
God Is Love:

A Modern Defense of the Doctrine of Universal
Reconciliation

By

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God's Gift to Humanity: Hell or Reconciliation?

PREFACE

This study is based on a series of sermons given by Dr. Otis A. Skinner. The sermons were published and entitled “A Series of Sermons in Defence of Universal Salvation.” It was published by Abel Tompkins in Boston, MA in 1842.

Google has graciously digitized Dr. Skinner's “Sermons” for the public domain. They ask the book not be used for commercial purposes.

Dr. Skinner advocates the doctrine of “impartial grace.” The modern term is universal reconciliation. He became alarmed by “the untiring efforts made in this city, during the past winter, against the doctrine of 'impartial grace.’” The advocates of the doctrine of eternal conscious torment were attacking the doctrine universal reconciliation and its advocates. Dr. Skinner calls the assault “unchristian measures employed to cast reproach upon its advocates.”

Over 175 years have passed since Dr. Skinner’s book was published. The assault on the doctrine of universal reconciliation has not diminished. The advocates of the doctrine of eternal conscious torment hold enmity toward those who disagree with their doctrine.

Dr. Skinner passionately held the doctrine of universal reconciliation. He felt compelled to defend it against the onslaught of reproach being poured out on “his brethren.” He intends to defend the doctrine, consequently “the world may be saved from those false” doctrines of which eternal conscious torment is one. It is his desire to teach the doctrine of universal reconciliation, “bringing many to rejoice in the goodness of God.”

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SERMON I. ETERNAL CONSCIOUS TORMENT CANNOT BE RECONCILED WITH DIVINE GOODNESS.

Yahweh is good to all. His tender mercies are over all his works. (Psalm 145:9)

The doctrine of eternal conscious torment is a dreadful doctrine. It is a doctrine of fear and retribution. There are many doctrines pertaining to Christianity, but the doctrine of eternal conscious torment is particularly horrendous. The tortures put upon a man are evil in their nature. Even so the doctrine is adamantly advocated by men and women who are otherwise well meaning people.

The doctrine of eternal conscious torment has been part of Christian theology since 500 AD. It is a doctrine firmly entrenched in denominations and congregations today. The doctrine has such credibility it is considered essential by many.

The advocates of the doctrine believe as Dr. Skinner writes, “one of the most efficient means, furnished by Heaven, for the prevention of crime, and the promotion of virtue.” In truth the doctrine has no effect on either crime or virtue.

Dr. Skinner writes positively about the growth in numbers of those advocating universal reconciliation in his day. He points to the reduction in the numbers of persons advocating eternal conscious torment. The doctrine was once nearly made dormant in Germany, France and England. He writes hopefully the doctrine of eternal conscious torment would wither in this country. The doctrine preached by advocates of eternal conscious torment cause those hearing it much discomfort. People in every congregation are growing weary of a doctrine that wreaks of evil.

Dr. Skinner believed the frequency of hell and damnation sermons was abating in his day. Common threats about the kinds of torments a sinner would suffer were losing their impact. Denominations and congregations were softening the descriptions of tortures, but even the least torment remains torture.

The ferocity of the tortures depicted in sermons mellowed over time. The intensity of the torments in hell were less prominent and

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were less zealous when that was the sermon's subject. Dr. Skinner writes, "Now you may listen to men of the same sects for months, and hear nothing of the kind; and now, instead of saying 'burning hell,' 'almighty vengeance,' 'arrows of infinite wrath,' and 'thunderbolts of an enraged God,' they say 'the happiness of the future state,' or 'the stings of conscience.'"

Today the vigor in the sermons has returned. The fierceness of God's wrath is again being preached in most denominations and congregations. The doctrine is codified in Creeds and local congregational By-laws.

Dr. Skinner was hopeful in his day that the truth of the doctrine of universal reconciliation was acting as leaven causing the Truth to rise. He was hopeful the doctrine of eternal conscious torment would soon be "exterminated from the Christian world." The doctrine has not been extinguished, but it remains hoped for that it will one day be in the past.

