

A Collection of Sayings & Excerpts

John Bunyan

"Run, John, run, the law commands, but gives us neither feet nor hands, Far better news the gospel brings: It bids us fly and gives us wings."

Augustine

"Without doubt the world did not come into existence in time, but with time." G. Vos, RD pg 189

"The O.T. is the N.T. concealed. The NT is the OT revealed."

Ralph Erskine

"A rigid master was the law, demanding brick, denying straw. But when with gospel tongue it sings, it bids me fly and gives me wings."

Blaine Pascal

"The last advance of reason is to recognize that it is surpassed by innumerable things; it is feeble if it cannot realize that."

F.J. Sheed (1930), writing around the same time as Berkhof, offers a similarly sobering assessment: "A study of what is happening to theology in its higher reaches would almost certainly take as its starting point with the attribute of simplicity, and show that every current heresy begins by being wrong on that."

Martin Luther

"I have held many things in my hands, and I have lost them all; but whatever I have placed in God's hands, that I still possess." -

John Owen

A gift and procuring cause in him to whom it is given, are inconsistent.

The more I see of the glory of Christ, the more the painted beauties of this world will wither in my eyes, and I will be more and more crucified to this world.

Jonathan Edwards

"How it comes about I know not, but I have remarked it here, that at those times when I have read the scriptures most, I have evermore been mostly lively and in the best frame."

CS Lewis

It would be strange if God were not strange.

Stephen Charnock

And now I cannot think of what I said but have only intimated what I adore.

Swiss theologian, Charles Journet

The aim of the theologian in dealing with mystery is to do away with phrases which diminish the mystery."

G. Vos

If one says that this sentence is meaningless words and distinctions, we grant that in a certain sense but at the same time point out that we are not able to get beyond them. They are beacons that we placed at the edge of the unfathomable depth of mysteries. pg 154 *Reformed Dogmatics*

Man's wicked presumption:

Here is a statement that I heard on the **Ben Shapiro Show** this morning that sums up original sin, man's depravity: his pride, self-reliance, self-righteousness, addictedness to his own will, practical atheism, and an Arminian/Pelagian bent: **"Man was born on third base, and he thinks he hit a triple."** This is so true! Now you can get a clearer sense of our miserable, self-deceived condition as we are born into the world.

Jesus in Matt 6:23 **But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!**

Toplady - Quotes from Augustus Toplady, 1740-1778

Augustus Montague Toplady was an Anglican cleric and hymn writer. He was a major Calvinist opponent of John Wesley. He is best remembered as the author of the hymn "Rock of Ages".

"When Christ entered into Jerusalem the people spread garments in the way. When He enters into our hearts, we pull off our own righteousness, and not only lay it under Christ's feet but even trample upon it ourselves."

"A man's free will cannot cure him even of the toothache, or a sore finger; and yet he madly thinks it is in its power to cure his soul"

"The greatest judgment which God himself can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free will."

My comment: Hence the first commandment *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.* [note the word *mind*; you can't do this if you don't know Him; to the extent that you do know Him is the extent that you honor this commandment and no more.

Do you wonder why we don't get excited or moved in a due manner toward our primary business on this earth? It's due to the hardness and deadness of our hearts. It is due to a lack of knowledge of God; that's it; a main part of it anyway. G Clark

John Owen - God's Love from himself - immutable, infinite

In God, there is no arousal of love because his love is **infinitely** and **immutably** fixed upon his own infinite and immutable goodness and the creature's **unmerited participation** in it. And, therefore, it is especially this fixed position that we call love. It is a fixed disposition of the will that takes delight and rest in union with the beloved.

Placing the emphasis upon the fixed disposition of love in no way implies that God is unable to act or relate. It is from this fixed position, not the arousal *per se*, that love gives rise to all sorts of actions aimed at union with the beloved. With respect to God's works *ad extra*, his love is the infinite, dynamic, fixed fountain of all of his works of creation, providence, and redemption (cf. Jn3:16), God's love remains the *fixed* fountain of all motion (i.e., the external operations of God). *Confessing the Impassible God* pg 331 [See all comments on God's love for himself below](#)

John Owen on Gen. 3:15

The covenant is made with Adam, and he is acquainted with it, Gen. 3:15, -- renewed with Noah, and not hidden from him, -- again established with Abraham, accompanied with a full and rich declaration of the chief promises of it, Gen. xii.; which is most certain not to be effected towards all, as afterwards will appear. Yea, that first distinction, between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent is enough to overthrow the pretended universality of the covenant of grace; for who dares affirm that God entered into a covenant of grace with the seed of the serpent?

John Owen, *Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, Book 3 Ch1 p126

John Owen **overcomes objections** to **original sin** and God's judgment for it on all humanity:

If Arminians (and Pelagians) believe that people are born innocent of Adam's transgression, that God did not impute Adam's sin to his posterity making them sinners, inherently bad, then why did God cast out Adam's most innocent posterity from paradise?? Owen's reasoning is excellent. [\[I can't remember where I got this quote by Owen; it could have been a paraphrase of the one below from his work, A Display of Arminianism, Ch. 7, – excellent reasoning.\]](#)

"I see no reason, then, why Corvinus should affirm, as he doth,¹² "That it is absurd, that by one man's disobedience many should be made actually disobedient," unless he did it purposely to contradict St Paul, teaching us that "by one man's disobedience many were made sinners," Romans 5:19. *Paulus ait, Corvinus negat; eligite cui credatis*; — Choose whom you will believe, St Paul or the Arminians. The sum of their endeavor in this particular is, to clear the nature of man from being any way guilty of Adam's actual sin, as being then in him a member and part of that body whereof he was the head, or from being obnoxious unto an imputation of it by reason of that covenant which God made with us all in him. So that, denying, as you saw before, all inherent corruption and pravity of nature, and now all participation, by any means, of Adam's transgression, methinks they cast a great aspersion on Almighty God, however he dealt with Adam for his own particular, yet for casting us, his most innocent posterity, out of paradise. It seems a hard case, that having no obliquity or sin in our nature to deserve it, nor no interest in his disobedience whose obedience had been the means of conveying so much happiness unto us, we should yet be involved in so great a punishment as we are; for that we are not

now by birth under a great curse and punishment, they shall never be able to persuade any poor soul who ever heard of paradise, or the garden where God first placed Adam." A Display of Arminianism Chp 7

John Owen *The Gospel Is Not a Fruitless Tender*

The first thing mentioned is the "mind." The Hebrew word, [], the apostle renders by διανοια, "the inward part." The mind is the most secret, inward part or power of the soul. And the prophet expresseth it by the "inward part," because it is the only safe and useful repository of the laws of God. When they are there laid up, we shall not lose them; neither men nor devils can take them from us. And he also declares wherein the excellency of covenant obedience doth consist. It is not in the conformity of our outward actions unto the law, although that be required therein also; but it principally lieth in the inward parts, where God searcheth for and regardeth truth in sincerity, Psalm 51:6. Wherefore διανοια is the "mind and understanding," whose natural depravation is the spring and principle of all disobedience; the cure whereof is here promised in the first place. In the outward administration of the means of grace, the affections, or, if I may so speak, the more outward part of the soul, are usually first affected and wrought upon: but the first real effect of the internal promised grace of the covenant is on the mind, the most spiritual and inward part of the soul. This in the New Testament is expressed by the renovation of the mind, Romans 12:2, Ephesians 4:23; and the opening of the eyes of our understandings, Ephesians 1:17, 18; God shining into our hearts, to give us the knowledge of his glory in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Corinthians 4:6. Hereby the enmity against God, the vanity, darkness, and alienation from the life of God, which the mind naturally is possessed and filled withal, are taken away and removed, —of the nature of which work I have treated at large elsewhere; —for the law of God in the mind, is the saving knowledge of the mind and will of God, whereof the law is the revelation, communicated unto it and implanted in it.

2. The way whereby God in the covenant of grace thus works on the mind is expressed by διδονς: so the apostle tenders XXX [XXX is the Septuagint translation - my insert], "I will give." Διδονς, "giving," may by an enallage be put for δωσω, "I will give." So is it expressed in the next clause, επιγραφω, in the future tense, "I will write." The word in the prophet is, "I will give;" we render it, "I will put." But there are two things intimated in the word: (1.) The freedom of the grace promised; it is a mere grant, gift, or donation of grace. (2.) The efficacy of it. That which is given of God unto any is received by them, otherwise it is no gift. And this latter is well expressed by the word used by us, "I will put;" which expresseth an actual communication, and not a fruitless tender. This the apostle renders emphatically, διδονς; that is, εμυ 'This is that which I do, am doing in this covenant; namely, freely giving that grace whereby my laws shall be implanted on the minds of men.' - John Owen, pg 148 Vol 22 Heb. 8:10-12

Concurrence by John Owen

Fourthly, The certainty of divers promises and threatenings of Almighty God depends upon his powerful determining and turning the wills and hearts of men which way he pleaseth; thus, to them that fear him he promises that they shall find favor in the sight of men, [Prov. iii. 4](#). Now, if, notwithstanding all God's powerful operation in their hearts, it remaineth absolutely in the hands of men whether they will favor them that fear him or no, it is wholly in their power whether God shall be true in his promises or no. Surely when Jacob wrestled with God on the strength of such promise, [Gen. xxxii. 12](#), he little thought of any question whether it were in the power of God to perform it. Yea, and the event showed that there ought to be no such question, [chap. xxxiii.](#); for the Lord turned the heart

of his brother Esau, as he does of others when he makes them pity his servants when at any time they have carried them away captives, [Ps. cvi. 46](#). See, also, the same powerful operation required to the execution of his judgments, [Job xii. 17, xx. 21](#), etc. **In brief, there is no prophecy nor prediction in the whole Scripture, no promise to the church or faithful, to whose accomplishment the free actions and concurrence of men are required, but evidently declares that God disposes of the hearts of men, rules their wills, inclines their affections, and determines them freely to choose and do what he in his good pleasure hath decreed shall be performed; —** such as were the prophecies of deliverance from the Babylonish captivity by Cyrus, [Isa. xlv.](#); of the conversion of the Gentiles; of the stability of the church, [Matt. xvi.](#); of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, [chap. xxiv.](#); with innumerable others. I will add only some few reasons for the close of this long discourse.

