the events themselves."

## II. TOTAL DEPRAVITY

The Truth of God teaches that man through the Fall is in a state of spiritual death and alienation from God. He is depraved and defiled in his nature. His understanding, will and affections are under the power and love of sin. 'Out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness' (Mark 7:21-22). 'The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no not one' (Psalm 14:2, 3). "The whole human race," in the words of Dr. Charles Hodge, "by their apostacy from God are totally depraved. By total depravity is not meant that all men are equally wicked, nor that any man is as thoroughly corrupt as it is possible for a man to be—but there is common to all men a total alienation of the soul from God so that no unrenewed man either understands or seeks after God: no such man ever makes God his portion, or God's glory the chief end of his being. The apostacy from God is total or complete. All men worship and serve the creature rather than, and more than, the Creator. They are all therefore, declared in Scripture to be spiritually dead. They are destitute of any principle of spiritual life." That is man's condition as he is before God. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God' (Romans 8:7, 8). 'That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee: Ye must be born again' (John 3:6,7). 'The heart is deceitful above all things; and desperately wicked: who can know it?' (Jeremiah 17:9).

Arminians deny the total depravity of man, in that they hold that the will of man is free and has the ability to choose Christ and the salvation that is in Him. Such teaching is false and delusive. The will of man is free only to choose according to his moral nature, and as his nature is under the dominion of sin, man chooses accordingly. "Man by his fall into a state of sin, hath wholly lost all ability of will to any spiritual good accompanying salvation-, so as a natural man, being altogether averse from that good, and dead in sin, is not able by his own strength, to convert himself, or to prepare himself thereunto." ('Confession of Faith,' Ch. 9, Sec. 3). 'The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned' (1 Cor. 2:14). 'No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day' (John 6:44). 'Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father. From that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him' (John 6:65, 66). All who are born again are said to be 'born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God' (John 1:13). The "evangelism" of decisionism, coming forward to the front, or standing up to make a decision for Christ, or signing decision cards, is purely Arminian. It is not of God, but of the will of man and can only end in delusion and eternal despair.

This "evangelism" of decisionism is based on another false and erroneous doctrine held and propagated by Arminians, that of a Universal Atonement. "There is in every mind, containing any acquaintance with gospel truth," said the eminent Dr. John Kennedy of Dingwall, "the idea that an interest in Christ's death is essential to safety. There is in every unrenewed heart a desire to avoid the necessity of dealing with a personal Saviour, and to attain to hope, through the gospel, without being 'born again.' The figment of a universal

atonement, has been produced to meet this craving. It is ,just the gospel perverted to suit the taste of proud carnal man. 'Christ died for all, and therefore for me; I believe this, and therefore I shall be saved,' are the short stages of an easy journey to the hope of peace. To believe that Christ died for me, because He died for all, is to 'believe a lie'; but even if it were true, of what advantage could this faith be to me? His dying for me, because for all, secures nothing for me. And to believe this, is something else than to believe in Christ Himself. It is, in effect, making His death a substitute for Himself. But instead of looking on the death of Christ as it refers to you, look, in the first instance, on its bearing on His own fitness to save, and on the prospects of all who are one with Him. To view it thus, is to see Christ commended instead of superseded by His death. The first thing, I require to be assured of, is Christ's fitness to save me, a sinner. It is in Him I am called to trust. Ere I can do so, I must be persuaded that He is worthy of my confidence. This I cannot be assured of, unless I know Him as a sacrifice for sin. The merit of His sacrifice I cannot appreciate, but in the light of His personal glory. And I cannot appropriate the benefits secured by it, till I have first taken hold of Himself by faith, What I discover in the light of the cross is, that He can save me in a way that shall be to the glory of God. This is His great recommendation as a Saviour to me. If this were not true regarding Him, I could never confide in Him. And in the light in which I realise the infinite merit of His sacrifice, I know His love to be such as 'passeth knowledge.' To connect that love and the death by which it was commended, with those whom the Father gave to Him, does not deprive me of hope. It only assures me of how certain, and therefore how desirable the redemption is, which was purchased by His blood. The Person, in all His power and love, is presented to me; and the authority of God shuts me up to the acceptance of Him, in order to my salvation. It is light, revealing the glorious person, the infinite merit, and the ineffable love of Christ, and a call requiring me to come to Him; and not any supposed reference of His death to me, that encourages me to receive Him that I may be saved."

