

# The Arminian

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## Jesus Christ, Savior of the World

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Andy Heer

How do people view eschatology? Some people get all worked up and go in the ditch of panic, fear and speculation. They see the Beast around every new election. They get wrapped up in playing the dating game. Most are smart enough to avoid setting a specific date, but they do tell everyone that we are living in the last days. If it is said often enough then it must be true.

Others try their best to ignore the subject all together. Many of these will claim to be pannennialists—that it will all pan out in the end. Essentially this is an agnostic position. I think the issue is more than simply a matter of chronology, such as where do you date the battle of Armageddon? Do you place it in the first century or do you place it at the end of time, or the end of the world? Do you project the anti-Christ and the beast figures into the first century or do you think they are yet to arrive on the scene of history?

The issue that is at the heart of all of this discussion of end times is your doctrine of the cross. The doctrine of eschatology and end times considered alone is peripheral. However the doctrine of the cross is, to take the Latin word for cross, at the crux of the matter. Your Christianity is going to be healthy or sick depending on whether your doctrine of the cross is healthy or sick. If your doctrine of the cross is healthy, then it will spread out and affect everything including your doctrine of eschatology. If your doctrine of the cross is sick, it too will spread out and affect everything in your understanding and thinking.

Consider 1 John 4:14, “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world” (NIV). What does this have to do with eschatology? What does this have to do with the future course of the world? What does this have to do with the end times? We are Christians, and it is our duty to testify to the same things as the apostles testified to in the first century. Those things they saw we should see, and those things they testified to as true we should be able to testify to them as truth as well. “That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ” (1 John 1:1-3).

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We fellowship with them in Christ and in the testimony of Christ. What is the testimony? The testimony is that Christ is the savior of the world. The Father sent the Son into the world with a particular mission. That mission was to save the world. Jesus went to the cross to die for a purpose. Jesus came on purpose. He died on purpose and He was resurrected on purpose. What is that purpose? To save the world. We are supposed to testify to this truth, but unless we acknowledge it as truth we will not testify about it. The modern church does not testify to this as truth. We don't treat this verse like the liberals and rip it out from the Bible. Instead what we do is just ignore this verse and others like it. If we want to be consistent Biblical Christians, we need to testify to the same thing.

Are we willing to say *Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world*? Evangelical Christians seem to have found a number of ways to slip off the point of this truth. In the Reformed tradition they find themselves redefining "world." They make "world" mean only the elect. Combine that with another

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## **Jesus came to bring salvation, not damnation to the world.**

and we probably do not have many more than a few hundred who are part of the elect.

In other traditions we find this interpretation, God sent His Son to offer salvation to the world. So this group does not redefine "world." They say "world" really means world. But the cop out by saying "savior" does not really mean savior. They redefine "Savior" as "Potential Savior." And their conclusion is Jesus is the potential savior for anyone who believes, but we know most will not believe. So they dilute the word "savior." The reformed position dilutes the word "world," and another group dilutes the word "savior." The Bible gives us no indication that we should dilute either word.

In John 12 we find a theme, which runs throughout the New Testament. "Yet at the same time many even of the leaders believed in him. But be-

cause of the Pharisees they would not confess their faith for fear they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. Then Jesus cried out, 'When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. When he looks at me, he sees the one who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it'" (John 12:42-47).

Jesus clearly teaches in the next verse that there will be some who are judged. So we are not trying to teach some form of universalism. The question we need to answer is *why did Jesus come into the world*? To fulfill the mission that the Father had for Him. Why then did the Father send Jesus into the world? Very simply, to save the world. Not in order to try to save the world, He came into the world to save the world. This does not necessarily mean every last man, woman and child, for we know there is a hell for those who reject the salvation offered to them. It may not include every last man, woman and child but it does mean the world.

"For God so loved the world, that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him" (John 3:16-17). Notice this salvation is not automatic. It is for those who believe. There is a clear distinction between those who believe and those who do not. There is a distinction between the sheep and the goats. There is a clear distinction between Judas and Peter. The one who believes has life and the one who does not believe has the wrath of God to face. The recipient of God's redemptive love is not this individual person and that individual person. Rather the recipient of God's redemptive love is the world.

Most evangelical Christians believe that when everything is said and done the world will be destroyed. The world will be condemned when all is finally finished. This belief of ours that we will have a damned world flies in the face of what Jesus is trying to teach us. Jesus came to bring sal-

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vation, not damnation to the world. Make no mistake, individuals are damned for rejecting God's salvation but the world is not damned. The world is the recipient of God's saving love. When we ask ourselves why we have the wrong concept, I believe the answer lies in the fact that we have been affected far more than we realize by the pessimism that is promoted by modern evangelicals. We hear it on the radio, we read it in the best-selling books and we start believing it over the truth found in Scripture. If we look only to the Scriptures we see a triumphal and a conquering through the cross of

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***We have been affected far more than we realize by the pessimism that is promoted by modern evangelicals.***

Christ. Jesus did not come into the world to *try* to save the world. He did not come to put out another option to the world. He came to save the world.