This opinion, that God has nothing but a **general influence into the actions of men**, not effectually moving their wills to this or that in particular, —

First, Grants a goodness of *entity*, or being, unto divers things, whereof God is not the author, as those special actions which men perform without his special concurrence; which is blasphemous. The apostle affirms that “of him are all things.” **Secondly**, It denies God to be the author of all moral goodness, for an action is good inasmuch as it is such an action in particular; [79](#) which that any is so, according to this opinion, is to be attributed merely to the will of man. The general influence of God moves him no more to prayer than to evil communications tending to the corruption of good manners. **Thirdly**, It makes all the decrees of God, whose execution dependeth on human actions, to be altogether uncertain, and his foreknowledge of such things to be fallible and easily to be deceived;

Edwards on the same subject: God a Promiser vs. a Predictor

§ 52. If it be as the Arminians suppose, **that all men’s virtue is of the determination of their own free will, independent on any prior determining, deciding, and disposing of the event**; that it is no part of the ordering of God, whether there be many virtuous or few in the world, whether there shall be much virtue or little, or where it shall be, in what nation, country, or when, or in what generation or age; or whether there shall be any at all: then none of these things belong to **God’s disposal**, and therefore, surely it does not belong to him to **promise** them. For it does not belong to him to promise in an affair, concerning which he has not the disposal.

And how can God promise, as he oftentimes does in his word, glorious times, when righteousness shall generally prevail, and his will shall generally be done; and yet that it is not an effect which belongs to him to determine; it is not left to his determination, but to the sovereign, arbitrary determination of others, independently on any determination of him; and therefore surely they ought to be the promisers? For him to promise, who has it not in his hand to dispose and determine, is a great absurdity; and yet God oftentimes in promising, speaks of himself as the sovereign disposer of the matter, using such expressions as abundantly imply it. (see this excerpt more fully below)

Edwards - God the disposing author of virtue, etc.

§ 53. If God is not the disposing author of virtue, then he is not the giver of it. The very notion of a giver implies a disposing cause of the possession of the benefit. 1 John iv. 4. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, (i. e. have overcome your spiritual enemies,) because

greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world;" that is, plainly, he is stronger, and his strength overcomes. But how can this be a reason, **if God does not put forth an overcoming, effectual strength in the case, but leaves it to free will to get the victory, to determine the point in the conflict?**

John Owen on **common grace, saving grace** and the **Sinners Prayer**

2. "This objection supposeth that a man is bound to know and be persuaded (that is, to believe) that Jesus Christ died by the appointment of God for him in particular, before he believe in Jesus Christ. Nay, this they [Arminians] make the bottom of their argument, that men, according to our persuasion [doctrine of election - my insert], may scruple whether they ought to believe or no, because they are not assured before that Christ died for them in particular, by the designation and appointment of God. Now, if this be not to involve themselves in a plain contradiction, I know not what is; for what, I pray, is it, according to Scripture, for a man to be assured that Christ died for him in particular? Is it not the very highest improvement of faith? doth it not include a sense of the spiritual love of God shed abroad in our hearts? Is it not the top of the apostle's consolation, [Rom. viii. 34](#), and the bottom of all his joyful assurance, [Gal. ii. 20](#)? **So that they evidently require that a man must believe before he do believe, — that he cannot believe, and shall exceedingly fear whether he ought to do so or no, unless he believe before he believe!** Methinks such removing of scruples were the ready way to entangle doubting consciences in farther inextricable perplexities." - John Owen, Death of Death in the Death of Christ

Owen continues to explain the absurdity of this type of prayer:

"Do not they openly make God to say, "Such is this my love, my universal grace, that by it I will freely love them, I dare joyfully embrace them, in all things but only that which will do them good?" Would not they affirm him to be a grossly counterfeiting hypocrite that should go to a poor blind man, and tell him, "**Alas, poor man, I pity thy case, I see thy want, I love thee exceedingly; open thine eyes, and I will give thee a hundred pounds?**" And dare they assign such a deportment to the most holy God of truth? Is their universal grace anything but a mock? Did that ever do good to any, as to salvation, which is common to all? Are they not the two properties of the grace of God in the Scripture, that it is discriminating and effectual? And is not their grace anything else but these? Let it be granted that all is true which they say concerning the extent of grace; is it such grace as that ever any soul was saved by? Why, I pray, then, are not all? "Why," they will say, "because they do not believe." **So, then, the bestowing of faith is no part of this free grace. See your second aim, even to exalt yourselves and your free-will into the room of grace; or, at least, leaving it room to come in, to have the best share in the work of salvation,—namely, believing itself, that makes all the rest profitable.** See, now, what your universality of free grace leads and tends to. Are not the very terms opposite to one another? In a word, to bring in reprobates to be objects of free grace, you deny the free grace of God to the elect; and to make it universal, you deny it to be effectual. That all may have a share of it, they deny any to be saved by it; for saving grace must be restrained." "...Are not the two great aims of their free grace to mock God and exalt themselves?"

Doctrine of God

excerpts from Edwards and Bavinck

Edwards on God's Promises vs. a Predictor

§ 52. If it be as the Arminians suppose, **that all men's virtue is of the determination of their own free will, independent on any prior determining, deciding, and disposing of the event**; that it is no part of the ordering of God, whether there be many virtuous or few in the world, whether there shall be much virtue or little, or where it shall be, in what nation, country, or when, or in what generation or age; or whether there shall be any at all: then none of these things belong to **God's disposal**, and therefore, surely it does not belong to him to **promise** them. For it does not belong to him to promise in an affair, concerning which he has not the disposal.

And how can God promise, as he oftentimes does in his word, glorious times, when righteousness shall generally prevail, and his will shall generally be done; and yet that it is not an effect which belongs to him to determine; it is not left to his determination, but to the sovereign, arbitrary determination of others, independently on any determination of him; and therefore surely they ought to be the promisers? **For him to promise, who has it not in his hand to dispose and determine, is a great absurdity**; and yet God oftentimes in promising, speaks of himself as the sovereign disposer of the matter, using such expressions as abundantly imply it. [Isa. Lx. 22.](#) "I the Lord do hasten it in its time." [Also Isa 46:11-9 above.] **Surely this is the language of promiser, and not merely a predictor.** God promises Abraham, that "all the families of the earth shall be blessed in him." God swears [Rom. Xiv. 11.](#) "every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess." And it is said to be given to Christ, that every nation, &c. should serve and obey him, [Dan. Vii.](#) After what manner they shall serve and obey him, is abundantly declared in other prophecies, as in [Isa. Xi.](#) And innumerable others. These are spoken of in the next chapter, as excellent things that God does.

Edwards: "God's purpose for my life was that I have a passion for God's glory and that I have a passion for my joy in that glory, and that these two are one passion."

Edwards - God the disposing author of virtue, etc.

§ 53. If God is not the disposing author of virtue, then he is not the giver of it. The very notion of a giver implies a disposing cause of the possession of the benefit. 1 John iv. 4. "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them, (i. e. have overcome your spiritual enemies,) because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world;" that is, plainly, he is stronger, and his strength overcomes. But how can this be a reason, **if God does not put forth an overcoming, effectual strength in the case, but leaves it to free will to get the victory, to determine the point in the conflict?**

Edwards on God's Nature

As to the *first* of these, I think the following things appear to be the dictates of reason:

1. That no notion of God's last end in the creation of the world, is agreeable to reason, which would truly imply any **indigence, insufficiency, and mutability in God**; or any dependence of the Creator on the creature, for any part of his perfection or happiness. Because it is evident, by both Scripture and reason, **that God is infinitely, eternally, unchangeably, and independently glorious and happy: that he cannot be profited by, or receive anything from, the creature; or be the subject of any sufferings, or**

diminution of his glory and felicity, from any other being. The notion of God creating the world, in order to receive any thing properly from the creature, is not only contrary to the nature of God, but inconsistent with the notion of creation; which implies a being receiving its existence, and all that belongs to it, out of nothing. **And this implies the most perfect, absolute, and universal derivation and dependence.** Now, if the creature receives its ALL from God, entirely and perfectly, how is it possible that *it* should have anything to add to God, to make him in any respect more than he was before, and so the Creator become dependent on the creature?¹

Concurrence/Compatibilism - Jonathan Edwards

§ 64. In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, *viz.* our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active.

In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text, “God worketh in you both to will and to do.”

God’s infinite love for himself and the communication thereof... Jonathan Edwards (See Bavinck, Vos & Van Til that follow after Edwards’ comments)

And with respect to the second and third particulars, the matter is no less plain. For he that loves any being, and has a disposition highly to prize and greatly to delight in his virtues and perfections, **must from the same disposition be well pleased to have his excellencies known, acknowledged, esteemed, and prized by others.** He that loves anything, **naturally loves the approbation of that thing, and is opposite to the disapprobation of it.** Thus it is when one loves the virtues of a friend. And thus it will necessarily be, **if a being loves himself and highly prizes his own excellencies; and thus it is fit it should be, if it be fit he should thus love himself, and prize his own valuable qualities; that is, it is fit that he should take delight in his own excellencies being seen, acknowledged, esteemed, and delighted in.** **This is implied in a love to himself and his own perfections; and in making this his end, he makes himself his end.**

And with respect to the fourth and last particular, *viz.* **God’s being disposed to an abundant communication, and glorious emanation, of that infinite fulness of good** which he possesses, as of his own **knowledge**, **excellency** and **happiness**, [**His glory**] in the manner he does; if we thoroughly consider the matter, it will appear, that herein also God makes himself his end, in such a sense, as plainly to manifest and testify a supreme and ultimate regard to himself.

One part of that **divine fulness** which is **communicated**, is the **divine knowledge**. That **communicated knowledge**, which must be supposed to pertain to God’s last end in creating the world, **is the creature’s knowledge of him.** For this is the end of knowledge; and even the **faculty of understanding**

would be vain without it. And this knowledge is most properly a communication of God's infinite knowledge, which primarily consists in the knowledge of himself. God, in making this his end, makes himself his end. This knowledge in the creature, is but a conformity to God. It is the **image of God's own knowledge of himself.** It is a participation of the same; though infinitely less in degree: as particular beams of the sun communicated are the light and glory of the sun itself, in part.

Besides, God's glory is the object of this knowledge, or the thing known; so that God is glorified in it, as hereby his excellency is seen. [Hence, lest one is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God, see his glory.] As therefore God values himself, as he delights in his own knowledge, he must delight in everything of that nature: as he delights in his own light, he must delight in every beam of that light; and as he highly values his own excellency, he must be well pleased in having it manifested, and so glorified.

