

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 19: Arminius' View of an Antecedent Will in which Election is based on Fore-seen Faith

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).



London, Printed for Nathanael Newbery, at the sign of the star in Popes-Head-Alley
Year of our Lord, 1635.

Set up in a more readable format for the 21st century student
by Nathan Clay Brummel, 2022

Chapter 19: Arminius' View of an Antecedent Will in which Election is based on Fore-seen Faith

The election of particular persons in respect of faith fore-seen is confuted. It is proved that men are not elected for faith, but to faith.

Out of the great abundance of places which the holy Scriptures supply to us, we will tithe and choose out some that are most clear and most weighty.

Saint Paul writes to the Ephesians, "God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he has chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:3-4). The apostle plainly enough teaches that spiritual blessings (and therefore faith) are given us according to the eternal Election, and as were elected. Whence it follows that Election is necessarily before these blessings; both in order and time. So, he that says that the soldiers received their donation and benevolence, as it seemed good to their general, does manifestly say, that first it seemed good to the general before it was done, and that the certain and absolute will of the general went before this largesse and gift. Neither are those words of less moment which follow: "He elected us in Christ before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him, in love." You see that we are elected to holiness, and not from holiness, or for holiness; and if we are elected to holiness, then also we are elected to faith, wherein our holiness chiefly consists. It cannot be denied that faith is a part of our holiness, unless by him, who

also denies, that incredulity in the prophane, is a part of their profanities and vice: For by faith we are not only sanctified efficiently, but also formally; no otherwise than the wall is formally whited by the white color. And if the Arminians could get it granted, that the holiness which is spoken of here, consists only in charity, yet they would effect nothing, nor would it ever the less be proved out of this place, that we are chosen to faith; for he that is elected to charity, is necessarily elected to faith, which begets charity (Galatians 5:6). Nor is it credible, that any one is elected to one part of holiness, and not to the other.

Being beat therefore from hence, they seek other refuges. Arnoldus (p. 66) by “elect” would have “they that are called” to be understood; as if Election and calling were the same thing: but “many are called, few are chosen” (Matthew 20). Therefore, among these elect (if Arnoldus be believed) there will be many reprobates; neither will this Election be opposed to reprobation. The same man (page 142) contends that these elect are the faithful, which is false in that since he takes it, to wit, that they are considered as being already faithful, when they are elected: For how can they that are considered as being faithful, be elected to holiness, seeing in that they are faithful, they are already holy? Paul indeed speaks to the Ephesians, whom he calls faithful and blessed: but not, if now they were faithful and blessed, they were therefore faithful before they were elected.

This good man therefore has devised another subtilty, and would have Paul to speak not of the Election of particular person, but of the Election, whereby any one people is elected to the calling, by the Gospel. If this is true, it must needs be, that among the elect, before the foundation of the world, that there were many reprobates: But the following words do not admit this interpretation; for the apostle says, we are elected, “that we should be without blame, in love.” He will have us to be elect that we might endeavor to holiness and good works: Now good works are of particular men, and not of a nation; neither by the Elect can here be understood the nations

admitted into the covenant, seeing Saint Paul includes himself in this number, “Has chosen us in Christ.” Arnoldus himself sufficiently declares how little he trusts to that exposition, while he joins another which overthrows this. He says that here it is spoken of the Election to glory, and therefore by “holiness” would have “salvation” understood. But the apostle fitly prevents this starting point; for he adds “that we might be holy and blameless”; but to be blameless is a virtue, and not salvation itself. Then also Paul expounds how we are holy, to wit, in charity, not in the fruition and enjoying of glory. He understands the duties of charity which are exercised in this life unto which to be exhorted after this life, is needless. Finally, by their so various and divers expositions, which overthrown one another, they sufficiently confess, that they have nothing wherein they may be constant: And because they cannot master us by the weight of their expositions, they endeavor to overwhelm us by the multitude of them.

