
CALVINISTIC CONTROVERSY.

HAVING found for some time a strong desire to unite with Mr. Whitefield, as far as possible, to cut off needless dispute, I wrote down my sentiments, as plain as I could, in the following terms :—

There are three points in debate : 1. Unconditional election. 2. Irresistible grace. 3. Final perseverance.

With regard to the first, unconditional election, I believe, That God, before the foundation of the world, did unconditionally elect certain persons to do certain works ; as Paul to preach the Gospel.

That he has unconditionally elected some nations to receive peculiar privileges, the Jewish nation in particular.

That he has unconditionally elected some nations to hear

the Gospel ; as England and Scotland now, and many others in past ages.

That he has unconditionally elected some persons to many peculiar advantages, both with regard to temporal and spiritual things.

And I do not deny, (though I cannot prove it is so,)

That he has unconditionally elected some persons, thence eminently styled "the elect," to eternal glory.

But I cannot believe,

That all those who are not thus elected to glory, must perish everlastingly ; or

That there is one soul on earth who has not, nor ever had, a possibility of escaping eternal damnation.

With regard to the second, irresistible grace, I believe,

That the grace which brings faith, and thereby salvation, into the soul, is irresistible at that moment.

That most believers may remember some time when God did irresistibly convince them of sin.

That most believers do, at some other times, find God irresistibly acting upon their souls.

Yet I believe, that the grace of God, both before and after those moments, may be, and hath been, resisted ; and

That, in general, it does not act irresistibly, but we may comply therewith, or may not.

And I do not deny,

That in those eminently styled "the elect," (if such there be,) the grace of God is so far irresistible, that they cannot but believe, and be finally saved.

But I cannot believe,

That all those must be damned, in whom it does not thus irresistibly work ; or

That there is one soul on earth who has not, and never had, any other grace, than such as does, in fact, increase his damnation, and was designed of God so to do.

With regard to the third, final perseverance, I believe,

That there is a state attainable in this life, from which a man cannot finally fall.

That he has attained this who is, according to St. Paul's account, "a new creature;" that is, who can say, "Old things are passed away ; all things" in me "are become new."

And I do not deny,

That all those eminently styled "the elect" will infallibly persevere to the end.*

* Mr. Moore says, "Mr. Wesley told me, that, at the time he wrote this, he believed, with Macarius, that all who are perfected in love, 1 John iv., were thus elect. But he afterwards doubted of this."—*Life of Mr. Wesley*, vol. i., p. 503.

The entire document, which appears to have been written at an early period of Mr. Wesley's public life, shows, to great advantage, his logical acumen and love of peace; but "evidently leans too much towards Calvinism," as will appear on comparing it with his later writings, and especially with his "Predestination calmly considered."—EDIT.