

**SERMON II. ETERNAL CONSCIOUS  
TORMENT CANNOT BE RECONCILED  
WITH GOD'S PURPOSE**

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...making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in him to an administration of the fullness of the times, to sum up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, in him....(Ephesians 1:9-10)

Dr. Skinner makes an astute and true observation. Theologians of all stripes must agree as Dr. Skinner writes, “It is universally acknowledged that no intelligent being can act without a purpose. This is true as it relates to men in all their different pursuits.”

Dr. Skinner states the obvious. Everything an intelligent man does he does to fulfill a purpose. Dr. Skinner writes, “The farmer tills his land....” His purpose is to ready the soil for a planting. His purpose is to feed his family and to tend his flocks. “The mechanic constructs a machine....” His purpose is to make toil more manageable and efficient. A seaman “crosses the tempestuous ocean, subjects himself to its dangers and hardships....” to take treasure for himself. A medical doctor “makes himself acquainted with the science of medicine....” The doctor's purpose is to know the diseases of the human body and to heal where he can.

Theologians have a purpose. They study the great works of the masters preceding them. They study mankind and assess its habits. Theologians develop doctrines and creeds with specific purpose. Theologians purpose to lead others to follow precepts they deem necessary for righteous life. Their purpose is to arbitrate truth. They advocate works to salvation. Theologians are convinced their purpose is aligned with God's. It is their purpose to “...be instrumental in redeeming them (mankind) from their iniquity.”

Dr. Skinner points out that not every purpose has good attached to it. Some have a purpose based in evil. Some think their purpose is good, but the consequences of their good purpose are thwarted in the world of evil. The purpose of men is established in their respective wisdom and is motivated by their respective gain. Purpose driven life

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is good and it is evil. Wisdom and intelligence of men drive purpose for self-gain.

Men pursue their purpose even if their purpose leads to ruin. Angels do it, too. Recall satan's purpose in the Garden to deceive Adam and to supplant God. Recall Adam's purpose to taste what was forbidden. Their purpose is personal and self-satisfying. Their purpose has consequences and those are the root of the "sin of the world."

God's Holy Word is replete with men who possessed a desire for God, but executed their purpose and opposed Him. David and Solomon come to mind. David purposed to possess Bathsheba and he purposed the murder of her husband to have her (2 Samuel 11).

Solomon purposed to build the Temple and lead Israel in God's wisdom. He lost his way and purposed to worship idols.

For it happened, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and *his heart was not perfect with Yahweh his God*, as was the heart of David his father. (1 Kings 11:4, emphasis added)

Man's purpose is not perfect as man is not perfect. The intent of purpose is for good or it is for evil. Dr. Skinner writes regarding the character of purpose. "They are good or bad according to the hearts in which they originate." Evil men construct means to take from others. Men with good purpose construct plans to "promote the happiness of those around them." Serious men exhibit serious purpose. They devote themselves to their outward appearance and attaining the goals of their purpose.

God, too, has a purpose. His good purpose rules over His creation. Dr. Skinner writes, "...For he cannot act without a purpose; neither can he have a purpose which conflicts with his wisdom or goodness."

Think that proposition through to its end. His wisdom is infinite. "He cannot have an unwise purpose." Just as His wisdom is infinite so is His goodness infinite. God does not have a purpose that is not good. Dr. Skinner concludes, "As the purposes of man are perfect and good according to the perfection of his wisdom and the goodness of his heart, so are the purposes of God according to his wisdom and goodness." All good purpose has its root in Him. He directs the paths of all men.

Joseph was betrayed by his brothers. They purposed him to be put away from Jacob. Joseph was enslaved by Egyptians and by God's purpose was elevated to authority in Egypt. There came a time when Jacob and his remaining sons would have to stand before Joseph in Egypt.

The Institute In Basic Life Principles (IBLP) defines their “...purpose of **introducing people to the Lord Jesus Christ**, and is dedicated to giving individuals, families, churches, schools, communities, governments, and businesses clear instruction and training on how to find success by following *God’s principles found in Scripture*” (bold in the original, italics added).<sup>1</sup>

The IBLP explains Joseph's history and God's purpose.<sup>2</sup> The authors call God's purpose His intention. Joseph is described “as the favored son of Israel's patriarch Jacob.” Joseph was a dreamer and blessed by God to understand visions. Joseph was blessed with spiritual insight and he was favored by God. Joseph was hated by his brothers. They kidnapped him intending his murder, but Joseph was instead sold into slavery.

