

Visible objects have a great advantage over us. We must, therefore, have our proper seasons of retirement, our proper times for calling our thoughts from the world, for charging them to have done with it, that we may converse with God and Divine things; that we should summon up our souls to the work, as David, "Bless the Lord, O my soul," etc. (Psalm ciii. 1, 2); so should we say, "View the Lord, O my soul, contemplate Him and His glories. O think what a mysterious, what a marvellous, what an amiable being He is! Look through the whole creation, and see what deserves thy esteem, thy love, and thy trust, in comparison with Him: He is accessible through Christ, He hears prayers, He listens to the cry of His servants and His people. Resolve, therefore, that thou wilt converse with Him: address Him, therefore, by daily prayer, and particularly in secret. Enter into thy closet, it will assist thy conceptions of Him, it will remind thee of His existence, and of thy business with Him there; and see to it that this part of duty do not degenerate into a form, that the soul be right with God while it is performed: and I do not doubt but it will have a most happy influence; and will bring the mind to such a temper and disposition that you may often be able to direct the eye of the soul to God in the intervals of such solemnities; as a pious native of France expresses it, that when he passed through the streets of Paris, where one may well imagine there would be diversions enough, his soul was no more moved than if he were in a desert.

Let us cry earnestly to the great Father of spirits to direct our fallen and degenerate minds to Himself, if we desire to maintain our frequent views of Him.

We might, says that excellent person to whom I have just referred, as soon bring down fire from heaven, or draw the stars from their orbits, as kindle devotion in our own cold dead hearts without a Divine agency and operation. The Lord opened the eyes of Hagar, and she saw the relief which He had prepared for her in

the wilderness. He must open our eyes, or we shall not see Him. Cry, therefore, to Him with all your souls, and if you feel your hearts raised to Him, look upon it as a token for good, as an assurance not only of His providential but gracious presence. "O thou King eternal, immortal, and invisible! Thou art ever with me, and yet I see Thee not: ever near to me, and yet I do not perceive Thee: and important as Thy presence is, I am often insensible of it: and shall it be always thus? Lord! I cannot bear it. I am persuaded that I see; and, blessed be Thy name, I feel it, that it were better to die than to live as at a distance from Thee: better to have no being at all than to lose God among His creatures, though it were the most excellent of them: and, therefore, O Lord, I earnestly entreat this favour of Thee, not that Thou wouldst make me rich and great, that Thou wouldst prosper me in my worldly affairs, though I desire such prosperity as Thou shalt see best, but that the eye of my soul may be directed to Thee. I would say as Thy servant Moses, 'O Lord! I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory' (Exod. xxxiii. 18), in a spiritual sense! Give me such a view of Thee as may fix my roving mind upon Thee more than ever! Let me see Thee so as to rejoice, if it be Thy blessed will; but if not, let me see Thee, so as to fear Thee, and to love Thee, and to conduct myself in a manner that may be agreeable to Thee: that in whatever darkness I now walk, I may at last come to see light in Thy light, so to behold Thy face in righteousness, as to be satisfied with Thy complete likeness; and, when my foolish heart would lose sight of Thee in the midst of these surrounding vanities, let me rather be made to feel Thine hand smiting me than to live in a forgetfulness of Thy presence."

Is there a heart in this assembly that can say amen to these petitions? If there be, I will be humbly bold to say it is a heart that has already seen God, a heart that, persisting in these sentiments, will see and enjoy Him for ever.

## JOHN WESLEY.

1703-1791.

## FREE GRACE.\*

How freely does God love the world! While we were yet sinners, "Christ died for the ungodly." While we were "dead in sin," God

\* "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Rom. viii. 32)?

Preached at Bristol, in the year 1740.

"spared not his own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." And how freely with Him does He "give us all things!" Verily, Free Grace is all in all.

The grace or love of God, whence cometh our salvation, is free in all, and free for all.

