

MISCELLANEOUS  
**OBSERVATIONS**

CONCERNING THE  
DIVINE DECREES IN GENERAL,  
AND  
ELECTION IN PARTICULAR.

## MISCELLANEOUS OBSERVATIONS.

---

*Concerning the Divine Decrees in general, and  
Election in particular.*

§ 1. **W**HETHER God has decreed all things that ever came to pass or not, all that own the being of a God, own that he knows all things beforehand. Now, it is selfevident, that if he knows all things beforehand, he either doth approve of them, or he doth not approve of them ; that is, he either is willing they should be, or he is not willing they should be. But to will that they should be, is to decree them.

§ 2. The Arminians ridicule the distinction between the secret and revealed will of God, or, more properly expressed, the distinction between the decree and law of God ; because we say he may decree one thing, and command another. And so, they argue, we hold a contrariety in God, as if one will of his contradicted another. However, if they will call this a contradiction of wills, we know that there is such a thing ; so that it is the greatest absurdity to dispute about it. We and they know it was God's secret will, that Abraham should not sacrifice his son Isaac ; but yet his command was, that he should do it. We know that God willed, that Pharaoh's heart should be hardened ; and yet, that the hardness of his heart was sin. We know that God willed the Egyptians should hate God's people : Psal. cv. 25. " He turned their heart to hate his people, and deal subtilly with his servants." We know that it was God's will, that Absalom should lie with Da-

vid's wives ; 2 Sam. xii. 11. " Thus saith the Lord, I will raise up this evil against thee, out of thine own house ; and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbor ; and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly ; but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." We know that God willed that Jeroboam and the ten tribes should rebel. The same may be said of the plunder of the Babylonians ; and other instances might be given. The scripture plainly tells us, that God wills to harden some men, Rom. ix. 18. That he willed that Christ should be killed by men, &c.

§ 3. It is most certain, that if there are any things so contingent, that there is an equal possibility of their being or not being, so that they may be, or they may not be ; God foreknows from all eternity that they may be, and also that they may not be. All will grant that we need no revelation to teach us this. And furthermore, if God knows all things that are to come to pass, he also foreknows whether those contingent things are to come to pass or no, at the same time that they are contingent, and that they may or may not come to pass. But what a contradiction is it to say, that God knows a thing will come to pass, and yet at the same time knows that it is contingent whether it will come to pass or no ; that is, he certainly knows it will come to pass, and yet certainly knows it may not come to pass ? What a contradiction is it to say, that God certainly foreknew that Judas would betray his master, or Peter deny him, and yet certainly knew that it might be otherwise, or certainly knew that he might be deceived ? I suppose it will be acknowledged by all, that for God certainly to know a thing will be, and yet certainly to know that it may not be, is the same thing as certainly to know that he may be deceived. I suppose it will also be acknowledged, that certainly to know a thing, and also at the same time to know that we may be deceived in it, is the same thing as certainly to know it, and certainly to know that we are uncertain of it, or that we do not certainly know it ; and that is the same thing as certainly to know it, and not certain-

ly to know it at the same time ; which we leave to be considered, whether it be not a contradiction.

§ 4. The meaning of the word *absolute*, when used about the decrees, wants to be stated. It is commonly said, God decrees nothing upon a foresight of any thing in the creature ; as this, they say, argues imperfection in God ; and so it does, taken in the sense that they commonly intend it. But nobody, I believe, will deny but that God decrees many things that he would not have decreed, if he had not foreknown and foredetermined such and such other things. What we mean, we completely express thus....That God decrees all things harmoniously, and in excellent order, one thing harmonizes with another, and there is such a relation between all the decrees, as makes the most excellent order. Thus God decrees rain in drought, because he decrees the earnest prayers of his people ; or thus, he decrees the prayers of his people, because he decrees rain. I acknowledge, to say, *God decrees a thing because*, is an improper way of speaking ; but not more improper than all our other ways of speaking about God. God decrees the latter event, because of the former, no more, than he decrees the former, because of the latter. But this is what we mean....When God decrees to give the blessing of rain, he decrees the prayers of his people ; and when he decrees the prayers of his people for rain, he very commonly decrees rain ; and thereby there is an harmony between these two decrees, of rain, and the prayers of God's people. Thus also, when he decrees diligence and industry, he decrees riches and prosperity ; when he decrees prudence, he often decrees success ; when he decrees striving, then he often decrees the obtaining the kingdom of heaven ; when he decrees the preaching of the gospel, then he decrees the bringing home of souls to Christ ; when he decrees good natural faculties, diligence and good advantages, then he decrees learning ; when he decrees summer, then he decrees the growing of plants ; when he decrees conformity to his Son, then he decrees calling ; when he decrees calling, then he decrees justification ; and when he decrees justification, then he decrees

everlasting glory. Thus, all the decrees of God are harmonious ; and this is all that can be said for or against absolute or conditional decrees. But this I say, it is as improper to make one decree a condition of another, as to make the other a condition of that : But there is a harmony between both.

§ 5. It cannot be any injustice in God to determine who is certainly to sin, and so certainly to be damned. For, if we suppose this impossibility, that God had not determined any thing, things would happen as fatally as they do now. For, as to such an absolute contingency, which they attribute to man's will, calling it the sovereignty of the will ; if they mean, by this sovereignty of will, that a man can will as he wills, it is perfect nonsense, and the same as if they should spend abundance of time and pains, and be very hot at proving, that a man can will when he doth will ; that is, that it is possible for that to be, which is. But if they mean, that there is a perfect contingency in the will of man, that is, that it happens merely by chance that a man wills such a thing, and not another, it is an impossibility and contradiction, that a thing should be without any cause or reason, and when there was every way as much cause why it should not have been. Wherefore, seeing things do unavoidably go fatally and necessarily, what injustice is it in the Supreme Being, seeing it is a contradiction that it should be otherwise, to decree that they should be as they are ?

§ 6. Contingency, as it is holden by some, is at the same time contradicted by themselves, if they hold foreknowledge. This is all that follows from an absolute, unconditional, irreversible decree, that it is impossible but that the things decreed should be. The same exactly follows from foreknowledge, that it is absolutely impossible but that the thing certainly foreknown should precisely come to pass.

If it will universally hold, that none can have absolutely perfect and complete happiness, at the same time that any thing is otherwise than he desires at that time it should be ; or thus, if it be true, that he has not absolute, perfect, infinite

and all possible happiness now, who has not now all that he wills to have now : Then God, if any thing is now otherwise than he wills to have it now, is not now absolutely, perfectly and infinitely happy. If God is infinitely happy now, then every thing is now, as God would have it to be now ; if every thing, then those things that are contrary to his commands. If so, it is not ridiculous to say, that things which are contrary to God's commands, are yet in a sense agreeable to his will. Again, let it be considered, whether it be not certainly true, that every one that can with infinite ease have a thing done, and yet will not have it done, wills it not ; that is, whether or no he that wills not to have a thing done, properly wills not to have a thing done. For example, let the thing be this, that Judas should be faithful to his Lord ; whether it be not true, that if God could with infinite ease have it done as he would, but would not have it done as he could, if he would, it be not proper to say, that God would not have it be, that Judas should be faithful to his Lord.

§ 7. They say, to what purpose are praying and striving, and attending on means, if all was irreversibly determined by God before ? But, to say that all was determined before these prayers and strivings, is a very wrong way of speaking, and begets those ideas in the mind, which correspond with no realities with respect to God. The decrees of our everlasting state were not before our prayers and strivings ; for these are as much present with God from all eternity, as they are the moment they are present with us. They are present as part of his decrees, or rather as the same ; and they did as really exist in eternity, with respect to God, as they exist in time, and as much at one time as another. Therefore, we can no more fairly argue, that these will be in vain, because God has foredetermined all things, than we can, that they would be in vain if they existed as soon as the decree, for so they do, inasmuch as they are a part of it.

§ 8. That we should say, that God has decreed every action of men, yea, every action that is sinful, and every circum-

stance of those actions ; that he predetermines that they shall be in every respect as they afterwards are ; that he determines that there shall be such actions, and just so sinful as they are ; and yet that God does not decree the actions that are sinful, as sin, but decrees them as good, is really consistent. For we do not mean, by decreeing an action *as sinful*, the same as decreeing an action so that it shall be sinful ; but by decreeing an action *as sinful*, I mean decreeing it for the sake of the sinfulness of the action. God decrees that they shall be sinful, for the sake of the good that he causes to arise from the sinfulness thereof ; whereas man decrees them for the sake of the evil that is in them.

§ 9. When a distinction is made between God's revealed will and his secret will, or his will of command and decree, will is certainly in that distinction taken in two senses. His will of decree, is not his will in the same sense as his will of command is. Therefore, it is no difficulty at all to suppose, that the one may be otherwise than the other : His will in both senses is his inclination. But when we say he wills virtue, or loves virtue, or the happiness of his creature ; thereby is intended, that virtue, or the creature's happiness, absolutely and simply considered, is agreeable to the inclination of his nature. His will of decree, is his inclination to a thing, not as to that thing absolutely and simply, but with respect to the universality of things, that have been, are, or shall be. So God, though he hates a thing as it is simply, may incline to it with reference to the universality of things. Though he hates sin in itself, yet he may will to permit it, for the greater promotion of holiness in this universality, including all things, and at all times. So, though he has no inclination to a creature's misery, considered absolutely, yet he may will it, for the greater promotion of happiness in this universality. God inclines to excellency, which is harmony, but yet he may incline to suffer that which is unharmonious in itself, for the promotion of universal harmony, or for the promoting of the harmony that there is in the universality, and making it shine the brighter. And thus it must needs be, and no hypothesis

whatsoever will relieve a man, but that he must own these two wills of God. For all must own, that God sometimes wills not to hinder the breach of his own commands, because he does not in fact hinder it. He wills to permit sin, it is evident, because he *does* permit it. None will say that God himself does what he does not *will* to do. But you will say, God wills to permit sin, as he wills the creature should be left to his freedom; and if he should hinder it, he would offer violence to the nature of his own creature. I answer, this comes nevertheless to the very thing that I say. You say, God does not will sin absolutely; but rather than alter the law of nature and the nature of free agents, he wills it. He wills what is contrary to excellency in some particulars, for the sake of a more general excellency and order. So that this scheme of the Arminians does not help the matter.

§ 10. It is a proper and excellent thing for infinite glory to shine forth; and for the same reason, it is proper that the shining forth of God's glory should be complete; that is, that all parts of his glory should shine forth, that every beauty should be proportionably effulgent, that the beholder may have a proper notion of God. It is not proper that one glory should be exceedingly manifested, and another not at all; for then the effulgence would not answer the reality. For the same reason it is not proper that one should be manifested exceedingly, and another but very little. It is highly proper that the effulgent glory of God should answer his real excellency; that the splendor should be answerable to the real and essential glory, for the same reason that it is proper and excellent for God to glorify himself at all. Thus it is necessary, that God's awful majesty, his authority and dreadful greatness, justice and holiness, should be manifested. But this could not be, unless sin and punishment had been decreed; so that the shining forth of God's glory would be very imperfect, both because these parts of divine glory would not shine forth as the others do, and also the glory of his goodness, love and holiness would be faint without them; nay, they could scarcely shine forth at all. If it were not right



that God should decree and permit and punish sin, there could be no manifestation of God's holiness in hatred of sin, or in shewing any preference, in his providence, of godliness before it. There would be no manifestation of God's grace or true goodness, if there was no sin to be pardoned, no misery to be saved from. How much happiness soever he bestowed, his goodness would not be so much prized and admired, and the sense of it not so great, as we have elsewhere shown. We little consider how much the sense of good is heightened by the sense of evil, both moral and natural. And as it is necessary that there should be evil, because the display of the glory of God could not but be imperfect and incomplete without it, so evil is necessary, in order to the highest happiness of the creature, and the completeness of that communication of God, for which he made the world; because the creature's happiness consists in the knowledge of God and sense of his love. And if the knowledge of him be imperfect, the happiness of the creature must be proportionably imperfect; and the happiness of the creature would be imperfect upon another account also; for, as we have said, the sense of good is comparatively dull and flat, without the knowledge of evil.