Another emanation of divine fulness, is the communication of virtue and holiness to the creature: this is a communication of God's holiness; so that hereby the creature partakes of God's own moral excellency [that which he lost at the fall]; which is properly the beauty of the divine nature. And as God delights in his own beauty, he must necessarily delight in the creature's holiness; which is a conformity to and participation of it, as truly as a brightness of a jewel, held in the sun's beams, is a participation or derivation of the sun's brightness, though immensely less in degree. And then it must be considered wherein this holiness in the creature consists, namely, in love, which is the comprehension of all true virtue; and primarily in love to God, which is exercised in a high esteem of God, admiration of his perfections, complacency in them, and praise of them. All which things are nothing else but the heart exalting, magnifying, or glorifying God; which, as I showed before, God necessarily approves of, and is pleased with, as he loves himself, and values the glory of his own nature.

Another part of God's fulness which he communicates, is his happiness. This happiness consists in enjoying and rejoicing in himself; and so does also the creature's happiness. It is a participation of what is in God; and God and his glory are the objective ground of it. The happiness of the creature consists in rejoicing in God; by which also God is magnified and exalted. Joy, or the exulting of the heart in God's glory, is one thing that belongs to praise. So that God is all in all, with respect to each part of that communication of the divine fulness which is made to the creature. What is communicated is divine, or something of God; and each communication is of that nature, that the creature to whom it is made, is thereby conformed to God, and united to him: and that in proportion as the communication is greater or less. And the communication itself is no other, in the very nature of it, than that wherein the very honour, exaltation, and praise of God consists.

Edwards continues – love for God...holiness – God's love for himself

Here are two things that ought particularly to be adverted to. (1.) That in God, the love of himself and the love of the public are not to be distinguished, as in man: because God's being, as it were, comprehends all. His **existence,** being infinite, must be equivalent to universal existence. And for the same reason that public affection in the creature is fit and beautiful,

God's regard to himself must be so likewise.—(2.) In God, the love of what is fit and decent, cannot be a distinct thing from the love of himself; because the **love of God is that wherein all holiness primarily and chiefly consists**, and God's own holiness must primarily consist in the love of himself. **And if God's holiness consists in love to himself**, then it will imply an approbation of the esteem and love of him in others. **For a being that loves himself, necessarily loves love to himself. If holiness in God consist chiefly in love to himself, holiness in the creature must chiefly consist in love to him. And if God loves holiness in himself, he must love it in the creature.**

Virtue, by such of the late philosophers as seem to be in chief repute, is placed in public affection, or general benevolence. And if the essence of virtue lies primarily in this, then the love of virtue itself is virtuous no otherwise, than as it is implied in, or arises from, this public affection, or extensive benevolence of mind. Because if a man truly loves the public, he necessarily loves love to the public.

Now therefore, for the same reason, if universal benevolence in the highest sense, be the same thing with benevolence to the Divine Being, who is in effect universal Being, it will follow, that love to virtue itself is no otherwise virtuous, than as it is implied in, or **arises from, love to the Divine Being**. **Consequently, God's own love to virtue is implied in love to himself: and is virtuous no otherwise than as it arises from love to himself**. So that God's virtuous disposition, **appearing in love to holiness in the creature**, is to be **resolved into the same thing with love to himself**. **And consequently, whereinsoever he makes virtue his end, he makes himself his end.** In fine, God being as it were an all-comprehending Being, all his moral perfections—his holiness, justice, grace, and benevolence—are some way or other to be resolved into a supreme and infinite regard to himself; and if so, it will be easy to suppose that it becomes him to make himself his supreme and last end in his works.

God's Love for Himself - Cornelius Van Til - God's Attitude

Once more: Not only do all facts reveal God but they, in revealing Him, manifest His attitude toward men. **God is love. He loves Himself above all else**. He loved Himself from all eternity when He had as yet made no creatures to love. **But when He made creatures, He made them lovable like Himself**. **He loved them because in loving them, He loved Himself above all else**. He made man perfect. And loving mankind, He offered them eternal life. It was seriously meant. It was no farce. All men disobeyed God. All came under His wrath and curse. God continued to love Himself; He therefore had to punish every insult to His holiness.

God's Love from himself - John Owen - God's love, immutable, infinite

In God, there is no arousal of love because his love is **infinitely** and **immutably** fixed upon his own infinite and immutable goodness and the creature's **unmerited participation** in it. And, therefore, it is especially this fixed position that we call love. It is a fixed disposition of the will that takes delight and rest in union with the beloved.

Placing the emphasis upon the fixed disposition of love in no way implies that God is unable to act or relate. It is from this fixed position, not the arousal *per se*, that love gives rise to all sorts

of actions aimed at union with the beloved. With respect to God's works *ad extra*, his love is the infinite, dynamic, fixed fountain of all of his works of creation, providence, and redemption (cf. Jn3:16), God's love remains the *fixed* fountain of all motion (i.e., the external operations of God). *Confessing the Impassible God* pg 331

God's Love for Himself - Bavinck states: (doctrine of God)

He receives nothing, but only gives. All things need him; he needs nothing or nobody. He always aims at himself because he cannot rest in anything other than himself. Inasmuch as he himself is the absolutely good and perfect one, he may not love anything else except with a view to himself. He may not and cannot be content with less than absolute perfection.

When he loves others, he loves himself in them: his own virtues, works, and gifts. For the same reason he is also blessed in himself as the sum of all goodness, of all perfection. Hermon Bavinck, Vol. 2 p 211

God's love for himself Vos

13. *What then is contained in this holiness of God?*

- a) That God loves Himself as the highest moral good.
- b) That God as such turns away from all evil. In fact, in God, too, holiness is therefore a being separated—a being separated from the world, but not the world in the abstract. It is a separation from the unclean, sinful world. And thereby it must be kept in view that this separation derives from a positive principle, **since God seeks and loves Himself as the highest good.**

87. *How then can we describe the holiness of God?*

As that attribute of God by which He seeks and loves Himself as the highest good and demands as reasonable goodness from the creature to be consecrated to Him.

Grace for grace & grace and truth John 1:16-17 Edwards, Owen, Shepard:

here are some excerpts from Edwards, Owen, and Shepard on these subjects- the meaning of *Grace for Grace* in John 1:16 and *grace and truth* in John 1:17

Being Conformed to His Image of God (Edwards)

[50] [Eph. iv. 13.](#) "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the **knowledge of God**, to the measure of the stature of the fullness **of Christ**;" that is, till we all come to agree in the same faith, which is **fully conformed to Christ**, and therein are come to his rule and measure in faith, and perhaps in other graces, the body of Christ becomes complete, **being completely conformed to Christ**. The church is the completeness of Christ, **the fullness of him that filleth all in all**. But this body is not complete, and perfect, till it is perfectly **conformed to his in faith, and to his image in other graces.**

Christ and his church, as here, so elsewhere, being as body and soul, are called one man, it is as if he had said, till Christ's body is complete in stature. The church, the body of Christ, is called a man. [Eph. li. 15.](#) **Pg 807 vol. 2 Jonathan Edwards**

here is the key paragraph:

In the truly holy affections of the saints is found that proportion, which is the natural consequence of the universality of their sanctification. **They have the whole image of Christ upon them:** they have put off the old man, and have put on the new man entire in all its parts and members. It hath pleased the Father that in Christ all fullness should dwell: there is in him every grace; he is full of grace and truth: and they that are Christ's, do, "of his fullness receive grace for grace" ([John 1:14, 16](#)); i.e., there is every grace in them which is in Christ; grace for grace; that is, grace answerable to grace: there is no grace in Christ, but there is its image in believers to answer it: the image is a true image; and there is something of the **same beautiful proportion in the image, which is in the original;** there is feature for feature, and member for member. There is symmetry and beauty in God's workmanship. The natural body, which God hath made, consists of many members; and all are in a beautiful proportion: so it is in the new man, consisting of various graces and affections. The body of one that was born a perfect child, may fail of exact proportion through distemper, and the weakness and wounds of some of its members; yet the disproportion is in no measure like that of those that are born monsters. **Jonathan Edwards** - On Religious Affections

Grace for Grace - Owen

John Owen states: 2. **In the plentiful communication of grace unto the community of the church; for now it is that we receive "grace for grace," or a plentiful effusion of it, by Jesus Christ.** There was grace given in an eminent manner unto many holy persons under the old testament, and all true believers had true, real, saving grace communicated unto them; but the measures of grace in the true church under the new testament do exceed those of the community of the church under the old.

For the sprinkler itself, composed of scarlet wool and hyssop, I doubt not but that **the human nature of Christ,** whereby and through which all grace is communicated unto us, ("for of his fullness we receive, and grace for grace,") was signified by it;

This is good too - Owen:

1. In general, Colossians 1:19, "It pleased the Father that in him should all **fullness** dwell." There is a fourfold fullness in Christ: — (1.) Of the Deity in his divine nature, Romans 9:5. (2.) Of union in his person, Colossians 2:9. (3.) Of grace in his human nature, John 1:14, 3:34; Luke 2:52, 4:1. (4.) **An authoritative fullness, to communicate of it unto others.** That is the fullness here intended; for it is in him as the head of the church, verse 18, so as that from him, or that fullness which it pleased the Father to entrust him withal, believers might receive "grace for grace," John 1:16, 17.

Thus he testifies that "all things are delivered to him of his Father," Matthew 11:27, — put into his power and possession. And they are the **things** he there intends, on the account whereof he invites sinners weary and laden to come unto him, verse 28, namely, **all mercy and grace**; which are the things that burdened sinners need and look after. The same is testified John 3:35, 36; and fully chapter 16:15, "All **things** that the Father hath are mine;" chapter 17:10. **All the grace and mercy that are in the heart of God as Father to bestow upon his children, they are all given into the hand of Christ, and are his, or part of his inheritance.**

Grace for Grace

Thomas Shepard (quoted by Edwards a lot) speaks on this:

Reason 3. Because those graces or qualifications, together with the operations of them which are in the faithful, are the same with Christ's, the same in kind and nature, John i. 16. "**From his fulness we have received grace for grace.**" hence we are said to "bear his image", and because it is but little at first, hence "from glory to glory," 2 Cor. iii. 18. Now the Lord Jesus had not only the Spirit which he had without measure, but also he had many divine qualities, habits, or graces, which it is blasphemy to think that they were hypocritical or common, which the faithful receive **from his fulness** [i.e. grace answerable to the grace that is in Christ, from his fullness - my insert], and wherein they are made in their measure like unto him.