It is of small importance, that from this word “blameless” they gather that it is spoken of the perfection after this life: For the apostle will have us to be blameless even in this life, as, Philippians 2:15 states where Paul commands us to be blameless and harmless in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Certainly, when the apostle says “that we might be blameless in charity”; it is manifest that he does not speak of the saints enjoying glory, where there is no place for reprehension, nor for exhortation, to the duties of charity. There is no little force in the following verse: “He predestinated us to the adoption of children, by Jesus Christ.” But of this place I thus reason: Those whom God predestinated to adoption, he has predestinated also to the spirit of adoption, to be given them, and this is nothing else but to predestinate them to faith; for the Spirit of adoption is it that bears witness in our hearts that we are the sons of God (Romans 8) and this testimony is faith itself. It is true indeed that God appointed no man to adoption, but whom God considers, as one that by his gift will be faithful; but the same may also

Be said of those that are appointed to faith, which is appointed to none but whom God considers as one that will be faithful: And surely they are grossly deceived, who think that the faithful are appointed to the adoption of children, seeing that they are faithful, they are already children: This Saint John teaches (Chapter 1), “To them that believed, he gave this prerogative, to be the sons of God.”

Agreeable to this place are also many other (I Corinthians 7:25) “I have obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful”; not because he considered me as already faithful and John 15:16: “I have chosen you, that you should bring forth fruit”: therefore he did not choose us, considered as already faithful, and therefore as already bearing fruit. Should we imagine that Christ speaks here only of the Election of the apostles to their apostleship? I think there is none of so impudent of face who can deny that the same thing may be spoken of any of the elect, whereof there is none whom God has not elected, that he might be godly and good: even as also there is no man, who is not of a shameless countenance, who will deny that all the following documents and lessons belong to the faithful: “These things I command you, that you love one another: if the world hate you, you know that it hath hated me first.”

Not unlike this, is that which the apostle says (2 Thessalonians 2:13), “God hath chosen you to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.” He says that we are elected to obtain salvation, he says, not for faith, and so faith is after election, and a certain medium, or middle thing, between election and salvation.

The words of Ananias to Saint Paul in Acts 22:20 are consonant with this; “God hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will;” by which knowledge, faith and assent to the gospel is understood: for Saint Paul was not elected more to know the gospel than to believe the gospel: Paul therefore was elected to believe, and so his election was before his faith.

The same apostle (in I Thessalonians 1:3) praising the faith and charity of the Thessalonians fetches the cause of these virtues from election itself: “Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labor of love, as knowing that you are elected of God.”

Here the Arminians willingly stumble in a plain way: for by election they will have calling to be understood; which if it be true, the reprobates themselves will be elected, as being also called. Then also Saint Paul is deluded, as if he were not in his right mind: For what need have Paul to tell the Thessalonians that he knew they were called by the gospel, seeing Saint Paul himself preached the gospel to them? He were a ridiculous grammarian, who should tell his scholars whom he had taught; “I know you have learned grammar.” Arnoldus (page 66) suspects that the word “knowing” is to be referred to the Thessalonians themselves. But the good man has dealt too negligently here, for he does not see, that by this means, the Greek speech would be made incongruous and not agreeing, for then it must have been read “eidotoon” (a genitive plural ending), that it might agree with “humoon” (second person genitive plural), which is in the former verse. But distrusting this exposition, he has smelt out that by the word “election,” “excellency” ought to be understood, which truly is an intolerable license, seeing election differs from excellency by the whole predicament; for election is an action, excellency is a quality, or a relation. Surely if it is lawful to bring such portents and monsters of interpretation, what will there be in the holy Scripture, which may not be deluded or depraved? Let Arnoldus bring another place where “excellency” is understood by the word “election”: For although “he that is elected,” may be taken for “him that excels,” yet you shall never find “election” to be taken for “excellency.” Neither ought it to seem a marvel that Paul says he knew of the election of the Thessalonians; for God might reveal that to him concerning the Thessalonians, which he revealed concerning the Corinthians (Acts 18:10): “I have much people in this city.” Or if that does not please, it may be said

that Saint Paul, when he saw the gospel received by the Thessalonians with very great joy and much fruit, easily persuaded himself that many of that people belonged to the election of God.

The same apostle in the beginning of his epistle to Titus calls himself “the Apostle, according to the faith of God’s elect.” It is plain that faith is said to be of the elect because it is peculiar to the elect or else it would not be rightly adorned with this eulogy and commendation, and that by the confession of Vorstius himself says: “Faith is called the faith of the elect of God, Titus 1, because faith is a proper marker of the elect.” But why is faith peculiar to the elect? Is it because as many as have true faith are elected by God? But the Arminians deny this; for they write of the apostasy of the saints, and think that the most holy men may fall away. It remains therefore, that faith is said to be of the elect, which God gives to the elect, and which is a fruit of election.