"Many of the Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, 'He told me everything I ever did.'" So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, "We no longer believe just because of what you said; now we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this man is the Savior of the world" (John 4:39-42). A lifeguard on the beach is not called a savior unless he saves someone. Just because he is positioned to save potential drowners does not make him a savior. We don't call him a savior if he tries unsuccessfully to save drowners. Christ is not the savior of this world if He does not save the world.

It seems quite simple to me. How much more clearly could the biblical writers have made this point? The Samaritians seemed to understand this point. This is the Messiah, the Christ, the Savior of the world. "Jesus said to them, 'I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world'" (John 6:32-33). Who came down from heaven to give life? It is none other than Jesus.

Who does Jesus give life to? The world. It does not say He tried unsuccessfully to give life to the world. "I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If a man eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I give for the life of the world" (John 6:48-51). Jesus is very particular. If you do not eat, you will die. If you do not eat, you will spend eternity in hell, but if you do eat you will have life forever. He says He has given His flesh for the world. He has given His bread to the world so that they may have life.

"My dear children, I write this to you, so that you will not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense — Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the [propitiation] for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John 2:1-2). What is propitiation? It is the turning aside of wrath. Propitiation is the turning away of God's judgment. We see Jesus is the propitiation not only for our sins but also for the sins of the whole world. What does this mean? The judgment or the wrath of God still rests upon individuals who do not believe. However it is not resting upon the world, because Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the whole world. Again, this is not to say every last man, woman, and child are automatically saved. Those who continue in high-handed rebellion, Judas, Pharaoh and the like, will perish.

How is this consistent with what I see all around me? When I look around the world, I see many more who do not believe than those who do believe. How is this consistent with my eyes? How is this consistent with what I read in the newspapers? First of all we need not use our newspapers as the standard. We have only one standard and that is The Word. The real question becomes are we seeing things consistent with the Word? Secondly, once we start seeing things as God sees them we need to be like John and testify to the truth. The truth revealed in God's Word. Do we believe the truth of God's Word? If so then we need to live it. If so then we need to proclaim it.

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# Calvinism and John Six: An Exegetical Response,

## Part One

Steve Witzki

Calvinists believe that one of their strongest arguments for unconditional election, irresistible grace, and unconditional security is found in the Gospel of John, chapter six. In reading Calvinist interpretations on this passage, I have found two that are identical in nature, but different in emphasis. Thomas R. Schreiner and Bruce A. Ware are concerned with emphasizing *unconditional elec-*

*tion* and *irresistible grace* in *Still Sovereign*. Schreiner and Ardel B. Caneday want to emphasize divine preservation or *unconditional security* in *The Race Set Before Us*. Each provides a clear, concise, and compelling interpreta-

tion for these doctrines. Since both share the same understanding of John 6:35-44, I will respond first to Schreiner and Ware and then to Schreiner and Caneday.

Our understanding of God's saving grace is very different [in comparison to the Arminian understanding]. We contend that Scripture does not teach that all people receive grace in equal measure, even though such a democratic notion is attractive today. What Scripture teaches is that God's saving grace is set only upon some, namely, those whom, in his great love, he elected long ago to save, and that this grace is necessarily effective in turning them to belief.

This latter understanding of grace is found, for example, throughout John 6. Take John 6:37, "All that the Father gives me will come to me; and whoever comes to me I will never drive away." The "coming" of John 6:37 is synonymous with "believing." That the words *coming* and *believing* are different ways of describing the same reality is confirmed by what Jesus says in John 6:35, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." To come to Jesus is to satisfy one's hunger and to

believe in him is to quench one's thirst. It is easy to see from this verse that "coming" and "believing" are synonyms, just as the metaphors of satisfying one's hunger and quenching one's thirst are parallel ways of saying that Jesus meets our every need. Two verses later Jesus says, "All that the Father gives me will come to me." We would not, therefore, do any violence to the meaning of this verse in wording it as follows: "All that the Father gives to me shall believe in me." Of course, not all people "come to" or "believe in" Jesus. The verse says that this will be true only of those whom the Father has given to Jesus. In other words, only some have been given by the Father to the Son, and they will come, and they will never be cast out, and they will be raised up on the last day (John 6:39-40).

