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THE ROMANS ROAD IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION *Tim Fulkerson*

In February of 2023, an article was published in the *St. Louis Free Press* called “I Thought I Was Saving Trans Kids, Now I’m Blowing the Whistle.” This article tells of an LGBTQ+ woman named Jamie Reed, who was a case worker at Washington University in their transgender clinic. After years of witnessing the young patients receive hormonal treatments, deal with emotional effects of these treatments, and have gender altering surgeries, she blew the whistle. She claimed that families were

“rushed to treatment, mental health issues were ignored, and side effects of hormone therapy were glossed over,” so she declared she could no longer work there. This fascinating article has since put the transgender clinic, and others like it, under significant scrutiny. The media, as expected, did everything it could to debunk the claims of this article. Yet Jamie Reed saw what was going on from the inside, and her conscience would not allow this, even as a queer woman.

America today could easily be described as a land of confusion. People are confused about gender, identity, and sexuality in unprecedented ways. John Wesley once said that “What one generation tolerates, the next generation will embrace.” Young people today have been targeted in complex and multifaceted ways to embrace transgenderism and other related forms of LGBTQ+ ideology. This confusion has significantly influenced businesses, grade schools, universities, community services, and tragically even many churches. Our culture has been dramatically changed and has moved far away from God and his holy ways.

How did we come to embrace this confusion? Romans chapter one gives us remarkable insight. After the apostle finishes his preface, he comes to his primary focus of the epistle, specifically the absolute need of the gospel of Jesus

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Christ. Although God is revealed in nature, Romans 1:18 reveals that people suppress the truth. Like someone being dunked or drowned in a swimming pool, people have chosen to hold the truth down and repress it. As a result, no person is without excuse (vs. 2), and we all deserve God's judgment and wrath. All can look at creation and arrive at the conclusion that there must be a Creator.

Just like Paul's day, our culture has suppressed the truth. We too have become futile in our thinking, resulting in this significant proliferation of confusion. This unholy exchange of the worship of everything but God, brings about the sin of idolatry. In Romans one, homosexuality is

We must speak out against all sexual immorality

specifically singled out as a particular expression of this idolatry. It is a clear illustration

of the idolatrous impulse of humanity to turn away from God's order and design. This is a corporate revolt against the Creator; it is truly the Romans Road in the wrong direction.

The answer to this confusion today is for the Christian Church to prioritize several things. First, we must take a stand for God's holy standards. We must speak into God's divine design for manhood and womanhood. God makes no mistakes regarding gender and design. He has also made clear that sexual intimacy is to be expressed solely in the context of a biblical marriage between one man and one woman (Gen 2:24). Any sexual practice outside of marriage is sinful. The confusion in our culture we have seen is because we as Christians have been shamed into silence. Yet we as a church have a responsibility to speak into these matters. To remain silent and inactive when error or evil is being canvassed has very serious consequences. Tolerance is

never a virtue when confronted with evil and sin.

Secondly, Jesus calls us to prioritize love. Our aim must not only be to posture people toward the Word of God, but also to have the true heart of God toward people. Our enemy is not people; it is against the deceiving spiritual forces that are attempting to pull people away from God. People may discount the messenger as a bigot, but their real problem may be the Bible. Our calling as Christians is to lovingly call people to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. If we fail in this, we are not acting in love. Our posture therefore must not be to condemn others, but to allow truth and love (Eph 4:15) to work together in our interactions with others.

Thirdly, we must speak out against *all* sexual immorality. Whether it is heterosexual or homosexual behavior, God calls each of us to righteousness. To bear the fruit of true repentance is to walk in holiness in all sexual conduct. Adam Clarke stated that "It is the grace of God, that shows and condemns the sin, that humbles us." May our consciences be awakened through the power of the Holy Spirit on these particular matters of identity and conduct.

Fourthly, we must hold out the hope of Jesus Christ in our battle against temptation. Jesus came to take away the practice of willful sin in our lives by the power of his Spirit. Because of the Gospel of Jesus, there is power for our lives to be transformed as we abide in him. Francis Asbury once wrote, "My desire is to live more to God today than yesterday, and to be more holy this hour than the last." My friends, this is the road in the right direction.

As a church we must speak into these issues with clarity and conviction, bringing God's truth through his Word in the power of Christ's love. We are warned not to compromise the truth. Paul says

there is a serious indictment that God's word levies against individuals and churches that "give approval of those who practice them" (Rom 1:32). This means that churches have no right to approve what God has condemned. There can be no assimilation between God's holy standards and approving and practicing

immorality. By the grace of God, let us each follow Christ without wavering, and stand firm in a culture that so desperately needs hope and healing.

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MOLINISM AND ARMINIANISM

Richard Clark

In this series of articles, I am considering the three major non-Calvinist views on the relationship between God's foreknowledge and providence. Arminianism maintains three major points that any sufficient Arminian (and biblical) account must maintain. First, God has granted humanity a limited degree of genuine free will. This is free will in the common sense of the term, the ability to choose (to will or act on) more than one option in a particular situation. Second, God possesses exhaustive foreknowledge of the future. Third, Arminians maintain a strong view of divine providence that is consistent with the explicit and implicit affirmations of scripture.

