

The Anatomy of Arminianism

Or,

The Opening of the Controversies of these times
(formerly handled in the Low-Countries) concerning the
Doctrine of Providence, of Predestination, of the Death of
Christ, of Nature and Grace, etc.

Chapter 18: The Universal, Conditional Election of Arminius

by Peter du Moulin, Minister of the Church at Paris

There are certain men crept in which were before ordained to this condemnation (Jude 4).



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Chapter 18: The Universal, Conditional Election of Arminius

The decree of general election is searched into, by which Arminius will have all men to be elected to salvation, under the condition of faith.

Pierre du Moulin

We have taught in the fifth chapter, that the antecedent will of God, as Arminius has received it after Damascen, is a mere forged device, and a thing contumelious against God. This foundation being taken away, that universal election, common to all men, under the condition of faith to be performed, falls down: For this general election Arminius will have to belong to the antecedent will of God.

Whereunto add those things which we have spoken (in Chapter 12) where we have dissolved, and unloosed the chain of the four decrees, in which the Arminians do comprehend the whole doctrine of election. There we have showed that the second decree, by which salvation is not decreed to particular persons, but it is determined that they shall be saved, who shall believe, is not the decree of providence nor predestination, but is the rule of the gospel, which prescribes and sets down the way to salvation.

This question is put to flight by the very name of “election,” for election cannot be of all men; he does not choose that takes all: Neither in the time of the deluge had Noah been chosen that he should live in the deluge, if no man had perished by the flood. He is elected who is preferred before others, the rest being either despised or less accounted of.

And seeing in all the points of faith, we ought to be wise, and taught out of the Scriptures much more in so high an argument, which exceeds our capacity. Let therefore the Arminians show by what place of Scripture all men are said to be elected, by that Election which is opposite to reprobation (for of that it is spoken here) and not of the Election of several men, by the consequent will of God. Who ever heard it said that Pharaoh or Judas did in any way belong to the Election of God? Saint Peter indeed in his second epistle, chapter 1, joins calling to election, commanding us to make our calling and Election sure, that is, by the earnest endeavor of good works, to effect that the sense of our effectual calling, and the persuasion of our Election may daily be increased in us: But he will not therefore have our calling and Election to be the same, nor will he have all that are any way called, to be elected: Yea, “Many are called, but few chosen” (Matthew 20:16).

That also is to be observed, that by this general Election, it is not decreed who are to be saved; but what manner of men are to be saved: and that the Arminians draw the ninth Chapter to the Romans to prove this; where it is plainly spoken of the good pleasure of God, and his mercy towards some several and peculiar persons, whom it seems good to God to choose: For those words, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy,” speak of some certain men; and not of what qualified men; for then he had said, “*Miseretor qualium*: I will have mercy on men so qualified and not *eijus*, or *quorum*, of whom: Neither had the example of Isaac and Jacob, who were particular persons, been applied to explain the Election not of particular persons, but the Election either of all, or of men so qualified.

But I would learn of the Arminians, whether Judas or Pilate; whether the high priests and the Scribes, by the instigation and accusations of whom our Savior was crucified, were elected conditionally, and comprehended in that general Election. If they were not comprehended, then that general and conditional Election which they would have to be extended to all men: filleth to the ground. On the other side, if Judas and those high priests were conditionally elected, the decree of God, concerning the crucifying of Christ, could not be absolute, because it was done by men, which were conditionally elected, under a condition which they might fulfill: It might therefore have come to pass, that before this wicked deed, they might have been converted and become faithful, and so had not crucified Christ.

And truly it cannot be said that Judas and Caiaphas were elected to salvation under the condition of believing in the death of Christ, seeing they were appointed to that very thing, that by their incredulity and wickedness, Christ might be delivered to death: but if Judas and Caiaphas had believed in Christ, Christ had not been delivered to death; and therefore this decree, whereby the Arminians will have God to have elected Judas and Caiaphas, and Pilate, under this condition, if they would believe in Christ, enfolds a contradiction. For they do as much as if they should bring in God speaking thus: "I appointed to save Judas and Caiaphas, if they will believe in the death of Christ: But if they shall believe, and shall be faithful, Christ should not be delivered to death, nor be crucified.

Also, of the four decrees of the Arminians the two former are contrary one to another. For by the first decree, God decreed to use the incredulity and perfidiousness of Judas to deliver Christ to death. But by the second decree, God elected Judas under the condition of faith, in the death of Christ. Therefore, by the former decree, Judas is absolutely considered as an unbeliever and a reprobate; but by the second, he is considered as one conditionally elected. The school of Arminius is painted about with these monsters, and chimeras, contrary one to another, which

would move laughter, if the church were not troubled by them, and the wisdom of God exposed to reproach.

Furthermore, by that general decree whereby all men are said to be elected under the condition of faith to be performed, God is openly mocked. For it is a foolish decree which is made under a condition, which condition, he who decreed it knew certainly in the very moment he decreed it, that it would not be fulfilled; especially if this condition cannot be fulfilled but by the help and power of him who decrees it. For by such a decree, God should set a law to himself, not to man. But it is manifest by experience that God does not minister to all men the means that are necessary to the fulfilling of this condition: For he will not have his gospel preached to all, neither does he give the Spirit of regeneration to all.