Dr. Skinner calls the doctrine a "mammoth error." It is a reason he encourages others "to persevere in our exertions, to go forward in the work of opposing error and defending truth...."

It is to this end Dr. Skinner brought these sermons in defense of universal reconciliation together and published them. It was his hope to continue to push the truth that God will reconcile all men to Himself. He determined to preach about the doctrines in question and expose them to light and to the Christian world.

This first sermon message is prepared to demonstrate that the doctrine of eternal conscious torment "is irreconcilable with Divine goodness."

Dr. Skinner points out the community of Christians are divided into two distinct categories. The first are Calvinists and the second are Arminians. There is a third group that has risen to greater prominence in recent years and that is a category of Christians advocating conditional immortality otherwise known as annihilation. The advocates of each of these persuasions limit the numbers of persons saved by Christ's Crucifixion, hence Dr. Skinner properly applies the name "limitarian" to their doctrinal positions.

Divine Goodness.

Dr. Skinner cites Dr. John Gill who provides the characteristics of Divine goodness. Dr. Gill says, “First, there is no cause for goodness out of God. The sinner loves God because He first loved him. Second. It is immutable; it is like Himself: the same yesterday, today, and forever. It admits of no distinctions by which it appears to alter or vary. It neither increases nor decreases. There never were any stops or impediments to this goodness. Third, The goodness of God endures forever; it can never be dissolved; nothing can separate it, or separate from it.”

Dr. Skinner adds Divine “goodness is infinitely great.”

For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39)

There is nothing that can or will separate us from His love. Nothing! Further, Divine goodness “is impartial. His tender mercies are over all. He is good to all.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God didn't send his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

We have five characteristics of Divine goodness laid out. “It is free, immutable, eternal, infinite, and impartial.” Only universal reconciliation possesses all of the properties of Divine goodness. It is indeed “impartial grace.”

Is Calvinism Reconcilable with Divine Goodness?

Calvinism teaches that God has determined beforehand that some are destined to live eternally with Him in His presence. The balance not chosen are destined to eternal conscious torment. It is God's will that not all are saved. The majority of God's creation is ordained for eternal conscious torment. They are condemned to hell because it

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pleases Him and because His condemnation of many glorifies Him. There is nothing any man can do to redirect his fate.

The men condemned are reprobates and their condition was established by God. Dr. Skinner asks if these men are condemned by God “in anticipation of what their characters would be?” God created them. Did He create them and instill in them a propensity to sin, but no means to extract themselves from the penalty of it?

John Calvin explains that God intended to create then ignore reprobates. He writes, “...There could be no election without its opposite reprobation. God is said to set apart those whom he adopts for salvation. It were most absurd to say, that he admits others fortuitously, or that they by their industry acquire what election alone confers on a few. Those, therefore, whom God passes by he reprobates, and that for no other cause but because he is pleased to exclude them from the inheritance which he predestines to his children.”ⁱ

Dr. Calvin and many others after him advocate this doctrine. It is no fault of the man condemned to eternal conscious torment. It pleases God to do so. Moreover, God is glorified by this administration of justice. It is good to ask how that is so.

Dr. John Piper is an eminent Bible scholar and theologian. He answers the question, “How Does It Glorify God to Predestine People to Hell?”ⁱⁱ He opens telling his audience that the phrase “predestining people” is seldom used. It is “very rare.” He suggests the phrase may not be in the Bible.

Dr. Piper assures his audience that “no one will be in hell who doesn’t deserve to be there.” Importantly every person in hell is there because of rebellion against God. He writes, “The only people who will suffer are people who have been opposing God and are at the present moment in hell opposing God, rejecting God.” A last thing he adds before answering the question is that Scripture “always pictures him [Christ Jesus] as rescuing *sinner*s before the foundation of the world. Christ is slain for sinners before the foundation of the world.”