In the first article in this series, I analysed open theism and concluded that it denied the compatibility of the first and second of the aforementioned points, it has difficulty explaining predictive passages in scripture, and it is inconsistent with early Arminianism. In my second article, I critiqued simple foreknowledge, examining its standing as an Arminian theology and its strength as a doctrine. I derived that it is certainly the most widely held Arminian view, especially when lay Christians are taken into account. It is not, however, without its challenges. While it asserts the truthfulness of all three of the aforementioned Arminian points, it has difficulty explaining how its models are providentially useful. In other words, if God has everlastingly or eternally always

known only what *will* be, then how is this simple foreknowledge useful for planning what *will* be? Doesn't God also need to have everlastingly or eternally known what *would* be the case in any set of circumstances, real or otherwise? Some Arminians have answered "yes" to this question, and have formulated variants of what has come to be called "Molinism", named after its founder Luis de Molina (1535-1600). My goal is not to convince anyone that they must prefer this alternative or the previous one.

It is important to bear in mind that all of these "models" of foreknowledge are just that, "models". They are not meant to be taken in an overly literal way. They are ways of imagining what the relationship between God's foreknowledge and providence might look like. Yet, when, for example, Molinist models include language about God deliberating, that is not because Molinist-Arminians think that God literally deliberates. Just as with open theism and simple foreknowledge, there is not just one account of Molinism. Several versions of Molinism are more or less consistent with Arminianism. For example, Jonathan Kvanvig's (b. 1954) understanding of "standard Molinism" and his "philosophical Arminianism" are much more consistent with Arminianism than what he refers to as "maverick Molinism," or Francisco Suárez's (1548–1617) "congruism." These latter two are arguably much more consistent with some

variants of Calvinism than with Arminianism.

Until now, I have explained Molinist-Arminianism as merely God's eternal or everlasting foreknowledge of what any free creature *would* do in any set of circumstances. I further explained that he used this foreknowledge of hypothetical possibilities to set in motion a particular future that was consistent with his will. While this is not an inaccurate account of Molinism, it is a mere summary. I am now going to try and explain Molinism more thoroughly, in a way that is easy to understand. Molina imagined that God had three sorts of knowledge. The first was his "natural knowledge", which was his knowledge of everything that *must* be the

God's middle knowledge is his knowledge of everything that would happen in any possible future that he set in motion.

way that it is given God's unchangeable nature, and his knowledge of everything that logically *could* be (which is everything that does not somehow defy the laws of logic, which are grounded in God's unchangeable nature). God possessed this natural knowledge before his decree to set any particular future in motion. God also had "middle knowledge" before his decree to set any particular future in motion. God's "middle knowledge" is his knowledge of everything that *would* happen in any possible future that he decided to set in motion through creation. Middle knowledge includes awareness of how free creatures *would* use their genuine free will in any scenario or set of circumstances that they find themselves in, and how their free choices would alter the future that God established at creation. God also had this knowledge before his decree to set any particular future in motion. God has a third sort of knowledge as a logical consequence of his choice to set a particular future in motion, through

his decree to create. Molinists refer to this third sort of knowledge as God's "free knowledge", which is his simple foreknowledge of how the actual future will play out. This simple foreknowledge is an outcome of God's decision to create a particular universe that will contain certain circumstances, as a result of a combination of his creative design and the future free choices of his creatures. Now that you are familiar with the three sorts of knowledge that God has, it should be clear how "middle knowledge" got its name. It logically falls between God's "natural knowledge" and his "free knowledge".

Molinist-Arminians have not always agreed on all the philosophical or theological minutiae surrounding Molinism, but they have affirmed something close enough to it that it is not widely different from the basics that I described above. Moreover, Molinist-Arminians have not concurred on how or why God used his middle knowledge in the ways that he has. Molinism has been, to a greater or lesser degree, attractive to several preeminent early Arminian theologians such as Jacob Arminius (1559-1609), Conrad Vorstius (1569-1622), Nicolaes Grevinchoven (d. 1632), Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), Étienne de Courcelles (1586-1659), Thomas Summers (1812-1882), John Miley (1813-1895), and William Pope (1822-1903). Beyond its historical grounding in early Arminianism, Molinist-Arminianism is attractive to many because it affirms the three points important to Arminianism mentioned at the beginning of this article.