### **III. EFFECTUAL CALLING**

All those whom God hath predestinated unto life, and those only, He is pleased in His appointed and accepted time, effectually to call by His word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death, in which they are by nature to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God, taking away their heart of stone and giving unto them an heart of flesh; renewing their wills, and by His almighty power determining them to that which is good; and effectually drawing them to Jesus Christ; yet so as they come most freely, being made willing by His grace." ("The Westminster Confession of Faith." Ch. 10 Sec. 1).

"Whom He did predestinate, them He also called" (Rom. 8:30). "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." (2 Tim. 1:9).

"Now here is the touchstone by which we may try our calling not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace. This calling forbids all trust in our own doings, and conducts us to Christ alone for salvation, but it afterwards purges us from dead works to serve the living and true God. As He that hath called you is holy, so must ye be holy. If you are living in sin, you are not called, but if you are truly Christ's, you can say, 'Nothing

pains me more than sin. I desire to be rid of it; Lord help me to be holy.' Is this the panting of thy heart? Is this the tenor of thy life towards God, and His divine will? Again, in Philippians 3:13, 14 we are told of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Is then your calling a high calling? Has it ennobled your heart, and set it upon heavenly things? Has it elevated your hopes, your tastes, your desires? Has it upraised the constant tenor of your life, so that you spend it with God and for God? Another test we find in Hebrews 3:1—"Partakers of the heavenly calling." Heavenly means a call from heaven. If a man alone call thee, thou art uncalled. Is thy calling of God? Is it a call to heaven as well as from heaven? Unless thou art a stranger here, and heaven thy home, thou hast not been called with a heavenly calling; for those who have been so called declare that they look for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and they themselves are strangers and pilgrims upon the earth. Is thy calling thus holy, high, heavenly? Then beloved, thou hast been called of God, for such is the calling wherewith God doth call His people."—C. H. Spurgeon.

Arminians on the other hand believe that man has the natural power of will to exercise faith on Christ. Sinners are therefore urged to make decisions for Christ. On this foundation of sand multitudes build their hope for eternity. The decisionist conversion is but the exercise of the unrenewed will. The faith in Christ professed is not the gift of God. The joy experienced is the joy of the stony-ground hearers. The hope cherished is not the good hope through grace, but the hope of the hypocrite that shall perish. All the religious activity which follows, is not of the Spirit but of the flesh. "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:22, 23).

### *Saving Faith*

The faith which is saving, which is the fruit of effectual calling or of the new birth is the gift of God. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." (Eph. 2:8, 9).

"Faith looks to Christ as holding the office of a Saviour. The command is given, and observe it is given to all as blind and guilty and helpless to look to Christ that they might be saved; and the first decisive and satisfactory evidence of a change of heart is to get a sight of Christ as the Saviour. We may even before this, have good hope concerning you, that the Spirit of grace has begun to deal with you: but we dare not, as we value the souls of men, and tender the glory of God, we dare not say, that any man is born of God, in other words truly converted, till he sees Christ.

"Many of you say you have faith in Christ. Can you tell us anything about Him in whom you say you believe? Were your souls ever ready to sink into hell? Did they ever stick fast in the miry clay of corruption? Locked up in the prison of unbelief? Icebound by impenitence? Laid lower than the beasts with lusts? Tormented as beset by devils? Did any one come to rescue you in that state? Who is He? Is He a Saviour? Mary saw the Lord; she could tell something about it. And so the two disciples going to Emmaus. Can you this day condescend upon a single incident, even to the extent of the twinkling of an eye? Any condition of body or soul in which you saw the Lord by faith? Can you tell what passed between Him and you?" (Rev. Jonathan R. Anderson, Glasgow. Died 1859).

While Arminian converts usually manifest a strict and praiseworthy abstention in the life they lead from drink, smoking, gambling, cinemas, etc., and a self-denying zeal for propagating their gospel and winning converts, their attitude to the Lord's day is not one of tenderness and love. "Ye are not under the law, but under grace," is the Scripture which they wrest in order to justify themselves. True believers in Christ are not under the condemnation of the law—"for there is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," but they are 'under the law to Christ' as their rule of life. This the apostle states in 1 Cor. 9:21. Love to Christ is manifested and proved by love to His commandments. "If you love Me keep My commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him." (1 John 2:4). All who have no love for God's holy day, who are not grieved over how far short they come in keeping the Sabbath holy to the Lord and who are not wounded and grieved in soul when they see the Lord's day desecrated, whatever their profession, and whatever name they may have, they have but a name to live: they are still in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. "This is the love of God that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3). When the Lord writes His law in the heart in regeneration there is love for the Fourth Commandment, as surely as for the other commandments. Love to the Lord, to His Word, to His Cause, to His people and to His commandments, the holy Sabbath included, cannot be separated.