Joseph was aware of the crimes committed against him by his brothers. In captivity he served Pharaoh's elite. He was unjustly accused of sexual assault and condemned to prison. The authors at IBLP write, “Joseph could have become bitter because of what his brothers had done to him and the injustice of his imprisonment. Instead, he worked diligently and grew in wisdom and responsibility.”

Joseph purposed his life to follow the precepts of Godly living as the IBLP authors advocate. Egyptian authorities “found him faithful and promoted him to positions of authority.” Joseph eventually became Pharaoh's right hand and chief administrator. The authors conclude, “Through this experience, **Joseph learned to see his enemies, who had evil intentions, as instruments in the hand of God**” (bold in the original).

There came a time when there was a famine in the lands. Joseph had planned for this crisis and stored great quantities of food to feed Egypt and more. Jacob and his sons left their homes and traveled to

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1 “What We Do.” Institute in Basic Life Principles website. Publication date unknown. <https://iblp.org/about-iblp/what-we-do>. Date viewed: 01/13/2019.

2 “When bad things happen, can God use them to accomplish good.” Institute in Basic Life Principles website. Publication date unknown. <https://iblp.org/questions/when-bad-things-happen-can-god-use-them-accomplish-good>. Date viewed: 01/13/2019.

Egypt in search of sustenance. Little did they know Jacob's favored son was also favored in Egypt. The brothers confessed their sin and repented. Joseph and his brothers were united again and Jacob was pleased.

*As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save many people alive. Now therefore don't be afraid. I will nourish you and your little ones.*" He comforted them, and spoke kindly to them. (Genesis 50:20-21, emphasis added).

There can be no doubt that God's divine purpose was fulfilled in the hatred of Joseph by his brothers. The brothers intended harm and God saw to it that good would come through their hatred. Joseph's story is not unique in this regard. There are many more accounts in God's Holy Word of bad men committing evil that eventually becomes clear in the Light as God's good purpose in His plan for humanity.

Dr. Skinner asks us to keep this in mind as we explore two questions. First, "What is the Divine purpose of God?" and second, "What is the wisdom of that purpose?"

## The Divine Purpose of God.

Dr. Skinner points out "there are many ways by which to decide what God has purposed." First, all theologians must agree "that it was goodness which led God to create man for a benevolent end." Goodness and mercy are compatible. Goodness and misery are not. Dr. Skinner writes, "Goodness cannot desire misery." Goodness by its definition desires happiness.

Theologians from all denominations and congregations must agree "God is love."

*Praise Yah, for Yahweh is good.* (Psalm 135:3, emphasis added)

...whatever other commandments there are, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as by yourself." Love doesn't harm a neighbor. Love therefore is the fulfillment of the law. (Romans 13:9-10).

There is only one conclusion. By His goodness and through His mercy His purpose is the salvation of all men. He is good. His commandment to love our neighbors is no less His desire to fulfill His purpose. He is the Lawgiver and He cannot deceive Himself.

His goodness is not partial. His justice is meted out to the good and to the evil. His justice is always good and His mercy is always evident. His justice is love and His Judgment is Christ Jesus. All Christians certainly attribute to God a purpose to “save the world.” His goodness is impartial. His goodness is a gift not reserved to any person, group, denomination or congregation.

His “impartial grace” is not limited to this or that group. If it were so His Holy Word would clearly teach He favors some over others. Dr. Skinner writes, “Had he been good to a part, he would have purposed to save only that part. Had he been good to none, he would not have purposed the salvation of any. These are self-evident truths, which do not require illustration or proof. Goodness is the procuring cause of salvation; and, therefore, the plan of salvation must embrace all to whom goodness extends.”

Second, Dr. Skinner posits God's purpose is determined by His will. His will and His purpose cannot be in conflict. If so, “...this would represent Him as laboring against Himself, and forming plans to disappoint His own desire.” There is nothing separating His will from His purpose. As Dr. Skinner writes, “...Consequently, when we know what the will of God is, we shall know his purpose.”