Grace and Truth...Edwards

This next one in a discussion of the communication of God's glory, **Edwards explains John 1:14** *For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* This is really good: my comments in [blue] emphasis in red.

Very good here:

And therefore, the **external glory** of God consists in the **communication of these**. The communication of his **knowledge** is chiefly in giving the **knowledge of himself**: for this is the knowledge in which the fullness of God's understanding chiefly consists. And thus we see how the manifestation of God's glory to **created understandings**, and their seeing and knowing it, is not distinct from an emanation or communication of **God's fullness**, but clearly implied in it. Again, the communication of God's virtue or holiness, is principally in communicating the love of himself. And thus we see how, **not only the creature's seeing and knowing God's excellence, but also supremely esteeming and loving him, belongs to the communication of God's fullness.** [This is KEY! Saving faith consists not only in an ascent to the truth, the mind being enlightened, but also the heart being moved as seeing Christ as his chief good; that this gospel is good! And so the will is properly moved to this end, a genuine esteem, value for and love of Christ. This answers to Edwards' statement that holiness or a love for God is communicated to the will thus changing the will so that it will trust and rest in

Christ, esteeming him, praising him, etc., seeing Him as his ultimate good. This the Pharisees did not have, so Jesus tells them that they have not the love of God in them and they will not come to Him to have life, that is, they will not believe because not only are they blinded, but also they do not see him as their chief good; people may know a lot about the gospel, scripture, and so on, but do not see Christ as their chief good. People always choose that which appears good to them (hence the will is involved to which the communication of God's glory, his holiness, is made); this is what distinguishes a saving faith from a temporary faith that does not save. See Heb. 6] And the communication of God's joy and happiness, consists chiefly in communicating to the creature that happiness and joy which consists in rejoicing in God, and in his glorious excellency; **for in such joy God's own happiness does principally consist.** And in these things, knowing God's excellency, loving God for it, and rejoicing in it, and in the exercise and expression of these, consists God's honour and praise; **so that these are clearly implied in that glory of God, which consists in the emanation of his internal glory.**

Good here:

And though all these things, which seem to be so various, are signified by that glory, which the Scripture speaks of as the ultimate end of all God's works; yet it is manifest there is no greater, and no other variety in it, than in the internal and essential glory of God itself. **God's internal glory is partly in his understanding, and partly in his will. And this internal glory, as seated in the will of God, implies both his holiness and his happiness:** both are evidently God's glory, according to the use of the phrase. So that as God's external glory is only the emanation of his internal, this variety necessarily follows. And again, it hence appears that there is no other variety or distinction, but what necessarily arises from the **distinct faculties of the creature, to which the communication is made,** as created in the image of God, even as having these two faculties of **understanding** and **will.** **God communicates himself to the understanding of the creature, in giving him the knowledge of his glory; and to the will of the creature, in giving him holiness, consisting primarily in the love of God: and in giving the creature happiness, chiefly consisting in joy in God.** These are the sum of that emanation of divine fullness called in Scripture, the glory of God. The first part of this glory is called truth, the latter, grace, John i. 14. "We beheld his glory, the glory of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Conforming the Soul - Flavel

"Truth is the sanctifying instrument, John 17:17, **the mould into which our souls are cast,** Rom. 6:17, **according therefore to the stamps and impressions it makes upon our understandings;** and the order in which truths lie there, will be the depth and lastingness of their impressions and influences upon the heart; **as the more weight is laid upon the seal, the more fair and lasting impression is made upon the wax.** He that sees the grounds and reasons of his peace and comfort most clearly, is like to maintain it the more constantly." Flavel vol. 1, p. 23 pdf file

The wax is likened to soft wax that is able to receive the impression of the seal (the word). In Ezek. 36:24-27, God removes the *stony heart*, that is hard (unbelieving, e.g., a hard heart or a heart that has been hardened like Pharaoh's heart was). It is God's Spirit that removes the hard,

stony heart and gives you a soft heart of flesh, hence the soft wax upon which the seal is now able to make its impression. Fascinating!

The truth is the truth of the knowledge of God – all that pertains to him - the wisdom of the way of salvation, regeneration, sanctification, his glory; and what is that but God's nature – his moral excellencies or perfections, all seen in his works, etc. All this, upon constant contemplation, transforms your soul, your heart, your mind, into the very image of those things (2Cor. 3:18) so that the tree now being good (or better, more conformed to his image), produces good fruit...out of the heart proceed the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23)...this is really good stuff. The heart (or mind) is the most secret recess of the soul where the knowledge of God is stored. This is what is changed over time as you study/contemplate, ruminate on what you've read. [the soul, the mind, the heart are often used interchangeably]

Concurrence & Free Will –

James Dolezal, G. Vos & John Norton, (compatibilism)

God changing the will...

4. Determined free will

All moral evil is located in an act of the will, either in its failure to seek the good it ought, or to seek real goods in a disordered way. This disordered way of seeking goods is evil either because it treats non-ultimate goods as though they were ultimate, resulting in idolatry, or because it seeks the good selfishly and at the expense of other goods to which it is obligated. What ordinarily renders such choices morally culpable is that the act of will is the best natural explanation for the action performed. If we can establish some other naturally necessary cause or contingent circumstance that better accounts for the action, the will is usually exempted from moral blame in the instance since it was not sufficiently free in its operation.

This is where the objection to universal divine providence usually crops up. If God is the one who immutably decrees the end from the beginning, accomplishing all his good pleasure and working all things after the counsel of his will, it would seem that one of two things results. Either rational creatures are not sufficiently free so as to establish their moral culpability, or God is somehow complicit in the evil of fallen angels and humans.

It is a common objection from those of Pelagian and semi-Pelagian conviction that God's universal causal primacy, as has been maintained in the Augustinian tradition, necessarily obliterates the reality of free will and with it all moral culpability. The traditional Augustinian response to this charge is that, far from destroying free will, it is God's primary agency that causes free will to be and move freely. There is no such thing as absolutely independent creaturely agency or operation, any more than there is such a thing as absolutely independent creaturely existence (which in any case is necessary for a creature's operation to commence or continue). And God's moving of the creature's will can no more be a coercive act against its volition than God's making the creature to be is a coercive

act against its being. [excellent reasoning!] There just would be no volitional movement in the creature without God concurrently and primarily acting to make it so – no moved mover without an absolute unmoved mover. This is essential to maintaining the order between God as first cause and all second causes. **John Norton** makes this point clearly, arguing that God's determination of the creature's will offers no violence to it:

Either the will is determined by God in its operation, or else it would follow, either that there were not an essential subordination of the second cause unto the first, that is, of man to God, which were repugnant to the nature of the second cause (it being imperfect and dependent); or that the first Cause were subordinate to the second, which were repugnant to the nature of the first Cause, being perfect and universal.

The will cannot be compelled: to say that which is done willingly is done constrainedly is to affirm a contradiction namely, that which is willing is unwilling. God can determine the will and not prejudice the nature of the will because he is an infinite Cause. God determineth the will suitably and agreeably to its own nature, that is, freely. He so determineth the will as the will determineth itself. God so determineth the will as the first free agent, as that the will determineth itself as a second free agent. The efficacy of God offereth no violence, nor changeth the nature of things, but govereth them according to their own natures; it reacheth from one end to the other mightily, and sweetly ordereth all things. The external, transient, efficacious motion of God upon the will determineth the will with a real determination: the will so moved, moveth itself with a real and formal determination.

Concurrence/Compatibilism - Jonathan Edwards

§ 64. In efficacious grace we are not merely passive, nor yet does God do some, and we do the rest. But God does all, and we do all. God produces all, and we act all. For that is what he produces, viz. our own acts. God is the only proper author and fountain; we only are the proper actors. We are, in different respects, wholly passive and wholly active.

In the Scriptures the same things are represented as from God and from us. God is said to convert, and men are said to convert and turn. God makes a new heart, and we are commanded to make us a new heart. God circumcises the heart, and we are commanded to circumcise our own hearts; not merely because we must use the means in order to the effect, but the effect itself is our act and our duty. These things are agreeable to that text, "God worketh in you both to will and to do."

God moves the will: G. Vos states:

31. How does God move the will of man? In a manner that accords with the freedom and the spontaneous character of the will—not, therefore, by placing Himself against the will and bending it with force; also not by a physical or unspiritual power that occurs in baptism, as the Roman Catholics contend; but by bringing about a reversal in the root of life, out of which the will itself arises. The result of this, then, is that the will of itself works in the opposite direction than was previously the case, and that no longer unwillingly but spontaneously, willingly. *Reformed Dogmatics*, pg660

The Will - John Flavel

View its will, and you shall find it like a queen upon the throne of the soul, swaying the sceptre of liberty in her hand, (as one expresses it) with all the affections waiting and attending upon her. No tyrant can force it, no torment can wrest the golden sceptre of liberty out of its hand; the keys of all the chambers of the soul hang at its girdle, these it delivers to Christ in the day of his power; victorious grace sweetly determines it by gaining its consent, but commits no violence upon it. God accepts its offering; though full of imperfections; but no service is accepted without it, how excellent so ever be the matter of it. John Flavel, A Treatise on the Soul of Man pg 254

Free Will - Notes on Free will – Van Til

Here the fundamental difference between Mr. Grey's (the traditional evangelical) and Mr. White's (the Calvinist or Reformed apologetic) approach to Mr. Black (the unbeliever) appears. The difference lies in the different notions of the **free will of man**. Or, it may be said, the difference is with respect to the nature of man as such. Mr. White would define man, and therefore his freedom, in terms of Scripture alone. He would therefore begin with the fact that **man is the creature of God**. And this implies that **man's freedom is a derivative freedom. It is a freedom that is not and can not be wholly ultimate, that is, self-dependent**. Mr. White knows that Mr. Black would not agree with him in this analysis of man and of his freedom. He knows that Mr. Black would not agree with him on this any more than he would agree on the biblical idea of total depravity.

Free will – Toplady

"A man's free will cannot cure him even of the toothache, or a sore finger; and yet he madly thinks it is in its power to cure his soul"

"The greatest judgment which God himself can, in the present life, inflict upon a man is to leave him in the hand of his own boasted free will."