§ 11. It is owned, that God did choose men to eternal life, upon a foresight of their faith. But then, here is the question, whether God decreed that faith, and chose them that they should believe.

§ 12. The sin of crucifying Christ being foreordained of God in his decree, and ordered in his providence, of which we have abundant evidence from the nature of the thing, and from the great ends God had to accomplish by means of this wicked act of crucifying Christ; it being, as it were, the cause of all the decrees, the greatest of all decreed events, and that on which all other decreed events depend as their main foundation; being the main thing in that greatest work of God, the work of redemption, which is the end of all other works; and it being so much prophesied of, and so plainly

spoken of, as being done according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ; I say, seeing we have such evidence that this sin is foreordained in God's decrees, and ordered in providence, and it being, as it were, the head sin, and representative of the sin of men in general ; hence is a clear argument, that all the sins of men are foreordained and ordered by a wise providence.

§ 13. It is objected against the absolute decrees respecting the future actions of men, and especially the unbelief of sinners, and their rejection of the gospel, that this does not consist with the sincerity of God's calls and invitations to such sinners ; as he has willed, in his eternal secret decree, that they should never accept of those invitations. To which I answer, that there is that in God, respecting the acceptance and compliance of sinners, which God knows will never be, and which he has decreed never to cause to be, in which, though it be not just the same with our desiring and wishing for that which will never come to pass, yet there is nothing wanting but what would imply imperfection in the case. There is all in God that is good, and perfect, and excellent in our desires and wishes for the conversion and salvation of wicked men. As, for instance, there is a love to holiness, absolutely considered, or an agreeableness of holiness to his nature and will ; or, in other words, to his natural inclination. The holiness and happiness of the creature, absolutely considered, are things that he loves. These things are infinitely more agreeable to his nature than to ours. There is all in God that belongs to our desire of the holiness and happiness of unconverted men and reprobates, excepting what implies imperfection. All that is consistent with infinite knowledge, wisdom, power, selfsufficiency, infinite happiness and immutability. Therefore, there is no reason that his absolute prescience, or his wise determination and ordering what is future, should hinder his expressing this disposition of his nature, in like manner as we are wont to express such a disposition in ourselves, viz. by calls and invitations, and the like.

The disagreeableness of the wickedness and misery of the creature, absolutely considered, to the nature of God, is all that is good in pious and holy men's lamenting the past misery and wickedness of men. Their lamenting these, is good no farther than it proceeds from the disagreeableness of those things to their holy and good nature. This is also all that is good in wishing for the future holiness and happiness of men. And there is nothing wanting in God, in order to his having such desires and such lamentings, but imperfection ; and nothing is in the way of his having them, but infinite perfection ; and therefore it properly, naturally and necessarily came to pass, that when God, in the manner of existence, came down from his infinite perfection, and accommodated himself to our nature and manner, by being made man, as he was, in the person of Jesus Christ, he really desired the conversion and salvation of reprobates, and lamented their obstinacy and misery ; as when he beheld the city Jerusalem, and wept over it, saying, " O Jerusalem," &c. In the like manner, when he comes down from his infinite perfection, though not in the manner of being, but in the manner of manifestation, and accommodates himself to our nature and manner, in the manner of expression, it is equally natural and proper that he should express himself as though he desired the conversion and salvation of reprobates, and lamented their obstinacy and misery.

§ 14. MAXIM 1. There is no such thing *truly* as any pain or grief, or trouble in God.

MAXIM 2. Hence it follows that there is no such thing as any real disappointment in God, or his being really crossed in his will, or things going contrary to his will ; because, according to the notion of *will*, to have one's will, is agreeable and pleasing ; for it is the notion of being pleased or suited, to have things as we will them to be ; and so, on the other hand, to have things contrary to one's will, is disagreeable, troublesome or uncomfortable. Job xxiii. 13. " He is in one mind, and who can turn him ? And what his soul desireth, that he doth."

In the first place, I lay this down, which I suppose none will deny, that as to God's own actions, God decrees them, or purposes them beforehand. For none will be so absurd as to say that God acts without intentions, or without designing to act, or that he forbears to act, without intending to forbear. 2dly. That whatsoever God intends or purposes, he intends and purposes from all eternity, and that there are no new purposes or intentions in God. For, if God sometimes begins to intend what he did not intend before, then two things will follow.

1. That God is not omniscient. If God sometimes begins to design what he did not design before, it must of necessity be for want of knowledge, or for want of knowing things before as he knows them now, for want of having exactly the same views of things. If God begins to intend what he did not before intend, it must be because he now sees reasons to intend it, that he did not see before ; or that he has something new, objected to his understanding, to influence him.

2. If God begins to intend or purpose things that he did not intend before, then God is certainly mutable, and then he must in his own mind and will, be liable to succession and change ; for wherever there are new things, there is succession and change. Therefore, I shall take these two things for positions granted and supposed in this controversy, viz. that as to God's own actions and forbearings to act, he decrees and purposes them beforehand ; and that whatsoever God designs or purposes, he purposes from all eternity, and thus decrees from all eternity all his own actions, and forbearings to act.

COROLL. Hence God decrees from all eternity, to permit all the evil that ever he does permit ; because God's permitting is God's forbearing to act or to prevent.

§ 15. It can be made evident by reason, that nothing can come to pass, but what it is the will and pleasure of God should come to pass. This may be argued from the infinite happiness of God. For every being had rather things should go

according to his will, than not ; because, if he had not rather, then it is not his will. It is a contradiction to say, he wills it, and yet does not choose it, or had not rather it should be so than not. But, if God had rather things should be according to his will than not, then, if a thing fall out otherwise than he hath willed, he meets with a cross ; because, on this supposition, he had rather it should have been otherwise, and therefore he would have been better pleased if the thing had been otherwise. It is contrary to what he chose, and therefore it is of necessity that he must be displeased. It is of necessity that every being should be pleased, when a thing is as he chooses, or had rather it should be. It is a contradiction to suppose otherwise. For it is the very notion of being pleased, to have things agreeable to one's pleasure. For the very same reason, every being is crossed, or it is displeasing to him, when a thing is, that he chose, and had rather should not have been. For it is the very notion of a thing's being cross or displeasing to any, that it is contrary to his pleasure.

But if God can meet with crosses and things displeasing to him, then he is not perfectly and unchangeably happy. For wherever there is any displeasedness or unpleasantness, it must, of necessity, in a degree diminish the happiness of the subject. Where there is any cross to a being's choice, there is something contrary to happiness. Wherever there is any displeasedness, there is something contrary to pleasure, and which consequently diminishes pleasure. It is impossible any thing should be plainer than this.

§ 16. The commands and prohibitions of God are only significations of our duty and of his nature. It is acknowledged that sin is, in itself considered, infinitely contrary to God's nature ; but it does not follow, but that it may be the pleasure of God to permit it, for the sake of the good that he will bring out of it. God can bring such good out of that, which in itself is contrary to his nature, and which, in itself considered, he abhors, as may be very agreeable to his nature, and when sin is spoken of as contrary to the will of

God, it is contrary to his will, considered only as in itself. As man commits it, it is contrary to God's will; for men act in committing it with a view to that which is evil. But as God permits it, it is not contrary to God's will; for God in permitting it has respect to the great good that he will make it an occasion of. If God respected sin as man respects it in committing it, it would be exceedingly contrary to his will; but considered as God decrees to permit it, it is not contrary to God's will. To give an instance....The crucifying of Christ was a great sin; and as men committed it, it was exceedingly hateful and highly provoking to God. Yet upon many great considerations it was the will of God that it should be done. Will any body say that it was not the will of God that Christ should be crucified? Acts iv. 28. "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done."

§ 17. Sin is an evil, yet the futurity of sin, or that sin should be future, is not an evil thing. Evil is an evil thing, and yet it may be a good thing that evil should be in the world. There is certainly a difference between the thing itself existing, and its being an evil thing that ever it came into existence. As, for instance, it might be an evil thing to crucify Christ, but yet it was a good thing that the crucifying of Christ came to pass. As men's act, it was evil, but as God ordered it, it was good. Who will deny but that it may be so that evil's coming to pass may be an occasion of a greater good than that is an evil, and so of there being more good in the whole, than if that evil had not come to pass? And if so, then it is a good thing that that evil comes to pass. When we say the thing is an evil thing in itself, then we mean that it is evil, considering it only within its own bounds. But when we say that it is a good thing that ever it came to pass, then we consider the thing as a thing among events, or as one thing belonging to the series of events, and as related to the rest of the series. If a man should say that it was a good thing that ever it happened that Joseph's brethren sold him into Egypt, or that it was a good thing that ever it came to pass that

Pope Leo X. sent out indulgencies for the commission of future sins, nobody would understand a man thus expressing himself, as justifying these acts.

It implies no contradiction to suppose that an act may be an evil act, and yet that it is a good thing that such an act should come to pass. A man may have been a bad man, and yet it may be a good thing that there has been such a man. This implies no contradiction ; because it implies no contradiction to suppose that there being such a man may be an occasion of there being more good in the whole, than there would have been otherwise. So it no more implies a contradiction to suppose that an action may be a bad action, and yet that it may be a good thing that there has been such an action. God's commands, and calls, and counsels, do imply another thing, viz. that it is our duty to do these things ; and though they may be our duty, yet it may be certain beforehand that we shall not do them.

And if there be any difficulty in this, the same difficulty will attend the scheme of the Arminians ; for they allow that God permits sin. Therefore, as he permits it, it cannot be contrary to his will. For if it were contrary to his will as he permits it, then it would be contrary to his will to permit it ; for that is the same thing. But nobody will say that God permits sin, when it is against his will to permit it ; for this would be to make him act involuntarily, or against his own will.

§ 18. “ The wrath of man shall praise thee, and the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.” Psal. lxxvi. 10. If God restrains sin when he pleases ; and when he permits it, permits it for the sake of some good that it will be an occasion of, and does actually restrain it in all other cases ; it is evident that when he permits it, it is his will that it should come to pass for the sake of the good that it will be an occasion of. If he permits it for the sake of that good, then he does not permit it merely because he would infringe on the creature's liberty in restraining it ; as is further evident because he does restrain it when that good is not in view. If it be his

will to permit it to come to pass, for the sake of the good that its coming to pass will be an occasion of; then it is his will to permit it, that by its coming to pass he may obtain that good; and therefore, it must necessarily be his will that it should come to pass, that he may obtain that good. If he permits it, that, by its coming to pass, he may obtain a certain good, then his proximate end in permitting it, is that it may come to pass. And if he wills the means for the sake of the end, he therein wills the end. If God wills to permit a thing that it may come to pass, then he wills that it should come to pass. This is selfevident. But if he wills to permit it to come to pass, that by its coming to pass he may obtain some end, then he wills to permit it that it should come to pass. For to will to permit a thing to come to pass, that by its coming to pass good may be obtained, is exactly the same thing as to will to permit it to come to pass, that it may come to pass, and so the end may be attained. To will to permit a thing to come to pass, that he may obtain some end by its coming to pass, and yet to be unwilling that it should come to pass, certainly implies a contradiction.

If the foundation of that distinction that there is between one man and another, whereby one is a good man, and another a wicked man, be God's pleasure, and his causation; then God has absolutely elected the particular persons that are to be godly. For, by supposition, it is owing to his determination. Matth. xi. 25, 26, 27. "At that time, Jesus answered and said, 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. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father: neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him."