First, It is free in all to whom it is given. It does not depend on any power or merit in man; no, not in any degree, neither in whole, nor in part. It does not in anywise depend either on

the good works or righteousness of the receiver; not on anything he has done, or anything he is. It does not depend on his endeavours. It does not depend on his good tempers, or good desires, or good purposes and intentions; for all these flow from the free grace of God; they are the streams only, not the fountain. They are the fruits of free grace, and not the root. They are not the cause, but the effects of it. Whatsoever good is in man, or is done by man, God is the author and doer of it. Thus is His grace free in all; that is, no way depending on any power or merit in man, but on God alone, who freely gave us His own Son, and "with Him freely giveth us all things."

But is it free for all, as well as in all? To this some have answered, "No; it is free only for those whom God hath ordained to life; and they are but a little flock. The greater part of mankind God hath ordained to death; and it is not free for them. Them God hateth; and, therefore, before they were born, decreed they should die eternally. And this He absolutely decreed, because so was His good pleasure—because it was His sovereign will. Accordingly, they are born for this,—to be destroyed body and soul in hell. And they grow up under the irrevocable curse of God, without any possibility of redemption; for what grace God gives, He gives only for this, to increase, not prevent, their damnation."

This is that decree of predestination. But methinks I hear one say, "This is not the predestination which I hold: I hold only the election of grace. What I believe is no more than this,—that God, before the foundation of the world, did elect a certain number of men to be justified, sanctified, and glorified. Now, all these will be saved, and none else; for the rest of mankind God leaves to themselves. So they follow the imaginations of their own hearts, which are only evil continually, and, waxing worse and worse, are at length justly punished with everlasting destruction."

Is this all the predestination which you hold? Consider; perhaps this is not all. Do not you believe God ordained them to this very thing? If so, you believe the whole decree; you hold predestination in the full sense which has been above described. But it may be you think you do not. Do not you then believe God hardens the hearts of them that perish? Do not you believe He (literally) hardened Pharaoh's heart; and that for this end He raised him up, or created him? Why, this amounts to just the same thing. If you believe Pharaoh, or any one man upon earth, was created for this end—to be damned—you hold all that has been said of predestination. And there is no need you should add that God seconds His decree, which is supposed unchangeable and irresistible, by hardening the hearts of those vessels of wrath whom that decree had before fitted for destruction.

Well, but it may be you do not believe even this; you do not hold any decree of reprobation; you do not think God decrees any man to be damned, nor hardens, irresistibly fits him, for damnation; you only say, "God eternally decreed that all being dead in sin He would say to some of the dry bones, Live, and to others He would not; that, consequently, these should be made alive, and those abide in death—these should glorify God by their salvation, and those by their destruction."

Is not this what you mean by the election of grace? If it be, I would ask one or two questions: Are any who are not thus elected saved? or were any, from the foundation of the world? Is it possible any man should be saved unless he be thus elected? If you say, "No," you are but where you was; you are not got one hair's breadth further; you still believe that, in consequence of an unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, the greater part of mankind abide in death, without any possibility of redemption; inasmuch as none can save them but God, and He will not save them. You believe He hath absolutely decreed not to save them; and what is this but decreeing to damn them? It is, in effect, neither more nor less; it comes to the same thing; for if you are dead, and altogether unable to make yourself alive, then, if God has absolutely decreed He will make only others alive, and not you, He hath absolutely decreed your everlasting death; you are absolutely consigned to damnation. So then, though you use softer words than some, you mean the self-same thing; and God's decree concerning the election of grace according to your account of it, amounts to neither more nor less than what others call God's decree of reprobation.

Call it, therefore, by whatever name you please, election, preterition, predestination, or reprobation, it comes in the end to the same thing. The sense of all is plainly this,—by virtue of an eternal, unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly damned; it being impossible that any of the former should be damned, or that any of the latter should be saved.

But if this be so, then is all preaching vain. It is needless to them that are elected; for they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be saved. Therefore, the end of preaching—to save souls—is void with regard to them; and it is useless to them that are not elected, for they cannot possibly be saved. They, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be damned. The end of preaching is, therefore, void with regard to them likewise; so that in either case our preaching is vain, as your hearing is also vain.