Knowledge of God leads to adoration and worship - Hermon Bavinck

"The knowledge of God is the central, core dogma, the exclusive content of theology. From the start of its labors dogmatic theology is shrouded in mystery; it stands before God the incomprehensible One. **This knowledge leads to adoration and worship; to know God is to live.**" [John 17:3, *And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God,...*] "By pursuing this aim, dogmatics does not become a dry and academic exercise, without practical usefulness for life. The more it reflects on God, the knowledge of whom is its only content, **the more it will be moved to adoration and worship.**" Herman Bavinck, Dutch Reformed Theologian, 1854-1921 Reformed Dogmatics, p 27, 29 [see Edwards' comment immediately above](#)

God's love for himself Vos

13. *What then is contained in this holiness of God?*

a) That God loves Himself as the highest moral good.

b) That God as such turns away from all evil. In fact, in God, too, holiness is therefore a being separated—a being separated from the world, but not the world in the abstract. It is a separation from the unclean, sinful world. And thereby it must be kept in view that this separation derives from a positive principle, **since God seeks and loves Himself as the highest good**.

87. *How then can we describe the holiness of God?*

As that attribute of God by which He seeks and loves Himself as the highest good and demands as reasonable goodness from the creature to be consecrated to Him.

God's Love for Himself - Bavinck states: (doctrine of God)

He receives nothing, but only gives. All things need him; he needs nothing or nobody. **He always aims at himself because he cannot rest in anything other than himself.** Inasmuch as he himself is the absolutely good and perfect one, **he may not love anything else except with a view to himself.** **He may not and cannot be content with less than absolute perfection.**

When he loves others, he loves himself in them: his own virtues, works, and gifts. For the same reason he is also blessed in himself as the sum of all goodness, of all perfection. Hermon Bavinck, Vol. 2 p 211] [see Edwards' comment immediately above](#)

Thomas Shepard Diary Entry of Thomas Shepard, Feb. 15, Cir. 1659

I was in prayer, and in the beginning of it that promise came in, "Seek me and you shall live." (Hagai 1). Hereupon I saw I had cause to seek him always because there was nothing else good and because he was always good. And my heart made choice of God alone and he was a sweet portion to me. And I began to see how well I could be without all other things with him; and so learned to live by faith. Only it came in, Why did I not desire to live with him alone in heaven? And I saw my heart very apt to comfort itself in other things besides him.

Faith – by Thomas Shepard– excellent!!

The subject in which it is wrought; a sinner sensible of his extreme wants; **for faith springs out of the destruction of our own excellency, and ruins of it;** like Christ, that did arise a root out of a dry ground; for the Lord's great plot is to advance Christ and his rich grace. Now, look, as it is obscured by bringing anything of our own to it, so it is advanced by fetching all from it; this can never be till the soul is sensible of his nakedness, emptiness, and wants; let Christ be never so sweet, a full soul will loathe him; and I say extreme want. The prodigal never comes home till he dies for hunger; for such is the senselessness of men, and dislike of Christ, that extremities only drive them hither, as Judges v. 6. When the Midianites came, they ran like beasts to their den, and until bread was taken from them, they cry not unto the Lord, but then they do; so men have neither hearts, or, if so, no heads to come to Christ till now; and usually the Lord makes this the ground of the soul's first motion towards Christ. I die here, and because of my wants I therefore come. Pardon sin, because great. Ps. xxv. 11, *lie* merciful, because it is a stiff-necked people. Exod. xxxiv. 9. That so when the Lord pardons, the

soul may have nothing to boast of but misery, and now it is hard to believe.

Lawful blessing do the most hurt –

Shepard - Consider This the Source of the Country's Woes **Lawful blessings** do the most hurt

I was much troubled about the poverty of the churches; and I saw it was such a misery as I could not well discern the cause of, nor see any way out; yet I saw we might find out the cause of any evil by the Lord's stroke. Now, he struck us in outward blessings and hence it is a sign there was our evil; (1.) In not acknowledging all we have from God, (Hos. 2:8) (2.) In not serving God in the having of them; (3.) In making ourselves secure and hardhearted; for lawful blessings are the secret idols, and do most hurt. And it is then a sign or greatest hurt lies in having, and that the greatest good lies in God's taking them away from us. Whereupon I, considering this, did sweetly content myself that the Lord should take all to glorify himself the more, and to take away the fuel of our sin. I saw that if God's people could be joyfully content to part with all to the Lord, prizing the gain of little holiness more than enough to overbalance all their losses, that the Lord then would do us good. Thomas Shepard, his Works, vol. 3 p 431

Diary Entries of Thomas Shepard, Cir. 1659

For want of Christ

January 28. I considered being in his presence what [lack] I did want. And it came to thus. 1. I did want [lack] light, even so much as to make me believe steadfastly. 2. So much faith as to make me cleave to God constantly. 3. For want of this I departed from God. 4. By departing, all woe came upon me, both sin and misery. And so I understood better – than before, how unbelief was the cause of all woe.

January 30. When I was in meditation, I saw, when Christ was present, all blessings were present as where any were without Christ present; there all sorrows were. Hence I saw how little of Christ was present in me. I saw I did not cease to be and live of myself, that Christ might be and live in me. I saw that Christ was to do, council, direct, and that I should be wholly diffident of myself, and careful for this, that he might be all to me. Hence I blessed Christ for showing me this and mourned for the want of it.

Worldliness, prosperity, etc. Shepard

Added excerpt from page 315, Parable of the Ten Virgins by Thomas Shepard, regarding the feigned esteeming of Christ by hypocrites

IV. I add, he esteems him thus,

1. As his present good; so that if the Lord do withdraw or deny himself, now unto him nothing in this world can for present quiet him, Jer. 50:4,5. Hence those in their judgments acknowledge Christ the greatest good, and when they are dying, and see he will so at the last day, **yet now for the present a little more liberty in sin, sloth, lust, honor, gain, lots, large accommodations are better. You never saw him.** O, vile world; thy Lord will one day condemn you out of your own mouth; thy own will was more

dear to thee than his, this world's ease better than his peace, etc. When you lie on your death beds, you esteem him then. Why? Because he serves your turn then. Hence, before you did not.

Prosperity - Flavel

"Would you be kept from sin? 'Lo, he has hedged up the way with thorns.' Would you see the creature's vanity? Your affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered as in our own experience of it. Would you have that your corruption mortified? This is the way: now God takes away the food and fuel that maintains them; for as prosperity begat and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is the means to kill them." P443

"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19:24

Oh how many have been coached to hell in the chariots of earthly pleasures, while others have been whipped to heaven by the rot of affliction. How few, like the daughter of Tyre, come to Christ with a gift! How few among the rich entreat his favor! John Flavel

John Flavel states:

"**Prosperity** meeting with a graceless heart, makes it wholly sensual, and entirely swallows up its thoughts and affections. Earthly things transform and molds their hearts into their own similitude and nature; the whole strength of their souls goes out to those enjoyments."

Worldliness – Loving the world too much - John Flavel

Inf. 9. Is it but a puff of breath that holds men in life?

Then build not too much hope and confidence upon any man. Build not too high upon so feeble a foundation. "Cease ye from man (says the prophet) whose breath is ill his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?? . There are two things that should deter us from dependence upon any man, viz. his falseness and his frailty. Grace in a great measure may cure the first, but not the last. The best of men must die, as well as the worst, . it is a vanity therefore to rely upon any man. It was the saying of a philosopher when he heard how merchants lost great estates at sea in a moment,— *Non amo felicitatem e funibus pendentem*; - I love not that happiness (says he) which hangs upon a rope. But all the happiness of many men hangs upon a far weaker thing than a rope, even the perishing breath of a creature. Let not parents raise their hopes too high or lean too hard upon their children. Say not of thy child, as Lamech did of Noah, "This son shall comfort us,". The world is full of the lamentings and bitter cries of disappointed parents. Let not the wife depend too much on her husband, as if her earthly comforts were secured in him against all danger. God is often provoked to stop our friend's breath, that thereby he may stop our way to sin. The trust and dependence of a soul are too weighty to be hanged upon such a weak and rotten pin as the breath of a creature.

Quieted with rattles vs right desires after Christ - Flavel

Will your desires after Christ admit no satisfaction, nor find rest anywhere but in the enjoyment of Christ? then are your desires right desires. The soul that desires Christ, can never be at rest till it come home to Christ. The devil can satisfy others with the riches and pleasures of this world, as children are quieted with rattles; but if nothing but Christ can rest and terminate your desires, surely such restless desires are right desires.

Worldliness - John Flavel

He set himself apart for you believers, and no others: no, not for angels but for you: Will ye also set yourselves apart peculiarly for Christ? be his, and no others? Let not Christ and the world share and divide your hearts in two halves betwixt them; let not the world step in and say, half mine. You will never do Christ right, nor answer this grace, till you can say, as it is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and on earth there is none that I desire in comparison of thee." None but Christ, none but Christ, is a proper motto for a Christian.