Dr. Piper believes those saved and predestined to heaven will be so awed by their good fortune they will worship their Savior with unimaginable zeal. The saved reflect back to Him the grace and mercy He casts on them. He is glorified. The saved are so grateful to

Him because they see clearly that their fate might very well have been hell. They praise Him for His benevolent choice. That, too, glorifies God.

Dr. Skinner points to the Westminster Confession's edict "Of the Last Judgment."ⁱⁱⁱ The Confession states: "The end of God's appointing this day is for the manifestation of the glory of His mercy, in the eternal salvation of the elect; and of His justice, in the damnation of the reprobate, who are wicked and disobedient. For then shall the righteous go into everlasting life, and receive that fulness of joy and refreshing, which shall come from the presence of the Lord; but the wicked who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of Jesus Christ, shall be cast into eternal torments, and be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power."

The doctrine of eternal conscious torment leads its advocates to preach God is glorified by "His justice, in the damnation of the reprobate...."

Scott Oliphint is a Professor at Westminster University. He is a primary author and contributor to "Through the Westminster Confession"^{iv} series. He writes about Chapter 33. "There must, then, be a dual affirmation with respect to eternal damnation. We must rightly grieve its existence; its existence is a manifestation of all that opposes God and His character, and it is an ugly and abhorrent place, devoid of the mercy and grace of God. But we should not grieve that existence *only* because some we know may be there. That is tragic, and we 'think God's thoughts after Him' when we take no delight in it. But the ultimate tragedy of it is that its existence is a testimony of those whose lives were set against the holiness of God's character, and who would not honor Him for who He is. The biblical focus of the tragedy, in other words, is the opposition to God that hell displays. With this focus, we should, in turn, learn to hate and despise that same opposition to the extent that its effects still remain in us."

Mr. Oliphint's assessment of this Institute of the Westminster Confession is telling. Hell is a real place and people we know are bound to be condemned to it. Being sad that a loved one is the subject of eternal conscious torment is appropriate. Perhaps over time our grief will subside and we will come to understand that our loved one is in hell by his volition. A place such as hell is necessary and

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created for people such as these. Our grief must give way to God's glory.

Dr. Skinner cites the Confession of Faith from the Second Baptist Church in Boston during his era in the mid-1800's. That congregation codified their belief “that all who have ever been, or who will be hereafter brought to repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, were from the beginning chosen in him to salvation....” The Second Baptist Church of Boston believed in the 1840's that no man could know Christ without the intervention of the Holy Spirit. He “is sent down to effect the work of regeneration in their hearts, without Whose influence none would ever repent or believe.”

This congregation confirmed precepts of eternal conscious torment. All men are affected adversely by Adam's Fall. Consequently, all men are born deserving hell, but God chose some for salvation and others for eternal punishment. Nothing can be done to change God's plan. No man can work hard enough, long enough or be righteous enough without the intervention of the Holy Spirit. Men are made reprobate by God. They did nothing of themselves to earn it, but were created for it.

Second Baptist Church of Houston is a major congregation with multiple campuses. Their reach is greater than the city they serve through many media venues. Second Baptist teaches, “Human beings are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. As the supreme object of God’s creation, we were designed for dignity. However, Adam’s sin catapulted the creation into a fallen state and plunged all his descendants into depravity. Thus, all of us are marred by rebellion and disobedience, which is called 'sin,' toward God. Sin separates people from God and causes many problems in life.”^v

This congregation of believers wishes there be nothing misunderstood about their beliefs. God created all men “in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character.” Adam's Fall somehow upsets God's creative force and the character of mankind is forever changed.

Second Baptists believe “every person who truly is saved is eternally secure in the Lord Jesus Christ and will spend eternity in heaven, while those who die in their sins will spend eternity in Hell.”

God's impartial nature has evaporated. The advocates of the doctrine of eternal conscious torment, in particular, these believing Calvin's doctrine of predestination have closed the door to all who disagree with their theology. Mankind's Holy character is essentially evil at conception. The Holy Spirit will choose those He will enlighten. All the rest are condemned. Second Baptist declares in their statement of beliefs, "People were created to exist forever. We will either exist eternally separated from God by sin or eternally with God through forgiveness and salvation. To be eternally in union with Him is eternal life. Heaven and Hell are real places of eternal existence."