Molinist-Arminianism also seems to provide a strong degree of providential usefulness, arguably unlike simple foreknowledge models. Through God's middle knowledge, he can plan and affect what *will* be the case through his knowledge of what *would* be the case. It also has explanatory power concerning certain passages of scripture. God knew

via his “free knowledge” that Peter and Judas would betray him. He knew, via his middle knowledge, that if David were to stay in Keilah then the people of Keilah *would* have freely handed David over to Saul (see 1 Sam 23:9-14). Christ was also able, because of his middle knowledge, to confidently declare, “If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would be fighting so that I would not be handed over to the Jews; but as it is, My kingdom is not of this realm (John 18:36, NASB).” Molinist-Arminianism is also able to explain how it is that God can incorporate evil into his plan, even though he would rather have it be the case that people both have free will and that no one ever sins. It is arguably able to account for difficult passages like Acts 2:23 and 4:27-28, without implying that God is less than perfectly good: “This Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men For truly in this city there were gathered together against your holy servant Jesus,

Middle knowledge constitutes a most important element in divine omniscience.

whom you anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever your hand and your plan had predestined to take place (ESV).” For in Molinist-Arminianism God knew that if he were to create free creatures in the situations that they found themselves in, they *would* freely murder Christ. While it was not ideal for God that people sin and that they require atonement, he knew that if he gave them free will this *would* be the case. So, the Triune God planned Christ’s incarnation and ministry knowing that people *would* freely murder him and that he would take what they meant for evil and use it for good, to atone for those who respond to his grace through faith.

Molinism can articulate meaningful accounts of conditional predestination. For example, God foreknew, via his middle knowledge, that if he were to create a world of free creatures they *would* sin and require atonement for redemption. God also knew that if he were to graciously atone for the sins of the world and unite those who respond to his grace through persevering faith to the Son, who *would* respond to him in persevering faith. God then decreed to set in motion a possible future, that included free creatures, through his creative act. By decreeing that one possible future be set in motion rather than another possible alternative, he conditionally predestined that those he foreknew *would* freely respond to his grace, *will* freely respond to it and be united to Christ. He further decreed that he will regenerate, sanctify, and glorify those whom he foreknows will be united to the Son.

Molinism is not, however, without its challenges, some of which are raised against it even by other Arminians. First, “If God can plan which future to set in motion, then why not set a future in motion that contains more goodness than this one?” Second, “Why not set a future in motion where people always freely choose the good rather than sin?” Third, “Since God did not set a better future in motion, is there any reason to prefer Molinist-Arminianism over Calvinism?” Fourth, “How can God have exhaustive foreknowledge of the future free decisions of creatures, let alone the free decisions of creatures that will never exist in circumstances that will never exist?” So, according to this fourth challenge, Molinism seems to be able to easily affirm the first and third Arminian points above but it may not explain “how” God has access to the second important point at the beginning of this article. Timeless models of simple foreknowledge were at least able to posit some way that God has access to

the second point and open theists just denied that God has it.

Molinist-Arminians continue to provide answers to these aforementioned questions. For the sake of space, I can only say that the aforementioned challenges are not necessarily successful at showing Molinist-Arminianism to be false. The laws of logic may be a reflection of God's nature and, if so, then God is not able to defy himself and do the illogical. It may be that some imaginable futures are not feasible in light of God's knowledge of what creatures *would* do if given free will. It might also be that if God had set in motion a different future that contained less evil it would have logically had to

have contained less free will (which is a great good) and, therefore, less goodness. Not all Arminians will be attracted to any variants of Molinism, but Pope maintained, in his *Compendium of Christian Theology*, that middle knowledge "constitutes a most important element in the Divine omniscience."

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A WORD FROM ASBURY

David Martinez

Dear Mr. Asbury used to carry a mite subscription paper [for donations], and at the house of one of his old friends he presented the paper. The friend handed him a bill. "I do not," said Mr. Asbury, "take more than one dollar from any one person." Said the brother, "If that is your rule, I will give you as many names as there are dollars." Every person who has a spark of love for the cause of God, whether he be a church member or not, should give something towards supporting that cause; even those who are maintained by charity, should give something out of that charity. I have been astonished to see some of our constant hearers, and people, too, that appear clever and friendly, who seldom, if ever, reach out a helping hand. If I could not labour in the harvest field myself, I would render assistance to those

who can, and are labouring hard night and day in gathering in the sheaves; especially if I had the smallest desire to profit by their labour. I should always wish to see the church of God as neat and as well finished as my own parlour, and her ministers provided for. Never hold the ministers of Christ in the light of beggars, while it is written, "The labourer is worthy of his (reward) hire;" and "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn." A minister of Christ is as much entitled to a living as any man.

American Methodist Pioneer: The Life and Journals of the Rev. Freeborn Garrettson 1752-1827, Robert Drew Simpson, ed, 397.

BIBLICAL DIFFICULTIES CALMLY CONSIDERED

A NEW SERIES ON HANDLING TROUBLING PASSAGES.

Thane Ury

It wasn't until the late-80s that I became an impenitent and ardent inerrantist.