He left the highest and best enjoyments, even those in his Father's bosom, to set himself apart for death and suffering for you: Are you ready to leave the bosom of the best and sweetest enjoyments, you have in this world, to serve him? If you stand not habitually ready to leave father, mother, wife, children, lands, yea, and life too, to serve him, you are not worthy of him,

Lawful blessing do the most hurt –

Shepard - Consider This the Source of the Country's Woes **Lawful blessings** do the most hurt

I was much troubled about the poverty of the churches; and I saw it was such a misery as I could not well discern the cause of, nor see any way out; yet I saw we might find out the cause of any evil by the Lord's stroke. Now, he struck us in outward blessings and hence it is a sign there was our evil; (1.) In not acknowledging all we have from God, (Hos. 2:8) (2.) In not serving God in the having of them; (3.) In making ourselves secure and hardhearted; for lawful blessings are the secret idols, and do most hurt. And it is then a sign or greatest hurt lies in having, and that the greatest good lies in God's taking them away from us. Whereupon I, considering this, did sweetly content myself that the Lord should take all to glorify himself the more, and to take away the fuel of our sin. I saw that if God's people could be joyfully content to part with all to the Lord, prizing the gain of little holiness more than enough to overbalance all their losses, that the Lord then would do us good. Thomas Shepard, his Works, vol. 3 p 431

Meditations and spiritual experiences - Shepard

I saw also how I had embraced the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life a long time. And hence I saw it was not only just and righteous that the Lord would deny to hear my prayers, but that it was mercy he would do so; for what greater judgment than to please a lust, and leave me to it. pg435 *The Works of Thomas Shepard*

Divine Light Irresistible Shepard:

Because all divine light of glory is ever powerful through Christ to change the heart. Hence if hypocrites had it, their hearts would be sincere, which is not so, and hence they ever want [lack] it, whatever light else they have; and hence those that have it must be sincere, John 8:32, "You shall know the truth, and it shall make you free," i.e., from your bondage of fears and sins; hence David prays for light, Psalm 119:33, 34, and then he shall be set at liberty. As iron is drawn to the load-stone by a secret hidden virtue, so there is a secret virtue of divine light that draws the most iron heart; nay, changes it, John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth," etc. For this is the difference between God and man's teaching; and hence when the gospel comes in power, it comes in demonstration; whereby the heart is mightily overpowered, that it cannot but fall down before God, whose voice and truth it hears. And hence the young man saw some worth in Christ, but not enough, and hence he forsook Christ. Truth is not stones, but bread to them that see it indeed. Thomas Shepard, The Parable of the Ten Virgins, pg 231

Love, Fear and the Law Elisha Coles

The law is good, if lawfully used; so is fear, in its time and place; but out of that, it is as a bone out of joint. The law works by fear, as a schoolmaster to Christ; it is ordinarily the first occasion of our motion towards believing. The heir, whilst a child, may be under the tutorage of fear; but when faith is grown up, then cast out the bondwoman and her son; fear shall not be heir with faith; for, though it be a good servant, it is an ill master. For fear to predominate over faith, is for "servants to ride, while princes walk on the earth, which is an error the earth cannot bear," Ecclesiastes 10:5. 7, with Proverbs 30:21,22. Believers, especially such as know themselves so to be, "receive not the spirit of bondage again to fear," Romans 8:15; they are actuated now by another principle, as a horse that is thoroughly broke and well tempered, is better managed by a gentle hand than a biting curb. Faith works by love; it is not henceforth the fear of wrath, but the sense of Christ's love, in delivering from wrath, that both curbs the unregenerate part, and carries to higher acts of obedience than fear is capable of, although, at times, all sorts of motives may be needful to keep us going; and the Lord, for exercise of our graces, and other holy ends, may let the dearest of his children long conflict with their fears, under which he yet supports them, and brings them forth like gold at last. —Elisha Coles, Perseverance in Sovereignty of God

Election - Elisha Coles

If you be of this happy remnant of election, then look for ill usage from the world. The men of the world have always hated God's elect, and will - why did Esau hate Jacob? because of the blessing, [Genesis 27:41](#). And our Savior expressly says to his disciples, "I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you," [John 15:19](#). While in nature, they love the world, and the world them; but when election breaks forth in its fruits, when once they are called according to purpose, then "a man's enemies will be those of his own house," [Micah 7:6](#). And hence it is, that the very doctrine of election is so disgusting to the world, and contended against; where I wish that some of the elect themselves were not (unwittingly) involved. Therefore think it not strange, but take it as an appendix of election, [John 15:17](#), [18](#), [19](#), as a part of that you were chosen to; and as that by which, partly, you must be fitted for the main end; your Lord himself was made perfect through sufferings, [Hebrews 2:10](#), and those foreknown, were predestinated to be conformed to their head, in suffering as well as glory, [Romans 8:29](#), and [6:5](#).

...Were you the head instead of being the tail; were the necks of your enemies under your feet;

yea, were the devils themselves made subject to you; it could not afford you the thousandth part of that cause of rejoicing, as that "your names are written in heaven." Are other men prosperous in the world, and free from trouble, while you are reduced to a low estate, and chastened every morning? have, perhaps, but a handful of meal, and a little oil in a cruse, etc., yet think not your portion mean, or hardly dealt out; your good things are to come; they are growing in the other world; and at the time of harvest the Lord will send his angels for you; yea, your Lord himself will come and fetch you thither; and "you shall be for ever with him, in whose presence is fullness of joy, and at whose right hand are rivers of pleasures for evermore," and then you will sing, "The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places;" at least say so now. As Abraham dealt by his concubines' children, so does God by the Ishmaels of the world, he gives them portions, and sends them away, [Genesis 25:6](#). But the inheritance he reserves for his Isaacs; to them he gives all that he has, yea, even himself; and what can we have more! - Elisha Coles, The Sov. of God

The Will - John Flavel

View its will, and you shall find it like a queen upon the throne of the soul, swaying the sceptre of liberty in her hand, (as one expresses it) with all the affections waiting and attending upon her. No tyrant can force it, no torment can wrest the golden sceptre of liberty out of its hand; the keys of all the chambers of the soul hang at its girdle, these it delivers to Christ in the day of his power; victorious grace sweetly determines it by gaining its consent, but commits no violence upon it. God accepts its offering; though full of imperfections; but no service is accepted without it, how excellent so ever be the matter of it. John Flavel, A Treatise on the Soul of Man pg 254

John Flavel, Puritan, 1600s

I know there is nothing in the word or in the works of God that is repugnant to sound reason, but there are some things that are opposite to carnal reason as well as above right reason, and therefore our reason never shows itself more unreasonable than in summoning those things to its bar which transcends its sphere and capacity.

Quieted with rattles vs right desires after Christ - Flavel

Will your desires after Christ admit no satisfaction, nor find rest anywhere but in the enjoyment of Christ? then are your desires right desires. The soul that desires Christ, can never be at rest till it come home to Christ. The devil can satisfy others with the riches and pleasures of this world, as children are quieted with rattles; but if nothing but Christ can rest and terminate your desires, surely such restless desires are right desires.

Prosperity - Flavel

"Would you be kept from sin? 'Lo, he has hedged up the way with thorns.' Would you see the creature's vanity? Your affliction is a fair glass to discover it; for the vanity of the creature is never so effectually and sensibly discovered as in our own experience of it. Would you have that your corruption mortified? This is the way: now God takes away the food and fuel that maintains them; for as prosperity begat and fed them, so adversity, when sanctified, is the means to kill them." P443

"It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 19:24

Oh how many have been coached to hell in the chariots of earthly pleasures, while others have been whipped to heaven by the rod of affliction. How few, like the daughter of Tyre, come to Christ with a gift! How few among the rich entreat his favor! John Flavel

John Flavel states:

“**Prosperity** meeting with a graceless heart, makes it wholly sensual, and entirely swallows up its thoughts and affections. Earthly things transform and molds their hearts into their own similitude and nature; the whole strength of their souls goes out to those enjoyments.”

John Flavel

Love to Christ, his ways and people, Gal. 5:6. Faith worketh by love, i.e., represents the love of God, and then makes use of the sweetness of it by way of argument, to constrain the soul to all acts of obedience, where it may testify the reality of its love to God and Christ.

Thirdly, Heart-purity, Acts 15:9. “Purifying the hearts by faith:” It doth not only cleanse the hands but the *heart*. No principle in man, besides faith can do this: **Morality may hide corruption, but faith only purifies the heart from it.**

Conforming the Soul - Flavel

“**Truth is the sanctifying instrument**, John 17:17, **the mould into which our souls are cast**, Rom. 6:17, **according therefore to the stamps and impressions it makes upon our understandings**; and the order in which truths lie there, will be the depth and lastingness of their impressions and influences upon the heart; **as the more weight is laid upon the seal, the more fair and lasting impression is made upon the wax**. He that sees the grounds and reasons of his peace and comfort most clearly, is like to maintain it the more constantly.” Flavel vol. 1, p. 23 pdf file

The wax is likened to soft wax that is able to receive the impression of the seal (the word). In Ezek. 36:24-27, God removes the *stony heart*, that is hard (unbelieving, e.g., a hard heart or a heart that has been hardened like Pharaoh’s heart was). It is God’s Spirit that removes the hard, stony heart and gives you a soft heart of flesh, hence the soft wax upon which the seal is now able to make its impression. Fascinating!

The truth is the truth of the knowledge of God – all that pertains to him - the wisdom of the way of salvation, regeneration, sanctification, his glory; and what is that but God’s nature – his moral excellencies or perfections, all seen in his works, etc. All this, upon constant contemplation, transforms your soul, your heart, your mind, into the very image of those things (2Cor. 3:18) so that the tree now being good (or better, more conformed to his image), produces good fruit...out of the heart proceed the issues of life (Proverbs 4:23)...this is really good stuff. The heart (or mind) is the most secret recess of the soul where the knowledge of God is stored. This is what is changed over time as you study/contemplate, ruminate on what you’ve read. [the soul, the mind, the heart are often used interchangeably]

Worldliness – Loving the world too much - John Flavel

Inf. 9. Is it but a puff of breath that holds men in life?

Then build not too much hope and confidence upon any man. Build not too high upon so feeble a foundation. "Cease ye from man (says the prophet) whose breath is ill his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of?? . There are two things that should deter us from dependence upon any man, viz. his falseness and his frailty. Grace in a great measure may cure the first, but not the last. The best of men must die, as well as the worst, . it is a vanity therefore to rely upon any man. It was the saying of a philosopher when he heard how merchants lost great estates at sea in a moment, — *Non amo felicitatem e funibus pendentem*; - I love not that happiness (says he) which hangs upon a rope. But all the happiness of many men hangs upon a far weaker thing than a rope, even the perishing breath of a creature. Let not parents raise their hopes too high or lean too hard upon their children. Say not of thy child, as Lamech did of Noah, "This son shall comfort us, ". The world is full of the lamentings and bitter cries of disappointed parents. Let not the wife depend too much on her husband, as if her earthly comforts were secured in him against all danger. God is often provoked to stop our friend's breath, that thereby he may stop our way to sin. The trust and dependence of a soul are too weighty to be hanged upon such a weak and rotten pin as the breath of a creature.

Worldliness - John Flavel

He set himself apart for you believers, and no others: no, not for angels but for you: Will ye also set yourselves apart peculiarly for Christ? be his, and no others? Let not Christ and the world share and divide your hearts in two halves betwixt them; let not the world step in and say, half mine. You will never do Christ right, nor answer this grace, till you can say, as it is, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and on earth there is none that I desire in comparison of thee." None but Christ, none but Christ, is a proper motto for a Christian.