Dr. Skinner writes, "Reprobation to endless death is opposed to impartial goodness."

"Yahweh Is Good to All."

How can it be said that God is good to all as the Psalmist wrote. Is He good when He condemns the majority of His creation to eternal conscious torment? Is His goodness impartial?

God's goodness is impartial, but the Calvinist doctrine insists He grants favor only to a few. A truly impartial goodness would impart His love over all. Dr. Skinner writes, "He must deal by all alike and grant to all the same favors and mercies."

The Christian systems of predestination, election and reprobation are highly and Divinely selective. To the elect "He gives them all the enjoyments of life." It is to them He bestows the supplication and sustenance. They are surrounded by friends. Heaven is a goal achieved and is waiting and ready to receive them. God sent Jesus for them. The Prophets of old came for their benefit. The command to spread the Gospel to all the world is their work in their way. Indeed, "Yahweh is good" to them.

Under these systems, however, the reprobate is not favored in any fashion. Being gifted with God's breath is not a blessing. Being gifted with temporal life is not a blessing, but a part of a greater curse. Dr. Skinner writes, "Let it not be replied, the blessings of life are free for all men, and in their equal distribution we see God's impartiality: for life is a curse to the slave of sin. Not only so, all blessings are

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curses to the reprobate, inasmuch as they will only enhance his misery beyond the grave.”

What blessings are made available to the reprobates of God's creation? None. His life is not blessed in its short state. His hope is only for a grave and that “a land of darkness and pain.” The reprobates have no inclination to light. They have no hope. They will never have respite from eternal suffering and pains upon pains. “Existence to him is an endless curse.”

The elect are as far removed from those not chosen as eternal heaven is from eternal hell. This condition is set by way of human decree.

The question must be asked and there must be an answer. Dr. Skinner asks, “How, then, can we say God is impartially good? If He is good to the elect, he cannot be to the non-elect.” One is raised to eternal life with Him and the other is cast off to a fiery pit.

This condition is contrary to Scripture. “Yahweh is good to all men.” Eternal conscious torment insists God is good to a few men of His choosing. The doctrine insists God is incapable or unwilling to be good to all or to cause reconciliation with all. The doctrine insists as Dr. Skinner says, “It is impossible for God to make all men happy: a position which destroys his perfections and makes him both weak and unwise.”

Dr. Skinner brings to light an argument advanced by the advocates of the doctrine of eternal conscious torment. Their position is that “the greatest possible good of the world consists in the endless misery of a part, and the endless happiness of a part.” God's glory is heightened by the condemnation of many to hell. His glory is heightened greater still by the heavenly happiness bestowed on some. On its face the position is unproven and cannot be proven.

Think this through. Goodness to one person glorifies God then goodness to all persons would glorify Him greater still. Dr. Skinner explains, “Certainly, the greatest good of any given number must be the greatest good of each one; and, therefore, the greatest good of the world must be the greatest good of each individual of the world. If it be not so, there is no difference between the greatest good and the greatest evil of the world ; for, if the greatest possible good of all men consists in the endless happiness of a part and the endless misery of a

part, the greatest misery of all must be the same and, hence, there is no difference between saying God is good to all and evil to all.”

Goodness becomes “synonymous with hatred.” The Calvinist doctrine of predestination concludes God is glorified in His love for some and His wrath for others. Both end in glorifying the Lord. The doctrine does not edify with scripture. It diminishes it. “Yahweh is good to all men.”

Believe only for a moment as you consider the Scripture. God is good to all men. He is impartial and “treats all with equal favor and kindness.” It is impossible that our Father would condemn one man to eternal conscious torment randomly and another man to eternal bliss.

God favors no person over another. He is good to all. He sent His Son to die for the sins of the world. Christ Jesus' shed blood covers all men and atones for all sin. Dr. Skinner writes, “None, therefore, are reprobates.”