This, then, is a plain proof that the doctrine of predestination is not a doctrine of God, because it makes void the ordinance of God; and

God is not divided against Himself. A second is that it directly tends to destroy that holiness which is the end of all the ordinances of God. I do not say none who hold it are holy (for God is of tender mercy to those who are unavoidably entangled in errors of any kind); but that the doctrine itself—that every man is either elected or not elected from eternity, and that the one must inevitably be saved, and the other inevitably damned—has a manifest tendency to destroy holiness in general; for it wholly takes away those first motives to follow after it, so frequently proposed in Scripture, the hope of future reward and fear of punishment, the hope of heaven and fear of hell. That these shall go away into everlasting punishment, and those into life eternal, is no motive to him to struggle for life who believes his lot is cast already; it is not reason<sup>ably</sup> for him so to do, if he thinks he is unalterably adjudged either to life or death. You will say, "But he knows not whether it is life or death." What then!—this helps not the matter; for if a sick man knows that he must unavoidably die, or unavoidably recover, though he knows not which, it is unreasonable for him to take any physic at all. He might justly say (and so I have heard some speak, both in bodily sickness and in spiritual), "If I am ordained to life, I shall live; if to death, I shall die; so I need not trouble myself about it." So directly does this doctrine tend to shut the very gate of holiness in general—to hinder unholy men from ever approaching thereto, or striving to enter in thereat.

As directly does this doctrine tend to destroy several particular branches of holiness. Such are meekness and love—love, I mean, of our enemies—of the evil and unthankful. I say not, that none who hold it have meekness and love (for as is the power of God, so is His mercy); but that it naturally tends to inspire or increase a sharpness or eagerness of temper, which is quite contrary to the meekness of Christ; as then specially appears, when they are opposed on this head. And it as naturally inspires contempt or coldness towards those whom we suppose outcasts from God. "O but," you say, "I suppose no particular man a reprobate." You mean you would not if you could help it; but you cannot help sometimes applying your general doctrine to particular persons; the enemy of souls will apply it for you. You know how often he has done so. But you rejected the thought with abhorrence. True; as soon as you could; but how did it sour and sharpen your spirit in the meantime! You well know it was not the spirit of love which you then felt towards that poor sinner, whom you supposed or suspected, whether you would or no, to have been hated of God from eternity.

Thirdly, this doctrine tends to destroy the comfort of religion, the happiness of Christianity

This is evident as to all those who believe themselves to be reprobated, or who only suspect or fear it. All the great and precious promises are lost to them; they afford them no ray of comfort, for they are not the elect of God; therefore they have neither lot nor portion in them. This is an effectual bar to their finding any comfort or happiness, even in that religion whose ways are designed to be "ways of pleasantness, and all her paths peace."

And as to you who believe yourselves the elect of God, what is your happiness! I hope, not a notion, a speculative belief, a bare opinion of any kind, but a feeling possession of God in your heart, wrought in you by the Holy Ghost, or the witness of God's Spirit with your spirit that you are a child of God. This, otherwise termed "the full assurance of faith," is the true ground of a Christian's happiness. And it does indeed imply a full assurance that all your past sins are forgiven, and that you are *now* a child of God. But it does not necessarily imply a full assurance of our future perseverance. I do not say this is never joined to it, but that it is not necessarily implied therein; for many have the one who have not the other.

Now, this witness of the Spirit experience shows to be much obstructed by this doctrine; and not only in those who, believing themselves reprobated, by this belief thrust it far from them, but even in them that have tasted of that good gift, who yet have soon lost it again, and fallen back into doubts, and fears, and darkness—horrible darkness that might be felt. And I appeal to any of you who hold this doctrine, to say, between God and your own hearts, whether you have not often a return of doubts and fears concerning your election or perseverance. If you ask, "Who has not!" I answer, very few of those that hold this doctrine; but many, very many of those that hold it not, in all parts of the earth—many of those who know and feel that they are in Christ to-day, and "take no thought for the morrow;" who "abide in Him" by faith from hour to hour, or, rather, from moment to moment; many of these have enjoyed the uninterrupted witness of His Spirit, the continual light of His countenance, from the moment wherein they first believed, for many months or years, to this day.