He left the highest and best enjoyments, even those in his Father's bosom, to set himself apart for death and suffering for you: Are you ready to leave the bosom of the best and sweetest enjoyments, you have in this world, to serve him? If you stand not habitually ready to leave father, mother, wife, children, lands, yea, and life too, to serve him, you are not worthy of him,

Trading with God

Thomas *The Crook in the Lot* pg47

(See Flavel immediately above on this subject)

Exhortation 2.

What crook there is, which in the settled order of things cannot be removed or evened in this world, let us apply to God for suitable relief under it. For instance, the common crook in the lot of saints, namely, indwelling sin; as God has made that crook not to be removed here, He can certainly balance it, and afford relief under it. The same is to be said of any crook, while it remains unremoved. In such cases apply yourself to God, for making up your losses another way.

And there are five things I would have you to keep in view and aim at here.

1. To take *God in Christ* for, and instead of that thing, the withholding or taking away of which from you makes the crook in your lot. (Ps. 142:4, 5) There is never a crook which God makes in our lot, but it is in effect Heaven's offer of a blessed exchange to us, such as, "Sell whatever you have, and you shall have treasure in heaven." (Mk. 10:21) **In managing of which exchange, God first puts out His hand, and takes away some earthly thing from us; and it is expected we put out our hand next and take some heavenly thing from Him in the stead of it, and particularly His Christ. Wherefore has God emptied your left hand of such and such an earthly comfort? Stretch out your right hand to God in Christ, take Him in the room of it, and welcome.** Therefore, the soul's closing with Christ is called buying, wherein parting with one thing, we get another in its stead, "the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls, who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it." (Matt. 13:45, 46) Do this, and you will be more than even hands with the crook in your lot.

2. Look for the *streams* running as full from Him as ever it did or could run, when the crook of the lot has dried it. This is the work of faith, confidently to depend on God for that which is denied us from the creature. "When my father and mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." (Ps 27:10) This is a most rational expectation; for it is certain there is no good in the creature but what is from God; therefore, there is no good to be found in the creature, the stream, but what may be got immediately from God, the fountain. And it is a welcome plea, to come to God and say, Now, Lord, You have taken away from me such a creature-comfort, I must have as good from Yourself.

3. Seek for the *spiritual fruits* of the crook in the lot. (Heb. 12:11) We see the way in the world is, when one trade fails, to fall on and drive another trade; so should we, when there is a crook in the lot, making our earthly comforts low, set ourselves the more for spiritual attainments. If our trade with the world sinks, let us see to drive a trade with heaven more vigorously; see, if by means of the crook, we can obtain more faith, love, heavenly-mindedness, contempt of the world, humility, self-denial, etc. (2Cor. 6:10) So while we lose at one hand we shall gain another.

4. *Grace* to bear us up under the crook. "For this thing I besought to the Lord thrice;" and He said, "My grace is sufficient for you." (2Cor. 12:8, 9) Whether a man is faint, and have a light burden, or is refreshed and strengthened, and have a heavy one, it is all the same; the latter can go as easy under his burden as the former under his. Grace proportioned to the trial is what we should aim at; getting that, though the crook is not evened, we are even hands with it.

5. The keeping in our eye the *eternal rest* and *weight of glory* in the other world. "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." (2Cor. 4:17, 18) This will balance the crook in your lot, be what it will; while they who have no well-grounded hope of salvation will find the crook in their lot in this world such a weight, as they have nothing to counterbalance it. But the hope of eternal rest may bear up under all the toil and trouble met with here.

The Old Man and the New Man – Van Til – Rom. 7:17

Again abstractions should be avoided. To say that God loves his people but hates their sin is to avoid the issue. Believers, in this life, are, and continue to be, both under the favor and under the disfavor of God. Sin is not an abstract something. The “new man” is responsible for the sin of the “old man.” When Paul says it is no longer he but sin that dwelleth in him that performs certain actions, he does not seek to lift the “new man” from under the responsibility of the sin of the “old man.” He merely means to prove that the “new man” is a genuine reality, whatever the appearance to the contrary. The idea of the old nature as a generality, as something the elect have in common with the non-elect, is still an important factor in the present situation. So, then, the ideas of common wrath and common grace must both be kept as constitutive factors in measuring the present historical situation by the Word of God

Cornelius Van Til states:

"As I have followed Calvin closely in stressing the fact that men ought to believe in God inasmuch as the evidence for his existence is abundantly plain, so I have also closely followed Calvin in saying that no sinner reacts properly to God's revelation. Is this too sweeping a statement? It is simply the doctrine of total depravity. All sinners are covenant breakers. They have an axe to grind. They do not want to keep God in remembrance. They keep under the knowledge of God that is within them. That is, they try as best they can to keep under this knowledge for fear they should look into the face of their judge.

Derivativeness of man - man's assumed ultimacy - Van Til

¹ **Van Til** states on page 157 of his book *Introduction to Systematic Theology*, pg 157: **Calvin** never did start a chain of reasoning about man's nature and destiny by taking man by himself. He did not start with man as with an ultimate starting point. Calvin did not start with a general *a priori* position. His position is as radically apposed to that of Descartes as it is to that of Hume. Most apologetic writers who have come after Calvin have allowed themselves to be influenced unduly by Cartesian philosophy on this matter. Calvin recognized fully that if man is to have true knowledge of himself, he must regard God as original and himself as derivative. He did not place God and man as correlatives next to one another, but he recognized from the outset two levels of existence and two levels of interpretation: on the one hand, the divine and eternal and, on the other hand, the human or temporal. To him it is perfectly obvious that the endowments that we possess are not of ourselves, but of God. Hence, he says that “not a particle of light, or wisdom, or justice, or power, or rectitude, or genuine truth, will anywhere be found, which does not flow from him: and of which he is not the cause. [Calvin, *Institutes* 1.2.2)

Cornelius Van Til again states from his book, *Introduction to Systematic Theology: p128-9*: In Paradise, man made his self-consciousness *the immediate but wholly derivative* starting point while he made the self-consciousness of God the *remote but wholly ultimate starting point* of all his knowledge. Hence, he saw that his knowledge was, though finite, yet true. Hence, he did

not set before himself the **false ideal of absolute comprehension**. Hence, too, he did not despair and conclude to irrationalism simply because he himself could not fully comprehend the whole of reality.

In opposition to this, **the non-Christian interpretation** of the human mind is based upon the presupposition that **it is the ultimate and not merely the derivative starting point for man**. Hence it has set before itself the ideal of **comprehensive knowledge**. This was done especially in the earlier stages of human thought. The Greek thinkers were as children who thought they could do everything. Even in modern times we have, in such systems as that of **Leibniz**, a striking manifestation of the pride, "hubris," **of the sinner who wishes to be as God**.³⁵ In more recent times, however, men have become more sophisticated. They have given up the quest of certainty and the quest for comprehension, except as a limiting concept. In modern irrationalism, the prodigal has recognized that he is at the swine trough, but still refuses to return to the father's house. His "hubris" never forsakes him.

³⁵ Van Til uses the strong language of hubris here about Leibniz's project. Leibniz had hoped to unify many disciplines and churches through his system, which is ultimately built on a very few general principles.

Free Will - Notes on Free will – Van Til

Van Til, *Defending the Faith*, pg 17-18, on how to witness to unbelievers

Here the fundamental difference between Mr. Grey's (the traditional evangelical) and Mr. White's (the Calvinist or Reformed apologetic) approach to Mr. Black (the unbeliever) appears. The difference lies in the different notions of the **free will of man**. Or, it may be said, the difference is with respect to the nature of man as such. Mr. White would define man, and therefore his freedom, in terms of Scripture alone. He would therefore begin with the fact that **man is the creature of God**. And this implies that man's freedom is a derivative freedom. It is a freedom that is not and can not be wholly ultimate, that is, self-dependent. Mr. White knows that Mr. Black would not agree with him in this analysis of man and of his freedom. He knows that Mr. Black would not agree with him on this any more than he would agree on the biblical idea of total depravity.

Mr. Grey, on the other hand, must at all costs have "a point of contact" in the system of thought of Mr. Black, who is typical of the natural man. Just as Mr. Grey is afraid of being charged with circular reasoning, so he is also afraid of being charged with talking about something that is "outside of experience." And so he is driven to talk in general about the free spirit of man." Of course, Mr. Black need have no objections from his point of view in allowing for the "free spirit of man." That is at bottom what he holds even when he is a naturalist. His whole position is based upon the idea of man as a free spirit, that is, a spirit that is not subject to the law of his Creator God. And Carnell does not distinguish between the biblical doctrine of freedom, as based upon and involved in the fact of man's creation, and the doctrine of freedom, in the sense of **autonomy, which makes man a law unto himself**.

God's Love for Himself - Cornelius Van Til - God's Attitude

Once more: Not only do all facts reveal God but they, in revealing Him, manifest His attitude toward men. **God is love. He loves Himself above all else.** He loved Himself from all eternity when He had as yet made no creatures to love. **But when He made creatures, He made them lovable like Himself. He loved them because in loving them, He loved Himself above all else.** He made man perfect. And loving mankind, He offered them eternal life. It was seriously meant. It was no farce. All men disobeyed God. All came under His wrath and curse. God continued to love Himself; He therefore had to punish every insult to His holiness.

Temporary Faith Heb. 6:4 - Van Til

Excellent insight here on the [hypocrite, temporary faith and Heb. 6:4](#)
from Common Grace and the Gospel

And this tolerance, on the one hand, and influence, on the other hand, extends, in varying degrees, to all dimensions. Because of the fact of **undifferentiation** we are tolerated in our religious life as we are tolerated in the field of weighing and measuring. And we have influence in the religious life as we have influence in the lower dimensions. **[undifferentiated: one has not fully developed into this sinful, fully epistemologically conscious mindset, "hardened of heart" condition where he is willfully waging war against God and knows it.]** **Those who have no depth of earth yet, sometimes and in some cases, receive with joy the seed of the Word. They have a temporal faith.** The problem of the inner ego and the more circumferential aspect of the human person, discussed by Kuyper with the help of the copper-wire illustration, need not much concern us. It is not a question of psychology. Psychologically the whole individual is involved even to the depth of his being. When he receives the witness of the living God through nature about him, through his conscience within him, and by means of the preaching of the gospel, he is deeply engaged psychologically in an interpretative endeavor. But this deep psychological interpretative endeavor, by which he joins to himself all the multitudinous forms of the voice of God, is still, itself, merely the revelational voice of God. The question of his ethical response has not yet been broached. The real question is one of epistemology and therewith of man's ethical attitude toward God. If men were **fully self-conscious epistemologically, they would violently suppress the psychologically interpretative voice within them. But to the extent that they are not self-conscious epistemologically, they may even taste of the heavenly gift, be made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and taste the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and not rebel.** **[incredible insight here!! this explains why it is too hard to discern false brethren and how many can be self-deceived.]** **They allow themselves to be affected by it to some extent.** It is the nostalgia of the prodigal who has left the father's home but sometimes has misgivings. On his way to the far country he may halt, he may even turn back for a distance, thinking that after all it was good and natural for a son to be in the father's home. Soon he will crucify unto himself the Son of God afresh, but for the moment the voice of God drowns out his own. He is at the moment not at all himself; he is not yet fully himself.