Calvinism's doctrine of election fails the “impartial goodness” test. Dr. Skinner now examines the Arminian doctrine of free will.

Arminianism Is Not Reconcilable with Impartial Goodness.

Dr. Skinner declares about Arminianism, “This theory may be thus stated: God is good.... Guided by goodness, he placed all men in a situation where they might be saved; and, therefore, if they are not, it is no fault of His; so that those who are lost have none but themselves to blame.”

The Arminian theology ostensibly vindicates God and His Divinity. It justifies His wrath and places all responsibility for salvation on a man's efforts. Dr. Skinner finds this theory of salvation to be “vastly more defective than the theory” of Calvinism.

Arminianism does not meet any of the benchmarks of Divine goodness. Arminianism opposes Divine goodness. The advocates of this theory declare God's goodness is in everything. His goodness is seen in the stars of the heavens. His goodness is in the land and all the plants of the earth. His goodness is in the terrain. His goodness is universal.

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Arminian theologians preach God is impartial and they do not appreciate the theories of the Calvinists. Arminians believe God is not partial to any person or any nation. They do not abide the idea that God created some for eternal conscious torment. Rather, eternal conscious torment is a choice made by men. Arminians teach their theology is impartial, but Dr. Skinner asks is it really?

All men are prone to all kinds of influences from birth to adulthood. Personalities and traits are different among men. Some men are kind and others bitter. Some smile and others grumble. Some agree and others argue. Some care and others are cruel. Some are born to peace and others to war. Mankind's character is formed by culture and societal creeds. A moral act in one culture is immoral in another. God places His creation in wealthy cultures and in poor. It is by His will not mankind's.

Mankind is not equally favored by the conditions they are born into. Some are born into wealthy societies and others into poverty. Some are born healthy and others born disabled. Many are born into privilege and others into servitude. Some are born into Christian families and most into something else.

All persons are not born into a shared condition. Dr. Skinner writes some have “advantages vastly superior” to others. Men holding an advantage “stand a much better chance of salvation. Indeed, some say that the heathen have no chance whatever, and that they are daily sinking into hell...” Those who lack advantage will die in their sin “ignorant of him of Whom they have never heard!”

God's impartiality is not seen in these differences of our births. It cannot be said Divine goodness is present in the eternal conscious torment of a person who never had so much as an opportunity to hear the Gospel.

The unrepentant are born reprobate and die in that state. Dr. Skinner says, “They are made heirs of endless perdition...” Those having the the opportunity to hear and believe the Gospel receive eternal bliss. “There is an infinite difference in the destiny of men, because they are differently constituted, or are surrounded by different influences.”

This theology demands God be partial to one over another. He gives favor to one and does not give favor to another. He chooses

somehow. His partiality is known by the outcome. One is favored with eternal happiness and the other eternal conscious torment.

The theology does not comport with the Scripture, “Yahweh is good to all.” His Judgment is Christ Jesus. Through Him we will be reconciled to God. He will be “all in all.” There is not a reasonable dispute.

Dr. Skinner reminds us that Arminianism “teaches that all may be saved, and if they are not, blame cannot be attached to God....” God’s goodness is diminished dramatically to very little or nothing at all. Arminianism “is opposed to the greatness of His goodness.”

Dr. Skinner considers, “Our efforts to benefit an individual are always in proportion to the strength of our love.” He paints a picture of a mother of a newborn. That mother sees her child as defenseless and does all that she is able to assure her baby grows up well. Another mother is less attentive and “may permit a helpless child, that has been entrusted to her care, to perish from cruel neglect.” There is a remarkable difference in the quality of love given by these mothers. The person loved benefits from the person loving. There is a correlation between love and benefit. There is a proportional outcome. Greater love brings with it greater goodness.

God’s love is greater than any good mother’s love. It is certainly greater than a bad mother’s love. His love is infinitely greater than both. God’s love is not cordoned away or time limited. His love is infinite. He loves every soul ever created. There is not a gradation of love as some suggest. His love is impartial.

