

Scripture reference list for Chapter 4

[51] Eph. iii. 11. See also Eph. i. 4. 1 Cor. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 9.

[52] Psalm civ. 24.

[53] Rom. xi. 31.

[54] Psalm xxxiii. 11.

[55] Job xxiii. 13.

[56] Acts ii. 23.

[57] Rom. viii. 29.

[58] Rom. xi. 2.

[59] 1 Peter i. 2.

[60] Rom. xi. 36.

[61] Col. i. 16.

[62] Prov. xvi. 4.

[63] The point has been more particularly, and with greater care and exactness, considered and examined in the light of both reason and revelation, by the late President Edwards, than by any other author, in his Dissertation concerning the End for which God created the world. The reader, who desires to see this subject more fully explained and explored, must be referred to that ingenious, elaborate performance.

[64] Acts xxvii.

[65] It is to be observed, and kept in mind, in attending to what is here said on human liberty, that every degree of active inclination and moral exercise of heart, is included in willing and choosing, as well as what are called the imperate and overt acts of the will: For such inclination or exercise of heart, in every degree and instance of it, is not distinguishable from exercise of will and choice; but is really the same thing.

[66] It is therefore certain that man is perfectly free, or has all the freedom that in the nature of things is possible, in the exercise of will and choice, or in acting voluntarily; and God, in forming man a voluntary agent, made him a free moral agent, and he cannot be deprived of this freedom and moral agency, unless he be made to cease from acting from motive, and exercising will and choice.

[67] It was thought proper and necessary briefly to consider in what liberty and moral agency consist, in order to determine, whether real liberty be consistent with the absolute previous certainty of all events and actions, implied in the doctrine of God's decrees. But the subject is by

no means exhausted here; nor is there need of it, since it has been more particularly and fully considered by those able writers. President Edwards, in his careful and strict inquiry into the modern, prevailing notions of that freedom of will, which is supposed to be essential to moral agency, virtue and vice, reward and punishment, praise and blame. And Mr. West, in his Essay on moral agency. The reader who desires to see a more thorough thorough and clear discussion of this point, is with pleasure referred to those performances, where he will, it is presumed, find abundant satisfaction.

[68] "Sin, in its own nature, hath no tendency to good, it is not an apt medium, hath no proper efficacy to promote the glory of God: So far is it from a direct contributing to it, that, on the contrary, it is most real dishonour to him. But as a black ground in a picture, which in itself only defiles, when placed by art, sets off the brighter colours, and brightens their beauty; so the evil of sin, which, considered absolutely, obscures the glory of God; yet, by the overruling disposition of his Providence, it serves to illustrate his name, and make it more glorious in the esteem of creatures. Without the sin of man, there had been no place for the most perfect exercise of his goodness." Bates, on the Harmony of the Divine Attributes, Edit. iii. p. 81

[69] If any one desires to see this subject more particularly and accurately considered, he must be referred to Mr. West's Essay on Moral Agency.

[70] There have been many objections to what has been here asserted and proved, viz. That sin is necessary in order to the greatest good of the whole, and is the occasion of good in every instance of it. It has been said, that such a position gives the greatest encouragement to sin; for the more sin there is, the better, the more good there will be--That sin, according to this, is really no crime--That this is therefore inconsistent with its being forbidden in the law of God, and the punishment of the sinner, &c.--The distinction which has been made between sin, considered in itself, in its own nature and tendency; and as it is connected with the whole, and as overruled and used by God for the greatest good of the universe, is sufficient, it is supposed, if well considered, to show how groundless such objections are. All sin is infinitely odious, in its own nature, and has the most evil tendency, as it consists in opposition to God, and his glory, and to all good; God's law, therefore, which requires love to him, must condemn and forbid sin, as infinitely wrong, and odious to him. The sinner cannot take encouragement to sin, from the good of which God makes it the occasion; because this is no good to him, so far as he is inclined to sin; and therefore cannot be a motive to sin: Because it is directly crossing to all inclination to sin. A son who desires not his fathers honour, but is of a disposition to be gratified in his disgrace, could not be persuaded to rebel against his father, from the consideration that his father would get honour by it: But if he be a friend to his father, and to his honour, he will not, from this friendship, be induced to act like an enemy, and do that which tends to hurt and dishonour him. Therefore man never did do evil with a desire and design to promote the good of which God makes it the occasion, it being a contradiction, and therefore absolutely impossible. And as rebellion against God is as evil in its own nature and tendency, when God makes it the occasion of good, and the disposition, views and motives of the sinner are as vile and criminal, as if no good, but infinite evil were the consequence, the sinner is as blameworthy, and deserves punishment as much, as if no good, but all the evil which his sin tends to produce, took place. It is not thought necessary or

proper to give a more particular answer to these objections here. This has been done in three sermons, on the subject of the good of which sin is the occasion, published in the year 1759, and reprinted in Boston, and at Edinburgh in Scotland, in 1773.