Prior to that, though raised in a Bible-believing home and having attended both

Asburys, somewhere along the way I had imbibed the view that the Bible could contain flawed (even erroneous) information in so-called non-salvific matters without detracting from the overall veracity of its salvific message. I later learned that this view is called “soteriological inerrancy,” and it is a popular with many progressive evangelicals. In the wake of the Enlightenment’s enthronement of reason, with its steady raising of science to canonical status, classic ideas of divine revelation, inspiration, and infallibility would be assaulted. And the verdict of history is fairly clear — from the Garden of Eden to the halls of BioLogos — that wherever God’s Word has been demoted to second fiddle epistemologically, devastating consequences have always followed.

Readers of *The Arminian* might recall that about 250 years ago John Wesley was perplexed by the claims of Soame Jenyns, a prominent figure who served in Parliament for four decades. In a widely distributed tract, Jenyns suggested that the

Soteriological inerrancy is popular with many progressive evangelicals.

and superstition of the times and countries in which they were written,” and further affirmed that when it came to the “science of history, geography, astronomy, and philosophy, the writers of Holy Writ appear to have been no better instructed than others.” If you have been following the trend in Christian higher education the last fifty years this type of thinking is now the norm. Most modern seminaries have unflinching made ample room for the views of Jenyns, who asserted that the biblical authors could have been “misled by the errors and prejudices of the times and countries in which they lived.”

A shocked Wesley responded that, “it is not self-evident whether Jenyns is an atheist, deist, or Christian.” If Jenyns were Christian,” stated Wesley, “then he betrays his own cause by averring that; all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God; but the writers of it were sometimes left to themselves, and consequently made some mistakes. Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth” [*Works*, 4:82]. Even the Bishop of Gloucester, William Warburton claimed that the biblical writers may have may have made trifling errors in circumstances of small importance. To this Wesley quipped, “Nay, will not the allowing there is any error in Scripture, shake the authority of the whole?” [*Works*, 9:150].

Wesley understood the utter devastation that would come in claiming that the Bible could contain a factual error of any type, even in non-salvific areas. And yet some, like Kenneth Grider, draw the odd conclusion that Wesley did not clearly affirm “total inerrancy” since in his response to Jenyns, Wesley allegedly did not clearly state that he was including *unimportant matters* when he claimed that there are no mistakes in the Bible (Grider, *WTJ* 19 [Fall 1984]) 56). But Grider, usually a fine scholar, is excruciatingly flatfooted in this proposal in that he ignores that the very phenomena which Jenyns raised (history, geography, astronomy, etc.) are some of the very areas that “soteriological inerrantists” consider to be non-essentials when compared to so-called “matters of faith and practice.”

As mentioned in the first paragraph, I have not always held to inerrancy, and probably could have sided in principle with some of the challenges of Jenyns and Warburton. But in 1983, the confluence of three redeeming factors woke me out of my higher critical slumbers: 1) Acquiring Gleason Archer’s mammoth work,

Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, 2) Taking Allan Coppedge's Basic Christian Doctrine class at ATS, and 3) Discovering a hidden jewel in the "10¢ box" in a Nicholasville parking lot rummage sale.

Like many believers, my heart would occasionally get snagged on thorny

Skeptics have always loved pointing out problem areas in the Bible.

passages. I was vexed by questions about where

Cain got

his wife, the imprecatory Psalms, whether the mustard seed was literally the smallest seed, and the opprobrium attached to the divine mandates to totally annihilate some pagan nations. And what of Joshua's long day, the many alleged contradictions in the Gospel accounts, and those biblical genealogies that seemed anything but seamless?

But devouring Archer's magisterial *Encyclopedia* opened up a whole world of satisfactory answers to me that I had never considered. And while most of Archer's entries are quite compelling, I later sleuthed out even more persuasive answers than his (some of his views on Genesis and origins, for example, are profoundly puzzling and problematic). But any weaknesses aside, Archer's efforts gave me confidence through many thorny passages, and proved propaedeutic to my early theological development.

Secondly, I was extremely fortunate to have taken many of Al Coppedge's Asbury classes. The first was Basic Christian Doctrine, which gave me and about 35 other Asburians some serious anchors. It is the only course that I've ever been part of where the professor received an ovation at the end. I was still in the throes of doubt, and benefitted from Dr. Coppedge having carved out a couple classes to give guidelines for handling biblical difficulties and dealing with alleged contradictions. His demonstration

of plausible responses to some famous skeptical barbs added ballast to my faith.

And lastly, in the parking lot of nearby Edgewood Plaza, my wife and I were feasting on a community rummage sale. One man's junk literally became my treasure, as I found a 1907 title, *Difficulties in the Bible*, by R.A. Torrey. This slender — and somewhat dated work — was to have a permanent impact in my grounding as an apologist. Not bad for 10¢! Torrey's work would not likely convince a hardened higher critic. That will take the Holy Spirit. But his more modest goal was to show how some of the classic critical objections lobbed by the detractors of our faith disappear upon close, scholarly, and charitable scrutiny. My big doubts, excusing the pun, stopped on a dime that day. It was a lifeline to me, providing in genesis some basic guidelines that I use to this very day. In fact, that summer, I scribbled these words in the book's flyleaf: "The turnaround book."