§ 19. It may be argued, from the infinite power and wisdom of God, that nothing can come to pass, but that it must be agreeable to the will and pleasure of God that it should come to pass. For, as was observed before, every being had



rather things should be according to his will, than not. Therefore, if things be not according to his will, it must be for want of power. It cannot be for want of will, by supposition. It must therefore be for want of sufficiency. It must be either because he cannot have it so, or cannot have it so without some difficulty, or some inconvenience ; or all may be expressed in a word, viz. that he wants sufficiency to have things as he wishes. But this cannot be the case of a being of infinite power and infinite wisdom. If he has infinite power and wisdom, he can order all things to be just as he wills : And he can order it with perfect and infinite ease, or without the least difficulty or inconveniency. Two things lie before him, both equally within his power, either to order the matter to be, or not to order it to be ; and both of them are equally easy to him. One is as little trouble to him as the other ; as to easiness or trouble, they are perfectly equal. It is as easy for him to order it, as not to order it. Therefore, his determination, whether it be ordering it, or not ordering it, must be a certain sign of his will in the case. If he does order it to be, this is a sign that his will is that it should be. And if he does not order it to be, but suffers it not to be, that is as sure a sign that he wills that it should not be. So that, however the thing is, it is a sure sign that it is the will of God that it should be as it is.

To this nothing can be objected, unless that it is not for want of will, nor want of power in God, that things be not as he would have them, but because the nature of the subject will not allow of it. But how can this be to the purpose, when the nature of the subject itself is of God, and is wholly within his power, is altogether the fruit of his mere will ? And cannot a God of infinite wisdom and infinite power cause the natures of things to be such, and order them so after they are caused, as to have things as he chooses, or without his will's being crossed, and things so coming to pass that he had rather have them otherwise ? As, for instance, God foresaw who would comply with the terms of salvation, and who would not : And he could have forbore to give being to such as he foresaw would not comply, if, upon some consideration, it was

not his pleasure that there should be some who should not comply with the terms of salvation. Objectors may say, God cannot always prevent men's sins, unless he act contrary to the free nature of the subject, or without destroying men's liberty. But will they deny, that an omnipotent and infinitely wise God could not possibly invent and set before men such strong motives to obedience, and have kept them before them in such a manner, as should have influenced all mankind to continue in their obedience, as the elect angels have done, without destroying their liberty? God will order it so, that the saints and angels in heaven never will sin: And does it therefore follow, that their liberty is destroyed, and that they are not free, but forced in their actions? Does it follow, that they are turned into blocks, as the Arminians say the Calvinist doctrines turn men?

§ 20. God decrees all the good that ever comes to pass; and therefore there certainly will come to pass no more good, than he has absolutely decreed to cause; and there certainly and infallibly will no more believe, no more be godly, and no more be saved, than God has decreed that he will cause to believe, and cause to be godly, and will save.

§ 21. The foreknowledge of God will necessarily infer a decree: For God could not foreknow that things would be, unless he had decreed they should be; and that because things would not be future, unless he had decreed they should be. If God, from all eternity, knew that such and such things were future, then they were future; and consequently the proposition was from all eternity true, that such a thing, at such a time, would be. And it is as much impossible that a thing should be future, without some reason of its being future, as that it should actually be, without some reason why it is. It is as perfectly unreasonable to suppose, that this proposition should be true, viz. such a thing will be, or is to be, without a reason why it is true; as it is that this proposition should be true, such a thing actually is, or has been, without some reason why that is true, or why that thing exists.

For, as the being of the thing is not in its own nature necessary, so that proposition that was true before, viz. that it shall be, is not in its own nature a necessary truth. And therefore I draw this consequence, that if there must be some reason of the futurity of the thing, or why the thing is future ; this can be no other than God's decree, or the truth of the proposition, that such a thing will be, has been determined by God. For the truth of the proposition is determined by the supposition. My meaning is, that it does not remain a question ; but the matter is decided, whether the proposition shall be true or not. The thing, in its own nature, is not necessary, but only possible ; and therefore, it is not of itself that it is future ; it is not of itself in a state of futurity, if I may so speak, but only in a state of possibility ; and there must be some cause to bring it out of a state of mere possibility, into a state of futurity. This must be God only ; for there was no other being by supposition existing. And though other things are future, yet it will not be sufficient to say, that the futurity of other things is the cause of the futurity of this. And it is owing only to him, that is the first being, and that exists necessarily, and of himself, that all other things, that are not in their own nature necessary, or necessarily future, but merely possible, are brought out of that state of mere possibility, into a state of futurity, to be certainly future. Here is an effect already done, viz. the rendering that which in its own nature is only possible, to be certainly future, so that it can be certainly known to be future : And there must be something already existing, that must have caused this effect. Whatsoever is not of itself or by the necessity of its own nature, is an effect of something else. But that such a thing should be future by supposition, is not of itself or by necessity of its own nature. If things that appertain to the creature, or things that come to pass in time, be not future of themselves and of their own nature, then they are future, because God makes them to be future. This is exceedingly evident ; for there is nothing else at all beside God and things that come to pass in time. And therefore, if things that come to

pass in time have not the reason of their own futurity in themselves, it must be in God.

But if you say, that the ground or reason of their futurity is in the things themselves, then things are future, prior to any decree, or their futurity is antecedent in nature of any decree of God. And then, to what purpose is any decree of God? For, according to this supposition, God's decreeing does not make any thing future, or not future; because it was future, prior to his decree. His decreeing or appointing that any thing shall be, or shall not be, does not alter the case. It is not about to be, or about not to be, any thing the more for God's decreeing it. According to this supposition, God has no freedom or choice in decreeing or appointing any thing. It is not at his choice what shall be future, and what not; no not in one thing. For the futurity of things is by this supposition antecedent in nature to his choice; so that his choosing or refusing does not alter the case. The things in themselves are future, and his decreeing cannot make them not future; for they cannot be future and not future at the same time; neither can it make them future, because they are future already; so that they who thus plead for man's liberty, advance principles which destroy the freedom of God himself. It is allowed that things are future before they come to pass; because God foreknows them. Either things are future antecedently to God's decree and independently of it, or they are not. If they are not future antecedently to, and independently of God's decree, then they are made so by his decree; there is no medium. But if they are so antecedently to his decree, then the above mentioned absurdity will follow, viz. that God has no power by his decree to make any thing future or not future. He has no choice in the case. And if it be already decided, something must have decided it; for, as has been already shown, it is not true without a reason why it is true. And if something has determined or decided the truth of it, it must be God that has decided it, or something else. It cannot be chance or mere accident: That is contrary to every rational supposition. For it is to be supposed, that there is some reason for it, and that something

does decide it. If there be any thing that comes to pass by mere accident, that comes to pass of itself without any reason. If it be not chance therefore that has decided it, it must be God or the creature. It cannot be the creature as actually existing : For, by supposition, it is determined from all eternity before any creature exists. Therefore, if it be any thing in the creature that decides it in any way, it must be only the futuration of that thing in the creature. But this brings us to the absurdity and contradiction, that the same thing is both the cause and the effect of itself. The very effect, the cause of which we are seeking, is the futuration of the thing ; and if this futuration be the cause of that effect, it is the cause of itself.

§ 22. The first objection of the Arminians is, that the divine decree infringes on the creature's liberty. In answer to this objection, we may observe some things to shew what is the true notion of liberty, and the absurdity of their notion of liberty. Their notion of liberty is, that there is a sovereignty in the will, and that the will determines itself, so that its determination to choose or refuse this or that, is primarily within itself ; which description of liberty implies a selfcontradiction. For it supposes the will, in its first act, choosing or refusing to be determined by itself ; which implies that there is an antecedent act of the will to that first act, determining that act. For, if the will determines its own first act, then there must be an act of the will before that first act, (for that determining is acting) which is a contradiction. There can be no fallacy in this ; for we know that if the will determines its own act, it does not determine it without acting. Therefore, here is this contradiction, viz. that there is an act of the will before the first act. There is an act of the will determining what it shall choose, before the first act of choice ; which is as much as to say, that there is an act of volition before the first act of volition. For the will's determining what it will choose, is choosing. The will's determining what it will will, is willing. So that according to this notion of liberty, the will must choose before it chooses, in order to deter-

mine what it will choose. If the will determines itself, it is certain that one act must determine another. If the will determines its own choice, then it must determine by a foregoing act what it will choose. If the will determines its own act, then an antecedent act determines the consequent ; for that determining is acting. The will cannot determine without acting. Therefore I inquire what determines that first act of the will, viz. its determination of its own act ? It must be answered, according to their scheme, that it is the will by a foregoing act. Here, again, we have the same contradiction, viz. that the first act of the will is determined by an act that is before that first act. If the will determines itself, or determines its own choice, the meaning of it must be, if there be any meaning belonging to it, that the will determines how it will choose ; and that it chooses, according to that, its own determination how to choose, or is directed in choosing by that its own determination. But then I would inquire, whether that first determination, that directs the choice, be not itself an act or a volition ; and if so, I would inquire what determines that act. Is it another determination still prior to that in the order of nature ? Then I would inquire, what determines the first act or determination of all ? If the will, in its acts of willing or choosing, determines or directs itself how to choose, then there is something done by the will prior to its act of choosing that is determined, viz. its determining or directing itself how to choose. This act determining or directing, must be something besides or distinct from the choice determined or directed, and must be prior in order of nature to it. Here are two acts of the will, one the cause of the other, viz. the act of the will directing and determining, and the act or choice directed or determined. Now, I inquire, what determines that first act of the will determining or directing, to determine and direct as it does ? If it be said, the will determines itself in that ; then that supposes there is another act of the will prior to that, directing and determining that act, which is contrary to the supposition. And if it was not, still the question would recur, what determines that first determining act of the will ? If the will determines itself, one

of these three things must be meant, viz. 1. That that very same act of the will determines itself. But this is as absurd as to say that something makes itself; and it supposes it to be before it is. For the act of determining is as much prior to the thing determined, as the act making is before the thing made. Or, 2. The meaning must be, that the will determines its own act, by some other act that is prior to it in order of nature; which implies that the will acts before its first act. Or, 3. The meaning must be, that the faculty, considered at the same time as perfectly without act, determines its own consequent act; which is to talk without a meaning, and is a great absurdity. To suppose that the faculty, remaining at the same time perfectly without act, can determine any thing, is a plain contradiction; for determining is acting. And besides, if the will does determine itself, that power of determining itself does not argue any freedom, unless it be by an act of the will, or unless that determination be itself an act of choice. For what freedom or liberty is there in the will's determining itself, without an act of choice in determining, whereby it may choose which way it will determine itself? So that those that suppose the will has a power of selfdetermination, must suppose that that very determination is an act of the will, or an act of choice, or else it does not at all help them out in what they would, viz. the liberty of the will. But if that very determination how to act, be itself an act of choice, then the question returns, what determines this act of choice.

Also, the foreknowledge of God contradicts their notion of liberty as much, and in every respect in the same manner as a decree. For they do not pretend that decree contradicts liberty any otherwise, than as it infers that it is beforehand certain that the thing will come to pass, and that it is impossible but that it should be, as the decree makes an indissoluble connexion beforehand between the subject and predicate of the proposition, that such a thing shall be. A decree infers no other necessity than that. And God's foreknowledge does infer the same to all intents and purposes. For if from all eternity God foreknew that such a thing would

be, then the event was infallibly certain beforehand, and that proposition was true from all eternity, that such a thing would be ; and therefore there was an indissoluble connexion beforehand between the subject and predicate of that proposition. If the proposition was true beforehand, the subject and predicate of it were connected beforehand. And therefore it follows from hence, that it is utterly impossible that it should not prove true, and that, for this reason, that it is utterly impossible that a thing should be true, and not true, at the same time.

§ 23. The same kind of infallible certainty, that the thing will come to pass, or impossibility but that it should come to pass, that they object against, must necessarily be inferred another way, whether we hold the thing to be any way decreed or not. For it has been shown before, and I suppose none will deny, that God from all eternity decrees his own actions. Therefore he from all eternity decrees every punishment that he ever has inflicted, or will inflict. So that it is impossible, by their own reasoning, but that the punishment should come to pass. And if it be impossible but that the punishment should come to pass, then it is equally impossible but that the sin should come to pass. For if it be possible that the sin should not come to pass, and yet impossible but that the punishment should come to pass, then it is impossible but that God should punish that sin which may never be.