The Arminians avoid this dart and argument, by saying, that by the name of faith, is understood doctrine: But they do not well avoid it so, for the doctrine of the gospel is not peculiar to the elect, neither can it be called the doctrine of the elect, seeing it is preached also to wicked and profane men. Here therefore we may see the apostle and Arminians to be striving together: Saint Paul says that “Faith is of the elect”: Arminius on the contrary part says that election is of them that are faithful, and who are considered as already believing.

With like licentious liberty, do they abuse the word, “of the elect,” by which they will have those that are called, and are holy to be understood: But after what manner? Seeing that according to Arminius, among them that are called, and holy, there are many reprobates; the elect therefore, by this means shall be reprobates. Is the Scripture thus to be deluded? But let us see other places.

Notable are the words of Christ in Luke 10:20: “Rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.” Christ speaks to men that were living, and who had not yet

persevered in the faith to the end: yet notwithstanding, their names were already written in Heaven, their salvation was determined by the certain purpose of God. Their election therefore was before their perseverance in faith, contrary to which is the opinion of Arminius, who will have perseverance in faith to go before election, and will have us to be elected for faith foreseen.

And if election is not peremptory and immutable, but after final perseverance, as the Arminians would have it, then we must say, that the names of the apostles, who did then first enter the race of Christian profession, were so written in Heaven, that yet it was in the power of the apostles to fall away from the faith, and so to be reprobated; And therefore they could bring it to pass that Christ should lie. See to what the audacity of these innovators comes. Furthermore, that which is said in the Scripture to be written in Heaven and before God, which is appointed and determined by his eternal counsel, we have proved in the former chapter; where we have rejected that unsavory and rash interpretation of the Arminians; we will have the writing of our names in heaven, to be nothing else than to be accounted the children of God, by the present state of righteousness, and that for no other argument, than because they will have it so.

Saint Paul writes in Ephesians 2:8: “By grace ye are saved through faith.” He does not say that they are saved for faith foreseen, but by faith, as by the means to salvation: And if God does not save us for faith foreseen, he neither will save us for faith foreseen, nor does he elect us for faith foreseen: For the elect is to be willing to save.

The same words, “By grace ye are saved through faith,” plainly say that faith is the means to salvation: and if salvation is the end, and faith the means, it must needs be that god thought of giving salvation to Peter and Paul before he thought of giving them faith, whereby they should come to salvation, for the end is first in the intent before the means: so habitation is intended before building, life before food,

health before medicine. With what face therefore dare the Arminians say that God had decreed to give Peter and Paul faith, before he had decreed to give them salvation.

But here Arminius has laid aside shame and denies that salvation is God's end; but he says that salvation and faith are the gifts of God, tied together by the will of God in this order, that faith should go before salvation, in respect of God the giver, and in the thing itself. These are the words of Arminius, which are cited and allowed by the Arminians in their answer to the Epistle to the Walacrians (page 93). But besides that, I had rather believe Saint Paul teaching that we are saved by God through faith. Arminius himself seems to me to grant the same thing while he denies it: For it is not likely that God is willing that faith should go before the obtaining of salvation, unless because he will give and bestow faith unto salvation. Now that which helps to obtain salvation is the means by which we come to salvation, as to the end. Grevinchovius following him (page 12) denies that God intended the salvation of certain men in particular, as an end. And in page 124 he says: "We have said that faith is to be considered two manner of ways, either as it is prescribed and to be performed, or as it is already performed: As it is to be performed, it is not the means, but the condition and the thing required: But as it is performed, it is the means to man, by which he obtains salvation promised under the condition of faith." The reader shall observe his excellent wit. This man will have faith, then, to be the means to salvation, when it is performed, that is, when faith ceases: For the Arminians then think faith to be performed when one has persevered in faith to the end; at which time vision and sight succeeds to faith ceasing. Therefore (if Arminius believed) faith will then begin to be the means of salvation when it is not faith: Then also that saying, that faith performed, is the means for man, not for God, is very weak: For faith is the means for a man to come to salvation, for no other cause, than because God wills and causes that man should come to salvation by faith: So he that says that

food is the means for a man to live, says also that it is the means that God uses for the sustentation of man's life.