Does the Arminian theology account for God’s impartial love? It does not. Dr. Skinner writes, “...No, for the theory consigns countless millions to endless sufferings. These millions are condemned and destined to eternal conscious torment because they did not recognize God’s Divine goodness. They reject the privilege of knowing Him.”

The Arminian theology declares “God is not infinitely good....” God only saves a man who surrenders his will to the will of God. All others not committed in the same way are not subject to His benevolent love. If Arminianism is true, then infinite and impartial goodness cannot be true.

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There is yet another complication resulting from the doctrine of eternal conscious torment. God's infinite grace upon grace and infinite mercy is transformed into wrath without Scriptural cause. The doctrine demands God punish the unrepentant with unimaginable anger, wrath and torture. Dr. Skinner writes, "God dooms them to all the agonies He can inflict; He pursues them with infinite vengeance; He makes them miracles of endless suffering."

There is nothing good in that. It must be explained by the advocates of this doctrine why endless, ever-increasing torments are laid on them. Hell is a prison of torments with no hope of release. What is the Holy and righteous moral value in God's condemnation of any man to eternal conscious torment?

Think this through. God created the universe and all that is in it. He is Sovereign over all that He creates. He knows those who will be saved and those who will not. Dr. Skinner asks, "Was there any great goodness in making provisions which He knew would be of no service?" Did God send His Son for the sins of those who choose to believe or of those chosen to believe? Did He not set the conditions of the births of all? Dr. Skinner asks, "Can I be justly reckoned good for offering to the poor or help the distressed, when I know my offers will not be accepted?"

The Arminian doctrine of eternal conscious torment assumes precisely that. God knows who will and who will not accept His offer of grace. He knows those who will comprehend His infinite mercy and those who cannot. If a man offers to do a good thing for another knowing the other will reject it, does it do any good to make the offer? Is there a benefit to be gained in heaven for the man offering goodness knowing the act of goodness will have no affect?

The Arminian theology defines God as unable to be infinitely good. As Dr. Skinner writes, "...He has not done all that was possible; He has only offered salvation, when He might have secured it for the world." The Arminian theology suggests "God is evil to some; for He formed a plan which He foresaw would be the means of adding to the unending torment of a great proportion of His children."

Arminianism Denies God's Immutability: Eternal Goodness is Not Eternal

The theology teaches God is Sovereign over all. God is majestic and worthy of praise. He is good; perfectly good in all that He sets out to accomplish. His plan for the atonement of sins is righteous and supremely loving. It is a gift to all, except His gift of grace is not granted to all. It is a gift accepted by those with His blessing of foresight. The advocates of this theology insist God provides the opportunity to believe, but that not all will take it. His goodness, therefore, remains without blemish. The blame for being sent to hell is on man.

Dr. Skinner defines the flaw in the theology. "...Goodness seeks the happiness of man, and that it can have no other end in view. If, therefore, God should ever inflict a torture intended only to curse those who suffer it, He is not good to them...." Moreover, God cannot change His mind. He cannot reduce the sentence. He can find no cause to redeem the man He consigns to eternal conscious torment. The doctrine advocated by Arminian theologians insists God's goodness has a limit and once He pronounces judgment there is no chance of appeal.

God sent Christ Jesus to die for the sin of the world. That is His purpose to resolve the curse of the world's sin. Christ died for all. The doctrine of the Arminian insists God's love changed from Divine goodness to Righteous hatred. So much for immutability. Even less so for Divine grace.

Discipline is not the product of eternal conscious torment even though Scripture tells us discipline is beneficial.

For they indeed, for a few days, punished us as seemed good to them; *but he for our profit*, that we may be partakers of his holiness. (Hebrews 12:10, emphasis added)

He disciplines His creation. There is not a distinction to be made regarding those who believe and those who do not. His discipline is applied as goodness and His goodness is impartial. He is immutable and He is Divine goodness. He cannot change. He will not change. Dr. Skinner writes, "...Divine goodness is eternal and immutable, so certain will God never change the system of His government towards

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any creature. The moment He changes this, His goodness changes, or ceases to be.”