Thus, we begin this series in *The Arminian*, addressing some of the more infamous biblical difficulties, alleged contradictions, apparent discrepancies, and moral conundrums. We will provide some suggestions for engaging what Peter calls "things which are hard to understand" (2 Pet 3:16). Skeptics have always loved pointing out problem areas in the Bible. That will not change. From Soame Jenyns, to David Hume, to Julius Wellhausen, to Bertrand Russell, to Bart Ehrman, to Richard Dawkins, to Sam Harris, to Bill Maher, to Thomas Oord, to BioLogos, skeptics always relish watching conservatives squirm to answer tough questions about the Bible. Worse yet, some believers use this as a pretense to argue against the absolute factual trustworthiness of Scripture. So, let's do what we can to be prepared to offer cogent and plausible answers, always with gentleness and reverence, which can perhaps be a turnaround for ourselves and

others. (to be continued)

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A WORD FROM WATSON

Joseph D. McPherson

The name “Watson” is usually associated with G. D. Watson, a popular holiness author. Few people have had any exposure to Richard Watson, the first Methodist to publish a systematic theology. We think part of the problem is that the wrong Watson has been reprinted and read.

At the end of a sermon by Richard Watson entitled “The Kingdom of the Redeemer,” based on Psalm 72:18-19, a number of promises and directives are assembled together in one paragraph. They proved to be an encouragement to me with a desire to share them. May they prove to be a blessing to you also.

“Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.” If we feel that we need mercy, he is rich to all that call upon him; and whosoever shall call on his name shall be saved. All the blessings you want are

treasured up in him, and out of his fullness you are called to receive. O look at the wondrous things which God doeth for you. He has not spared his own Son; he has given the promise of the Spirit. The kingdom of heaven is opened to all believers. “Blessed are they that trust in him.” Seek his blessing in all its fullness, and exhibit all its evidences. Christianity calls us to put on the Lord Jesus Christ, to walk in him, to be shining lights in the world. Endeavor, too, to increase the number of your Lord’s subjects, to spread the influence of his truth and love, and in all things to “show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” [The Works of the Rev. Richard Watson, 8:412]

THE FIVE POINTS OF ARMINIANISM – UNLIMITED ATONEMENT

Vinicius Couto

Before we read what Arminius had to say on this topic, let’s define atonement. The word *atone* and its derivatives come from *kipper*, in Hebrew, whose meaning is to cover or cleanse (Exod 30:10; Lev 23:27,28; 25:9; Num 5:8; 29:11). In the New Testament, most of the time, the Greek words are derivations of *hilaskomai* and they are normally translated as “sacrifice,” “propitiation,” “mercy seat,” and

“reconciliation” (Luke 18:13; Heb 2:17).

We still find the Hebrew words *padâh*, whose meaning is to rescue or redeem (Exod 13:13,15; 21:8; Lev 19:20; 27:27; Num 18:15,16; 18:16,17; Deut 7:8; 9:26 passim); *ga’al*, which means to redeem or act as a redeeming relative (Judg 9:26,28,30,31,35,36,37,39,41); and *goel*, which is redeemer (Gen 48:16; Exod 6:6; 15:3; Lev 25:25; 27:33; Num 5:8; 35:12; Deut 19:6; Josh 20:3 ,9; Ruth 2:20;

3:9,12,13 passim). In the Septuagint, the Greek word generally used to translate these words is *lytron*, which usually meant the release from servitude of a slave in exchange for payment, compensation or even the offering of a substitute (Exod 21:30; 30: 12; Lev 19:20; 25:24; Num 3:12; 35:31; 2 Kgs 10:27; Prov 6:35; 13:8; Isa 45:13).

Lytron, therefore, means release price, ransom, ransom price, widely used in the New Testament to refer to the idea of redemption/rescue, which are part of the semantic field for the idea of atonement (cf. Mt 20:28; Mc 10:45). The word

“redemption”

also derives from three other Greek words: *lytroo*, *lutro-*

rosis and *apolutrosis*. The first has the meaning of rescuing, redeeming or releasing by paying a price (cf. Luke 24:21; Titus 2:14; 1 Pet 1:18,19). And the last two, *lutrosis* and *apolutrosis*, mean redemption, release or liberation (Luke 1:68; 2:38; 21:28; Rom 3:24; 8:23; 1 Cor 1:30; Eph 1:7,14; 4:30; Col 1:14; Heb 9:12,15; 11:35).

Yet another important term for the idea of atonement is *hilasmos*, usually translated as “propitiation” (1 John 2:2; 4:10), and it means to appease someone’s anger, to give an offering to appease or satisfy a party that is angry. Human sin offends the holiness of God and that is why humanity is a child of wrath by nature (Eph 2:3). For God’s wrath to be appeased, an offering (sacrifice) had to be given to God. Since human beings are unskilled and incapable of paying such a sacrifice, it was necessary for Christ to make propitiation for our sins. Only He was capable of accomplishing such a feat.

