

Arminianism Demolished

in a letter written to an unregenerate preacher

by William Huntington

Sir,

I received yours of June the 6th, and I read it, but with no satisfaction; that which savours of nothing but flesh and blood, can never be savoury to an heaven-born soul; “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” and will be savoury to the children of the flesh; “but that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,” and will be relished by none but spiritual children. If your matter had sprung from the Holy Ghost, it would have been more palatable to my soul; but as it savours neither of sound reason, nor of divinity, it is like Job’s tasteless dish; “Can that which is unsavoury be eaten without salt? or is there any taste in the white of an egg?”

For my part I see nothing in the doctrine of election that is so contrary to sound reason. The woman who is now your wife, was chosen for you by your father, as you have owned to me; and when he proposed her to you, you approved of her, and married her in preference to any other. And I suppose that you would have deemed it daring insolence in any common prostitute, who should have come and called you to an account for not marrying her. And what should you have thought, if all the women in the world had come to you, and demanded your person to have been divided among them in wedlock? would you not have replied, “Every man has a right to chuse his own partner in life: who is to control me in the object of my choice?” Let this sovereign prerogative be granted to your Maker, and the offensive doctrine of election by Arminian practice is established. God the Father made a marriage for his son, Matt. xxii. 2. And Christ says, “I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord.”

The Father brings this dame to his son, “No man can come to me except the Father draw him;” and he accepts her at his hands, and says, This is flesh of my flesh, and bone of my bone. “This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church,” Ephes. v. 32.

And though you, sir, are desirous of making the Saviour a polygamist, by putting Leah to bed in the dark, and forcing her upon him by a covenant of wedlock of your own devising, which has been altered ten times, yet the Saviour says, No; she shall not be my wife; nor am I her husband, call her Loruhamah, Hosea I. 6. I will not have her, I will have Hephzibah, my own delight, and no other. “There are threescore queens and fourscore concubines, and virgins without number. My dove, my undefiled is but one, she is the only one of her mother, she is the choice one of her that bare her.”

I will come with another appeal to the court of equity. You, sir, keep several servants; and do you always hire every one that offers his service? Do not you act like a sovereign here? Have you not a choice in them? and do you not send for their character, and inquire after their honesty? Let this privilege be granted to your Maker, and the controversy is ended. God sends his ministerial servants into the market, to hire labourers into his vineyard, Matt. xx. 1; and he pitches upon such as you refuse, for he takes those that stand idle, Matt. xx. 6; and he takes them without any recommendation, which you will not do, for you require a character of their honesty; and yet at the same time you want to thrust a company of thieves into the Saviour’s service; I mean such as yourself; who by your preaching free-will, and self-righteousness, rob him of the glory of his arm, and the honour of his merit, all the day long.

Now, sir, you would think it insolent in any ruffian who should come and take you to task for not hiring him; and yet you are cavilling at God for not sending all the world into his vineyard; when it is

plain that you make use of four branches of sovereignty in hiring your servants, which God does not do in his. You chuse the industrious, but he hires the idle; “Why stand ye here all the day idle? Because no man hath hired us. Go ye into the vineyard, and that which is right, that shall ye receive.”

You chuse the strong, the goodly, and the honest; but the Lord chuses the weak, the base, the dishonourable, and them that are despised. You pay a man according to his worth, time, and labour, in which you show both sovereignty and partiality; but the Lord pays the first last, and gives as much to him that wrought but one hour, as to them who bore the heat and burthen of the day: every one received a penny. I know merit-mongers murmur at this, supposing that they shall have more; but their eye is evil in so doing, because the master is good, in giving where it is most needed.

I know the fifteenth chapter of the Corinthians is perverted, to afford a ground for boasting, in promising the greatest reward of glory, to the greatest labourer and brightest Christian; but God’s word has cut off that notion; nor is there a word that favours such a notion in all the chapter above cited. The saints are all to come to the unity of faith, and they are all to arrive to the fulness of Christ’s stature, to a perfect man in Christ. I know their cant is, that every vessel will be full; some die young, and they are small vessels, others are of a larger size, but God says no. “There shall be no more thence an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old; but the sinner being an hundred years old, shall be accursed.” Thus it appears, that there shall not be one little vessel and another great; nor is one weak and another strong in the Lord. “In that day shall the Lord defend the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and he that is feeble among them at that day shall be as David, and the house of David shall be as God, as the angel of the Lord before him.” Thus the young vessel is to die a hundred years old; the shortest vessel is to arrive to the fulness of Christ’s stature; the weakest is to be as strong as David, the last are to be first; every one received a penny, and the least in the kingdom of God is equal to the angels in heaven, who neither marry nor are given in marriage.