§ 24. For God certainly to know that a thing will be, that possibly may be, and possibly may not be, implies a contradiction. If possibly it may be otherwise, then how can God know certainly that it will be ? If it possibly may be otherwise, then he knows it possibly may be otherwise ; and that it is inconsistent with his certainly knowing that it will not be otherwise. If God certainly knows it will be, and yet it may possibly be otherwise, then it may possibly happen to be otherwise than God certainly knows it will be. If so, then it may possibly happen that God may be mistaken in his



judgment, when he certainly knows ; for it is supposed that it is possible that it should be otherwise than he judges. For that it should be otherwise than he judges, and that he should be mistaken, are the same thing. How unfair therefore is it in those that hold the foreknowledge of God, to insist upon this objection from human liberty, against the decrees, when their scheme is attended with the same difficulty, exactly in the same manner !

§ 25. Their other objection is, that God's decrees make God the author of sin. I answer, that there is no more necessity of supposing God the author of sin, on this scheme, than on the other. For if we suppose, according to my doctrine, that God has determined, from all eternity, the number and persons of those that shall perform the condition of the covenant of grace ; in order to support this doctrine, there is no need of maintaining any more concerning God's decreeing sin, than this, viz. that God has decreed that he will permit all the sin that ever comes to pass, and that upon his permitting it, it will certainly come to pass. And they hold the same thing ; for they hold that God does determine beforehand to permit all the sin that does come to pass ; and that he certainly knows that if he does permit it, it will come to pass. I say, they in their scheme allow both these ; they allow that God does permit all the sin to come to pass, that ever does come to pass ; and those that allow the foreknowledge of God, do also allow the other thing, viz. that he knows concerning all the sin that ever does really come to pass, that it will come to pass upon his permitting it. So that if this be making God the author of sin, they make him so in the very same way that they charge us with doing it.

§ 26. One objection of their's against God's decreeing or ordering, in any sense, that sin should come to pass, is, that man cannot do this without making himself sinful and in some measure, guilty of the sin, and that therefore God cannot. To this I answer, that the same objection lies against their own scheme two ways : 1. Because they own that God

does permit sin, and that he determines to permit it beforehand, and that he knows, with respect to all sin that ever is committed, that upon his permitting it, it will come to pass ; and we hold no other. 2. Their objection is, that what is a sin in men, is a sin in God ; and therefore, in any sense to decree sin, would be a sin. But if this objection be good, it is as strong against God's permission of sin, which they allow ; for it would be a sin in men to permit sin. We ought not to permit or suffer it where we have opportunity to hinder it ; and we cannot permit it without making ourselves in some measure guilty. Yet they allow that God does permit sin ; and that his permitting it does not make him guilty of it. Why must the argument from men to God be stronger in the other case than in this ?

§ 27. They say, that we ought to begin in religion, with the perfections of God, and make these a rule to interpret scripture. Ans. 1. If this be the best rule, I ask, why is it not as good a rule to argue from these perfections of God, his omniscience, infinite happiness, infinite wisdom and power, as his other attributes that they argue from ? If it be not as good a rule to argue from these as those, it must be because they are not so certain, or because it is not so certain that he is possessed of these perfections. But this they will not maintain ; for his moral perfections are proved no otherwise than by arguing from his natural perfections ; and therefore the latter must be equally certain with the former. What we prove another thing by, must at least be as certain as it makes the thing proved by it. If an absolute and universal decree does infer a seeming inconsistency with some of God's moral perfections, they must confess the contrary to have a seeming inconsistency with the natural perfections of God.

Again, 2dly. They lay it down for a rule to embrace no doctrine which they by their own reason cannot reconcile with the moral perfections of God. But I would shew the unreasonableness of this rule. For, 1. If this be a good rule, then it always was so. Let us then see what will follow. We

shall then, 2dly, have reason to conclude every thing to be really inconsistent with God's moral perfections, that we cannot reconcile with his moral perfections ; for if we have not reason to conclude that it is inconsistent, then we have no reason to conclude that it is not true. But if this be true that we have reason to conclude every thing is inconsistent with God's moral perfections which we cannot reconcile with those perfections, then David had reason to conclude that some things that he saw take place, in fact were inconsistent with God's moral perfections, for he could not reconcile them with those perfections, Psalm lxxiii. And Job had cause to come to the same conclusion concerning some events in his day. 3. If it be a good rule that we must conclude that to be inconsistent with the divine perfections, that we cannot reconcile with, or, which is the same thing, that we cannot see how it is consistent with those perfections, then it must be because we have reason to conclude that it cannot happen that our reason cannot see how it can be, and then it will follow that we must reject the doctrine of the Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, &c.

The scripture itself supposes that there are some things in the scripture that men may not be able to reconcile with God's moral perfections. See Rom. ix. 19. "Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will?" And the apostle does not answer the objection, by shewing us how to reconcile it with the moral perfections of God, but by representing the arrogance of quarrelling with revealed doctrines under such a pretence, and not considering the infinite distance between God and us. "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" And God answered Job after the same manner. God rebuked him for darkening counsel by words without knowledge, and answered him, only by declaring and manifesting to him the infinite distance between God and him ; so letting him know, that it became him humbly to submit to God, and acknowledge his justice even in those things that were difficult to his reason ; and that without solving his difficulties any other way than by making him sensible of the weakness of his own understanding.

§ 28. If there be no election, then it is not God that makes men to differ, expressly contrary to scripture. No man ought to praise God for that happiness that he has above other men, or for that distinction that is between him and other men, that he is holy and that he is saved; when they are not holy and not saved. The saints in heaven, when they look on the devils in hell, have no occasion to praise God on account of the difference between them. Some of the ill consequences of the Arminian doctrines are, that it robs God of the greater part of the glory of his grace, and takes away a principal motive to love and praise him, and exalts man to God's room, and ascribes the glory to self, that belongs to God alone. Rom. xi. 7. "The election hath obtained, and the rest were blinded." That by the *election* here is not meant the Gentiles, but the elect part of the Jews, is most apparent by the context. Such Arminians who allow, that some only are elected, and not all that are saved, but that none are reprobated, overthrow hereby their own main objection against reprobation, viz. that God offers salvation to all, and encourages them to seek it, which say they, would be inconsistent with God's truth, if he had absolutely determined not to save them; for they will not deny that those that are elected whilst ungodly, are warned of God to beware of eternal damnation, and to avoid such and such things, lest they should be damned. But for God to warn men to beware of damnation, though he has absolutely determined that they shall not be damned, is exactly parallel with his exhorting men to seek salvation, though he has actually determined that they shall not be saved.

§ 29. That election is not from a foresight of works, or conditional, as depending on the condition of man's will, is evident by 2 Tim. i. 9. "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." Philip. ii. 13. "For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his own good pleasure." Rom. ix. 15, 16. "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on

whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy." Men's labors and endeavors themselves are from God. 1 Cor. xv. 10. "But by the grace of God, I am what I am ; and his grace which was bestowed upon me, was not in vain ; but I labored more abundantly than they all. Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

§ 30. God decrees all things, and even all sins. Acts ii. 23. "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain ;" iv. 28. "For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." If the thing meant, be only that Christ's sufferings should come to pass by some means or other ; I answer, they could not come to pass but by sin. For contempt and disgrace was one thing he was to suffer. Even the free actions of men are subject to God's disposal. Prov. xxi. 1. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord ; he turneth it as the rivers of water, whithersoever it pleaseth him." See Jer. lii. 3. "For through the anger of the Lord it came to pass in Jerusalem and Judah, till he had cast them out from his presence, that Zedekiah rebelled against the king of Babylon." The not complying with the terms of the covenant of grace is decreed, 1 Pet. ii. 8. "A stone of stumbling and a rock of offence to them that stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed." What man determines, never comes to pass, unless God determines it, Lam. iii. 37. "Who is he that saith, and it cometh to pass, and the Lord commandeth it not ?" By commanding is here meant willing ; and God is elsewhere said to speak, and it was done ; to command, and it stood fast. God determines the limits of men's lives. This is exceeding evident. Job vii. 1. "Is there not an appointed time to man upon earth ? Are not his days also like the days of an hireling ?" *Days of an hireling* signify an appointed, certain, limited time ; as Isa. xvi. 14, and Isa. xxi. 16. If the limits of men's lives are determined, men's free actions must be determined, and even

their sins; for their lives often depend on such acts. See also Job xiv. 5.

§ 31. If God does not know all things, then his knowledge may increase, he may gain, and may grow wiser as he grows older. He may discover new things, and may draw consequences from them. And he may be mistaken: If he does not know, he may guess wrong: If he does not know, he has no infallible judgment; for an infallible judgment is knowledge. And if he may be mistaken, he may order matters wrong; he may be frustrated; his measures may be broken. For, doubtless, in things that are uncertain, he orders things according to what appears most probable, or else he fails in prudence. But in so ordering things, his measures may be broken. And then the greater part of the great events, viz. events among rational creatures, would be uncertain to him. For the greater part of them depend on men's free actions. That he does foreknow, is evident by his predicting and foretelling events, and even the sins of men, as Judas's sin. If he did not foreknow, he might change his will as he altered his views. Now, it is especially with respect to God's will and purposes, that he is said in scripture not to be changeable. Having thus proved the foreknowledge of God, and the greater part of Arminians not denying it, I shall hereafter take it for granted, and shall argue against those only that allow it. If he did not foreknow and might be disappointed, he might repent.

§ 32. They say, as God's power extends only to all things possible, so God's knowledge only extends to all things knowable.

Ans. Things impossible, or contradictions, are not things; but events that come to pass, are things. God's power does extend to all things, otherwise it would not be infinite. So neither is the knowledge of God infinite, unless God knows all things. To suppose that God cannot do things impossible, does not suppose that God's power can be increased. But to suppose that God does not know men's free actions, does sup-

pose that God's knowledge may be increased. To suppose that God's decrees are conditional, in the sense of the Arminians, or that they depend, as they suppose, on a foresight of something that shall come to pass in time, is to suppose that something that first begins to be in time, is the cause of something that has been from all eternity, which is absurd ; for nothing can be a cause of that existence, which is before the existence of that cause. What an absurdity is it, to suppose that that existence which is an effect, is effected by a cause, when that cause that effects it, is not, or has no being ? If it be answered, that it is not the actual existence of the thing, that is the reason or cause of the decree, but the foresight of the existence ; and the foresight of the existence may be at the same time with the decree, and before it, in the order of nature, though the existence itself is not ; and that it is not properly the actual existence of the thing foreseen, that is the cause of the decree, but the existence of it in the divine foreknowledge. I reply, that this does not help the difficulty at all, but only puts it a step farther off ; for still, by their scheme, the foreknowledge depends on the future actual existence ; so that the actual existence is the cause of the divine foreknowledge, which is infinite ages before it. And it is a great absurdity to suppose this effect to flow from this cause, before the existence of the cause. And whatever is said, the absurdity will occur, unless we suppose that the divine decree is the ground of the futurition of the event, and also the ground of the foreknowledge of it. Then the cause is before the effect ; but otherwise the effect is before the cause.

§ 33. If God absolutely determined that Christ's death should have success in gathering a church to him, it will follow that there was a number absolutely elected, or that God had determined some should surely be saved. If God determined that some should surely be saved, that implies that he had determined that he would see to it, that some should perform the conditions of salvation and be saved ; or, which is the same thing, that he would cause that they should be surely saved. But this cannot be, without fixing on the per-

sons beforehand. For the cause is before the effect. There is no such thing as God's resolving absolutely beforehand that he would save some, and yet not determining who they should be, before they were actually saved : Or that he should see to it, that there should be in a number the requisites of salvation, and yet not determine who, till they actually have the requisites of salvation. But God had absolutely determined that some should be saved, yea a great number, after Christ's death ; and had determined it beforehand. Because he had absolutely promised it ; Isa. xlix. 6, and liii. 10. See in Psal. lxxii. and other places in the Psalms, and Tit. ii. 14. God, having absolutely purposed this before Christ's death, must either have then determined the persons, or resolved that he would hereafter determine the persons ; at least, if he saw there was need of it, and saw that they did not come in of themselves. But this latter supposition, if we allow it, overthrows the Arminian scheme. It shows, that such a pre-determination, or absolute election, is not inconsistent with God's perfections, or the nature of the gospel constitution, or God's government of the world, and his promise of reward to the believing and obedient, and the design of gospel offers and commands, as the Arminians suppose. If God has absolutely determined to save some certain persons, then, doubtless, he has in like manner determined concerning all that are to be saved. God's promising, supposes not only that the thing is future, but that God will do it. If it be left to chance, or man's contingent will, and the event happen right, God is never the truer. He performs not his promise ; he takes no effectual care about it ; it is not he that promised, that performs. That thing, or, rather nothing, called fortune, orders all....Concerning the absurdity of supposing that it was not absolutely determined beforehand, what success there should be of Christ's death ; see *Polhill's Spec. Theolog. in Christo*, p. 165....171.