Or, consider John 6:44, "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day." The first half of this verse indicates, as Arminians gladly acknowledge also, that God's grace (i.e., the drawing of the Father) is necessary for personal salvation. But the question before us is what kind of grace this is. Is it unlimited or common grace, given to all? Or is it a particular grace, an efficacious grace given only to some? The second half of verse 44 answers our question, for there we find that the one who is given grace (who is drawn by the Father) is actually saved (raised up). The drawing of the Father, then, is not general, but particular, for it accomplishes the final salvation of those who are drawn. God's grace, without which no one can be saved, is therefore an efficacious [irresistible] grace, resulting in the sure salvation of those to whom it is given [*Still Sovereign*, pp. 14-15].

I admit that as a Classical Arminian I have yet to read a convincing exegetical rebuttal to this Calvinist interpretation. Nevertheless, it was this disappointment that drove me to examine more closely the Calvinist exegesis. What I discovered is that this cherished passage by Calvinists does not support their doctrines of *unconditional election*, *irresistible grace*, nor *unconditional security*.

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The first and most obvious problem with Schreiner and Ware's interpretation has to do with *who* the "all that" refers to. They identify the "all that" in verses 37 and 39 as "those whom, in his great love, he elected long ago to save." The "all that" would then refer to those people, "the elect," whom God the Father has selected in eternity to *become believers in time*. This is confirmed when they paraphrase verse 37a as, "All that the Father gives to me shall believe in me." Thus, this giving is "necessarily effective in turning them ['the elect'] to belief."

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### People are given to Jesus because they are already believers.

Such an understanding cannot be justified when we compare the "all that" found in verse 39 with verse 40. Please observe the

parallel lines in the ABCBBA structure of verses 39-40. "And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."

- A raise them up at the last day
- B that I shall lose none of all that he has given me
- C this is the will of him who sent me
- C' For this is the will of my Father
- B' that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life
- A' raise him up at the last day

First, we should note the connective word "for" in verse 40. There is a logical connection between the last sentence and the following. This logical connection was self-evident in the ABCBBA structure of these verses. The "all that" in verse 39 whom the Father "has given" to Jesus is none other than "everyone who looks to the Son and believes in Him," in verse 40. Both verses affirm that *all believers* will be raised up on the last day.

Calvinist F. F. Bruce clarifies our conclusions, "In verse 39 'all' is neuter singular (*pan*) as in verse 37a, and when Jesus says that he will 'raise *it* (*auto*) up on the last day' he speaks of the sum-total of his people. In verse 40 'every one' is masculine singular (*pas*), and when Jesus says that

he will 'raise him (*auton*) up at the last day' he speaks of each individual believer as in verse 37b."

The "all that" in verse 39 is identical to that in verse 37 as Bruce explains once again. "In the first part of verse 37 the pronoun 'all' is neuter singular (Gk. *pan*), denoting the sum-total of believers. In the second part ('the one who comes') each individual member of that sum-total is in view. This oscillation between the [believing] community as a whole and its individual members reappears in verses 39 and 40." So Schreiner and Ware are correct in saying, "only some have been given by the Father to the Son." However, the "some" that the Father has selected to be given to the Son are none other than "the sum-total of believers" or "the whole mass of believers" [Lanski, *The Gospel of John*, p. 468], or better yet "all believers regarded as one complete whole" [Vincent, *Word Studies*, 2:150]. Therefore, certain persons are not selected and then *given* to Jesus in order to *become believers*, as Calvinists assert; people are *given* to Jesus because *they are already believers*.

Since the Father gives believers to Jesus, then what did Jesus mean in saying they "will come to Me?" This brings us to the next major problem with Schreiner and Ware's interpretation. They link the word "come" in verses 35, 37b, and 44 with "will come" in verse 37a. They write, "We would not, therefore, do any violence to the meaning of this verse in wording it as follows: 'All that the Father gives to me shall believe in me.'" Unfortunately, this is precisely where Calvinists have failed to accurately reflect Christ's intended meaning and where Arminians have failed to point this out.

First, we have already determined who the "all that" refers to—all believers regarded as a complete whole. Consequently, it would make no sense for Jesus to have said, "All believers that the Father gives to me will believe in me." Jesus already has the whole mass of believers in view as those given to Him by the Father and who "will come" to Him.

Secondly, it is significant that the Greek word for "come" in verses 35, 37b, 44, and 45 is different from that of "will come" in 37a. "Will come" (*heko*) emphasizes the idea of reaching or arriving, whereas the one who comes (*erchomai*) to Jesus emphasizes the process of coming. In verses

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35 and 37b, “comes” is a present participle that refers to ongoing action and is literally translated “coming.” As Schreiner and Ware have rightly noted, it is synonymous with “believing” in this context. It is also significant that “believe” is used as a present participle in verses 35, 40, 47. Individual believers who keep on coming to Jesus in faith are promised that they will never be spiritually hungry (v 35a), nor will they be driven away or “cast out” from Jesus into condemnation on the last day (implied, v 37b).