Though it is said of the twelve Apostles, that they shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, yet this shews no pre-eminence in a state of glory; for the Gentiles shall judge angels, and the world both, “Know ye not that we shall judge angels? and if the world is to be judged by you, are ye not able to judge these matters?” A two-edged sword is to be in the hand of the elect, to bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; this honour have all his saints, Psalm cxlix. 9.

The scriptures declare, that he that overcomes, shall sit down with Christ on his throne, even as Christ overcame, and sat down with his Father in his throne. Christ rewarding every man according to his work, doth not militate against what I have said; there are two sorts of works, the works of the flesh, and the works of the Spirit, and there are no more. And he that is a just God and a Saviour, will doubtless judge and reward both the righteous and the wicked.

It is observable, that when the god of this world has blinded men’s eyes, that they then begin to dream of merit, and fly to the bible for some ground of boasting, which is the last book in all the world that a man should fly to for such a ground; for the author of it purposed to stain the pride of all glory; and his word excludes all boasting, unless a man will be content to make his boast of the Lord; which, if he can submit to, he may, as David did, make his boast all the day long.

I shall come with another appeal to conscience; and indeed I would rather appeal to your own conscience, than to the word of God with you, because you seem to be altogether ignorant of it; God has hid your heart from understanding, therefore he shall not exalt you, Job xvii. 4.

When you go to a fair to buy cattle, do you purchase all the droves that are brought for sale? do you not pick out this horse of strength for draft, that horse of heels for your saddle, and such a particular flock of sheep for your fold, and this and that calf for weaning, and bringing up for your dairy? And is there any in the fair so daring, as to come and abuse you, ridicule you, and call you partial and unjust, because you have not purchased his old ram goat? Now, sir, some to the bar of equity, and permit me to speak on God’s behalf. God does as you have done; he calls a number of poor wretched sinners, gives them one faith, one hope, one heart, and one way, and calls them his state horses; “I have

compared thee, oh my love, to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots." He calls other poor sinners, and fits them for his saddle, does his business in the world with them, and makes them as his goodly horse in the battle, Zech. x. 3. He brings them sensibly into the bonds of the covenant, puts his mark upon them, and says, there shall be one fold, and one shepherd; and under his tender care, and in his good pasture he makes them grow up as calves of the stall, Mal. iv. 2; and so fits them to suckle others; and you are charging God with injustice, because he hath not chosen nor purchased the goats; and he declares he will not; for he says, he laid down his life as a ransom for the sheep; and, that in the great day he will separate the righteous from the wicked, even as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats.

By your leave, I will come with another appeal to your conscience.

Out of your four children, John is your favourite; and though it has appeared a great grief to your wife, and you have been talked to about it, yet you cannot hide it; you know I have seen it myself: your affections here are the language of scripture; Was not Esau Jacob's brother? saith the Lord: yet I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau, and laid his mountains and his heritage waste, for the dragons of the wilderness, Mal. I. 2,3. And though you and many more are cavilling at God, and calling him unjust for this discriminating love, yet God stands to it; and his love to Jacob, and hatred to Esau, is immutably fixed to all eternity. For "Israel," the spiritual seed of Jacob, "shall be saved in the Lord, with an everlasting salvation; they shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end;" while, on the other hand, Edom, and all the mystic seed of Esau, are named the border of wickedness, and the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever, Mal. i. 4. Your affections were fixed on this child, probably on the account of his beauty and wit;¹ but it is not so with God; for God revealed to Rebecca his absolute choice, before the children were born, and before they had done either good or evil; and that his eternal purposes might stand, touching his election, he told her the elder shall serve the younger. And she acted agreeably to one possessed with the faith of God's elect; for she believes the decree, eyes the promise that God gave her, and uses means to secure the blessing to the chosen, or elected object;² even though her husband's natural affection swayed him to determine quite contrary to the revealed will of God; this was confirmed at the children's birth, by Jacob's holding Esau by the heel; Esau got the start at the birth; but before ever Esau's heel was cleared, Jacob's hand appeared; so now Esau was running to catch venison, while Jacob's hand was conveying the savoury meat, and getting the blessing in his hairy gloves; and though Isaac trembled when Esau came, and owned that Jacob had got it by subtlety, yet he is brought to remember the revealed will of God, and to confirm what himself had done, "I have blessed him, and he shall be blessed;" and God confirms it again at Bethel.