It is pretended, that the antecedent certainty of any sin's being committed, seeing that it is attended with necessity, takes away all liberty, and makes warnings and exhortations to avoid sin, a mere illusion. To this I would bring the an-



stance of Peter. Christ told him, that he should surely deny him thrice that night, before the cock should crow twice. And yet, after that, Christ exhorted all his disciples to watch and pray, that they might not fall into temptation; and directs, that he who had no sword, should sell his garment and buy one.

§ 34. How evident is it, that God sets up that to be sought after as a reward of virtue, and the fruit of our endeavors, which yet he has determined shall never come to pass? As, 1 Sam. xiii. 13. "And Samuel said unto Saul, Thou hast done foolishly; thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee. For now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever." It is evident that God had long before decreed, that the kingdom of Israel should be established in the tribe of Judah.... Luke xxii. 22. "The son of man goeth as it was determined [Matth. xxvi. 24, and Mark xiv. 21, as it is written of him] but woe unto that man by whom the son of man is betrayed." *As it was determined*: As this passage is not liable to the ambiguities which some have apprehended in Acts ii. 23, and iv. 28, (which yet seem on the whole to be parallel to it in their most natural construction) I look upon it as an evident proof, that those things are in the language of scripture said to be determined or decreed, (or exactly bounded and marked out by God, as the word *ἀπορρίσσει* most naturally signifies) which he sees will in fact happen in consequence of his volitions, without any necessitating agency, as well as those events of which he is properly the author; and, as Beza expresses it, "*Qui sequitur deum emendate sane loquitur*, we need not fear falling into any impropriety of speech, when we use the language which God has taught." *Doddridge in loc.*

§ 35. As to the decrees of election, see Psal. lxxv. 4. "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." Isa. xli. 9. "Thou whom I have taken from the ends of the earth, and called thee from the chief men thereof, and

said unto thee, Thou art my servant ; I have chosen thee, and not cast thee away." Matth. xx. 16. " So the last shall be first, and the first last : For many be called, but few chosen." Chap. xxii. 14. " For many are called, but few are chosen." Chap. xxiv. 24. " For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders ; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very *elect*." John vi. 37....46. " All that the Father giveth me, shall come to me ; and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," &c. Chap. x. 3, 4, and verse 11, and 14....17. v. 26....30. " To him the porter openeth, and the sheep hear his voice ; and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. I am the good Shepherd ; and know my sheep, and am known of mine. Therefore doth my Father love me ; because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you," &c. Chap. xvii. 6....20. " I have manifested thy name unto the men thou gavest me out of the world : Thine they were, and thou gavest them me ; and they have kept thy word, &c. Neither pray I for these alone ; but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." Acts xviii. 10. " For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee, to hurt thee : For I have much people in this city." As to reprobation, see Matth. xi. 20....27. " Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not, &c. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father ; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." John vi. 41....46. " 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, &c. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save he which is of God, he hath seen the Father." Chap. viii. 47. " He that is of God, heareth God's words : Ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God." Chap. x. 26. " But ye believe

not, because you are not of my sheep, as I said unto you." Chap. xvii. 9....13. "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine," &c. 1 Thes. v. 9. "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Pet. ii. 8. "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: Whereunto also they were appointed." Jude i. 4. "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness." 1 John iv. 6. "We are of God. He that knoweth God, heareth us; he that is not of God, heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." Rev. iii. 8. "I know thy works: Behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: For thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name." Chap. xx. 12, 15. "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: And another book was opened, which is the book of life: And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." John xii. 37....41. "But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him. Because that Esaias said, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, &c. These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory, and spake of him." Rom. ix. 6, 7, 8, 11....14, 16.... 19. v. 21....24. v. 27, 29, 33. "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: But, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed. 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. "The elder shall serve the

younger, &c. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, &c. Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his will? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor? &c. Even us whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles. Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved: And as Esaias said before, Except the Lord of Sabaoth had left us a seed, we had been as Sodoma, and been made like unto Gomorrha. As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumbling stone, and a rock of offence: And whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed." And chap. xi. 1,...6. v. 7....11. v. 15, 17, 19....23. v. 32, 36. "I say then, Hath God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, &c. Even so then at this present time also 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. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: Otherwise, work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded. God hath given them the spirit of slumber, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day. Let their table be made a snare, and a trap, and a stumbling block, and a recompence unto them, &c. And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in, &c. And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be grafted in: For God is able to graft them in again. For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: To whom be glory for ever. Amen."

§ 36. All that is intended when we say that God decrees all that comes to pass, is, that all events are subject to the disposals of providence, or that God orders all things in his providence ; and that he intended from eternity to order all things in providence, and intended to order them as he does. Election does not signify only something common to professing Christians, Matth. xx. 16. “ Many are called, but few are chosen.” Matth. xxiv. 31. “ He shall send forth his angels, and gather together his elect.”

§ 37. God’s foreknowledge appears from this, that God has foretold that there should be some good men, as the Arminians themselves allow. *Stebbing*, in his Treatise concerning the Operations of the Holy Spirit, p. 237, second edition, says as follows : “ So long as a man may be certain that those things will come to pass which God hath foretold, he may be certain, that God’s grace will prevail in multitudes of men before the end of all things. For, by divers predictions in holy writ we are assured, that when Christ shall come to judgment, there will be some who shall be changed, and put on immortality.”

§ 38. The scriptures, in teaching us this doctrine, are guilty of no hard imposition on our understanding of a doctrine contrary to reason. If they had taught the contrary doctrine, it would have been much more contrary to reason, and a much greater temptation to persons of diligent and thorough consideration, to doubt of the divinity of the scripture.

§ 39. Concerning the decreeing of sin, see Acts iii. 17, 18, with Acts xiii. 27. “ And now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your rulers. But those things which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.”...“ For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they knew him not, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are

read every Sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him.

§ 40. It is objected, that this is a speculative point. So might they say, Jesus's being the Messiah, is a speculative point.

§ 41. If God's inviting or commanding a person to do a thing, when he, in his decree, has ordained that it shall be otherwise, argues insincerity in the command or invitation, the insincerity must be in this, viz. that he commands a thing to be done, when his end in commanding is not, that the thing may be done ; which cannot be his end ; because he knows certainly, at the time that he commands it, that it will not be. But it is certain, that God's commanding a thing to be done, which he certainly knows at the time will not be done, is no evidence of insincerity in God in commanding. For thus God commanded Pharaoh to let the people go : And yet he knew he would not obey, as he says at the same time that he orders the command to be given him, *Exod. iii. 18, 19.* " And thou shalt come, thou and the elders of Israel, unto the king of Egypt, and you shall say unto him, The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us ; and now let us go, we beseech thee, three days journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God : And I am sure that the king of Egypt will not let you go ; no not by a mighty hand." See also chap. iv. 21, 22, 23, and chap. vii. 1....7 ; see also chap. ix. 16, compared with *Rom. ix. 17.*

§ 42. It is impossible for an infinitely wise and good being to do otherwise, than to choose what he sees on the whole to be best. And certainly reason requires us to suppose, that of all possible events with respect to sin, and the conversion and salvation of particular persons, it is better that one of those possible and opposite events should come to pass than another ; and therefore, an infinitely wise and good being must choose accordingly. What God permits, he decrees to permit. If it is no blemish to God to permit sin, then it is no

blemish to him to purpose or intend to permit it. And if he be omniscient, and does designedly permit that sin which actually comes to pass, then he designedly permits that sin, knowing, if he permits it, it will actually come to pass. And this is an effectual permission, and all that we plead for. What, then, do our adversaries quarrel with us for? And why do they pretend that we charge God with being the author of sin? There is a way of drawing consequences from scripture, that begs the question. As the Arminians say, there are many more texts plainly against election, than seem to be for it, viz. those texts that represent, that general offers of salvation are made, as though it was left to men's choice, whether they will be saved or no. But that is begging the question. For the question very much consists in these things, whether an absolute decree be inconsistent with man's liberty, and so with a general offer of salvation, &c.

§ 43. Concerning the Arminian notion of election, that when the apostles speak of election, they only mean that by which the professing Christians in those days were distinguished from others, as the nation of Israel of old was; this is unreasonable, according to their own principles. For if they were elected, and that was the reason why they so far embraced the gospel, as to become Christians rather than others, then, on Arminian principles, no thanks were due to them for embracing the gospel; neither were others, who continued openly to reject the gospel, to blame; and it was in vain to use any means to persuade any to join with the Christian church; nor were any to blame for not doing it, or to be praised for doing it, &c. Besides, their principles render vain all endeavors to spread the gospel. For the gospel will certainly be spread to all nations that are elected; and all such shall have the offers of the gospel, whether they take any care of the matter or no.

§ 44. Dr. Whitby, to make out his scheme, makes the word election signify two entirely different things; one, elec-

tion to a common faith of Christianity ; another, a conditional election to salvation. But every one must be sensible of the unreasonableness of such shifting and varying, and turning into all shapes, to evade the force of scripture.

§ 45. It is evident the apostle, in Rom. ix. has not only respect to God's sovereignty in the election and preterition of nations, because he illustrates his meaning by the instance of a particular person, viz. Pharaoh. The exercise of the sovereignty that he speaks of, appears by the express words of the apostle about vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath, vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor. But the vessels of mercy, he speaks of as prepared to glory. They, it is plain, are those that shall be saved, and the vessels of wrath are those that perish. He speaks of those that shall be saved, v. 27. "A remnant shall be saved." What is there that God does decree according to the scheme of the Arminians so as to make it in any measure consistent with itself? He does not decree any of the great events of the world of mankind, (which are the principal events, and those to which all others are subordinated) because these depend on men's free will. He does not absolutely decree any events wherein the welfare of men is concerned ; for if he does, then these things, according to their scheme, cannot be the subject of prayer. For according to them, it is absurd to seek or pray for things, which we do not know but that God has absolutely decreed and fixed before. We do not know but that he has determined absolutely and unfrustrably from eternity, that they shall not be ; and then, by their scheme, we cannot pray in faith for them. See Whitby, p. 177, &c. And if God does not decree and order those events beforehand, then what becomes of the providence of God ; and what room is there for prayer, if there be no providence? Prayer is shut out this way also. According to them, we cannot reasonably pray for the accomplishment of things that are already fixed, before our prayers ; for then our prayers alter nothing, and what, say they, signifies it for us to pray ?



Dr. Whitby insists upon it, that we cannot pray in faith for the salvation of others, if we do not know that Christ died intentionally for their salvation.

§ 46. To Dr. Whitby's observation, that the apostle speaks of churches, as though they were all elect, I answer, he speaks from a judgment of charity, as Dr. Whitby himself observes, p. 460. God foreknows the elect, as God is said to know those that are his own sheep from strangers ; as Christ is said not to know the workers of iniquity, that is, he owns them not. In the same sense, God is said to know the elect from all eternity ; that is, he knew them as a man knows his own things. He acknowledged them from eternity. He owns them as his children. Reprobates he did not know ; they were strangers to God from all eternity. If God ever determined, in the general, that some of mankind should certainly be saved, and did not leave it altogether undetermined whether ever so much as one soul of all mankind should believe in Christ ; it must be that he determined that some particular persons should certainly believe in him. For it is certain that if he has left it undetermined concerning this and that, and the other person, whether ever he should believe or not, and so of every particular person in the world ; then there is no necessity at all, that this or that, or any particular person in the world, should ever be saved by Christ, for the matter of any determination of God's. So that, though God sent his Son into the world, yet the matter was left altogether undetermined by God, whether ever any person should be saved by him, and there was all this ado about Christ's birth, death, resurrection, ascension, and sitting at God's right hand, when it was not as yet determined whether he should ever save one soul, or have any mediatorial kingdom at all.