As we can see, the term atonement inevitably has to do with the replacement of some person by the death of some animal or Christ; it is directly linked to the

idea of redemption, in its sense of rescue; it is also connected to the sense of propitiation, appeasement of anger; and, finally, it is still linked to the idea of remission, of forgiveness of debts, because if redemption is the redemption made through a payment, remission is the release of a certain penalty, that is, clemency. Arminius recognized these points and stated in his *Oration II: The Object of Theology*, that “a Mediator was to be ordained, who, by his blood, might atone for sinners, by his death might expiate the sin of mankind, might reconcile the wicked to God, and might save them from his impending anger.”

One of the issues surrounding the discussion of atonement in Arminius’s day was related to its scope. Would Jesus have made atonement for each and every person of the human race or would He have died only for the elect? Most of Arminius’s speeches on this topic are in his *Examination of a Treatise by William Perkins*. In an excerpt from it, Arminius comments: “But, indeed, my friend Perkins, the Scripture says, most clearly, in many places, that Christ died for all, for the life of the world, and that by the command and grace of God.” Further on, he shows some of the main biblical passages in which this statement can be supported, emphasizing the words “world” and “all” as proof of the unlimited scope of Christ’s work:

Christ is called “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world” (John i, 29). God is declared to have “so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (iii, 16). Christ declares that he will give “his flesh for the life of the world” (vi, 51). “God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself” (2 Cor. v, 19). “He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for

Human sin offends the holiness of God.

the sins of the whole world” (1 John ii, 2). The Samaritans said “We know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world” (John iv, 42). Also 1 John iv, 14, “We have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” That, in the word “world,” in these passages, all men, in general, are to be understood, is manifest from these passages and from Scriptural usages. For there is, in my judgment, no passage in the whole Bible, in which it can be proved beyond controversy that the word “world” signifies ‘the Elect. Again, Christ it is said to have died for all, in Heb. ii, 9, and elsewhere. He is said to be “the Savior of all men, especially of those that believe” (1 Tim. iv., 10), which declaration

There is not place in the Bible in which world signifies the elect.

cannot be explained to refer to preservation in this life without per version and injury. Christ is also styled the “Mediator between God and men” (1 Tim. ii, 5). He is said to have died for those “without strength, ungodly, and yet sinners” (Romans v, 6–8.)

In another text, his *Apology Against Thirty-One Defamatory Articles*, Arminius reacts to article XII, which stated that he said that “Christ has died for all men and for every individual”. With caution, Arminius responds that this loose phrase could indicate that “the redemption, which was obtained by means of that price, is applied and communicated to all men and to every one,” which would lead to universalism. This he vehemently denies. Instead, he emphasizes that his position is that “the price of the death of Christ was

given for all and for every one,” a subject he explores further with Perkins, distinguishing between obtained and applied redemption. However, before we demonstrate this argument, it is important to highlight that Arminius cites another sequence of biblical verses in his reaction to article XII, among which we also highlight the Dutch theologian's argument “that he gave his flesh for the life of the world; (John vi, 51;) that Christ died even for that man who might be destroyed with the meat of another person; (Rom. xiv, 15;) and that false teachers make merchandize even of those who deny the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction; (2 Peter ii, 1, 3.)”

Aware, therefore, that unlimited atonement was questioned as something that led to universalism, Arminius argues with Perkins that “Christ died for all men *sufficiently*, but, for the elect and believers only, he died *efficaciously*” and attests that this was a phraseology “used by the schoolmen.” It is in this sense that Arminius distinguished between obtained redemption and applied redemption, which anticipates the answer to the later question that unlimited atonement would cause sins to be paid twice, since obtained redemption is the *provision* of forgiveness, while the applied is the *application* of the benefits of Christ's atonement:

I say that a distinction is to be made between redemption obtained and redemption applied, and I affirm that it was obtained for the whole world, and for all and each of mankind; but that it was applied only to believers, and to the elect. First, I show that if it was not obtained for all, faith in Christ is, by no right, required of all, and if it was not obtained for all, no one can be rightly blamed, on account of rejecting the offer of

redemption, for he rejects that which does not belong to him, and he does it with propriety. If Christ did not die for all, then he can not be the judge of all. The latter idea is conceded, on both sides.

On this point, Arminius further explains in his refutation of Perkins: “The ransom or price of the death of Christ, is said to be universal in its sufficiency, but particular in its efficacy, i. e. sufficient for

Christ died for all without any distinction to elect and reprobate.

the redemption of the whole world, and for the expiation of all sins, but its efficacy pertains not to all universally, which efficacy consists in actual application by faith and the sacrament of regeneration.”