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*;... (1 Timothy 2:3-6, emphasis added)

Goodness is God's standard. He sets what is good and what is not. It is His desire that all people be saved. It is His desire that all come to completely and absolutely know the truth.

Dr. Skinner correctly states, “It makes no difference whether we call this a will of purpose or a will of desire; it is enough to know that God's will and purpose agree; that they do not oppose each other, and that God wills what He purposes.”

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ; even as *he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and without blemish before him in love*; having predestined us for adoption as children through Jesus Christ to himself, *according to the good pleasure of his desire*, to the praise of the glory of his grace, by which he freely bestowed favor on us in the Beloved, in whom we have our redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, *according to the riches of his grace*, which he made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, *making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure* which he purposed in him to an administration of the fullness of the times, *to sum up all things in Christ*, the things in the heavens, and the things on the earth, in him;... (Ephesians 1:3-10. emphasis added)

God's purpose satisfies "His good pleasure." His purpose is seen in the life, persecution, prosecution, conviction, death, burial and resurrection of Christ Jesus for the "sin of the world." There is no light between what He purposes as a matter of His will or of His desire. He does not thwart His plan by His will that some are predestined to eternal bliss or that some choose it. He says clearly "all will come to complete knowledge and understanding of His will."

It is not practical theology to declare His will and His purpose have different conclusions. Dr. Skinner writes, "...All speculations about the difference between a will of desire and a will of purpose are entirely unmeaning." I add the speculations made by men are often arrogant and deliberately ignorant.

Third, God's Divine purpose is known by the death of Christ. Theologians from eras past and time present preach impacting sermons describing the pains and sufferings put on the Son of God. Some go to great lengths and focus on the physical torments our Christ endured. Some focus on the model of Christ's life and the unfairness of the governments of religion and politics. The descriptions of the tortures put upon Him are too many to number.

Mel Gibson is a controversial man living in our era. He is a seriously flawed man, as I am a seriously flawed man. The difference between us is notoriety. Mr. Gibson is an accomplished actor. He is

a gifted preacher. He is blessed with the drive, the talent, and the spirit to make movies. He produced and directed “The Passion of the Christ” in 2004.

Mr. Gibson's film is violent. The violence is cruel and “in your face.” The Baptist church I joined bought a bloc of tickets and we attended as a group. We supported Mr. Gibson's movie and we extolled its virtues. For my wife and I seeing it the one time was the only time we want to subject ourselves to that. The truth hit home while watching the movie. Many of us if not all cried.

Mr. Gibson's movie is based in Roman Catholic doctrine. Yet, Protestant denominations and congregations flocked to see it; to support it. The movie's focus is Christ's tribulation. The movie sparked controversy and disagreement. Some believed Mr. Gibson's rendition is accurate and compelling and necessary. Others suggest the violence is insulting and overplayed.

Christian theologians, no matter where they fall on the spectrum, preach the same kind of violence on the body of Christ as Mr. Gibson. In the end, again, no matter where they fall on the spectrum, they all conclude with Christ's death. Dr. Skinner writes, “...The end which is His death was designed to secure was the salvation of sinners. This was the great object to be effected.”

For whom did Christ Jesus not die? Is there even one? He died for the sin of the world. Jesus died for all. Christ Jesus is the manifest grace, mercy, love and Judgment of God. It is God's will that all be saved. Christ Jesus died and our salvation is assured. Dr. Skinner rightly declares, “Jesus was a propitiation for sin; He died to take away sin. He gave Himself a ransom for sinners. All, then, for whom He died must be embraced in God's purpose of mercy; for no being would attempt to do what he had first rendered impossible; neither would God send his Son to die for those he had not purposed for salvation. His purpose, then, embraces all for whom he appointed Jesus to die.”

The punishments put on Christ Jesus are real, but His death is the true object deserving our focus. Dr. Skinner posits there is only one question remaining. “Did Jesus die for the world?”

Theologians of all denominations, congregations and persuasions preach this truth frequently. Universally it is preached. The doctrine that Jesus died for the sin of the world is widely held. It is orthodox.