That assurance of faith which these enjoy excludes all doubt and fear. It excludes all kinds of doubt and fear concerning their future perseverance; though it is not properly, as was said before, an assurance of what is future, but only of what *now* is. And this needs not for its support a speculative belief, that whoever is once ordained to life must live; for it is wrought, from hour to hour, by the mighty power of God, "by the Holy Ghost which is given unto them." And therefore that doctrine is not of God, because it tends to obstruct, if not destroy, this great work of the Holy Ghost, whence flows

the chief comfort of religion, the happiness of Christianity.

Again, how uncomfortable a thought is this, that thousands and millions of men, without any preceding offence or fault of theirs, were unchangeably doomed to everlasting burnings. How peculiarly uncomfortable must it be to those who have put on Christ, to those who, being filled with bowels of mercy, tenderness, and compassion, could even "wish themselves accursed for their brethren's sake."

Fourthly, this uncomfortable doctrine directly tends to destroy our zeal for good works. And this it does, first, as it naturally tends (according to what was observed before) to destroy our love to the greater part of mankind, namely, the evil and unthankful. For whatever lessens our love, must so far lessen our desire to do them good. This it does, secondly, as it cuts off one of the strongest motives to all acts of bodily mercy, such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and the like—viz., the hope of saving their souls from death. For what avails it to relieve their temporal wants, who are just dropping into eternal fire? "Well, but run and snatch them as brands out of the fire." Nay, this you suppose impossible. They were appointed thereunto, you say, from eternity, before they had done either good or evil. You believe it is the will of God they should die. And "who hath resisted His will?" But you say you do not know whether these are elected or not. What then? If you know they are the one or the other—that they are either elected, or not elected—all your labour is void and vain. In either case, your advice, reproof, or exhortation is as needless and useless as our preaching. It is needless to them that are elected, for they will infallibly be saved without it. It is useless to them that are not elected, for with or without it they will infallibly be damned; therefore you cannot, consistently with your principles, take any pains about their salvation. Consequently, those principles directly tend to destroy your zeal for good works; for all good works; but particularly for the greatest of all, the saving of souls from death.

But, fifthly, this doctrine not only tends to destroy Christian holiness, happiness, and good works, but hath also a direct and manifest tendency to overthrow the whole Christian revelation. The point which the wisest of the modern unbelievers must industriously labour to prove, is, that the Christian revelation is not necessary. They well know, could they once show this, the conclusion would be too plain to be denied, "if it be not necessary, it is not true." Now, this fundamental point you give up. For supposing that eternal, unchangeable decree, one part of mankind must be saved, though the Christian revelation were not as being, and the other part of mankind must be damned, notwithstanding that revelation. And what would an infidel

desire more? You allow him all he asks. In making the Gospel thus unnecessary to all sorts of men; you give up the whole Christian cause. "O tell it not in Gath. Publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice;" lest the sons of unbelief triumph.

And as this doctrine manifestly and directly tends to overthrow the whole Christian revelation, so it does the same thing, by plain consequence, in making that revelation contradict itself. For it is grounded on such an interpretation of some texts (more or fewer it matters not) as flatly contradicts all the other texts, and indeed the whole scope and tenor of Scripture. For instance, the assertors of this doctrine interpret that text of Scripture, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," as implying that God in a literal sense hated Esau, and all the reprobated, from eternity. Now, what can possibly be a more flat contradiction than this, not only to the whole scope and tenor of Scripture, but also to all those particular texts which expressly declare, "God is love!" Again, they infer from that text, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" (Rom. ix. 15), that God is love only to some men, viz., the elect, and that He hath mercy for those only; flatly contrary to which is the whole tenor of Scripture, as is that express declaration in particular. "The Lord is loving unto every man; and His mercy is over all His works" (Psalm cxlv. 9). Again, they infer from that and the like texts, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy," that He showeth mercy only to those to whom He had respect from all eternity. Nay, but who replieth against God now! You now contradict the whole oracles of God, which declare throughout, "God is no respecter of persons" (Acts x. 34); "There is no respect of persons with Him" (Rom. ii. 11). Again, from that text, "The children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her," unto Rebecca, "The elder shall serve the younger;" you infer, that our being predestinated, or elect, no way depends on the foreknowledge of God. Flatly contrary to this are all the Scriptures, and those in particular, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God" (1 Peter i. 2); "Whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate" (Rom. viii. 29).