I will come with another appeal to your conscience, which, I think you cannot be offended at, because you have taken away both the power and the sovereignty of my Lord and Master, and assumed all yourself, by asserting in this your letter, "that you have a power to do good, and a will to choose or refuse good." Therefore, as an ambassador of Christ I come to you; for where can the servant of a dethroned sovereign go, but to those possessed with sovereign power? and according to your letter, you are the man.

I believe, if you were to make your will tomorrow, you would make it greatly in favour of your beloved son; and perhaps cut off one, that you are far from being kind to, with a shilling. God does not go so far; for though he insists upon it, that Ishmael shall not be heir of the providential substance, and promised blessings of Abraham, yet he provides for Ishmael as a Father in providence, and tells him he should live by his sword. Thus God's mercies are over all his works: God loveth the stranger in giving him food and raiment; and makes his sun to shine on the unthankful as well as on the grateful, and sends his rain on the just and unjust.

And I suppose it would be taken as a very great offence for any person to ask you why you gave your substance and homestall to one child, and only an Ishmael's portion to the rest? your reply would undoubtedly be, "I am not accountable to man for these things, but have an undoubted right to do as I please with my own." God says the same, "Why dost thou strive against him, for he giveth not account

of any of his matters?" and asks, if it is not right that he should do as he pleases with his own?

I have perused your letter over and over, and considered it minutely; and the whole of it seems to amount only to this; you are labouring to prejudice poor sinners against the sovereign power of God your Maker, and to establish your own sovereignty instead thereof. But, if there is truth in the bible, living and dying in the work and spirit that you are now in, you will never see Christ with acceptance. "Those that honour me will I honour, but they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."

All the human race have sinned, and are in a state of death and condemnation by sin, and it is God's pleasure to have mercy on some, and those are the objects that himself chose, according to his own good pleasure: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy; and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." This he proclaimed from heaven himself; and though there are many that have and still do resist his will, yet there is none that have or ever shall alter it; God is of one mind, and none can turn him; and what his soul desireth that he doth.

If ten men taken, are combined in one robbery, and being tried and found guilty, are cast and condemned for the same; yet it lies in the king's breast to pardon one or more of them, though all are alike guilty; and it would be no less than rebellion, if not treason, in you to call your sovereign unjust or wicked in so doing; yet you are guilty of such rebellion against God: hear the Lord's own voice in the court of equity, "Is it fit to say to a king, thou art wicked, or to princes, ye are ungodly? How much less to him that accepteth not the persons of princes, nor regardeth the rich more than the poor?" But in this God differs much from the king, because a king often pardons without any satisfaction to his law; but God pardons none without a full satisfaction both to law and justice; and though an infinite satisfaction be given both to his law and justice, yet he will not pardon all the human race.

It is plain to me in the word of God, that Christ, as the head of the elect, was set up from everlasting; and it is as plain, that the elect were chosen in him from everlasting; and the natural consequence is, that some were rejected, when the others were chosen; God hath appeared of old to the church in Christ, her head, saying, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love;" and it is as plain that some were rejected from the same date: they were of old ordained to this condemnation, Jude iv. God's rejection precedes their name; "Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them."