§ 47. It is most absurd, to call such a conditional election as they talk of, by the name of election, seeing there is a necessary connexion between faith in Jesus Christ and eternal life. Those that believe in Christ, must be saved, according to God's inviolable constitution of things. What nonsense is

it, therefore, to talk of choosing such to life from all eternity out of the rest of mankind ? A predestination of such to life is altogether useless and needless. By faith in one that has satisfied for sin, the soul necessarily becomes free from sin. By faith in one that has bought eternal life for them, they have, of unavoidable consequence, a right to eternal life. Now, what sense is it to say, that God from all eternity, of his free grace, chose out those that he foresaw would have no guilt of sin, that they should not be punished for their guilt, as others were, when it is a contradiction to suppose that they can be punished for their guilt when they have none ? For who can lay any thing to their charge, when it is Christ that has died ? And what do they mean by an election of men to that which is, in its own nature, impossible that it should not be, whether they are elected to it or no ; or by God's choosing them that had a right to eternal life, that they should possess it ? What sense is it to say that a creditor chooses out those among his debtors to be free from debt, that owe him nothing ? But if they say that election is only God's determination, in the general, that all that believe shall be saved, in what sense can this be called election ? They are not *persons* that are here chosen, but mankind is divided into two sorts, the one believing, and the other unbelieving, and God chooses the believing sort. It is not election of persons, but of qualifications. God does from all eternity choose to bestow eternal life upon those that have a right to it, rather than upon those who have a right to damnation. Is this all the election we have an account of in God's word ? Such a thing as election may well be allowed ; for that there is such a thing as sovereign love is certain ; that is, love, not for any excellency, but merely God's good pleasure. For whether it is proper to say that God from all eternity loved the elect or no, it is proper to say that God loved men after the fall, while sinners and enemies ; for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son to die. This was not for any goodness or excellency, but merely God's good pleasure ; for he would not love the fallen angels.

§ 48. Christ is often spoken of in scripture as being, by way of eminency, the Elect or Chosen of God. Isa. xlii. 1. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth." Luke xxiii. 35. "If he be the Christ, the Chosen of God." 1 Pet. ii. 4. "A living stone, chosen of God, and precious." Psal. lxxxix. 3. "I have made a covenant with my Chosen:" v. 19. "I have exalted one chosen out of the people." Hence those persons in the Old Testament, that were the most remarkable types of Christ, were the subjects of a very remarkable election of God, by which they were designed to some peculiar honor of the prophetic, priestly, or kingly office. So Moses was called God's chosen, in that wherein he was eminently a type of Christ, viz. as a prophet and ruler, and mediator for his people; Psal. cvi. 23. "Had not Moses, his chosen, stood before him in the breach." So Aaron was constituted high priest by a remarkable election of God, as in Numb. xvi. 5. and xvii. 5. Deut. xxi. 5. So David the king was the subject of a remarkable election; Psal. lxxviii. 67....72. "Moreover, he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim, but chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Sion, which he loved; and he built his sanctuary like high palaces; like the earth which he hath established for ever. He chose David also his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds, from following the ewes great with young; he brought him to feed Jacob his people, and Israel his inheritance." 1 Sam. xvi. 7....10. "The Lord hath not chosen this, neither hath the Lord chosen this; the Lord hath not chosen these." Christ is the chosen of God, both as to his divine and human nature. As to his divine nature, he was chosen of God, though not to any addition to his essential glory or real happiness, which is infinite, yet to great declarative glory. As he is man, he is chosen of God to the highest degree of real glory and happiness of all creatures. As to both, he is chosen of God to the office and glory of the mediator between God and men, and the head of all the elect creation. His election, as it respects his divine nature, was for his worthiness and excellency and infinite amiableness in the sight of God, and perfect fitness for that which God chose

him to, and his worthiness was the ground of his election. But his election, as it respects his human nature, was free and sovereign, not being for any worthiness, but his election was the foundation of his worthiness. His election, as he is God, is a manifestation of God's infinite wisdom. The wisdom of any being is discovered by the wise choice he makes, so the infinite wisdom of God is manifest in the wisdom of his choice when he chose his eternal Son, one so fit, upon all accounts, for the office of a mediator, when he only was fit, and when he was perfectly and infinitely fit ; and yet his fitness was so difficult to be discerned, that none but one of infinite wisdom could discover it. His election, as he was man, was a manifestation of God's sovereignty and grace. God had determined to exalt one of the creatures so high, that he should be one person with God, and should have communion with God, and should have glory in all respects answerable ; and so should be the head of all other elect creatures, that they might be united to God and glorified in him. And his sovereignty appears in the election of the man Jesus, various ways. It appears in choosing the species of creatures of which he should be, viz. the race of mankind, and not the angels, the superior species. God's sovereignty also appears in choosing this creature of the seed of fallen creatures that were become enemies and rebels, abominable, miserable creatures. It appears in choosing that he should be of such a branch of mankind, in selecting the posterity of David, a mean person originally, and the youngest of the family. And as he was the seed of the woman, so his sovereignty appears in his being the seed of such particular women ; as of Leah, the uncomely wife of Jacob, whom her husband had not chosen ; and Tamar, a Canaanitess, and a harlot ; and Rahab a harlot ; and Ruth a Moabitess ; and of Bathsheba, one that had committed adultery, and as he was the seed of many a mean person. And his sovereignty appears in the choice of that individual female of whom Christ was born.

It was owing to this election of God, that the man Jesus was not one of the corrupt race of mankind, so that his freedom from sin and damnation is owing to the free, sovereign.

electing love of God in him, as well as in the rest of elect men. All holiness, all obedience and good works, and perseverance in him, was owing to the electing love of God, as well as in his elect members. And so his freedom from eternal damnation was owing to the free, electing love of God another way, viz. as it was owing to God's electing love to him and his members, but to him in the first place, that he did not fail in that great and difficult work that he undertook ; that he did not fail under his extreme sufferings, and so eternally continue under them. For if he had failed ; if his courage, resolution and love had been conquered by his sufferings, he never could have been delivered from them ; for then he would have failed in his obedience to God, and his love to God failing, and being overcome by sufferings, these sufferings would have failed of the nature of an acceptable sacrifice to God, and the infinite value of his sufferings would have failed, and so must be made up in infinite duration, to atone for his own deficiency. But God having chosen Christ, he could not fail in this work, and so was delivered from his sufferings, from the eternity of them, by the electing love of God. Justification and glorification were fruits of God's foreknowledge and predestination in him, as well as in his elect members.

So that the man Christ Jesus has the eternal, electing love of God to him, to contemplate and admire, and to delight and rejoice his heart, as all his elect members have. He has it before him as others have, eternally to praise God for his free and sovereign election of him, and to ascribe the praise of his freedom from eternal damnation, (which he, with his elect members, beholds, and has had a sense of, far beyond all the rest, and so has more cause of joy and praise for his deliverance from it) and the praise of the glory he possesses, to that election. This election is not for Christ's works or worthiness, for all his works and worthiness are the fruits of it. God had power over this seed of the woman, to make it either a vessel to honor or dishonor, as he had over the rest.

Christ is, by way of eminency, called **THE ELECT** of God. For though other elect men are by election distin-

guished from the greater part of mankind, yet they, in their election, have that which is common to thousands and millions ; and though the elect angels are distinguished by election from the angels that fell, yet they are chosen among myriads of others ; but this man, by his election, is vastly distinguished from all other creatures in heaven or earth ; and Christ, in his election, is the head of election, and the pattern of all other election. Christ is the head of all elect creatures ; and both angels and men are chosen in him in some sense, i. e. chosen to be in him. All elect men are said to be chosen in Christ, Eph. 1. 4. Election contains two things, viz. foreknowledge and predestination, which are distinguished in the 8th chapter of Romans. The one is choosing persons to be God's, which is a foreknowing of them ; and the other, a destining them to be conformed to the image of his Son, both in holiness and blessedness. The elect are chosen in him, with respect to those two, in senses somewhat diverse. With respect to foreknowledge or foreknowing, we are chosen in him as God chose us, to be actually his in this way, viz. by being in Christ, or being members of his Son. This is the way that God determined we should actually become his. God chose Christ, and gave his elect people to him ; and so, looking on them as his, owned them for his own. But by predestination, which is consequent on his foreknowledge, we are elected in Christ, as we are elected in his election. For God having in foreknowledge given us to Christ, he thenceforward beheld us as members and parts of him ; and so ordaining the head to glory, he therein ordained the members to glory. In destining Christ to eternal life, he destined all parts of Christ to it also. So that we are appointed to eternal life in Christ, being in Christ, his members from eternity. In his being appointed to life, we are appointed to life. So Christ's election is the foundation of ours, as much as his justification and glorification are the foundation of ours. By election in scripture is sometimes meant this latter part, viz. destination to conformity to Christ in life and glory, as 2 Thess. ii. 13. " God from the beginning hath chosen you to salvation." And it seems to be

spoken of in this sense chiefly, in Eph. i. 3, 4, 5. "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 to the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

§ 49. 2 Thess. ii. 13. "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." Concerning this scripture I observe the following things: 1. The word translated *chosen* is a word that signifies to choose or pick out from many others. 2. That this choosing is given as a reason why those differ from others that believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, as an instance of the distinguishing grace of God; and therefore the apostle mentions their being chosen, their election as the ground of their sanctification by the Spirit and belief of the truth. 3. The apostle speaks of their being chosen to salvation, as a ground of their perseverance, or the reason why they never shall fall away, as others spoken of before, whereby they failed of salvation. See the preceding verses. Compare Heb. vi. 9. 4. They are spoken of as thus chosen from the beginning.

That place, Matth. xx. 21....23. "Grant that these my two sons may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left, in thy kingdom;...it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my father," affords an invincible argument for particular, personal predestination.

It is an evidence that the apostle, in chap. ix. of Romans, has not respect solely to an election and dereliction of nations or public societies, that one instance which he produces to illustrate and confirm what he says, is the dereliction of a particular person, even Pharaoh, Rom. ix. 17. So it is an instance of God's mercy to a particular person, even Moses. When he says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I

will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion," &c. the words cited were used by God on occasion of, and with relation to his mercy to, a particular person, even Moses ; (see Exod. xxxiii. 19.) And the language in that verse and the next, is suited to particular persons ; as, verse 16, and 18, and verses 22, 23. And the apostle shews plainly, verses 27, 29, that it is not an election of nations or public societies, but a distinction of some particular persons from others of the same society ; as it was a distinction of particular persons, in preserving some, when others were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar's armies ; and in returning some from captivity, and leaving others. This was not a showing of mercy to one public society in distinction from another. So in chap. x. 4, 5, where the apostle plainly continues to speak of the same election, it was not by a national election, or election of any public society, that God distinguished the seven thousand that he had reserved, who had not bowed the knee to Baal.

John vi. 37. " All that the Father hath given me shall come to me. And this is the Father's will which sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day."...." What is this being given to Christ to be raised up again to everlasting life, but the election of particular persons to salvation ? And since it is the Father's will, that of all that he has given to Christ, he should lose nothing ; this election must be so absolute as to insure their salvation." *Green's Friendly Conferences.*

It is plainly and abundantly taught in scripture, that election is not of works : Rom. ix. 11. " That the purpose of God according to election might stand, *not of works*, but of him that calleth." Verse 11. " Neither of them *having done either good or evil.*" And Rom. xi. 5, 6. " Even so at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the *election of grace.* And if by grace, then it is no more *of works* : Otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace : Otherwise work is no more work." 2 Tim. i. 9. " 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."