And "the same Lord over all is rich" in mercy "to all that call upon Him" (Rom. x. 12). But you say, "No, He is such only to those for whom Christ died. And those are not all, but only a few, whom God hath chosen out of the world; for He died not for all, but only for those who were 'chosen in Him before the foundation of the world'" (Eph. i. 4). Flatly contrary to your interpretation of these Scriptures, also, is

the whole tenor of the New Testament; as are in particular those texts: "Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died" (Rom. xiv. 15)—a clear proof that Christ died, not only for those that are saved, but also for them that perish; He is "the Saviour of the world" (John iv. 42); He is "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world" (i. 29); "He is the propitiation, not for our sins only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (1 John ii. 2). "He," the living God, "is the Saviour of all men" (1 Tim. iv. 10); "He gave Himself a ransom for all" (ii. 6); "He tasted death for every man" (Heb. ii. 9).

If you ask, "Why then are not all men saved?" the whole law and the testimony answer, First, Not because of any decree of God; not because it is His pleasure they should die; for, "As I live, saith the Lord God," "I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth" (Ezek. xviii. 3, 32). Whatever be the cause of their perishing, it cannot be His will, if the oracles of God are true; for they declare, "He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9); "He willeth that all men should be saved." And they, secondly, declare what is the cause why all men are not saved, namely, that they will not be saved. So our Lord expressly, "Ye will not come unto me that ye may have life" (John v. 40). "The power of the Lord is present to heal" them, but they will not be healed. "They reject the counsel," the merciful counsel of God, "against themselves," as did their stiff-necked forefathers. And therefore are they without excuse; because God would save them, but they will not be saved. This is the condemnation, "How often would I have gathered you together, and ye would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37).

Thus manifestly does this doctrine tend to overthrow the whole Christian revelation, by making it contradict itself; by giving such an interpretation of some texts, as flatly contradicts all the other texts, and indeed the whole scope and tenor of Scripture—an abundant proof that it is not of God. But neither is this all, for, seventhly, it is a doctrine full of blasphemy, of such blasphemy as I should dread to mention, but that the honour of our gracious God, and the cause of His truth, will not suffer me to be silent. In the cause of God, then, and from a sincere concern for the glory of His great name, I will mention a few of the horrible blasphemies contained in this horrible doctrine. But first, I must warn every one of you that hears, as ye will answer it at the great day, not to charge me (as some have done) with blaspheming, because I mention the blasphemy of others. And the more you are grieved with them that do thus blaspheme, see that ye "confirm your love towards them" the more, and that your heart's desire, and continual prayer to God, be, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

This premised, let it be observed that this doctrine represents our blessed Lord "Jesus Christ the righteous, the only begotten Son of the Father, full of grace and truth," as a hypocrite, a deceiver of the people, a man void of common sincerity. For it cannot be denied that He everywhere speaks as if He were willing that all men should be saved; therefore, to say that He was not willing that all men should be saved, is to represent Him as a mere hypocrite and dissembler. It cannot be denied that the gracious words which come out of His mouth are full of invitations to all sinners: to say, then, that He did not intend to save all sinners is to represent Him as a gross deceiver of the people. You cannot deny that He says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden!" If, then, you say He calls those that cannot come, those whom He can make able to come, but will not, how is it possible to describe greater insincerity? You represent Him as mocking His helpless creatures, by offering what He never intends to give. You describe Him as saying one thing and meaning another; as pretending the love which He had not. Him, in whose mouth was no guile, you make full of deceit, void of common sincerity; then especially, when drawing nigh the city, He wept over it, and said, "O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not!" Now, if you say they would, but He would not, you represent Him (which who could bear!) as weeping crocodile tears over the prey which He had doomed to destruction!