However, in verse 37a, Jesus does not specifically have the individual believer in mind, but all believers seen as a collective whole. It is they who will come to Jesus. The Greek word for will come (*heko*) is not a present participle but a future indicative. How is it that all believers, regarded as a complete whole, will come to Jesus or reach Him in the future? The answer is provided just two

verses later by the other “all that” verse 39: “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that he has given me, but raise them up at the last day.”

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**While John 6:44 does not imply irresistible grace, it does imply an enabling grace.**

According to verse 39, all believers, regarded as a complete whole, that the Father has given to Jesus will be raised up on the last day. In verse 37a, all believers, regarded as a complete whole, that the Father gives to Jesus will come to Jesus. Each time the verb “raise up” (*anistemi*) is used in John (6:39, 40, 44, 54) it is in the future indicative like “will come” (*heko*). Therefore it seems safe to conclude, from the immediate context, from the corresponding phrase “all that,” from the change in the Greek word and its tense, that “will come” to Christ in verse 37a is parallel in meaning with the phrase “raise up on the last day.” All believers will certainly come to Jesus in final salvation via a future resurrection!

That “will come” (*heko*) is to be interpreted as a coming to final salvation via a future resurrection in John 6:37a is given further confirmation when we see how it was used by Jesus in the other Gospels. “I say to you that many will come (*heko*) from east and west, and recline at the table with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of

heaven; but the sons of the kingdom will be cast out (*ekballo*) into the outer darkness; in that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” (Matt 8:11-12, NASB). “There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out (*ekballo exo*). People will come (*heko*) from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God” (Luke 13:28-29, NASB). “All that [all believers regarded as a complete whole] the Father gives Me will come (*heko*) to Me [in final salvation via a future resurrection], and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out (*ballo exo*)” (John 6:37, NASB).

In each of these contexts the community of believers are the ones who will come to Jesus in final salvation, while unbelievers will be cast out into final condemnation. While Arminians have missed the significance of *heko* in interpreting John 6:35ff, Calvinists have consistently misused it to support unconditional election and irresistible grace. But doesn’t John 6:44 teach a particular grace, an efficacious grace given only to some? No it does not. The verse does not say, “the one who is given grace (who is drawn by the Father) is actually saved (raised up),” as Schreiner and Ware argue. The verse reads, “No one can come (*erchomai*) to [believe in] me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.” Who is it that will be raised up on the last day according to Jesus? The phrase “raise up” is used three other times by Jesus in John 6 and each time it applies to both the believing community and to its individual believers:

“And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all that [all believers regarded as a complete whole] he has given me, but raise them up at the last day” (v 39). “For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (v 40). “Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day” (v 54).

Notice that before we encounter this “drawing” of the Father we find Jesus declaring several times that only those believing in Him possess eternal life (6:27-29, 40; cf. 3:16, 18, 36; 6:54); will never hunger nor thirst (6:35); and will not be driven

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away or cast out (6:37b). It is only when we get to verse 44 that we find out that a person cannot believe in Jesus unless the Father first “draws” him. Clearly,

Both God’s sovereign grace and human response play a role in human salvation, but even one’s human response is enabled by God’s grace. God’s role in the relationship is incomparably greater than the human one, but the fact remains that God does not and will not save a person without the positive human response, called faith, to the divine leading and drawing [Ben Witherington, *John’s Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel*, p. 158].

Jesus could have said, “No one can believe in me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and the one who believes in Me (in response to this drawing), I will raise him up on the last day.” But since he already affirmed to his listeners that they must come to or believe in Him in order to receive the promises, it was not necessary to emphasize it here. Jesus’ concern was to emphasize God’s sovereign initiative that precedes and enables the human response of faith. Therefore while verse 44 does not imply irresistible grace, it does imply *an enabling grace* necessary for a person to respond in faith to Jesus’ offer to receive eternal life.

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## A Prayer for World Missions

Thomas O. Summers

In his book *The Golden Censer: An Essay on Prayer* (1859), Thomas Summers defined prayer as, “The offering up of our desires to God, for things agreeable to his will, in the name of Christ, by the help of his Spirit, with confession of our sins and thankful acknowledgment of his mercies.” Summers also offered the following prayer for a missionary meeting:

**W**e esteem it a privilege, O Lord, that we may labor for the advancement of thy cause. Of ourselves we can do nothing, but thou canst command success on the feeblest efforts. Be present in our meeting. Stir us up to zeal and prayer.