For my part, I wish that you would mind your farming, and let the word of God alone, unless you could submit to his tuition; or at least lay by preaching, till your understanding be enlightened; for you own that you are in an unjustified state; and if so you are yet in your sins, and God tells you not to meddle. "But unto the wicked God saith, what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou shouldest take my covenant in thy mouth; seeing thou hatest instruction and castest my words behind thee?" Thou art the man to whom God speaks; you hate instruction, and have cast the sublime doctrines of God's sovereignty, his uncontrollable will, his absolute choice of his people, his imputed righteousness, his promised strength in perseverance, and eternal life as his free gift, behind thy back; thou art the man that has ridiculed these truths, and committed spiritual wickedness in high places, even in the church of God, the city which he has set on a hill, and in the assumed character of a minister, the highest office in the church, and in the pulpit the highest place therein. You call God unjust! and a man that declares the whole counsel of God, and preaches the preaching that God bid him; that such preaching makes God unjust. You declare Christ died for all, and yet Ezekiel tells you there are numbers in hell already, and Christ says, "Broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many go in thereat." Christ by his death satisfied justice in the behalf of the elect, but you say such children of God may fall away, and be damned after all the satisfaction made by Christ; and after that satisfaction is made known, and applied to the elect by the Holy Ghost; though God has sworn that he will not be wroth with them, nor rebuke them; do not you make God both unjust and false by this your blasphemy? By your declaring that human merit is available in point of justification before God, do not you lessen the merit of Christ? and do not you give the testimony of all the servants of God, both prophets and apostles, the lie, who have all declared, that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living

be justified? do not you by this mitigate the severity of God's spiritual law? and by driving sinners to it for life, do not you render the gospel of the grace of God of none effect to poor sinners?

While you are declaring that Christ died for all, you in effect declare that he died for none, because you affirm that the redeemed may fall away and be lost; and thus in preaching universal redemption to all, you leave all redemption as a matter of universal doubt, and make it sure to none. However, it is out of the abundance of your heart, that your mouth speaketh; you believe the doctrines of predestination and reprobation too, as firmly as the devil himself does; those doctrines gall you as well as he, or else neither he nor you would vent such malice against them, nor set men to fight with so high a hand against God for revealing them. "He that reproveth God, let him answer it." Wilt thou disannul God's judgments, wilt thou condemn God, that thou mayest be righteous? Job xl. 8. "Shall mortal man be more just than God, shall a man be more pure than his Maker?" Why dost thou strive against him, for he giveth no account of any of his matters: he is of one mind, and thou wilt never turn him. Submission well becomes a rebel, and thou must be brought to submission, if ever he saves thee.

I desired you, when I answered your last, to trouble me no more with such stuff; but you are like the troubled sea that cannot rest, and therefore you are determined that others shall not rest. As to my publishing my last letter, it could be no offence, as I concealed your name; and I do intend to publish this also, for I am not ashamed of the doctrines of the Lord, though I am ashamed of your rebellion. However, if you can make a shift to creep into heaven by this new system of your own contriving, I have no objection; I could wish that all the human race might be saved; but my groundless wish will never turn the immutable mind of God, nor prevail against his irrevocable decree; and if I was to preach such lies in God's name, as you do, I should have no more success than you have; for God will never set the seal of his own Spirit to ratify a lie; but I see God sets his seal to my ministry daily; and when he first revealed the truth to me, his own Spirit sealed my soul up to the day of redemption at the same time: and I am well persuaded that if I am right, you are wrong; and that if your road be the way to heaven, I can have no hope of getting there; for my road lies full south, and yours full north.

However, I bless God, I have not a single doubt but the doctrines that I preach are the truths of God, nor have I a doubt of being saved in them; but as for your part, you own that you are in an unjustified state; and if so, then every curse in the law of God is levelled at your head. And for a condemned criminal in chains, to assume sovereignty, infallibility to himself, and become a dictator both to his sovereign and his judge, is such a piece of insolence as never appeared in any court of judicature in the world. Your cavilling must be turned into praying; and your fighting against God, into fighting against yourself, if ever you are saved. Adieu. From all blindness of mind, from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, from hardness of heart, and contempt of God's word and commandments, good Lord deliver thee.

Amen,
W.H.

William Huntington (1745-1813) was a London minister and author, much maligned in his day and ever since by men far inferior to him in the knowledge of the Scriptures, a man who was greatly used of God. This article was excerpted from *Epistles of Faith*, Part 1, Letter 16, by William Huntington, published by T. Bensley, London, in the late eighteenth or early nineteenth century.

ENDNOTES:

1. There is no excuse for a parent to love one child above another, and where this has been the case it has so often brought great trouble and deep sadness into a family. Human parents love one above another because of something in them, or something they have done, whereas God loved Jacob and hated Esau from before they had even been born. Besides, only Jacob was the adopted son of God; Esau was not part of God's family. All who are the true children of God are loved by Him. – *Ed.*
2. All this is true; nevertheless it was sinful in her to have chosen this devious means to achieve the desired result, instead of trusting in God to bring it to pass. – *Ed.*

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