Such blasphemy this, as one would think, might make the ears of a Christian tingle! But there is yet more behind; for just as it honours the Son, so doth this doctrine honour the Father. It destroys all His attributes at once; it overturns both His justice, mercy, and truth. Yes, it represents the most holy God as worse than the devil; as more false, more cruel, and more unjust! More false, because the devil, liar as he is, hath never said he willeth all mankind to be saved; more unjust, because the devil cannot, if he would, be guilty of such injustice as you ascribe to God, when you say that God condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, for continuing in sin, which, for want of that grace He will not give them, they cannot avoid; and more cruel, because that unhappy spirit seeketh rest and findeth none. So that his own restless misery is a kind of temptation to him to tempt others; but God resteth in His high and holy place, so that to suppose Him, out of His mere motion, of His pure will and pleasure, happy as He is, to doom His creatures, whether they will or not, to endless misery, is to impute such cruelty to Him as we cannot impute to the great enemy of God and men. It is to represent the most High

God (he that hath ears to hear, let him hear!) as more cruel, false, and unjust than the devil.

This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the horrible doctrine of predestination. And here I fix my foot. On this I join issue with every assertor of it. You represent God as worse than the devil; more false, more cruel, more unjust. But you say you will prove it by Scripture. Hold! What will you prove by Scripture? that God is worse than the devil? It cannot be. Whatever that Scripture proves, it never proves this; whatever be its true meaning, it cannot mean this. Do you ask what is its true meaning, then? If I say I know not, you have gained nothing; for there are many Scriptures, the true sense whereof neither you nor I shall know till death is swallowed up in victory. But this I know, better it were to say it had no sense at all than it had such a sense as this. It cannot mean, whatever it mean beside, that the God of truth is a liar. Let it mean what it will, it cannot mean that the Judge of all the world is unjust. No Scripture can mean that God is not love, or that His mercy is not over all His works; that is, whatever it prove beside, no Scripture can prove predestination.

This is the blasphemy for which I abhor the doctrine of predestination; a doctrine, upon the supposition of which, if one could possibly suppose it for a moment—call it election, reprobation, or what you please (for all comes to the same thing)—one might say to our adversary the devil, "Thou fool, why dost thou prowl about any longer? Thy lying in wait for souls is as needless and as useless as our preaching. Hearest thou not that God hath taken thy work out of thy hands, and that He doth it more effectually? Thou, with all thy principalities and powers, canst only so assault that we may resist thee; but He can irresistibly destroy both body and soul in hell! Thou canst only entice; but His unchangeable decree, to leave thousands of souls in death, compels them to continue in sin till they drop into everlasting burnings. Thou temptest, He forces us to be damned, for we cannot resist His will. Thou fool! why goest thou about any longer, seeking whom thou mayst devour? Hearest thou not that God is the devouring lion, the destroyer of souls, the murderer of men? Moloch caused only children to pass through the fire, and that fire was soon quenched; or the corruptible body being consumed, its torments were at an end; but God, thou art told, by His eternal decree, fixed before they had done good or evil, causes not only children of a span long, but the parents also, to pass through the fire of hell; that fire which never shall be quenched; and the body which is cast thereinto, being now incorruptible and immortal, will be ever consuming and never consumed; but the smoke of their torment, because it is God's good pleasure, ascendeth up for ever."

Oh, how would the enemy of God and men

rejoice to hear these things were so! How would he cry aloud and spare not. How would he lift up his voice and say, To your tents, O Israel! Flee from the face of this God or ye shall utterly perish. But whither will ye flee? Into heaven? He is there. Down to hell? He is there also. Ye cannot flee from an omnipresent almighty tyrant. And whether ye flee or stay I call heaven, His throne, and earth, His footstool, to witness against you; ye shall perish, shall perish eternally! Sing, O hell, and rejoice ye that are under the earth! for God, even the mighty God, hath spoken and devoted to death thousands of souls, from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof. Here, O death, is thy sting! Here, O grave, is thy victory! Nations yet unborn, or ever they have done good or evil, are doomed never to see the light of life, but thou shalt gnaw upon them for ever and ever. Let all those morning stars sing together, who fell with Lucifer, son of the morning. Let all the sons of hell shout for joy, for the decree is past, and who shall annul it?