It is of no small importance that the apostle in the same place calls faith the gift of God: "By grace ye are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." For the apostle will not have salvation alone to be the gift of God, but also faith: For he that gives the end, gives also the means; as he that gives us life, gives us also means to maintain our life. So Philippians 1:19: "It is given to you for Christ," that is, "in that which concerns Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Therefore, to believe in Christ is the gift of God. Wherefore we are not rightly said to be elected by God for faith foreseen, seeing God himself gives faith: For God is not said (unless it be very improperly) to foresee those things which he himself determined to do. He would not be thought to have a sound brain, who should say that God fore-saw the sun would be round or shining, for God himself turned it into roundness and put light into it. How greatly the Arminians err here, and that it follows of their doctrine that faith is not the gift of God, although sometimes they speak otherwise, shall be seen in the right place.

Thither also belong the words which are in the eleventh verse of the first chapter: "Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." If God has predestinated anyone to salvation, he works also all things which are necessary to the execution of that decree, and if all things, then also faith: faith therefore, is something after predestination, for it is a part of the execution of that decree.

There is a notable place (in Acts 13:48) that reads: "They believed as many as were ordained to eternal life." While Paul preached to the man of Antioch some believed, some refused the gospel. Saint Luke brings this cause why they did not believe, to wit, the ordination and decree of God. Election therefore is before faith because the election of God is the cause why men believe. According to Arminius,

Saint Luke ought to have spoken thus: “And as many as believed were elected by God, in reward of their faith”: But contrariwise he says, they believed because they were elected.

Socinus, and after him Arminius, deprave and corrupt this place with very great wickedness. For by “tetagmenous”, “they that were ordained,” they understand “they that were disposed, prepared and inclined, or well affected” as if Luke had used a different Greek word, “diakeimenos.” Certainly a bad evasion and an interpretation without color and example. For neither the Scripture nor any man that I know ever took the word “tetagmenous” in this sense. To which purpose when many examples may be heaped up, yet they are most fit which are taken out of the book of Acts itself that it may appear in what sense Saint Luke always takes this word, Chapter 15:2 “they decreed or determined that Paul should go up”: And Acts 28:23 “when they had appointed him a day.” So Saint Paul (Romans 13:1): “The powers that are, are ordained, or appointed by God.” So Chrysostom in Homily 30 on the book of Acts interprets this place in Acts as “as many as were ordained to salvation,” where he renders “tetagmenous,” ordained “afwrismenoitootheo,” severed by God and foredetermined. Then also, although the word were ambiguous, reason itself would convince this: For none of the unregenerate can be well disposed or well affected to eternal life: But all these men of Antioch, before they believed the gospel were unregenerate, therefore, they were ill-disposed to the obtaining of salvation. Let the school and followers of Arminius tell me, what disposition was in the thief who was crucified with Christ to believe before he did believe: Or in the Apostle Paul, when like a wolf he did rage against the flock of Christ, and swelling with Pharisaical pride was a most eager maintainer of righteousness by the Law; yea also common sense abhors that kind of speaking which they devise. For we are not want to say that one is well disposed, or prone, or well affected to blessedness, but to virtue. This inclination must be to do something and not to enjoy or obtain

something. So one may be said to be inclined to the exercise of his body, but not to health; to combat, not to the reward or victory: or if any one please to take the word “dispositum”, “disposed,” for “cupido,” “desire,” there is no man who is not disposed to salvation.

It is not for nothing that the Greek doesn't have the word “tetagmenous” simply and alone but has “as many” included: “as many as were appointed”: By which preterpluperfect tense is plainly signified, not a present disposition, but an ordination that went before.

It is to no purpose that they therefore gather that by “those that are ordained” are understood “those that are disposed” because in that place they are opposed to them that are unworthy. For Luke here makes no opposition, nor if he did, would it hinder us anything, who know that by the very election to faith and salvation men are made worthy, and therefore also we are opposed to those that are unworthy. In the meantime, let the reader judge what and how wicked a doctrine this is which makes men to be worthy before they believe and that some are found among infidels who are worthy of salvation.

