

that was in enmity against God, "working in them to will and to do," making those who were the slaves of sin truly free in repenting and believing, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty," so that there is no necessitation or compulsion of their wills, "which are endued with that liberty that they cannot be forced to good or evil." Arminian writers, John Wesley included, have admitted their inability to reconcile the foreknowledge of God with the free agency of man. From God's eternal foreknowledge of His people's faith and repentance and perseverance in holiness, it would be wrong, however, to infer that they would in time be necessitated or compelled to believe and repent and be saved, while it would be right to infer that they certainly would believe and repent; and so, in like manner, from God's election of them before the foundation of the world to faith and holiness and eternal life, it would be equally wrong to draw the first of these inferences, and right to draw the second. It is God, who, in the execution of His gracious purpose, begins by His Spirit the good work in man; but the effect of His action on the soul is to stir it up to the proper exercise of all its powers, so that it acts rightly in the use of its own freedom; and in His gracious operation He does not overturn, or act inconsistently with, the laws of man's constitution as a rational and moral creature. Mere assertions that Calvinism reduces man to the level of a machine, or of matter that is incapable of acting except as it is acted upon, are unworthy of an answer.

The Arminian allegation, that according to the doctrine of election God is partial, proceeds, in so far as we associate with partiality the idea of injustice, on the unscriptural idea that fallen man has a claim on God, and it sets aside the distinction between the acts of God as a sovereign and as a judge. As a judge, He ever acts justly and impartially, and condemns or justifies according to the invariable rules He has proclaimed; while, as a sovereign, He is free to dispense His favours to whom He pleases; otherwise He might be charged with partiality for making some of His creatures merely men, while He has made others angels, or for dealing more graciously with men than with fallen angels. Any objection to the doctrine of election on this ground might, with equal propriety, be urged against the divine procedure (allowed by Arminians) in choosing some nations to distinguishing privileges—to the enjoyment of gospel light—while others are left in heathen darkness; or against God's choice of the people of Israel to the special and great advantages they so long exclusively possessed, the chief of which was that "unto them were committed the oracles of God," while for so many ages the rest of the world was permitted to be overrun with idolatry and wickedness. The greatest diversities also, in point of privilege, are to be found in christian lands: some men, for instance, being members in early life of pious households, where they enjoy all the benefit of religious culture and godly example, while others are brought up in great ignorance of bible-truth, and in the midst of wickedness and profanity; some are cut down in early life when unprepared for death, while others have their season of grace prolonged, and may be brought to know the Lord in old age; while we see great inequality in the distribution of providential bounties, and of good and evil generally. Not to dwell, however, on things like these. If the fact that election represents God as sovereignly bestowing on some favours, which