Finally, what is to be judged of this general election appears by the fellow sectarians, and conclusions which are drawn thence; whereof that is the chiefest, and far the worst, whereby they deny that the number of the elect is certain, and determined by the will of God electing; whence it follows that the election of particular persons is not certain by the will of God: For it it were certain by the decree of God, that this, or that man, were of the number of the elect, than of several persons joined together, the whole sum and certain number would be made up. But that which Arnoldus says (Page 192) that the number of the elect may be increased or diminished, is such a thing, that there is no good man who does not tremble at the hearing of it. For what is it in God to diminish the number of the elect, but to change his opinion, and to take from the number of the elect, those which indeed being not sufficiently well considered of, and as having cast his accounts amiss, he had brought into the white album of the elect, which should rather have been carried into the black book of reprobates?

Of the same evil stamp, is that of Grevinchovius against Ames (page 136) making an half, an incomplete, and so a revocable election. Grevinchovius says that

“In the Scriptures men are called elect 1) incompletely, according to the present state, in as much as they are such, to wit, faithful men for the present time, the last terms of their life being excepted, in which, 2) Election is fulfilled.” Behold a depending election by which every most wicked man is incompletely elect, and the decree of God is incomplete, until it is made complete by man, which surely are not *dogmata*, but *portenta*, not *doctrines*, but *monstrous opinions*, which never came into the mind of anyone, of whom the name of Christ is anywhere heard of.

But the Scriptures teaches that the number of the elect is certain (Revelation 6). The souls which are under the altar are commanded to wait while the number of the brethren is fulfilled. Also, that which Christ says of the sheep that were given him, even before their conversion (John 10:6). As also that he says that all shall come to him, as many as are given him by the Father (John 6:37). And that none of his sheep can be taken out of his hand (John 10:28). These Scripture plainly declare that the number of them is determined by the purpose of God. Saint Luke does also agree, in whom, Christ thus speaks to the apostles in Luke 10:20: “Rejoice not that the spirits are subject to you: but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” No less expressly does the apostle to the Hebrews speak in Hebrews 12:22-23 where he calls the church “the heavenly Jerusalem, the assembly of the firstborn, which are written in Heaven.” Hitherto pertains that book of life, concerning which it is spoken in other places. In Revelation 20 those who are said to be cast into the lake of fire, are those who are not found written in the book of life. The Arminians, (page 96 of the conference at Hage) use a vain interpretation to expound those words of Christ: “Rejoice that your names are written in the book of life.” For they will not have these words to be taken of election to salvation, but they will have this to be the sense of it: “Rejoice that according to the present state of faith, righteousness, and obedience, you are accounted for pious and godly men, yea for the sons of God.” O good God, where is modesty! Here is neither reason nor color for this. For, to be accounted

faithful by men is not to have their names written in heaven: Nor was there any cause that the apostle should so rejoice because men thought well of them, seeing that this oftentimes happens to him that is most wicked; and this had been much less than that the devils did tremble at their voice, and fled from them: which yet Christ reckons to be but a small thing in comparison to having their names written in heaven. Surely this language of being “written in heaven,” refers not to the opinion of men, but to the purpose of God. And this phrase is taken from the prophet with whom that is said to be written before God, which is fastened and determined by this decree. In Isaiah 4:3 they are said to be “written for life” who were to be preserved by the purpose of God. In Isaiah 65:6 it says: “Behold it is written before me, I will not keep silence, but will recompence.” It is as if he should say, it is certain and determined by me to revenge these wicked deeds.

I am ashamed of that shift, whereby some of them say, that therefore the names of the apostles are said to be written in heaven because they were elected to their apostleship. For so the name of Judas himself was written in heaven; in which respect, he had so little cause to rejoice, that even his very apostleship turned to his destruction. Then also we have the words of the apostle to the Hebrews which are plainly agreeable to these, by which he calls the faithful “the first begotten, which are written in heaven” which cannot be drawn to the election to an office, seeing it belongs to all the faithful and the elect.

The question of the book of life is a greater and longer question, not belong to this place. I am not ignorant that there is a certain book of life which is not the book of Election, but the catalogue of them who profess themselves to be members of the church, and are visibly granted into the covenant, of which book there is mention in Ezekiel 13:9 and Psalm 69:29. Out of this book there is no doubt but some are blotted. But when they are thrown headlong into hell, as many as are not written in the book of life; it is plain that in this book is set down the certain and determined

number of men, who while others are appointed to the fire, they alone are reserved to life; the number of whom can be increased or diminished no more now than in the last judgment.

These things have concerned that general and conditional Election. Now let us come to the absolute Election of several persons, which the Arminians would have to rest and depend on the foreknowledge of faith and to be made for faith foreseen. The former of these elections has the second place in the series and rank of the four decrees laid down by Arminius, the latter election has the fourth place; that pertains to the antecedent will of God, this to the consequent, that goes before, this does follow man's will. Arminius says that God is disappointed of that but cannot be disappointed of this.