Dr. Skinner writes, “This is so often and so fully asserted, that we wonder any should ever have called it in question.”

For while we were yet weak, at the right time *Christ died for the ungodly*. For one will hardly die for a righteous man. Yet perhaps for a righteous person someone would even dare to die. But God commends his own love toward us, in that *while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us*. (Romans 5:6-8, emphasis added)

I count myself among the ungodly. That's an easy confession because we are all ungodly. There is not a distinction to be made. There are no categories of persons. None are exempt. We are all ungodly. Even so, “while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

For the love of Christ constrains us; because we judge thus, *that one died for all*, therefore all died. *He died for all, that those who live should no longer live to themselves, but to him who for their sakes died and rose again*. Therefore we know no one after the flesh from now on. Even though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now we know him so no more. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things have passed away. Behold, all things have become new. But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ, and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation; namely, that *God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not reckoning to them their trespasses*, and having committed to us the word of reconciliation. (Romans 5:14-19, emphasis added)

It is God's purpose. Jesus died for ungodly men and all men are ungodly. His death reconciles the world to Himself. He does not hold the sins of ungodly men against them. The ransom for all sin has been paid. Dr. Skinner writes, “Therefore, God's purpose must embrace all men.”

Fourth, God's Holy Word teaches He creates all things for His pleasure. Dr. Skinner posits, “...Surely none would say it is His pleasure to render any [of] the subjects to ceaseless wo[e].” In fact,



His Word declares as Dr. Skinner writes, “It is God's pleasure to gather all things in Christ Jesus.”

Since then the children have shared in flesh and blood, he also himself in the same way partook of the same, that through death he might bring to nothing him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might deliver all of them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. (Hebrews 2:14-15)

Christ Jesus lived in His body a life in flesh and blood. He lived a life as one of us. However, His death impacts satan. Christ's death brings satan “to nothing.” Satan held, past tense, “the power of death.” Christ's death on the cross, His burial and His resurrection brings satan's cause to nothing. Christ's death delivers all from the bondage of satan's power. The bondage to satan has been removed.

You know that he was revealed to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. Whoever remains in him doesn't sin. Whoever sins hasn't seen him, neither knows him. (1 John 3:5-6).

Sin is introduced into the world by satan. His work is the sin that destroys to the point of death. Jesus is glorified in death and is the Destroyer of satan's evil work. Sin is taken from the world by Christ's sacrifice. There is no one who can argue otherwise. As Dr. Skinner writes Christ Jesus' life, death and resurrection “...take it away from the world and remove it from the hearts of all men.”

“...The mystery of His will...” is known. God's divine purpose is known. “He will gather together all things in Christ.” Creation in heaven and on earth is gathered already. Satan's disobedience is exposed and the sin he brings has been covered.

“All things” are all men. “All things” can only mean all things. Dr. Skinner writes, “The text, then, teaches, that God has purposed the salvation of all mankind.” There are no exclusions. The family of man has been revealed in “all things” and all things will be reconciled to Him. It is “impartial grace.” It is overwhelming mercy on a fallen world.

Dr. Skinner asks rhetorically if there are some for whom God's mercy does not apply? Is God's purpose to elevate some and to eternally punish others? If so, where is the evidence? "Is there any evidence here that some were purposed for endless happiness and others predestinated to endless death?" That condition is not written here. Paul was not writing to declare "the eternal condition of men." Paul was writing about the condition of the church in Rome.

Some in Rome were predestined to know Him and to believe Him. These would understand that God's purpose is good and that their effort for Him is to their benefit. There is nothing that can separate God's love from His people. There are not words to drive His people from Him. There is not war or persecution that separates them from Him. Nothing can drive His creation from Him.

Who shall not be brought into the Kingdom? There is nothing in the text to suggest there is any person who cannot or who will not be drawn to Him. Dr. Skinner writes, "Therefore, the purpose, of which the apostle was here speaking, related to the condition of the church on earth, and not to man's final condition."

The Jews are no less blinded than unsaved Romans. Their blindness is not forever. Their inability to see is a veil that is lifted by God's grace. Dr. Skinner writes, "Their blindness was only limited."