Grant, O God, unto thy Church a pentecostal season. Pour out upon us thy good Spirit from on high, and make the wilderness become a fruitful field. May he again convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. May there be speedily and widely a shaking among

the dry bones. May a holy interest respecting eternal things take the place of indifference. May the cry be heard from every quarter— Men and brethren, what shall we do? May men look to him whom they have pierced, and mourn. May they flee for refuge to the hope which the gospel reveals. May they believe with the heart unto righteousness, and with the mouth make confession unto salvation. May they cleave unto the Lord with full purpose of heart, and follow the Lamb, treading in the footmarks which he left during his sojourn upon our earth.

Acknowledge, O Lord, and honor thine own truth **before** the sons of men. Vindicate thy cause. **Take** unto thyself thy great power and reign. **Claim** the nations for thine own. Let the earth **be** filled with thy knowledge, as the waters cover the sea. And to Father, Son, and Spirit, one God, be all the glory now and for ever.

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## The Brush Arbor

Robert L. Brush

### The Witness of the Spirit

“The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God” (Romans 8:16).

What is this dual or joint testimony that we are the children of God? We can divide them in this fashion:

I. The direct witness—(God’s voice or impression)

II. The indirect witness—(a clear conscience)

I. The Direct Witness: An inward impression on the soul whereby God’s Spirit directly witnesses to my spirit: “I am a child of God, Jesus Christ

loves me and has given Himself for me and all my sins are blotted out, that I, even I, am reconciled to God.”

- A. This direct witness must precede the witness of our own spirit. In other words this direct testimony must precede the indirect testimony. We cannot love God, obey and rejoice in Him, until we know He loves us. Then we love Him because He first loved us.
- B. This testimony must precede all holiness, or knowledge of any real change wrought in our hearts and lives.
- C. Wesley states: “The Spirit of God gives the believer such testimony to his adoption that, while it is present in the soul, he can no more

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***This direct testimony must precede the indirect testimony.***

doubt the shining of the sun while he is standing in the blaze of its beams.” But how may we distinguish this God-given witness from the pre-

sumption of the natural mind; from our natural enthusiasms or euphoria? One is a revelation my sins are forgiven through Christ. The other is simply a feeling of love or tenderness toward whatever the mind is occupied with at the time.

- D. We may also examine ourselves with the steps of true salvation:
  1. Law. Have you ever been convicted of sin?
  2. Have you truly repented of your sins?
  3. Have you made any attempt to right your wrongs?
  4. Have all things become new?
  5. Are you delivered from the power of Satan?
  6. Was there ever a time when you truly believed and knew Christ died for your sins?

II. The indirect witness or clean conscience or the witness of our own spirit. “For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world and more abundantly to you-ward” (2 Cor 1:12).

- A. The need for the indirect witness: Many people imagine themselves to be children of God while doing the works of the devil. These are fanatics of the worst kind! It is a

daunting task to unveil the darkness that covers many of these souls. Except for the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit it is nearly impossible. They consider the one that would attempt to help them as enemies of the faith. They have become self-deceived. This is indeed a desperate condition.

- B. How may we hope to rescue these? “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Rom 8:14).
- C. Self examination. How does the Holy Spirit lead one? Into all holy tempers and actions. Are we thus led? We know if we are kind and understanding or hot-headed, stubborn, fiery or impatient
- D. The fruit of the Spirit. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith and temperance (Gal 5:22-23). Can we honestly say we have the fruit in our lives? Do you have a meek spirit? A teachable spirit? A tenderness of soul? Humbleness of mind? Did you have a noticeable change, victory over sin, old sins that before seemed impossible? a bad temper, lying tongue, sticky fingers, lustful thoughts, hatred for sin and love for right?
- E. Having read what St. Paul said, let’s see what St. John has to say: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him and keepeth not his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (1 John 2:3-4). We know Him if we keep His commandments. We know we are in Him because we keep His word and the love of God is perfected in us (1 John 2:5). “Ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is born of God” (1 John 2:29), which means everyone born of God does righteousness! “And hereby we know that he abideth in us by the Spirit which he hath given us” (1 John 3:24).
- F. How then may we know God’s voice? We must test it by the Word of God and examine our lives for the fruit of the Spirit. His Spirit is a loving spirit and an obedient spirit. If we resist the word of God in these matters we are in danger of becoming presumptuous and thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought. A presumptuous man imagines he has favor with God and becomes lifted up with pride. The more confident of God’s he

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imagines he has, the more lifted up with pride he becomes. He may assume a haughty behavior and may become overbearing to all around him. He becomes incapable of receiving reproof and develops a kind of fierceness in his manner. Is such a one growing in grace? No, he has found an easy way. He will be overly strict in one area while doing outright sin in another. His joy then is not of the Lord, but of his own making.