It is thus that we finally come to some fruitful insight into **the problem of civil righteousness or the works of non-regenerate men.** It is not that in some lower dimension no differentiation,

epistemological or psychological, needs to be made by believers. It is not that there is even a square foot of neutral territory. It is not that in the field of civics or justice, any more than in any other particular dimension, men, to the extent that they are epistemologically self-conscious, show any righteousness. The problem, as already suggested, faces us in every dimension. There are non-believers who go to church, there are those who give to the cause of missions. [codehypo1] Nor are they hypocrites, properly speaking. The hypocrite is a person who is epistemologically self-conscious to a large degree. He “joins the church” for the sake of reward. He may very well do the works of the law externally. Dillinger often walked well-dressed in fashionable society. May not a criminal give many and fine Christmas presents today to those whom he plans to murder tomorrow? He does the works of the law. Schilder makes much of the fact that the works of the law may be thus externally performed. But the problem cannot be settled in this fashion. The very existence of the hypocrite requires us to go back of the hypocrite. To be able to act the hypocrite he must know the requirements of proper society thoroughly. How does he know the requirements of society? Because he has mingled in society and has had its requirements inscribed upon him as a demand. The very possibility of self-conscious hypocrisy presupposes an earlier undifferentiated state. It is from that undifferentiated stage that we must make our beginning.

Van Til on **Arminianism**, man’s assumed **autonomy** & ultimacy, etc.

The following is an excellent teaching on what **Arminians** believe, how they see God and man, etc.: this will give you a more in depth understanding of our fallen nature, our mind, etc. represented by Arminianism, that God is transforming into His image. See Romans 12:2, Phil. 2:13. Van Til nails it here. Mull this heretical concept of man's **autonomy** or **ultimacy**. This is what God is weaning us off of day by day, year by year. And the only way it progresses meaningfully, is by a diligent study and meditation of the Scriptures. Otherwise, we subject ourselves to routine self-frustration, no peace, restlessness, etc.

From Van Til’s book,
An Introduction to Systematic Theology
pg 295-296

In what has been said so far, stress was laid upon the idea that God controls and therefore knows all things. It is because of this claim that Christianity is frequently charged with rationalism. To this must be added that man does not know and cannot ever expect to know God or anything else exhaustively. He never has and never can expect to have in his mind exactly the same thought content that God has in his mind. As a creature of God man never knows God “**adequately**.” He knows *pro mensura humana* (according to human measure). This contention is not contrary to but rather involved in the first contention with respect to the all-comprehensiveness of God’s knowledge. If we hold to the first, we must also hold to the second. For if we hold to the first, then and then only have we thought of the human mind as really **derivative** and **wholly dependent** at every point on the mind of God and its prior activity. Romanists and Arminians do not hold to the first, and therefore they do not hold to the second. They do not hold to the first because to hold to the first would be to deny that the human mind has ultimacy, and this not Romanist or Arminian is willing to do. Holding to the ultimacy of the human

mind in some respect, the Romanist and the Arminians can then also maintain – and even must, to be consistent – that the relation between the divine and the human mind is similar to that of a teacher to a pupil. The teacher knows many things that the pupil does not know. Yet the teacher tells the pupil what he knows, and there is no reason at all why the pupil should not eventually know as much as the teacher. Nor is there any reason why the pupil should not understand a single proposition made by the teacher as well as the teacher himself. The teacher may understand some of the implications of a proposition that he has made to the pupil, while the pupil does not understand these implications at a certain time. But when the teacher adds new propositions to the first one, these implications will gradually become clear to the pupil as well as to the teacher. There is only a **gradational difference** between the two. The teacher and what the teacher knows are incomprehensible to the pupil until the teacher reveals what he knows to the pupil. The possibility of the pupil's understanding the teacher in what he says rests upon the fact that both are operating under the same conditions and limitations. The teacher does not know everything because he does not control everything. Particularly he does not control the pupil's mind. The teacher therefore cannot predict the future because the future is not wholly under his control. He cannot be sure that the laws of logic by means of which he makes predictions fit wholly into the facts of the universe about which he is making assertions. So, there is mystery for him in the same way that there is mystery for the pupil. Both the teacher and the pupil look up to **the impersonal laws of logic** that are **independent** of them both, as neither of them controls the facts of reality by means of his power.

It is true that **Romanism and Arminians** will not put the matter as plainly as this. They want to maintain the Creator-creature relationship, but, in the last analysis, their teaching with respect to the **ultimacy or autonomy of the human mind** accounts for their compromise with the non-Christian view of the relation between God and man as illustrated by the teacher-pupil relationship. According to all non-Christian thought, man is potentially divine. **Man is not really dependent upon God. Man is not created by God. The world is not under the providential control of God. So, the mind of man may eventually know all things.**

Theistic Mutualism - Lane Tipton on **Theistic Mutualism** (Pantheism in **Van Til's** use)

One way to try to describe what theistic mutualism is saying is this: typically, mutualists will affirm that when you talk about the Creator-creature distinction initially, just God in himself, that God is immutable, self-contained, simple and all of the classical attributes are affirmed – typically. Even Karl Barth will go so far as to affirm them. But the problem with mutualism is that when God relates to the creation, God, in that relation enters into a process of development along with the creation so that both God and creation are in a common mutual process of self-actualization of actualizing unactualized potential together in a common process of mutual evolution and development. And um, it's become I think particularly problematic since the Enlightenment – it's not an exclusively enlightenment problem by any stretch of the imagination; all ancient heresies at the end of the day are mutualistic in character I think, in one way or another. Ah, but particularly in the 19th and 20th century, in the shadow of Kant and Hegel and others – that what is affirmed in the creator-creature distinction, is denied in essence in the creator-creature relation; and um, and in so doing that, the divine and the human, the divine and the creaturely are commingled in various ways.

Dr. Lane Tipton, Classical Theism and Theistic Mutualism in the Reformed Tradition 8/4/20 – YouTube video, Min 14: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hBaGNTrn1V4>

Total Depravity

Tipton/Van Til

Great summary of man's total depravity – the big picture

After the fall, sinners both **suppress the general revelation of God** without and within and reason in a rebellious way that does not submit to God's special revelation in Scripture. Sinners proceed in terms of a totalizing suppression and rejection of God's one grand scheme of covenantal revelation that, after the fall, has its climactic fulfillment in the person, work, and kingdom of "the self-attesting Christ" of Scripture. Unbelief rests in empty and deceptive presuppositions (Col. 2:8) that proceed from a mind that is darkened (Eph. 4:17), a will that is enslaved (Rom. 6:20; 8:7-8), and affections that are set on forbidden earthly things that cannot satisfy (Eph. 4:19). The heart of the unbeliever is turned against God in such rebellion that it "cannot" submit to God or please him (Romans 8:7-8). Unbelief recoils at its core against the glory of the absolute and living Trinitarian persons who are the one living and true God. Unbelief reasons as though there is no absolute God who is absolutely revealed in nature and in Scripture (Gen. 3:1-6).

Vile Passions blind the judgment of Man John Cameron, Scottish Theologian 1600s

The Passions Blind the Judgment of Man, and Hinder It from Assenting to the Truth

It's a matter worthy astonishment, that not only vulgar brains, but even the most eminent wits should suffer themselves to be so easily won by the outsides of lies, to bear arms against the truth. Albeit the spirit of man, the more excellent a temper it is of, the more natural, and eager an appetite it has after knowledge of the truth; by the same instinct loathing ignorance, and especially disdaining to be cheated.

But the cause of our mischief is the perverseness of our passions, which oftentimes so over-heat and distemper the heart, that out of it, as it were exhaling thick and black vapors upon the understanding, they either disturb our judgments, or altogether dull our apprehension This corruption is almost universal, and like to a general distemper of all the humors in the body, it's dispersed into all the passages of man's life. In a word, it's the Epidemical disease of our souls which makes us easily induced to believe all that for true which we desire should be so suitable to our dispositions, and convenient for the accomplishment and execution of our desires, and designs.

Key passages

Romans 6:17, ¹⁷ But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed,

John 17:17 Sanctify them^[a] in the truth; your word is truth

2Cor. 3:18 ¹⁸ And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,^[a] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.^[b] For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Prov. 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

Ezek. 36:24-27 I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. ²⁵ I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. ²⁶ And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. **And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.** ²⁷ And **I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes** and be careful to obey my rules.

Related passages

2Cor4:18 *while we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

Col. 3:2 *Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.*

Luke 14:26 ²⁶ *"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.*

1Jn. 2:15 *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.*

Jn 12:25 ²⁵ *He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life.*

Acts 20:24 ²⁴ ^[a] *But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my ^[b]race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.*

Rev. 12:11 ¹¹ *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony, and they did not love their lives to the death.*

Mark 8:24 ³⁴ *When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.*

2Cor3:18 *And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord,^[a] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.^[b] For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.*

Rom. 12:1-2 *I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. ² Do not be conformed to*

this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Prov. 4:23 *Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.*

Jer 10:23 O LORD, I know the way of man *is* not in himself; *It is* not in man who walks to direct his own steps.

Prov. 21:1 The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *Like* the [Ⓛ]rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes.

2Cor 8:17-18 ¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. ¹⁸ But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as [Ⓛ]by the Spirit of the Lord.

Dan. 4:35 All the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing; He does according to His will in the army of heaven And *among* the inhabitants of the earth. No one can restrain His hand Or say to Him, "What have You done?"

Rom. 9:19-21 ¹⁹ You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" ²⁰ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed *it*, "Why have you made me like this?" ²¹ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?

Acts 17:28 ²⁸ for in Him we live and move and have our being,

Rm 11:36 ³⁶ For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Eph. 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.