Let their table before them become a snare. May it become a retribution and a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they can't see. Let their backs be continually bent. Pour out your indignation on them. Let the fierceness of your anger overtake them. Let their habitation be desolate. Let no one dwell in their tents. (Psalm 69:22-25)

It is God Who purposed the blindness and put stumbling blocks in their paths. It is God Who purposed trials and heavy burdens on those who persecute. It is God Who purposed the Gospel be spread to the world in spite of the authorities' will to be gods unto themselves. Blindness and sin are not permanent disabilities. God uses men to lift the veil. The veil of blindness is necessary and is purposed by God to advance His gift. Dr. Skinner writes, "God makes everything minister to one great leading purpose, a purpose which is agreeable to his nature, in accordance with his will, and in unison with his commands. God, then, never purposed the endless misery of any of his children."

Dr. Skinner makes the point that it is God's purpose that mankind experience "endless happiness." Remember, He is immutable. His will and His desire cannot be in conflict. He is good...superior, righteous good. His purpose is "impartial grace" to all men.

## The Wisdom of God's Purpose.

Our Father is "omniscient." He knows all things. He does not exist in time as humans know time. He creates all things and He knits in them His purpose. Dr. Skinner writes, "...God, when he formed His purpose, knew all the obstructions that would be encountered in its accomplishment."

God knows about the legalists desire to encapsulate His will into laws the legalists administer. He knows about the theologians creating doctrines that oppose His will that all be saved. Dr. Skinner writes, "He knew how ignorant man would become; how willful he would be in his opposition to truth; how he would despise the offers of grace, and how deeply he would become immersed in sin."

God knows, too, His promises of grace would be maligned by those opposing it. He knows the level of His grace is more than sufficient to overwhelm even the most ardent, vehement arguments against it.

Can any hide himself in secret places so that I shall not see him? says Yahweh. Don't I fill heaven and earth? says Yahweh. (Jeremiah 23:24)

Isn't my word like fire? says Yahweh; and like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces? (Jeremiah 23:29)

God's Holy Word is replete with concrete statements regarding the omniscience of our Father. None of His creation can hide anything from Him. There is no secret any man can hide from Him. His Word castigates false prophets and lying dreamers. His will, His purpose, His desire will prevail even over those things His creation tries to hide from Him.

This is the end of the matter. All has been heard. Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every work into judgment, with

every hidden thing, whether it is good, or whether it is evil.  
(Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)

All of the arguments have been made. All the evidence has been presented. The conclusion is clear, “Fear God, and keep His commandments...” God will judge “every work.” He will shine Light onto the hidden works “whether it is good, or whether it is evil.” Nothing is left unexposed.

The wisdom of God’s purpose is not exempt from His omniscience. Just as He sees all things He knows all things. He creates all things. He has been and always will be Sovereign over all His creation.

Know therefore this day, and lay it to your heart, that Yahweh himself is God in heaven above and on the earth beneath. There is no one else. (Deuteronomy 4:39)

Dr. Skinner asserts, “These assumptions being admitted truths, any inference legitimately drawn from them must be acknowledged correct.” When our Father determined His purpose He knew the ways in which He would accomplish it. His methods and “...means were provided sufficient to carry it full into execution.” This is the only conclusion that can be derived. Dr. Skinner writes, “...It would be supreme folly in God to form a plan, and seek its execution, when he saw in the beginning, that the means provided would be incompetent to produce the desired object.”

Dr. Skinner provides us a hypothetical. A man has three sons. Each of the sons has fallen purposely into sins. Each son is enamored by the pleasures of the flesh. The father wants to bring each of his sons back into the fold because he loves them wholly. The father would give all that he owns for the sake of his sons. He would give his life for them. Dr. Skinner writes the father “would give the world if it were his” to give.

Dr. Skinner asks many reasonable questions. “Would such a father likely adopt a plan which he knew would be wholly unavailing...?” The purpose behind the father’s plan is the reformation of his sons. He would be foolish to execute a plan to save his sons if that plan would not meet its purpose. “Would such a father adopt a plan which he knew would...render his sons far more wicked and miserable?” No, emphatically not.