Mark 13:22 predicts that “False Christs and false prophets shall arise and shall show signs and wonders to seduce, if it were possible, the very elect.” There is an “aitiologia”, a cause and reason of it given in the word “elect”: For the cause is noted why some cannot be finally deceived, to wit, because they are elected. Election, therefore, is before perseverance in faith to the end, as being the cause of perseverance: And that which is the cause of perseverance in faith is the cause of faith. That which is the cause why one always believes is the cause why he believes: Therefore, the opinion of Arminius falls to the ground, by which he determines, that not only faith, but also perseverance in faith, is before election and that God in electing considers it as a condition already performed and fulfilled.

The words of the apostle ought not to be omitted in 2 Timothy 1:9: “He hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” These words seem to me to be diametrically and directly contrary to Arminianism: For the apostle does not only deny that we are saved for the fore-seeing of works, but also he brings the eternal decree of God to exclude the respect of works. But if God has not elected us for the fore-seeing of works; then certainly not for the fore-seeing of faith, which begets and effects works: And if God has not elected any one for the fore-seeing of faith, then certainly not for the right using of grace nor for the obedience of faith, for as much as this using and this obedience, is manifestly a work: Neither is it any doubt but that to embrace the gospel by faith is a kind of work and action of the will.

What? That Arminius acknowledges faith not only to be an action and therefore a work, but also contends that faith is imputed for righteousness, not as an instrument, that is, not as it apprehends Christ, but as it is a work and an action? The words of Arminius are reported by the Walachrian brethren in their epistle and they are these: “Faith is imputed for righteousness, not as it is an instrument, but as it is an action, although it be by him, whom it apprehends.” Neither do the Arminians in their answer deny it but willingly acknowledge that these are Arminius’ words and on page 87 they defend him. The same men in the page boing before do confess that Peter Bertius, a man of special name among the Arminians, is of the opinion “That the very act of faith is imputed to us for righteousness in a proper sense, and therefore that we are justified by faith as by an inherent quality”; which ulcer I do not touch here: But I only take that which makes for the present matter, to wit, seeing that faith itself is not only an action and a work, but that also according to the mind of the Arminians, we are justified by faith in as much as it is an action and a work, and an inherent virtue; it is plain that the fore-seeing of faith is excluded by that very eternal

good pleasure of God which the apostle uses to exclude the fore-seeing of works, seeing that faith itself is also a work and an action; yea, and justifies, as it is an action, if Arminius be believed.

Hitherto pertains that which is said in Romans 9:11: “The purpose of God which is according to election, not of works, but of him that calleth”: because faith itself is a work and doth justify as it is a work (as the Arminians will have it) and to use grace aright, is with them to work.

The Scripture speaks of the decree of election, as of a certain and immutable decree, as in 2 Timothy 2:19: “The foundation of God standeth sure, and hath this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his.” And Romans 9: “That the purpose of God, which is according to election might stand.” And John 10:28: “I give to my sheep eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand.” And chapter 6:37: “All that the father giveth me, shall come to me”: whereunto add that which is said in Mark 13 that the elect cannot be deceived. Did Pilate think it was an unlawful thing to change the title of the cross, which was written by him; and will it be a thing worthy the majesty and wisdom of God to cancel those things he wrote, and having changed his opinion, to wipe out those whom he had set into the white register of the elect? He therefore does not think well of God and subverts the doctrine of the gospel who will have the decree of the election of men to be mutable and revocable and to depend on man’s will. We have heard that Grevinchovius denies the decree of election to be peremptory and absolute while we live here. And the whole school of Arminius cries out with one voice that the number of the elect is not certain and determined by the election and will of God: But if the number of the elect be not certain by the will of God, then neither is election itself certain. And surely they justly make election mutable who make it to depend on man’s will: for they will have election to rest on faith fore-seen, and faith itself to depend on man’s free-will. Indeed, they say that preventing and

accompanying of grace is necessary to believe, but the use of this grace they will have to be in the power of man's will, which always has this liberty that it may use that grace or not use it. And we shall see in its place that the Arminians teach that the grace of God is not the total cause of faith, but only a cause in part.

Finally you may everywhere find that election is made by the purpose and good pleasure of God and for his mere grace as in 2 Timothy 1:9; Ephesians 1:5-6, 11; and Romans 9:15 and 11:3. But I find nowhere that anyone is elected for faith fore-seen; neither do the Arminians prove it any otherwise, but by consequences far-fetched which we will examine in their place and order.