**CONCLUSION:** The believer has victory over sin, he is purified by faith as the Holy Spirit cleanses his affections and emotions and placed in him the love of God and love for God. This change of attitude gives power to the will to resist sin and cling to God.

Regeneration cleanses from the acquired pollution of habitual sins. Entire sanctification cleanses from inherited pollution of original sin. However, there is no state of grace that exempts us from temptation. The most perfect have continual need of the atonement of Christ for involuntary transgressions. We must, like St. Paul discipline our lives and watch and pray, lest after we have taught others we ourselves become a castaway (1 Cor. 9:27).

[This outline is taken from John Wesley's sermons #10, 11, 12: "The Witness of the Spirit, Discourses 1-2; The Witness of Our Own Spirit"].

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## REVIEWS

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In *The Rise of Christianity* (1996) Rodney Stark, a professor of sociology and comparative religion, discusses how the obscure, marginal Jesus Movement became the dominant religious force in the Western world in a few centuries. Toward the end of the book Stark stated this conclusion, "I believe that it was the religion's particular doctrines that permitted Christianity to be among the most sweeping and successful revitalization movements in history. And it was

the way these doctrines took on actual flesh, the way they directed organizational actions and individual behavior, that led to the rise of Christianity" [p. 211].

If this is true, it is no wonder that part of Satan's attack on the Church today is to water down and disembowel Christian doctrine. Therefore, we are vitally concerned with how the message of Christ is described in Christian literature.

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**Jerry L. Walls and Joseph R. Dongell, *Why I Am Not a Calvinist*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004. 230 pages. Robert A. Peterson and Michael D. Williams. *Why I Am Not An Arminian*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2004. 224 pages.**

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Walls and Dongell approach the biblical text with humility. They do not profess omniscience. They concede the Bible is obscure at some points, but it is clear on the central issues of salvation. They correctly frame the debate as not about the freedom of man, but about the nature of God. What does it mean to claim that God does indeed love the whole world, but has chosen only some to be saved? Is God disingenuous when he offers salvation to all, yet withholds from the non-elect the grace necessary to respond? Does God, in fact, have two wills - one of which is unstated but contradicts that which is stated in his word? Is divine compassion for the lost sincere when he desires all to be saved, yet unconditionally determines who will be saved?

They indite contemporary Arminianism as having an inadequate view of sin. Historic Wesleyan-Arminian, held to the

sinful condition of humanity as fully as Calvinism. In fact the Calvinistic contributor to the *Biblical Repository and Princeton Review* in 1861 affirmed that eighteenth-century Wesleyans properly affirmed, "Man's ruin by the fall; his native depravity and alienation from God; his absolute need of a Savior, and utter inability to save himself; the necessity of regeneration by the Holy Spirit; justification, not by works, but by faith alone in the blood and righteousness of Jesus; the free offer of salvation to every human being, without money and without price; the necessity of holiness, not to merit heaven, but to become meet for it."

However, as much as we may agree on the nature of the human condition, Calvinists and Wesleyan-Arminians part company over the nature of God's rescue operation. Although the Calvinistic/Arminian debate has continued for

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centuries, the specific issues and terminology have changed. As much as some of us love the classic Wesleyan-Arminian rebuttals of historic Calvinism, Calvinists have flooded the market with their position, while we have been content to reprint a few old classics. Most of us cannot adequately defend our convictions. Walls and Dongell state a contemporary Arminianism and rebut a contemporary Calvinism. For example, in the debate concerning human freedom three philosophic positions are possible: determinism, compatibilism, and libertarianism. We will fail if we accuse modern Calvinists of hard-core determinism. The authors point out that most contemporary Calvinists affirm that God's will is deterministic and yet we are still responsible. This is a different definition of "freedom" than the libertarian view that a free action is one which is not predetermined.

While the position of Molinism is an interesting attempt to reconcile the two views, the Arminian case is not advanced by Jerry's openness to open theism and the authors apparently do not agree with one another on the question of divine foreknowledge [p. 45]. Nor do the authors even attempt to discuss the differences between Calvinistic and Arminian views of perseverance or eternal security. Yet through exegesis, logic, and contemporary illustrations, they do succeed in raising a red flag concerning the practical consequences of Calvinism for evangelism, the fate of the uncivilized, Christian assurance, and the problem of evil.