The father's plan comes from wisdom and goodness. He knows his sons are on a path to destruction and he desires to turn them from it. His wisdom prevails. His sons, if they do not return to righteousness will suffer unimaginable consequences. Restoring his sons is an act of goodness.

Truth be told no father would develop and execute a plan that would cause his sons greater harm. Yet, modern orthodoxy demands our Father do just that! Does God love His children less than this father loves his sons? Did God develop a plan that is certain to fail and certain to cause His children immeasurable suffering? Is God incompetent and unable to execute His plan successfully to bring His children back into the fold.

No human father would develop and execute a plan destined to fail. Human fathers are frail and fraught with error and emotion. Human father's make mistakes. Our heavenly father is love always and never in error. Dr. Skinner writes, "We are, therefore, led unavoidably to the conclusion, that God's plan of grace is furnished withall the means which are requisit to produce the desired result." To deny this conclusion is to declare God does not love all that He creates. He will execute a plan doomed to fail and many of His sons will be cast off. God's plan will "...be unavailing and prove an infinite curse."

If the doctrine of "limited atonement" and its subsequent doctrine of eternal conscious torment are right, then, as Dr. Skinner writes, "God does not purpose the salvaton of all...." God being all-knowing would design His plan of salvation for only a few. What might that look like?

Dr. Skinner provides another hypothetical to answer the question. He asks, "Suppose there are six human beings cast away upon a desolate island. Three of these are adults, and three helpless infants." Dr. Skinner reports he has a plan to save these six. He writes, "I procure a ship and send to that island...." Dr. Skinner's instructions to the Captain that only those that can board the ship of their own power and will will be rescued. He writes, "I know that only the adults can walk, that the infants are perfectly helpless...." Dr. Skinner's efforts to rescue would only be allowed the adults. The infants would be left behind because they were unable to save themselves.

Consider his illustration closely. Does it sound familiar? Dr. Skinner asks, “What would my purpose be in such a transaction?” No one could say the purpose was to save infants. “Would not all unhesitatingly say that my purpose is virtually excluded them as it included the adults?” It would be the Captain’s purpose to leave the infants stranded as much his purpose to save the adults.

If true, Dr. Skinner’s illustration comports with “limited atonement” and eternal conscious torment. Dr. Skinner writes, “...If God’s plan of grace does not save all, He knew at its formation that it would not.” His purpose as taught by traditionalists is to save some and condemn most. It is the doctrine of denominations and congregations to this day.

Eternal conscious torment demands “God never purposed the salvation of all men.” The ripple effect of this precept has alarming consequences. If eternal conscious torment is true, then God “...did not create all for his pleasure; He never sent His Son to save all...” A ripple goes out that discredits the Bible. Holy Scripture “...asserts the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” The doctrine of eternal conscious torment concludes this precept must be false.

Arminian advocates of the doctrine teach God saves “only those which God foresaw would accept the terms of grace.” All others were created with God’s purpose, will, and intent to never save them. The doctrine requires acceptance that God purposely set aside His creation for eternal punishment; that it is His plan, His will, His desire to torment His creation. Advocates of the doctrine must conclude God’s love, grace and mercy are limited to a few. And, God knows it from before the beginning.

While Calvinist theologians tell us God chose those He will save before the foundations of the world the Arminians preach a kind of divine ignorance. Dr. Skinner points us to Dr. Adam Clarke, a famous expositor of God’s Holy Word. Dr. Clarke, according to Dr. Skinner, would have us believe God did not know the choice made by any of those whom would be saved. Dr. Clarke was adamantly opposed to the doctrine of election as advocated by Calvinists. Calvinism teaches God knew before hand whom He would save; He chose. Arminianism teaches God does not fully know the being He creates and does not know which of His creation will acknowledge His saving grace. Calvinism allows God’s Sovereignty to choose, although the outcome Calvinism derives is incorrect. Arminianism

requires God be “ignorant” of choices made; the precept behind the doctrine of free-will.