Yes, the decree is past; and so it was before the foundation of the world. But what decree? Even this: "I will set before the sons of men life and death, blessing and cursing;" and "the soul that chooseth life shall live, as the soul that chooseth death shall die." This decree, whereby whom God "did foreknow, He did predestinate," was indeed from everlasting; this, whereby all who suffer Christ to make them alive, are "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," now standeth fast, even as the moon, and the faithful witness in heaven; and when heaven and earth shall pass away, yet this shall not pass away, for it is as unchangeable and eternal as the being of God that gave it. This decree yields the strongest encouragement to abound in all good works, and in all holiness, and it is a well-spring of joy, of happiness also, to our great and endless comfort. This is worthy of God. It is every way consistent with the perfection of His nature. It gives us the noblest view, both of His justice, mercy, and truth. To this agrees the whole scope of the Christian revelation, as well as all the parts thereof. To this Moses and all the prophets bear witness, and our blessed Lord and all His apostles. Thus Moses, in the name of his Lord, "I call heaven and earth to record against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live." Thus Ezekiel (to cite one prophet for all), "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear (eternally) the iniquity of the father. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Thus our blessed Lord, "If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." Thus His great apostle, St Paul, "God commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent." All men, everywhere; every person, in every place,

without any exception either of place or person. Thus St James, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him." Thus St Peter, "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." And thus St John, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, and He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world."

Oh, hear ye this, ye that forget God! Ye cannot charge your death upon Him. "Have I

any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God. Repent and turn from your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions whereby you have transgressed; for why will ye die, O house of Israel! For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye." "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel!"

## WILLIAM MURRAY,

LORD MANSFIELD.

1705-1793.

### SPEECH WHEN SURROUNDED BY A MOB IN THE COURT OF THE KING'S BENCH, ON A TRIAL RESPECTING THE OUTLAWRY OF JOHN WILKES.\*

[JOHN WILKES had been prosecuted in 1764 for a libel upon the king and an obscene essay on women. Verdict had been declared against him, and, as he did not appear to receive sentence, he was outlawed. Wilkes returned to England in 1768, applied to the Court of the King's Bench for a reversal of the outlawry, numerous meetings were held in his favour in the metropolis, and on the 8th of June 1768, when the decision was made public, the court was crowded by a highly-excited mob. While Lord Mansfield was engaged in reading his decision, he suddenly stopped, and addressed those present in the speech given below.]

But here let me pause.

It is fit to take some notice of various terrors being out; the numerous crowds which have attended and now attend in and about the hall, out of all reach of hearing what passes in court, and the tumults, which, in other places, have shamefully insulted all order and government. Audacious addresses in print dictate to us, from those they call the *people*, the judgment to be given now, and afterward upon the conviction. Reasons of policy are urged, from danger in the kingdom by commotions and general confusion.

Give me leave to take the opportunity of this great and respectable audience to let the whole world know *all such attempts are vain*. Unless we have been able to find an error which bears

us out to reverse the outlawry, it must be affirmed. The Constitution does not allow reasons of state to influence our judgments; God forbid it should! We must not regard political consequences, how formidable soever they might be. If rebellion was the certain consequence, we are bound to say, *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum* ["Be justice done, though heaven in ruins fall."] The Constitution trusts the king with reasons of state and policy. He may stop prosecutions; he may pardon offences; it is his to judge whether the law or the criminal shall yield. We have no election. None of us encouraged or approved the commission of either of the crimes of which the defendant is convicted. None of us had any hand in his being prosecuted. As to myself, I took no part (in another place) in the addresses for that prosecution. We did not advise or assist the defendant to fly from justice; it was his own act, and he must take the consequences. None of us have been consulted, or had anything to do with the present prosecution. It is not in our power to stop it; it was not in our power to bring it on. We cannot pardon. We are to say what we take the law to be. If we do not speak our real opinions, we prevaricate with God and our own consciences.

I pass over many anonymous letters I have received. Those in print are public, and some of them have been brought judicially before the court. Whoever the writers are, *they take the wrong way!* I will do my duty unawed. What am I to fear? That *mendax infamia* [lying scandal] from the press, which daily coins false facts and false motives? The lies of calumny carry no terror to me. I trust that the temper of my mind, and the colour and conduct of my life, have given me a suit of armour against

\* Delivered June 8, 1768.