At death God does not become an enemy of the unrepentant rebel. The goodness He is during our lives does not change after our deaths. He is all-loving now and always.

Jesus Christ is the *same* yesterday, today, and *forever*.
(Hebrews 13:8, emphasis added).

“Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord.” He will open His arms to receive those who believe and He will be no less open to receive those who do not. He will give them mercy from the abundance of His grace. His mercy is from a well of grace that will always be full. His glory will shine over them and His Light will expose their King. They will experience His love. They will know heavenly compassion. He will be their God and they will be His people.

Behold, I will gather them out of all the countries, where I have driven them in my anger, and in my wrath, and in great indignation; and I will bring them again to this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely: *and they shall be my people, and I will be their God*: (Jeremiah 32:37-38, emphasis added)

Arminianism Limits the Magnitude of God's Love

Let us first agree that God is love; He is all-knowing, all-seeing, and all-powerful. Let us agree His goodness is perfect. There is nothing a man can do to affect these attributes of our Sovereign God. No moral acts or physical deeds affect His perfect goodness. No physical deeds done to benefit another affect His perfect goodness. Dr. Skinner writes, “Goodness is a part of his nature, and not something caused by human virtue or the death of Christ. Let me say, too, that the action of goodness does not depend upon anything we do. God pursues his purposes of love when we are sinful, just the same as when we are virtuous. His love is wholly uncaused, and the blessings it bestows are not induced by anything out of him. Sin, therefore, will not prevent our coming into an enjoyment of divine grace; for it is the work of goodness so to subdue the heart and destroy sin, that it shall not bar man from receiving divine grace.”

God is Sovereign over His creation at the moment He creates it. His goodness is perfect over His creation from that moment forward. His goodness does not change. All mankind dies, but He does not leave them to death. He raises their spirits and they return to Him. His goodness opens eyes of blind men. He makes the lame walk. He gathers His flock to Himself and He recovers the lost. His goodness is unarguably, eternally good. God saves mankind because He is good and His mercies are fresh every day.

Scripture confirms each assertion made above.

“You have put all things in subjection under his feet.” For in that he subjected all things to him, *he left nothing that is not subject to him*. But now we don’t see all things subjected to him, yet. But *we see him who has been made a little lower than the angels, Jesus*, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, that by the grace of God *he should taste of death for everyone*. For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many children to glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings. For both he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified are all from one, for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brothers saying, “I will declare your name to my brothers. In the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.” (Hebrews 2:8-12, emphasis added)

All things are subjected to Christ Jesus. He is Sovereign! By His grand and gracious obedience to His Father's command He experienced “death for everyone.”

I exhort therefore, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and givings of thanks, be made for all men: for kings and all who are in high places; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of *God our Savior; who desires all people to be saved and come to full knowledge of the truth*. For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, *who gave himself as a ransom for all*; the testimony in its own times; to which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle (I am telling the truth in

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Christ, not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.
(1 Timothy 2:1-7)

Paul says, "I am telling you the truth." Live in peace with those appointed to serve "in high places." It is a good thing and indicative of God's perfect goodness. It is God's will, His desire, His intent, His gift to humanity that "all people...be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth." Paul is telling the truth when he says, "Christ Jesus,... gave Himself as a ransom for all...."

And I thank him who enabled me, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he counted me faithful, appointing me to service; although I was before a blasphemer, a persecutor, and insolent. However, I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. *The grace of our Lord abounded exceedingly with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus.* The saying is faithful and worthy of all acceptance, that *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.* (1 Timothy 1:12-15, emphasis added)

Paul openly acknowledges his arrogance and evil heart. He recants and repents the sins of blasphemy, persecution and arrogance in his life. God's infinite impartial goodness is seen in Paul's testimony. It is evident in God's merciful love for Paul. It begs the question: Who could be worse than Paul? And, if there was a man worse than Paul, what would God's response be? "Christ came into the world to save sinners."