It is folly to conclude from scripture that God not unaware. He is all knowing, all powerful, and ever present! He has a purpose for everything He does and all He does is good because He is good. Dr. Skinner writes, “...God is not thus ignorant ; that he sees the end from the beginning; and, therefore, when he created man, the result of that creation was present with him, and that result, whether good or bad, must have been purposed. Hence we must either say, God purposed the endless misery of a part, and the endless happiness of a part, or say that all mankind will be heirs of grace ; for the termination of his government, whatever it may be, was originally purposed.”

### The Perfection of God’s Purpose.

God is perfect and everything that comes from Him must be perfect. His plan for reconciliation is perfect.

God’s plan, in order to be perfect, “must be sufficiently broad to embrace all mankind.” Dr. Skinner asks, “If an individual should invite his friends to an entertainment, but make provision for only half the number to be present, we should pronounce his arrangements sadly imperfect, and accuse him of a lamentable want of wisdom. But would he be more unwise than God, if his plan of grace reaches only half he desires to save?”

Calvinism and Arminianism approach God’s plan of salvation in their respective doctrines in this fashion. Both advocate a doctrine that Christ’s atoning sacrifice is made for all, but with big “buts.” Calvinism teaches the perfect plan is that salvation is divinely gifted to some and deliberately not given to others. Arminianism teaches salvation is offered to all, but God’s will is subject to His creation’s respective will.

Calvinism and Arminianism espouse God’s plan as imperfect and divinely so. Advocates from each are convinced God does not intend to save all mankind, that His will that all be saved is only His wish.

A perfect plan lacks doubt. God’s perfection removes all shades of doubt. As Dr. Skinner writes, “A perfect system must have no contingencies which can defeat its accomplishment.” There are not any “if-then” comparisons. Calvinism declares if God chose you, then you are saved. Arminianism declares if you choose God, then

you are saved. Neither plan is consistent. Both are certainly without perfection.

Advocates of “impartial grace” agree God creates all men in His image and that it is His spirit that is placed into all mankind. “Impartial grace” recognizes the certainty that mankind has free-will. We believe every person will be rewarded according to the choices he makes. We believe every person ever created is accountable to his Creator. Every person understands he is accountable for his choices.

That said, it must be clearly stated that no person is able to thwart the will of God. Dr. Skinner writes, “But in this agency of man, there is no power to thwart the divine purposes. It is not an agency which can make all things bend to its desires; but it is a limited agency, and one which is so far subject to the controlling influences of God, as to be kept within bounds that guard the highest interests of the soul. Any other arrangement would be neither wise nor good.”

Dr. Skinner asks us to consider the imperfection of plans lacking goodness or wisdom. It is unwise to pass a successful business to a son who is wholly inept and unable to manage the smallest enterprise. It would neither be wise nor good knowing the business will fail. It would be unwise to elect or hire a manager who has proven he cannot lead, yet we elect many who are just that. It is unwise to develop a plan of salvation that cannot be carried out to all. It is unwise to give weaponry to nations who intend us harm.

Dr. Skinner asks, “For what has God given man the agency which he possesses?” God’s plan must be good and it must be perfect, yet he gives to man the ability to reject good and perfect. Did God set a trap for mankind? “To say he has done it for this, would be charging Him with deception and injustice, and ascribing to him a character which we could neither reverence nor love.”

God gives His creation the ability to act independently from Him. Dr. Skinner asks, “For what then was the agency given?” Dr. Skinner advocates the doctrine of “impartial grace” more familiarly known as universal reconciliation. It is from that doctrine that he answers the question.

First, God gives mankind the power, capacity and ability to make choices; call it free will. Our choices, free will, can be from self-interest or can affect our capacity to love others. It is disciplining to learn from our choices. Wrestling with trials of all kinds is discipline. The ultimate end is in God’s perfect wisdom. Dr. Skinner concludes



God's agency is a gift to "open to him (mankind) the riches and glories of grace, and raise him, through mercy, kindness and compassion, to the blessedness of heaven. This is an end worthy of infinite wisdom and love, and such as we should expect a heavenly Father would seek."

God blesses us with the ability to exercise free will, but our free will is never superior to God's Will. About this gift Dr. Skinner concludes, "Hence, human agency, given for such a benevolent purpose, cannot have power to prevent the accomplishment of that great design, formed in the beginning, and to which all the arrangements of God directly tend. It implies, therefore, no contingency in regard to the result of God's government. Here is perfection, and perfection worthy of infinite wisdom."