Arminian church bodies of our day have removed the ancient landmarks set by the godly fathers in the past as safeguards and bulwarks of the sanctity of the sabbath. The result is obvious. The curse of the Popish or "continental Sunday" has overspread the land like a flood. Is it any wonder that Dr. Kennedy of Dingwall said that Voluntaryism and Arminianism must be pioneers of Rationalism, for they are both the off-spring of unbelief?

#### *Man's Inability and Responsibility*

Arminians hold that responsibility infers ability, and therefore maintain that when sinners are called upon to believe and to repent, that they have the power to do so. Such teaching is false to the core. The call given in the gospel, and given by all who preach the gospel in its fullness, to believe and repent is the outward call. It is the prerogative of the Holy Spirit alone in His internal and regenerating work to make the outward call effectual. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.'

Although man through the fall lost his ability, he is still responsible and accountable to God, and because responsible he is duty bound to make use of the outward means and ordinances appointed by God, and the efficiency of which is dependent alone on His power. God has established a connection between the means and the end desired. He commands us to use them, and He has promised to bless them. To separate the means from the end, which the Lord has ordained for the salvation of sinners is to be guilty of separating what the Lord has joined. A despising and a neglecting of the means is a despising of the salvation the means bring before us. 'And how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?'

#### **IV. THE ATONEMENT**

The Atonement is the satisfaction which the Lord Jesus Christ by His obedience unto death gave to all the claims of God's law and justice in the room and stead of all given Him by



the Father. It is on the ground and basis of Christ's atonement—the work which He finished and the sacrifice which He offered that sinners are reconciled to God. It is the sacrifice which God Himself in His infinite love, mercy and wisdom provided whereby in a way consistent with the righteousness of His nature, sinners, lost, guilty and hell-deserving would be saved with an everlasting salvation. 'Herein is love not that we loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins' (1 John 4:10). The love of the Son in coming to suffer and die is equal to the love of the Father Who sent Him. Christ's sacrifice is the one and only sacrifice for sin. It is of infinite value and merit, because the sacrifice of God in our nature. 'The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1:7). And to Christ alone as the propitiation through faith in His blood are we as sinners directed to look for salvation, 'for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved' (Acts 4:12).

Arminians believe in a Universal Atonement, that Christ died for all and every man alike, for Judas as well as for Peter, and in support of their view they appeal to certain passages in Scripture, which on the surface appear to teach that Christ died for the whole world of mankind. It is evident from Scripture that the term 'world' has a variety of meanings, and that it must always be interpreted according to the context in which it is found. This also applies to the word 'all.' The texts used by the Arminians to support their theory of a Universal Atonement can all be explained in the light of the context as setting forth an atonement for all the elect and the elect only. They do not in the slightest way contradict the Scriptural and Calvinistic doctrine of a Definite or Limited Atonement—limited in its design, limitless in its efficacy. According to the Word of God, Christ by His death infallibly secured the salvation of the elect, those chosen in Him and given Him by the Father before the foundation of the world. Those for whom Christ suffered and died are called 'His sheep' (John 10:11, 15); 'His Church' (Acts 20:28; Ephesians 5:25-27); 'His people' (Matthew 1:21); 'His elect' (Romans 8:32-35). If Christ died for all, then all would be saved, for it is impossible that they for whom Christ died and whose guilt He expiated, should be condemned and lost on account of that guilt. In His intercessory prayer Christ prays for all for whom He offered Himself as a sacrifice. 'I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me: for they are Thine' (John 17:9). And on these alone He bestows eternal life. 'As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him' (John 17:2).

### *The Universal Call of the Gospel and a Definite Atonement*

If Christ's death was only for the elect, how can pardon and salvation be offered to all?

"The preachers of the gospel" says Dr. John Owen, "in their particular congregations, being utterly unacquainted with the purpose and secret counsel of God, being also forbidden to pry or search into it, (Deut. 29:29) may justifiably call upon every man to believe, with assurance of salvation to every one in particular upon his so doing; knowing and being fully persuaded of this, that there is enough in the death of Christ to save every one that shall do so; leaving the purpose and counsel of God on whom He will bestow faith and for whom in particular Christ died, to Himself. When God calls upon men to believe, He does not in the first place call upon them to believe that Christ died for them: but that there is none other name under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved, but only of Jesus Christ, through whom salvation is preached. (*Death of Death*. Bk. 4, Ch. 1).