For by him all things were created, in the heavens and on the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers; all things have been created through him, and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things are held together. He is the head of the body, the assembly, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For all the fullness was pleased to dwell in him; and through him *to reconcile all things to himself, by him, whether things on the earth, or things in the heavens, having made peace through the blood of his cross.* (Colossians 1:16-20, emphasis added)

He is Sovereign over His creation. He is the Alpha and the Omega. He is "I Am." His blood shed on the cross at Calvary

“reconciles all things to Himself.” He is the Creator and His love is immutable. Peace for all in Christ. Jesus said, “It is finished.”

To me, the very least of all saints, was *this grace given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ*, and to make all men see what is the administration of the mystery which for ages has been hidden in *God, who created all things through Jesus Christ*; (Ephesians 3:8-9, emphasis added)

Paul states his ministry is to preach “the unsearchable riches of Christ.” God created all men through Christ. We are all Christ's. The best and the worst. The least and the greatest are Christ's.

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God, and knows God. He who doesn't love doesn't know God, for *God is love*. By this God's love was revealed in us, that God has sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son as the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, if God loved us in this way, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time. *If we love one another, God remains in us, and his love has been perfected in us*. (1 John 4:7-12, emphasis added)

If God's character is immutable and if He is love, then His love is immutable. His love never changes. The love He showed by sending His Son to die for the atonement of the sin of the world shows His love is indeed immutable. Moreover, coming to understand His direction to love even those who hate us lifts us to experience His love in us.

Then the end comes, when he will deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father; when he will have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For, “*He put all things in subjection under his feet*.” But when he says, “All things are put in subjection,” it is evident that he is excepted who subjected all things to him. When all things have been subjected to him, then the Son will also himself be subjected to him who subjected all

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things to him, that *God may be all in all*. (1 Corinthians 15:24-28, emphasis added)

Paul is speaking of the end of this eon; this age. All things are “all things.” Nothing is exempted from inclusion. All things will be made subject to Christ Jesus by the Father. Christ Jesus then subjects all things aside from Himself to the Father. Everything is made in Christ and He then reconciles them to the Father. God becomes “all in all” to all things.

It is not convoluted reasoning to teach God reconciles all things to Himself through Christ Jesus. The doctrine of eternal conscious torment adds to scripture by finding exclusions where none exist. The doctrine is not supported.

And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, *will draw all people to myself*. (John 13:32, emphasis added)

It is established Christ Jesus was indeed raised up on a cross at Calvary. He tells us the outcome of His sacrifice. His lifting up on the cross, His death on the cross, His body prepared and buried, His bodily resurrection from the dead and His ascension to the right hand of the Father “will draw all people to Himself.”

Dr. Skinner closes the sermon succinctly advocating the doctrine of universal reconciliation. “Thus do the Scriptures teach that the free, immutable, eternal, infinite and impartial goodness of God, will save all men from sin, and exalt them to immortal glory.” The theologies of Calvin and Arminius are opposed to these attributes of God. They are exposed in the Light of His Word.

ⁱ John Calvin. “*Institutes of the Christian Religion: Vol. 3.*” Christian Classics Ethereal website. ([link](#)). Date viewed: 09/10/2018.

ⁱⁱ John Piper. “*How Does It Glorify God to Predestine People to Hell?*” Desiring God website. ([link](#)). Date viewed: 09/10/2018.

ⁱⁱⁱ “*Westminster Confession, Chapter 33.*” Center for Reformed Theology and Apologetics website. ([link](#)). Date viewed: 09/10/2018.

^{iv} Scott Oliphint. “*Through the Westminster Confession: Chapter 33.2.*” Reformed 21 website. ([link](#)). Date viewed 09/10/2018.

^v “*What Do We Believe?*” Second Baptist Church, Houston, TX website. ([link](#)) Date viewed: 09/12/2018.