Advocates of "impartial grace" see clearly that it is by an act of God we exist. It is clear the Father of all loves all. His Judgment is grace without favoritism. His Judgment is His will that all be reconciled.

His grace extends to all without "...obstructions which impede the work of salvation." It is His work, His act, therefore, cannot be overwhelmed by any other act. His grace is Perfect.

"Impartial grace" forgives lack of knowledge, rebellion and disobedience. Dr. Skinner writes, "These array man against his God, and cause the world to engage in strife and bitter contentions. Remove these, therefore, and all men are saved. The work of redemption is completed."

What is the objection? Dr. Skinner writes:

If this objection be well founded, in what consists the perfection of God's plan? If its light is not superior to human ignorance, its truth more powerful than error, and its grace more effectual than sin, it must indeed fall very far short of perfection.

But God can flood the world with light; he can make truth ride in triumph over error from sea to sea; and he can cause the waters of grace to wash every heart in his vast dominion.

No wisdom can be superior to God's, and, therefore, his plan of salvation must have means which can remove all obstructions, and reconcile every heart to himself. Indeed, God

can make the wrath of man praise him, and restrain what will not subserve this great purpose.

The whole history of the church is an illustration of this holy truth. How often has the triumph of error served to help the onward march of the gospel! Look at the crucifixion of Jesus. The very conquest of his enemies was the means of establishing his religion on an everlasting foundation, and of clothing it with a power which will enable it to go forward in triumph, till its great mission is finished, and the world saved.

Nothing, then, can prevent the ultimate victory of the gospel over all the causes of human wo.

Dr. Skinner advocates “impartial grace.” He declares if “impartial grace” is not God’s will then there are three reasons to explain His inability to reconcile all. First, “Because He will find it impossible.” Second, because the price of salvation is too high. Last, God’s immutability is not really.

Traditionalists of all stripes concur Christ died for the sins of the world, but not really. They say He is all-powerful, but cannot or will not change the hearts of all.

The Life of the Perfect atonement is sufficient to save the world. Traditionalists teach His death does not save all, but only a few. The Father knew the cost and paid it for all through His Son’s obedience even to death on a cross.

We are taught by traditionalists that God is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. He is immutable. He is love and that love never changes. They also teach He changes from a Father Who loves to a punishing Authority.

The objection lacks credence. “Impartial grace” is the only consistently faithful doctrine magnifying God’s eternal love. “Impartial grace” glorifies God and properly sets Him above all else. Dr. Skinner closes the argument. “Hence, God's purpose to save all will be fully accomplished. If we turn to the Scriptures, they fully justify this glorious conclusion.”

They teach that God works all things after the counsel of his own will ; that the kingdom is his, and he is the Governor among the nations; and that he does all his pleasure in the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth.

Read the history of God's dealings, as recorded in the Bible, and you will find, that every event foretold has come to pass at the appointed time, and in the appointed manner ; that every purpose in regard to the establishment of truth, or the revolution of nations, has been executed, and that kingdoms and empires have been agents to fulfil his designs.

Why, then, shall we say, he can accomplish all designs, except that which relates to salvation? The truth is, his purpose to save man is the great purpose for which all others were formed; and shall we say the less ones will be all accomplished, but the chief one defeated? God does all his pleasure.

The Bible says, as God has thought, so shall it come to pass; and as he has purposed, so shall it stand. Now, is not this testimony enough? Can we ask for anything more explicit ? What has God purposed?

Among other things, he has purposed the endless happiness of the world. This purpose, therefore, shall be executed; for as he as thought, so shall it be done.

This view of the Divine purpose is as honorable to God, as it is cheering to the soul. We see that there is a wise and gracious Being who superintends all the interests of mankind, and who is guiding everything to a glorious termination.

Men may fight against him, despise his law, and give themselves up to the degradation of sin; but no power can obstruct the progress of his plan, or destroy the efficacy of the means appointed to enlighten the ignorant and save the sinful.

"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants, of the earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou ? "

"Thou art worthy, Lord, to receive glory, and honor, and power ; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created."