How invincible a proof of the Calvinistical doctrine of election is that place in Rom. xi. 5. "Even so then at this present time also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Dr. Doddridge observes upon it, that some explain this of having chosen grace, i. e. the gospel. But that turn is very unnatural, and neither suits the phrase, nor the connexion with the former clause, or with the next verse, where the apostle comments on his own words.

§ 50. If God does not some way in his providence, and so in his predeterminations, order what the volitions of men shall be, he would be as dependent in governing the world, as a skilful mariner is in governing his ship, in passing over a turbulent, tempestuous ocean, where he meets constantly, and through the whole voyage, with things that agitate the ship, have great influence on the motions of it, and are so cross and grievous to him, that he is obliged to accommodate himself in the best manner that he can. He meets with cross winds, violent tempests, strong currents, and great opposition from enemies; none of which things he has the disposal of, but is forced to suffer. He only guides the ship, and, by his skill, turns that hither and thither, and steers it in such a manner as to avoid dangers, as well as the case will allow.

§ 51. As to that objection against the election which the apostle speaks of in his epistles, as an election by which such should be distinguished as should certainly be saved at last, viz. that many of those whom the apostle calls elect, chosen in Christ, &c. actually turned apostates: What Dr. Doddridge observes in his note on Eph. i. 4, may be a sufficient answer. "The apostle speaks of whole societies in general as consisting of saints and believers, because this was the predominant character; and he had reason, in the judgment of charity, to believe the greater part were such; (compare Phil. i. 7.) Nor did he always judge it necessary to make exceptions in reference to a few hypocrites who had crept in

among them, any more than Christ judged it so, to speak of Judas as excluded, when he mentions the twelve thrones of judgment on which the apostles should sit." (Matth. xix. 28.)

§ 52. Many have a notion concerning some things in religion, and, in particular, concerning predestination, that if they be the truth, yet it is not best that they should be known. But many reasons may be offered against this notion.

§ 53. What the devil did to afflict Job, was the exercise and fruit of his devilish disposition, and his acts therein were devilish. And yet it is most apparent, that those acts and effects of the devil towards Job, were appointed by infinite wisdom for holy ends ; but not accomplished by God any otherwise than by permission.

§ 54. There were many absolute promises of old, that salvation should actually be accomplished, and that it should be of great extent, or extending to great multitudes of mankind ; as, that " the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head." " In thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Psalm xxii. 30. " A seed shall serve him, and it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation." Isa. liii. 10. " He shall see his seed." Psalm ii. 6. " Ask of me, and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance," &c. Psalm cx. " Sit thou at my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool." " Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power ;" and innumerable others. And if there were absolute promises of this, then there were absolute purposes of it ; for that which is sincerely, absolutely promised, is with an absolute purpose of fulfilling the promise. But how can it be devised, that there should be an absolute, determinate, infallible, unchangeable purpose, that Christ should actually save vast multitudes of mankind ; and yet it be not absolutely purposed that he should save any one single person, but that with regard to every individual soul, this was left undetermined by God, to be determined by man's contingent will, which might determine for salvation, or against

it, there being nothing to render it impossible concerning any one, that his will would not finally determine against it? Observe, these prophecies are not merely predictions, but are of the nature of promises, and are often so called :.... " Which he hath promised by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," &c. God takes care to fulfil his own promises ; but, according to this scheme, it is not God that fulfils these promises ; but men, left to themselves, to their contingent wills, fulfil them. Man's will, which God does not determine, determines itself in exclusion of God.

All the promises of God are yea and amen, and God himself makes them so to be ; he takes care of that matter.

§ 55. Concerning that grand objection, that this doctrine supposes partiality in God, and is very dishonorable to him, being quite contrary to God's extensive and universal benevolence to his creatures ; it may be shewn that the Arminian notions and principles in this matter, lead directly to Deism ; and that on these principles, it is utterly impossible to answer Tindal's objections against revealed religion, especially in his 14th chapter. Besides, unjustifiable partiality is not imputable to a sovereign distributing his favors, though ever so unequally, unless it be done unwisely, and so as to infringe the common good.

§ 56. God has regard to conditions in his decrees, as he has regard to a wise order and connexion of things. Such is his wisdom in his decrees, and all his acts and operations, that if it were not for wise connexion that is regarded, many things would not be decreed. One part of the wise system of events would not have been decreed, unless the other parts had been decreed, &c.

§ 57. God in the decree of election is justly to be considered as decreeing the creature's eternal happiness, antecedently to any foresight of good works, in a sense wherein he does not in reprobation decree the creature's eternal misery, antecedently to any foresight of sin ; because the being of

sin is supposed in the first place in order to the decree of reprobation, which is, that God will glorify his vindictive justice ; and the very notion of revenging justice, simply considered, supposes a fault to be revenged. But faith and good works are not supposed in the first place in order to the decree of election. The first things in order in this decree are, that God will communicate his happiness, and glorify his grace ; (for these two seem to be coordinate.) But in neither of these are faith and good works supposed. For when God decrees, and seeks to communicate his own happiness in the creature's happiness, the notion of this, simply considered, supposes or implies nothing of faith or good works ; nor does the notion of grace, in itself, suppose any such thing. It does not necessarily follow from the very nature of grace, or God's communicativeness of his own happiness, that there must be faith and good works. This is only a certain way of the appointment of God's wisdom, wherein he will bring men to partake of his grace. But yet God is far from having decreed damnation from a foresight of evil works, in the sense of the Arminians, as if God in this decree did properly depend on the creature's sinful act, as an event, the coming to pass of which primarily depends on the creature's determination ; so that the creature's determination in this decree may properly be looked upon as antecedent to God's determination, and on which his determination is consequent and dependent.

§ 58. What divines intend by *prior* and *posterior* in the affair of God's decrees, is not that one is before another in the order of time, for all are from eternity ; but that we must conceive the view or consideration of one decree to be before another, inasmuch as God decrees one thing out of respect to another decree that he has made ; so that one decree must be conceived of as in some sort to be the ground of another, or that God decrees one because of another ; or that he would not have decreed one, had he not decreed that other. Now there are two ways in which divine decrees may be said to be in this sense prior one to another. 1. When one

thing decreed is the end of another, this must in some respect be conceived of as prior to that other. The good to be obtained is in some respect prior, in the consideration of him who decrees and disposes, to the means of obtaining it. 2. When one thing decreed is the ground on which the disposer goes, in seeking such an end by another thing decreed, as being the foundation of the capableness or fitness that there is in that other thing decreed, to obtain such an end. Thus the sinfulness of the reprobate is the ground on which God goes in determining to glorify his justice in the punishment of his sinfulness; because his sinfulness is the foundation of the possibility of obtaining that end by such means. His having sin is the foundation of both the fitness and possibility of justice being glorified in the punishment of his sin, and therefore the consideration of the being of sin in the subject, must in some respect be prior in the mind of the disposer, to the determination to glorify his justice in the punishment of sin. For the disposer must first consider the capableness and aptness of such means for such an end, before he determines them to such an end.

Thus God must be conceived of, as first considering Adonibezek's cruelty in cutting off the thumbs and great toes of threescore and ten kings, as that which was to be before he decreed to glorify his justice in punishing that cruelty by the cutting off his thumbs and great toes. For God, in this last decree, has respect to the fitness and aptness of his thumbs and great toes being cut off to glorify his justice. But this aptness depends on the nature of that sin that was punished. Therefore the disposer, in fixing on those means for this end, must be conceived of as having that sin in view. Not only must God be conceived of as having some end in consideration, before he determines the means in order to that end, but he must also be conceived of as having a consideration of the capableness or aptness of the means to obtain the end before he fixes on the means. Both these, in different respects, may be said to be prior to the means decreed to such an end in the mind of the disposer. Both, in different respects, are the ground or reason of the appointment of the

means. The end is the ground or reason of the appointment of the means ; and also the capacity and fitness of the means to the end, is the ground or reason of this appointment to such an end. So both the sin of the reprobate, and also the glory of divine justice, may properly be said to be before the decree of damning the reprobate. The decree of damnation may properly be said, in different respects, to be because of both these ; and that God would not have decreed the damnation of the sinner, had it not been for the respect he had both to the one and the other. Both may properly be considered as the ground of the decree of damnation. The view of the sinfulness of the reprobate must be in some respect prior in the decree, to God's decree to glorify his justice in punishing their sinfulness. Because sinfulness is necessarily supposed as already existing in the decree of punishing sinfulness, and the decree of damnation being posterior to the consideration of the sin of men in this latter respect, clears God of any injustice in such a decree. That which stands in the place of the ultimate end in a decree, i. e. that which is a mere end, and not a means to any thing further or higher, viz. the shining forth of God's glory, and the communication of his goodness, must indeed be considered as prior, in the consideration of the Supreme Disposer, to every thing excepting the mere possibility of it. But this must in some respects be conceived of as prior to that, because possibility is necessarily supposed in his decree. But if we descend lower than the highest end ; if we come down to other events decreed, that be not mere ends, but means to obtain that end, then we must necessarily bring in more things, as in some respect prior, in the same manner as mere possibility is in this highest decree. Because more things must necessarily be supposed or considered as existing in the decree, in order that those things which are decreed may reach the end for which they are decreed. More things must be supposed in order to a possibility of these things taking place as subordinate to their end ; and therefore they stand in the same place, in these lower decrees, as absolute possibility does in the decree of the highest end. The vindictive jus-

tice of God is not to be considered as a mere or ultimate end, but as a means to that end. Indeed, God's glorifying his justice, or rather his glorifying his holiness and greatness, has the place of a mere and ultimate end. But his glorifying his justice in punishing sin, (or in exercising vindictive justice, which is the same) is not to be considered as a mere end, but a certain way or means of obtaining an end. Vindictive justice is not to be considered as a certain, distinct attribute to be glorified, but as a certain way and means for the glorifying an attribute. Every distinct way of God's glorifying or exercising an attribute, might as well be called a distinct attribute as this. It is but giving a distinct name to it, and so we might multiply attributes without end. The considering of the glorifying of vindictive justice as a mere end, has led to great misrepresentations, and undue and unhappy expressions about the decree of reprobation. Hence the glorifying of God's vindictive justice on such particular persons, has been considered as altogether prior in the decree to their sinfulness, yea to their very beings. Whereas it being only a means to an end, those things that are necessarily presupposed, in order to the fitness and possibility of this means of obtaining the end, must be conceived of as prior to it.

Hence God's decree of the eternal damnation of the reprobate is not to be conceived of as prior to the fall, yea, and to the very being of the persons, as the decree of the eternal glory of the elect is. For God's glorifying his love, and communicating his goodness, stands in the place of a mere or ultimate end, and therefore is prior in the mind of the eternal disposer to the very being of the subject, and to every thing but mere possibility. The goodness of God gives the being as well as the happiness of the creature, and does not presuppose it. Indeed, the glorifying of God's mercy, as it presupposes the subject to be miserable, and the glorifying his grace, as it presupposes the subject to be sinful, unworthy and illdeserving, are not to be conceived of as ultimate ends, but only as certain ways and means for the glorifying the exceeding abundance and overflowing fulness of God's goodness and love ; therefore these decrees are not to be consid-

ered as prior to the decree of the being and permission of the fall of the subject. And the decree of election, as it implies a decree of glorifying God's mercy and grace, considers men as being cursed and fallen; because the very notion of such a decree supposes sin and misery. Hence we may learn, how much in the decree of predestination is to be considered as prior to the creation and fall of man, and how much as posterior; viz. that God's decree to glorify his love and communicate his goodness, and to glorify his greatness and holiness, is to be considered as prior to creation and the fall of man. And because the glory of God's love, and the communication of his goodness necessarily imply the happiness of the creature, and give both their being and happiness; hence the design to communicate and glorify his goodness and love eternally to a certain number, is to be considered as prior, in both those mentioned respects, to their being and fall. For such a design, in the notion of it, presupposes neither. But nothing in the decree of reprobation is to be looked upon as antecedent in one of those respects to man's being and fall; but only that general decree that God will glorify his justice, or rather his holiness and greatness, which supposes neither their being nor sinfulness. But whatsoever there is in this decree of evil to particular subjects, it is to be considered as consequent on the decree of their creation, and permission of their fall. And indeed, although all that is in the decree of election, all that respects good to the subjects, be not posterior to the being and fall of men, yet both the decree of election and rejection or reprobation, as so styled, must be considered as consequent on the decrees concerning the creation and fall. For both these decrees have respect to that distinction or discrimination that is afterwards actually made amongst men in pursuance of these decrees. Hence effectual calling, being the proper execution of election, is sometimes in scripture called election; and the rejection of men in time is called reprobation. Therefore the decrees of election and reprobation must be looked upon as beginning there, where the actual distinction begins, because distinction is implied in the notion of those decrees. And therefore,



whatsoever is prior to this actual distinction, the foresight of it, and decree concerning it, or that state that was common, or wherein they were undistinguished, the foresight of that, or decree concerning it, must be considered, in some respect, as prior to the decree concerning the distinction. Because all that is before is supposed or looked upon as already put in the decree. For that is the decree, viz. to make such a distinction between those that were before in such a common state. And this is agreeable to the scripture representations of those decrees, John xv. 19. "Ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." See also Ezek. xvi. 1....8.