In Vol. 3, p. 295 of his Works, Dr. Owen also says, "Preachers of the gospel and others have sufficient warrant to press upon all men the duties of faith, repentance and obedience, although they know in themselves they have not a sufficiency of ability for their due performance; for (1) It is the will and command of God that they should do so, and that is the rule of their duties. They are not to consider what men can do or will do, but what God requires. To make a judgment of men's ability and to accommodate the commands of God unto them accordingly, is not consistent unto any of the sons of men . . . such are God's commands, and such are the duties required in them. In and by them God doth use to communicate of His grace unto the souls of men: not with respect unto them as their duties, but as they are ways appointed and sanctified by Him unto such ends."

John Calvin says, "As ministers of the Gospel are messengers between God and men, the first duty devolving upon them is to make free offer of the grace of God, and the second is to strive with all their might that it may not be offered in vain."

### *The Sinner's Warrant to Believe in Christ*

Let no sinner exclude himself from the benefit of the gospel, by saying either I know not if I be elect, or I know not if I be a believer and so I know not if Christ died for me and gave Himself for me in particular. This is to mistake the ground and object of faith: for as salvation in God's purpose to the elect is not the ground of faith, and salvation in possession of the believer is not the ground of faith, but salvation in the Word of grace and in the gospel offer: this is the glad news that comes to the sinner's ears, upon which he may build his faith and hope of salvation.

The question then is not, are you an elect person or not? nor is it are you a believer or not? But the question is, are you a sinner that needs a Saviour? It is not Christ in the decree of election that you are to look to, while you know not that you are elected, that is to go too far back; nor is it Christ in the heart or in possession you are to look to, while you are not a believer, this is to go too far forward; but it is Christ in the Word. You know that you are a sinner, and Christ a Saviour held forth to you there, saying, "Look unto Me and be ye saved all ends of the earth, for I am God and beside Me there is none else." (Ralph Erskine).

### *An Erroneous Presentation of the Gospel Call*

In giving the gospel call, take heed to the warrant wherewith you accompany it," said the Prof. R. Watts, D.D., LL.D., an eminent Calvinistic theologian of his day in an address—"The Gospel Call," which he gave to divinity students of the Assembly College, Belfast, in 1867. "In calling upon men to believe, beware that you give no other warrant than what God's Word authorises you to give. . . . The warrant of faith which consists in assuring all men that Christ died for them, is, in view of the awful fact that all men are not saved utterly derogatory to the work of the Redeemer, as well as to the honour, the justice, and the truth of the everlasting Father. You will be led to conclude that the professedly unlimited atonement is really so limited as to be no atonement at all. The giving of such a warrant, in view of the unquestionable fact that millions of those for whom it is alleged the satisfaction was made, have perished, involves an impeachment of the love, and truth, and justice of the Father, or of the all-perfect righteousness of Christ. Whatever difficulties you may feel in giving the gospel call, you must not attempt to obviate them by the adoption of a theory of the atonement which strips it of all its glory and abstracts from it all that renders it efficaciously

redemptive, or that really constitutes it a ground of the faith of God's people and a guarantee for their full and final salvation. A desire for success has led many an ambassador to fall into the error. Commissioned to 'preach the gospel'—to preach Christ and Him crucified—to proclaim the unsearchable riches which are treasured up in His person and work—the ambassador has reduced the gospel, the inexhaustible theme to one sentence, and shrivelling up his message, has discharged it in the one utterance—'Christ has died for you!' Out of this prime error has arisen all his embarrassment. Such a warrant of faith requires, as its background, either a special revelation in regard to the parties addressed or a universal atonement. Not being possessed of the former, the herald has endeavoured to find relief by adopting the latter.

The preaching of the gospel does not consist in the utterance of one or two laconic invitations to come to Christ. The object of preaching is to 'produce both faith and repentance, and such invitations are fitted to produce neither. . . . You are to expound and proclaim to all men the way of life, by exhibiting Christ in the infinite dignity of His person and grace of His official relations and work; you are to urge upon men the duty of accepting the salvation offered by God in Him, and of submitting to be saved in the way which, in the infinite mercy of God, has been provided. In doing this, you are to ply those you address with all the arguments furnished by the worth of the soul, the bliss of heaven, the unutterable woes of the lost, the justice and wrath of God, revealed in His law and in the history of its administration, and by His love and mercy exhibited in Christ and His work. This done, you can assure them that all who obey this call shall be saved. This done, your work as an ambassador is done. You have said all you have authority to say. In the execution of such a commission, the question will come to you again and again—Can these bones live? But in your felt incompetency to quicken the dead which strew the valley of vision into which the Head of the Church may carry you, call to mind the truth to which attention has been already directed; remember that you are a co-worker with God; that whilst you have charge of the external call, there is another—an internal call—given by the Omnipotent, life-giving Spirit, whose it is to shine into the hearts of men, and give them to behold that glory of God in the face of Christ which it is yours to display before the minds of men in their natural estate." (*Free Presbyterian Magazine*, Vol. 37:1).