Limited atonement sounds strange. Perkins argued that Christ would have died for everyone, but not in the same way. Arminius very classily refutes this weak argument of Perkins: “That your answer may not, to some, seem too horrible, you present, secondly, another answer, namely, ‘Christ may be said to have died for all,’ but you subjoin an explanation of this kind, which perverts the interpretation, and absolutely nullifies your apparent and verbal confession. For you add that ‘he did not die for all and for each equally in reference to God, in the same sense for the lost and for the elect, or efficiently on the part of God.’”

Another solution found by Arminius to undo the *need* for Christ to die only for the elect came from the logic of decrees. According to him, in his argument against Perkins, “the death of Christ, in the order of causes, precedes the decree of election and reprobation, from which arises the difference between the elect and the reprobate.” In this sense, “The election was made in Christ, dead, raised again, and having meritoriously obtained grace

and glory. Therefore, Christ also died for all, without any distinction of elect and reprobate. For that two-fold relation of men is subsequent to the death of Christ.”

In his *Apology Against Thirty-One Defamatory Articles* Arminius refutes Articles XIII and XIV by saying that “God has taken the whole human race into the grace of reconciliation, and has entered into a covenant of grace with Adam, and with the whole of his posterity in him. In which he promises the remission of all sins to as many as stand steadfastly, and deal not treacherously, in that covenant.” In this way, unlimited atonement could also be seen through the arguments of federal theology. While the first Adam represents the human race in sinfulness, the second Adam represents all people in redemption.

Later, the Remonstrants were faithful to Arminius's thought on unlimited atonement, stating in *Article II*:

That, agreeably thereto, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, died for all men and for every man, so that he has obtained for them all, by his death on the cross, redemption, and the forgiveness of sins; yet that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins, except the believer, according to the word of the Gospel of John iii. 16: “God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life”; and in the First Epistle of John ii. 2: “And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

For Arminius, therefore, atonement is demonstrably unlimited based on biblical texts that confirm the scope of Christ's sacrifice for the *world* and for *all*. *Federal*

theology also confirms this truth since as all die in Adam, all will be made alive in Jesus. However, this does not mean that all people are automatically saved, falling into universalism. In this sense, Arminius distinguishes between *obtained redemption* and *applied redemption*. This distinction already anticipates the answer to the question of sins paid twice. He also uses reason to argue that, by the *logic of the decrees*, Christ's election and atonement for humanity are prior to the notion of humanity's election and

reprobation. Finally, Arminius understands that the teaching of unlimited atonement is in agreement with the *schoolmen*, among whom he constantly cites those of patristics. Arminius followed the typical methodology of Protestantism: Scriptures, Tradition and Reason.

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Wesley Stories

Joseph Beaumont Wakeley

One one occasion when John Wesley was traveling he had for a fellow-passenger in the coach an officer who was intelligent, and very agreeable in conversation; but there was one very serious drawback - his profanity. When they change coached Mr Wesley took the officer aside, and after expressing the pleasure he had enjoyed in his company, said he had a great favor to ask of him. The young officer said, "I will take great pleasure in obliging you, for I am sure you will not make an unreasonable request." "Then," said Mr. Wesley, "as we have to travel together some distance, I beg, if I should so far forget myself as to swear, you will kindly reprove me." The officer immediately saw the motive and felt the force of the request, and smiling, said, "None but Mr. Wesley could have conceived a reproof in such a manner." The reproof acted like a charm.

REVIEWS

***Life in the Son: A Study of the Doctrine of Perseverance*, Robert Shank.
Revised and Updated edition, Steve Witzki. BethanyHouse, 2024. 608 pages.
ISBN: 9780764243073**

Too often we are content to defend our entrenched theological position. Dr. Shank represents intellectual honesty and academic integrity at its best. We should all be willing to follow the revealed truth of Scripture wherever that pursuit leads. Robert L. Shank's bombshell *Life in the Son* was dropped in 1960. Dealing with the doctrine of perseverance and security, it went through eight editions; the last printing was in 1989.

Steve Witzki contacted the Shank family in

2003 about updating the book. With their blessing, Steve added 200 new pages, incorporating the best Arminian scholarship since 1960. Steve has edited the original work very judiciously and I have read his rationale for every change made in a draft copy which he supplied. He has followed Shank's methodology and advanced Shank's argument. It is good to see a faithful guide back in circulation.

***Five Lies of Our Anti-Christian Age*, Rosaria Butterfield, Crossway, 2023. 344 pages. ISBN: 978-1-4335-8406-0**

For nearly ten years Rosaria was a lesbian activist who taught at Syracuse University. In 1999 she converted to Christianity and two years later married Kent who is a pastor. In her autobiography *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert: An English Professor's Journey into the Christian Faith* (2012) she tells the story of her conversion.

In this book she identifies five lies:

- Homosexuality is normal. She argues that fixed homosexual orientation was the invention of Sigmund Freud. The obligation to "come out" and share with everyone your sinful desires became necessary when homosexuality was transformed from sin to a neutral category which demands affirmation and celebration. Rosaria, however, argues that God has equipped us to overcome sin. Thus, the sin of homosexuality is a verb, not a noun. It is a sinful practice; it does not define who we are.
- Being a spiritual person is kinder than being a biblical Christian. While it is popular to be into vague spirituality, biblical Christianity is often perceived as being too harsh because it makes absolute demands. Yet it is the truth that sets us free.