The volume by Peterson and Williams is less philosophical and more historical. It is not by accident that their presentation begins with Augustine. The authors argue for unconditional predestination and unconditional security. If it can be demonstrated that the basis and conclusion of Calvinism is taught in Scripture, then logically the whole system must be scriptural. These chapters contain a fairly typical list of proof texts and attempts to harmonize "difficult" passages. These authors conclude that true believers cannot commit apostasy, but as usual, fail to explain how church members who have never truly been saved can fall from or forsake a faith they never had.

The authors argue for a compatibilist view of freedom affirming both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. And yet conservative Arminians also affirm both divine sovereignty and human responsibility. The real issue is the definition of "freedom." Calvinists affirm that man is free, yet deny the power of contrary choice. Thus, for Calvinists "freedom" allows a man to vote, but there is always just one name on the ballot.

Yet Walls and Dongell were absolutely right that the essence of Arminianism is not free will. Wesley himself declared that the natural man was free, but free only to evil. Wesley wrote that both he and Fletcher "absolutely deny natural free will. We both steadily assert that the will of man is by nature free only to evil. Yet we both believe that every man has a measure of free will restored to him by grace."

The real question is whether the preliminary grace of God can enable such a person to repent and believe. The authors of this book argue that sinful humans are unable to do anything, even believe, apart from God's irresistible sovereign grace. Yet it is irresponsible for these authors to describe the Wesleyan-Arminian concept of total depravity as hypothetical. There is nothing hypothetical about our inability. And yet our natural inability is temporarily superceded by divine grace. While this preliminary grace appears to all men, yet not all men respond in faith because they do have the power of contrary choice. This true freedom does not negate God's sovereignty since he chose to limit his sovereignty. While God does not always see fit to exercise his absolute power nor impose his perfect will, he has predestined the final consequences of our free choices. We may initially resist his grace, but not his final judgment.

The closing chapter of this book is on the atonement. The authors argue that the governmental view of the atonement is inadequate. They then document the fact that Wesley taught a substitutionary view of the atonement and then argue that particular or limited atonement is an implication of the doctrine of the substitutionary atonement. Therefore, they attempt to drive a wedge between earlier and later Wesleyan-Arminians. But the great Wesleyan theologians of the past were clear that the sufferings of Christ were an equivalent which God accepts as satisfaction of his justice when we believe. Richard Watson distinguished between "full satisfaction" and "fully equivalency." Benjamin Field wrote that while the commercial metaphor of the atonement is valid to a point, the Scriptures do not teach that Christ paid the exact sin debt for the elect and therefore those for whom Christ suffered are unconditionally saved. Thomas Ralston believed in the satisfaction of the justice of God, but not *penal* satisfaction—the exact payment of our penalty for our sins. Thomas Summers cut to the heart of the issue when he concluded that Christ did not perform the duties God requires of us. It is our faith, not the holiness of Christ, which is imputed to us for righteousness.

I have a thirteen-page excursus on the nature of the atonement in **my Romans commentary**. **I cite a number of early**

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Methodist theologians who held to a substitutionary view of the atonement and yet every one of them concluded that it was offered universally. While I do not pretend to have approached these two books with a neutral mind, my most objective critique is that the Calvinist volume tended to superficial exegesis and standard arguments against

Arminianism, but with a more peaceful tone. Of the multiplicity of apologetical works on Calvinism this one might be the best, but with the dearth of comparable contemporary Arminian writings the volume by Walls and Dongell is cutting edge scholarship.

—Vic Reasoner

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### **J. D. Faust, *The Rod: Will God Spare It? Hayesville, NC: Schoettle Publishing Co, 2002. 437 pages.***

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Faust writes that living in a future millennium is a prize which can be forfeited. However, Faust also teaches eternal security and in an attempt to reconcile this doctrine with rest of Scripture, he concludes that many Christians will miss the millennium because they lived carnally or in rebellion. Thus, entrance into the millennium is conditional and those believers who were not overcomers are excluded from the millennial kingdom, although not from final salvation.

Faust separates the “bema” judgment of Rom 14:10 from the Great White Throne judgment of Revelation 20:12. When Christ comes for his church, these carnal Christians will be resurrected, but not share in the first resurrection. Faust does not want to call this purgatory because that word is associated with Roman Catholicism. Nor is this the soul sleep of seventh day adventism nor the heresy of universalism. Above all he has avoided the dreaded label of Arminianism.