The decrees of God must be conceived of in the same order, and as antecedent to, and consequent on one another, in the same manner, as God's acts in the execution of those decrees. If this will not hold, with regard to those things that are the effects of those acts, yet certainly it will hold with respect to the acts themselves. They depend on one another, and are grounded on one another, in the same manner as the decrees that these are the execution of, and in no other. For, on the one hand, the decrees of God are no other than his eternal doing what is done, acted or executed by him in time. On the one hand, God's acts themselves, in executing, can be conceived of no otherwise, than as decrees for a present effect. They are acts of Gods will. God brings things to pass only by acts of his will. He speaks, and it is done. His will says, let it be, and it is. And this act of his will that now is, cannot be looked upon as really different from that act of will that was in him before, and from eternity, in decreeing that this thing should be at this time. It differs only relatively. Here is no new act of the will in God, but only the same acts of God's will, which before, because the time was not come, respected future time; and so were called decrees. But now the time being come, they respect present time, and so are not called by us decrees, but acts executing decrees. Yet they are evidently the same acts in God. Therefore those acts, in executing, must certainly be conceived of in the same order, and with the same dependence, as the decrees them-

selves. It may be in some measure illustrated by this....The decree of God or the will of God decreeing events, may be represented as a straight line of infinite length, that runs through all past eternity, and terminates in the event. The last point in the line, is the act of God's will in bringing the event to pass, and does not at all differ from all the other points throughout the infinite length of the line, in any other respect but this, that this last point is next to the event. This line may be represented as in motion, but yet always kept parallel to itself. The hither end of the line, by its motion, describes events in the order in which they come to pass; or at least represents God's acts in bringing the events to pass, in their order and mutual dependence, antecedence and consequence. By the motion of all the other points of the line, before the event or end of the line, in the whole infinite length of it, are represented the decrees in their order; which, because the line in all its motions is kept parallel to itself, is exactly the same with the order of the motions of the last point. For the motion of every point of the whole line, is in all respects, just like the motion of that last point wherein the line terminates in the event; and the different parts of the motion of every point, are in every respect precisely in the same order. And the maxim, that what is first in intention, is last in execution, does not in the least concern this matter. For, by last in execution, is meant only last in order of time, without any respect to the priority or posteriority that we are speaking of; and it does not at all hinder, but that in God's acts, in executing his decrees, one act is the ground or reason of another act, in the same manner precisely as the decree that related to it was the ground or reason of the other decree. The absolute independence of God, no more argues against some of God's decrees being grounded on decrees of some other things that should first come to pass, than it does against some of God's acts in time, being grounded on some other antecedent acts of his. It is just the same with God's acts in executing, as has been said already of his decreeing. In one respect, the end that is afterwards to be accomplished, is the ground of God's acting; in another respect, something

that is already accomplished, is the ground of his acting, as it is the ground of the fitness or capableness of the act to obtain the end. There is nothing but the ultimate end of all things, viz. God's glory, and the communication of his goodness, that is prior to all first acts in creating the world, in one respect and mere possibility in another. But, with respect to after acts, other ends are prior in one respect, and other preceding acts are prior in another, just as I have shewn it to be with respect to God's decrees. Now, this being established, it may help more clearly to illustrate, and fully to evince, what we have insisted on concerning the order of the decrees, and that God's decrees of some things that are accomplished first in order of time, are also prior in the order, so as to be the proper ground and reason of other decrees. For, let us see how it is in God's acts in executing his decrees. Will any deny, that God's act in rewarding righteousness, is grounded on a foregoing act of his in giving righteousness? And that he rewards righteousness in such a person, because he hath given righteousness to such a person; and that because this latter act necessarily supposes the former act foregoing? So, in like manner, God's decree, in determining to reward righteousness, is grounded on an antecedent decree to give righteousness, because the former decree necessarily supposes the latter decree, and implies it in the very notion of it. So, who will deny, but that God's act in punishing sin, is grounded on what God hath antecedently done in permitting sin, or suffering it to be, because the former necessarily supposes the latter, and therefore that the actual permission of sin is prior, in the order of nature, to the punishment of it? So that whatever foregoing act of God is in any respect a ground and reason of another succeeding act, so far is both the act, and decree of the act, prior to both that other act and decree.

It may be objected to this, that if so, the decree of bestowing salvation on an elect soul, is founded on the decree of bestowing faith on him; for God actually bestows salvation in some respect, because he has bestowed faith; and this would be to make the decree of election succedaneous to the decree of giving faith, as well as that of reprobation consequent on

the decree of permitting sin. To this I answer, that both God's act, and also his decree of bestowing salvation on such a fallen creature, is in some respects, grounded on God's act and decree of giving faith, but in no wise as the decree or act of eternal punishing is grounded on sin, because punishment necessarily presupposes sin, so that it could not be without it. But the decreeing and giving the happiness of the elect, is not so founded on faith. The case is very different. For with respect to eternal punishment, it may be said that God would not, yea, could not, have decreed or executed it, had he not decreed and permitted sin; but it cannot be said, either that God could not, or would not, have decreed or bestowed the eternal happiness of the elect, unless he had decreed and given faith. Indeed, the salvation of an elect soul is, in this respect, grounded on the decree of giving faith as God's decree of bestowing happiness on the elect in this particular way, as a fallen creature, and by the righteousness of Christ made his own, by being heartily received and closed with, is grounded on the decree of bestowing faith in Christ, because it presupposes it, as the act that answers to this decree does. But the decree of bestowing happiness in general, which we conceive of as antecedent to this act, presupposes no such thing; nor does just so much without any more in execution presuppose faith, or indeed the righteousness of Christ, or any act or suffering of a mediator, or even the fall of man. And the decree of God's communicating his goodness to such a subject, does not so much as presuppose the being of the subject, because it gives being. But there is no decree of evil to such a subject which can be conceived of as antecedent to a decree of punishment. For the first decree of evil or suffering, implies that in it. For there is no evil decreed for any other end, but the glory of God's justice. Therefore the decree of the permission of sin is prior to all other things in the decree of reprobation. Due distinctions seem not to have been observed, in asserting that all the decrees of God are unconditional; which has occasioned difficulties in controversies about the decrees. There are no conditional decrees in this sense, viz. that decrees should

depend on things as conditions of them, which in this decree, that depends on them as conditions, must be considered, like themselves, as yet undecreed. But yet decrees may, in some sort, be conditions of decrees ; so that it may be said, that God would not have decreed some things, had he not decreed others.

§ 59. The objection to the divine decrees will be, that according to this doctrine, God may do evil, that good may come of it.

Ans. I do not argue that God may commit evil, that good may come of it ; but that he may will that evil should come to pass, and permit that it may come to pass, that good may come of it. It is in itself absolutely evil, for any being to commit evil that good may come of it ; but it would be no evil, but good, even in a creature, to will that evil should come to pass, if he had wisdom sufficient to see certainly that good would come of it, or that more good would come to pass in that way than in any other. And the only reason why it would not be lawful for a creature to permit evil to come to pass, and that it would not be wise, or good and virtuous in him so to do, is, that he has not perfect wisdom and sufficiency, so as to render it fit that such an affair should be trusted with him. In so doing he goes beyond his line ; he goes out of his province ; he meddles with things too high for him. It is every one's duty to do things fit for him in his sphere, and commensurate to his power. God never intrusted this providence in the hands of creatures of finite understandings, nor is it proper that he should.

If a prince were of perfect and allcomprehensive wisdom and foresight, and he should see that an act of treason would be for the great advancement of the welfare of his kingdom, it might be wise and virtuous in him to will that such act of treason should come to pass ; yea, it would be foolish and wrong if he did not ; and it would be prudent and wise in him not to restrain the traitor, but to let him alone to go on in the way he chose. And yet he might hate the treason at the same time, and he might properly also give forth laws at

the same time, forbidding it upon pain of death, and might hold these laws in force against this traitor.

The Arminians themselves allow that God permits sin, and that if he permits it, it will come to pass. So that the only difficulty about the act of the will that is in it, is that God should will evil to be, that good may come of it. But it is demonstrably true, that if God sees that good will come of it, and more good than otherwise, so that when the whole series of events is viewed by God, and all things balanced, the sum total of good with the evil is more than without it, all being subtracted that needs be subtracted, and added that is to be added ; if the sum total of good thus considered, be greatest, greater than the sum in any other case, then it will follow that God, if he be a wise and holy being, must will it.

For if this sum total that has evil in it, when what the evil subtracts is subtracted, has yet the greatest good in it, then it is the best sum total, better than the other sum total that has no evil in it. But if, all things considered, it be really the best, how can it be otherwise than that it should be chosen by an infinitely wise and good being, whose holiness and goodness consists in always choosing what is best ? Which does it argue most, wisdom or folly, a good disposition or an evil one, when two things are set before a being, the one better and the other worse, to choose the worse, and refuse the better ?

§ 60. There is no inconsistency or contrariety between the decretive and preceptive will of God. It is very consistent to suppose that God may hate the thing itself, and yet will that it should come to pass. Yea, I do not fear to assert that the thing itself may be contrary to God's will, and yet that it may be agreeable to his will that it should come to pass, because his will, in the one case, has not the same object with his will in the other case. To suppose God to have contrary wills towards the same object, is a contradiction ; but it is not so, to suppose him to have contrary wills about different objects. The thing itself, and that the thing should come to pass, are different, as is evident ; because it is possible that

the one may be good and the other may be evil. The thing itself may be evil, and yet it may be a good thing that it should come to pass. It may be a good thing that an evil thing should come to pass; and oftentimes it most certainly and undeniably is so, and proves so.

§ 61. Objectors to the doctrine of election may say, God cannot always preserve men from sinning, unless he destroy their liberty. But will they deny that an omnipotent, an infinitely wise God, could possibly invent and set before men such strong motives to obedience, and keep them before them in such a manner as should influence them to continue in their obedience, as the elect angels have done, without destroying their liberty? God will order it so that the saints and angels in heaven never will sin, and does it therefore follow that their liberty is destroyed, and that they are not free, but forced in their actions? Does it follow that they are turned into machines and blocks, as the Arminians say the Calvinistic doctrines turn men?

§ 62. To conclude this discourse; I wish the reader to consider the unreasonableness of rejecting plain revelations, because they are puzzling to our reason. There is no greater difficulty attending this doctrine than the contrary, nor so great. So that though the doctrine of the decrees be mysterious, and attended with difficulties, yet the opposite doctrine is in itself more mysterious, and attended with greater difficulties, and with contradictions to reason more evident, to one who thoroughly considers things; so that, even if the scripture had made no revelation of it, we should have had reason to believe it. But since the scripture is so abundant in declaring it, the unreasonableness of rejecting it appears the more glaring.