- Feminism is good for the world and the church. Rosaria advocates complementarianism, that God created men and women in marriage to fulfill different roles. Husbands are to lead, protect, and provide. Wives are to submit, nurture, and keep the home.
- Transgenderism is normal. However, Rosaria argues that it is the sin of envy — wanting to be what we were not created to be. It is rebellion against reality.
- Modesty is an outdated burden that serves male dominance and holds women back. Having denied that men and women are different, the contemporary culture has replaced modesty with exhibitionism.

As a committed Calvinist, Rosaria affirms the Westminster Shorter Catechism, that "sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God and are enabled more and more to die unto sin and live unto righteousness." While she affirms progressive sanctification, yet she states that we all sin. Yet she believes that salvation cannot be lost. She affirms the Puritan interpretation of Romans 7

that indwelling sin is always present in the believer in this life. While we reject these lies, on the same page she also declares that the Bible does not teach indwelling sin is a permanent feature of the believer's life. According to Rosaria, the responsibility of sin, whatever the sin, squarely falls on the shoulders of the sinner. But she believes that we can be transformed. Her experience is better than her theology.

The irony is that Rosaria Champagne Butterfield described her deliverance from a lesbian lifestyle to become the wife of a Reformed Presbyterian Church pastor. Yet Calvinists are not

supposed to believe in deliverance from sin; that is supposed to be a Wesleyan doctrine!

In 1999 Nazarene theologian Kenneth Grider wrote "Wesleyans and Homosexuality" which reduced homosexuality to a mere fact of nature based on biological determinism. Today we have the spectacle of Thomas Oord's book, *Why the Church of the Nazarene Should Be Fully LGBTQ+ Affirming* (2023). In this upside down world, Butterfield the Calvinist advocates holiness while Oord the "Wesleyan" advocates sinfulness.

The Prayers of St. Paul, William Burt Pope. 2nd edition. 1896. Reprint, Schmuel Publishers, 2024.

The high water mark in Methodist theology was the three-volume *Compendium of Christian Theology*, written by William Burt Pope in 1875. Pope is in a class by himself in Methodist theology. He became the dominant figure in Methodist theology and, next to John Wesley himself, did more to provide Methodism with a systematic standard of doctrine than anyone else. He grasped and elucidated the grace of God as the key to Wesleyan theology. He respected the genuine freedom of man without shifting the emphasis from grace to man. It is this concept of grace which enabled Methodism to avoid both Pelagianism and predestination. In William Burt Pope the spirit of John Wesley's theology lived again. Pope "ruled as a sun over the day," but with his passing "the voices of the night" began to call to each other. In particular, these "voices" were advocating biblical higher criticism, rationalism, ecumenicism, evolution, and social liberalism.

Recently, Justus Hunter has advocated a return to W. B. Pope. Fred Sanders also concluded that Pope "was the greatest doctrinal theologian ever to take up the task of teaching Christian theology from the point of view of the Wesleyan revival movement." But until this recent reprint, nothing Pope wrote was currently in print.

As an apologist for the doctrine of entire sanctification, John Wesley argued on the basis of God's promises, his commands, scriptural examples, and scriptural prayers. The greatest exposition of the prayers for entire sanctification was *The Prayers of St. Paul*, written by Pope in 1876. Pope handles each of Paul's prayers as a separate chapter, using them inductively to form a beautiful and comprehensive description of entire sanctification. While the doctrine has often been traced historically and presented theologically, Pope's work is classic because it develops the doctrine exegetically.

Kennedy K. Ekeocha, Matthew 24-25 as Prophetic-Apocalyptic: Structure, Function, and Eschatology. Pickwick Publications, 2024. 342 pages. ISBN: 978-1-6667-8385-8

A couple of us in the Fundamental Wesleyan Society had Kennedy as a masters-level student. This book is the fruit of his doctoral research on the Olivet Discourse. This passage is the starting point

in order to grasp the eschatological teachings of Jesus. It is also the necessary prerequisite for understanding the book of Revelation.

The great debate is over the timing of the events which Jesus predicted. The viable options are: hyper-preterist, partial-preterist, futurist, or some overlap of past and future. At a popular level, best-sellers attempt to predict what is going to happen next with no awareness of the controversies surrounding the proper interpretation of Jesus' words. And the scholarly guild tends to debate these issues in isolation from the world of pop-eschatology.

The value of Kennedy's research is that he interacts with both segments of the church. The

proper question is not whether he agrees with the current media gurus on prophecy, but whether or not the popular "experts" are even aware of the interpretative issues with Kennedy processes. It is above my pay-grade to assign a letter grade on this project, but as his former teacher I have much to learn from him.

—All reviews by Dr. Vic Reasoner, general editor.

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