## **V. THE PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS**

The fifth and last point of Arminianism implies that saving grace is not an abiding principle, and that those who are loved of God, ransomed by Christ, and born again of the Spirit, may be cast away and perish eternally. Against this false and God-dishonouring doctrine of the Arminians, Christopher Ness advances twelve arguments proving that special grace cannot be totally and finally lost. Saving grace, he points out, is called a 'seed' remaining in those that are born of God (1 John 3; 9), an 'incorruptible seed' (1 Peter 1:23). Grace never differs from itself, though a gracious man does from himself. Saving grace cannot be lost, though as respecting its acts and operations it may not always be in exercise; but degrees and measures of grace (formerly attained to) may be lost. 'Thou hast left thy first love' (Rev. 2:4).

"The last and twelfth argument for the final perseverance of the saints is taken from the whole concurrent voice of Scripture testimony. 'The Word of the Lord shall stand for ever.' Dr.

Moulin and others have computed the texts of Scripture, which declare the doctrine of the saints' final perseverance, at six hundred: the twelve following may, however, suffice (merely as a sample) to establish it as a gospel truth: Romans 11:29; John 10:28, 29; Luke 22:32 Romans 8:30, 38, 39; 1 John 2:19, 27; 2 Cor. 1:21, 22; Phil. 1:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; Malachi 3:6; John 14:19; Jeremiah 32:40; 1 Peter 1:3, 4, 5.

"This is the Father's will which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing . . . that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day' (John 6:39, 40).

*The Need for an Uncompromising and Vigilant Witness Against Arminianism*

Warnings from the pulpit and denunciation of the errors of Arminianism are not now heard as once they were. Even in pulpits where the truth is preached, it is to be feared that, in some cases, a faithful witness is not raised against Arminianism. The cause of this may be due in a measure to the fact that in defending the cause of truth new forms of error have to be exposed and assailed, with the result that the old enemy is left so far unmolested as if it were dead. Unfortunately this is not so; Arminianism is very much alive in the pulpit, in the theological and religious press, and in the modern evangelistic meeting . . . . When we bear in mind the horror with which our forefathers regarded Arminianism, the modern attitude to it indicates how far the professing Church has drifted from the position of the theologians of those days." (*The Reformed Faith* by the Rev. D. Beaton, p. 18).

Arminianism was the false gospel of John Wesley and his followers in the eighteenth century, and of D. L. Moody in the nineteenth. It is the stock-in-trade of well nigh all the popular evangelists of this century from Billy Graham downwards. The gospel halls of the Brethren, Open and Closed, are nurseries of Arminianism. The active agents of the Faith Mission and the Salvation Army, notwithstanding the moral and social results to the credit of the latter, spread the plague on every side. All the sects which have sprung up in these latter times, however divergent in their doctrines and practices—Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals, Mormons, Christadelphians, Cooneyites, etc., etc., have all in common, the fatal lie of free-willism. It is Satan's sovereign drug, which causes the soul to sleep in delusion, and the end of such delusion is death. "Free will," says Spurgeon, "has carried many souls to hell but never a soul to heaven."

Arminianism is armed to the teeth in enmity to true and vital godliness. Where it flourishes its fruits are a superficial goody-goody form of godliness—the lamp and the light of the foolish virgins which went out in death and in despair. The Declaratory Acts of 1879, 1892 and 1921 in Scotland, and in 1901 in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand threw open the flood-gates to the deluge of Arminianism. Spiritual death and desolation followed. The fat land was turned into barrenness, and the Churches adopting these Declaratory Acts are now well on the road to Rome. The 'sovereign drug' of Arminianism has flourished beyond the wildest dreams of priests and Jesuits. It is not by open and unabashed passing of nefarious Declaratory Acts that Satan as an angel of light now works. Subtle infiltration is his present policy and technique. What need there is for the 'denunciation' and the 'horror' the Rev. D. Beaton refers to, as the cloven-hoof of Arminianism is unmistakably seen far within the tents of the popular evangelical conventions, fellowships, and unions of our day! The Scripture Union, the Inter-Varsity Fellowship, the International Council of Christian Churches, the conventions of the Keswick fraternity etc., are all riddled with the cancer of Arminianism.