Thus Charles Stanley teaches that disobedient Christians will experience a type of outer darkness that is within the millennial kingdom. Faust taught that they would die again and go to hell, but only temporarily hurt by the lake of fire. They will be banished to the underworld throughout the millennium. They are in danger of temporarily losing their souls and temporarily being hurt by the second death (2:11). Their names may also be temporarily blotted out of the book of life (3:5). Yet this is a warning to Christians who can never perish eternally (John 6:39-40). “Losing ‘life’ is not necessarily losing absolute, eternal life. To be blotted out of the ‘book of life’ at the judgment seat means to be condemned to die throughout the millennium. This is a danger for Christians” [p. 212]. However, there is more

than one book mentioned in Revelation 20:12. “It is possible that there is more than one ‘book of life’ [p. 213]. However, since their names will be found in the final book of life (20:12), they will be raised to immortality a thousand years later at the Great White Throne Judgment. Or they may be temporarily blotted out of the book for unfaithfulness and after having been scourged, they will again be found in the book of life [p. 215]. In either case they will be incarcerated and chastised during the millennium, but saved in the end. Christians certainly can have assurance that they are saved, but they are to strive until the end and hope in the Lord’s mercy, “yet we should never have certainty” concerning the judgment seat [pp. 242; 285].

No, I am not making this up. I have labored to state the views of Faust in his own words. Incredibly, this book is endorsed by many fundamental Baptists and they are holding conferences on this topic. This implies they are having trouble with some of their carnal Church members and need some leverage to restrain them. It is obvious that their cardinal doctrine is unconditional eternal security and that everything else must be cut to fit. It also assumes the category of carnal Christians, a false view of assurance, and a dispensational premillennial division of the general judgment. However, if the millennium is that period of time from Christ’s first advent to his second coming in final judgment, as much of the Church has always believed, then these carnal Christians may be stuck in hell forever with no hope of ever getting out. I would not want to base my chances of getting out on this theological house of cards.

—Vic Reasoner

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**CORRECTION:** In *The Arminian Magazine* 2:1 (Fall 1981) the article entitled “The Three Dispensations” was printed without acknowledging the author. A later editor mistakenly attributed the article to Robert L. Brush. Actually the article was by Daniel Steele and taken from his book *Love Enthroned*.

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## **Mark Bird, *How Can You Be Sure? Charles Stanley and John Wesley Debate Salvation and Security.* Salem, OH: Schmull Publishing Co, 2004. 144 pages**

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The main idea of this book is to compare and contrast two men, John Wesley and Charles Stanley and their views on the atonement, especially as it relates to the doctrine of Eternal Security. Thus, Bird combats some of Stanley's theological balderdash by contrasting him with an evangelical standard like Wesley. Bird does an admirable job articulating both positions.

Here are just a few examples of how Wesley's and Stanley's views collate. Stanley does not speak much about grace before salvation. Wesley believes in "prevenient grace because of the depth of inherited depravity," and for him "no good could be done except for prevenient grace." Stanley believes that "Christ was the substitute for our punishment and for our righteousness." Wesley believed that "Christ was the substitute for our punishment" but not that his sinless life is imputed for our righteousness. Stanley believes that willful sin

cannot separate a person from God. Wesley does. Concerning assurance Stanley says, "one is now saved and will persevere in his salvation." Wesley says "assurance is a *present* assurance, a knowledge that one is now saved, but not that he will persevere." Bird also points out that "Stanley describes the Spirit-filled life like Wesley describes regeneration, rather than entire sanctification." At the end of each chapter Bird summarizes the differences with a parallel chart.

While Bird contrasts the views of both men, he does not rebut some of Stanley's particular interpretations, especially peculiar interpretations of some parables. Rather, he allows the reader to draw a general response from Wesley's views. Nevertheless, Bird does give us a better view of the twistings and turnings that Stanley does as he tries to craft his wrought iron eternal security fence.

—Dennis Hartman

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John Goodwin, *Redemption Redeemed*. Expanded Edition. Edited by John D. Wagner. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2004.

*The Arminian Magazine* 20:1 (Spring 2002) contained a notice of the reprint of this Puritan classic which defends the unlimited atonement of Christ. Editor John Wagner now has an expanded edition with 94 additional pages which offers a fuller text. This 2004 edition may be order online using this ISBN: 1592447309.

*Selected Sermons from the Works of Adam Clarke*. Salem, OH: Allegheny Publications, 2005.

*The Miscellaneous Works of Adam Clarke* is a thirteen-volume set. Volumes 5-8 contain a total of 60 sermons by Clarke, plus a tract, a short book, and two speeches. They have also been published separately in four volumes as *Discourses on Various Subjects Relative to the Being and Attributes of God and His Works in Creation, Providence, and Grace*. While either of the sets are hard to find, thankfully Allegheny has reprinted thirteen of these sermons in this volume. It retails for \$12.99. Call them at 800-672-7500.

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