[71] "If by the author of sin is meant the permitter, or a not hinderer of sin: and at the same time, a disposer of the state of events, in such a manner, for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes, that sin infallibly follows; I say, if this be all that is meant, by being the author of sin, I do not deny that God is the author of sin, (tho' I dislike and reject the phrase, as that which, by use and custom, is apt to carry another sense) It is no reproach for the Most High to be thus the author of sin. This is not to be the actor of sin, but on the contrary, of holiness. What God doth herein, is holy; and the glorious exercise of the infinite excellency of his nature And I do not deny, that God's being thus the author of sin, follows from what I have laid down: And I assert that it equally follows from the doctrine which is maintained by most of the Arminian divines."

Edwards, on Freedom of Will. Edit. I. Part iv. S. xi. P. 254. "If it would be a plain defect of wisdom and goodness in a being, not to choose that should be, which he certainly knows it would, all things considered, be best should be, (as has but now been observed) then it must be impossible for a Being who has no defect of wisdom and goodness, to do any otherwise than choose it should be; and that for this very reason, because he is perfectly wise and good. And if it be agreeable to perfect wisdom and goodness for him to choose that it should be, and the ordering of all things supremely and perfectly belongs to him, it must be agreeable to infinite wisdom and goodness, to order that it should be. If the choice be good, the ordering and disposing things according to that choice must also be good. It can be no harm in one to whom it belongs to do his will in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth, to execute a good volition If the will be good, and the object of his will be, all things considered, good and best; then the choosing or willing it, is not willing evil. And if so, then his ordering according to that will, is not doing evil?" Idem. P. 267. It may be proper to observe here, that all which has been above asserted respecting the origin and cause of moral evil, is contained and fully expressed in the following words, in the Shorter Catechism. "The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his own will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass. God executeth his decrees in his works of creation and providence. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions." And in their confession of faith, they say, "God, the great creator of all things, doth uphold, direct, dispose and govern all creatures, actions and things, from the greatest even to the least, by his most wise and holy providence, according to his infallible foreknowledge, and the free and immutable counsel of his own will, to the praise of the glory of his wisdom, power, justice, goodness, and mercy. "The Almighty power, unsearchable wisdom, and infinite goodness of God, so far manifest themselves in his providence; that it extendeth itself even to the first fall, and all other sins of angels and men, and that not by a bare permission, but such as hath joined with it a most wise and powerful bounding, and otherwise ordering, and governing them, in a manifold dispensation, to his own holy ends." It is here asserted that God hath foreordained, decreed and willed the existence of moral evil; for this has come to pass. And it is said God brings this decree or will of his into effect, by creation and his governing providence, by which he, in the exercise of wisdom and holiness, does powerfully govern his creatures, and superintend and direct, dispose and order all their actions.

These assertions, which have been justly considered as essential to what has been called Calvinism, and are professed and espoused by all consistent Calvinists, have been strongly objected to by many, ever since they have been made and published, as full of impiety, and involving horrible consequences, making God the author of sin, &c. It is therefore no wonder, when this same doctrine is revived, explained and vindicated, that the same objections should come into view, and be urged, as they have been heretofore. This is observed, with a view to rectify a mistake which some seem to imbibe, while they oppose the doctrine above asserted, respecting the origin and cause of moral evil: and yet do not consider or believe they are equally opposing the Assembly of Divines, and all who have espoused the confession of faith and the catechism composed by them; and not as a proof of the truth of the doctrine; for it is presumed this has been exhibited in what has been said above; and will be yet farther confirmed b/ what is to follow; and needs not the testimony of man for its support.

[72] Gen. xlv. 7, 8, to 20.

[73] Psalm cvii. 17.

[74] 1 Sam. ii. 25.

[75] 2 Sara. xvi. 10, 11.

[76] 2 Sam. xvii. 14.

[77] 1 Kings xii. 15, 24.

[78] 2 Kings xxvi. 2, 3, 29.

[79] 2 Chron. xxv. 20.

[80] Jeremiah xxv. 9.--li. 20.

[81] Isaiah liv 16.

[82] Zech. viii. 10.

[83] Ezekiel xx. 25, 26.

[84] Matt. xxvi. 53, 54, 56.

[85] Luke xxii. 21, 22.

[86] Acts ii. 23.--iii. 17, 18.

[87] Acts iv. 27, 28.

[88] 2 Samuel xxiv. 1.

[89] 1 Kings xi. 14, 23.

[90] 1 Chron. v. 26.

[91] Isaiah xiii. 17.

- [92] Psalm xxviii. 3.
- [93] Psalm xxxiii 14, 15.
- [94] Psalm cv. 25.
- [95] Psalm cxix. 36.
- [96] Psalm cxli. 4.
- [97] Rev. xvii. 17.
- [98] Prov. xxi. 1.
- [99] Judges ix. 23.
- [100] 1 Samuel xvi. 4. xviii. 10.
- [101] 1 Kings xxii. 23.
- [102] Isaiah xix. 14.
- [103] Job xii. 16.
- [104] Isaiah lxiii. 17.
- [105] Ezekiel xiv. 9.
- [106] 2 Thes. ii. 11, 12.
- [107] Isa. vi. 9, 10.
- [108] Isaiah xxix. 10.--xliv. 15.
- [109] Romans xi. 7, 8.
- [110] Exodus iv. 21.
- [111] Chapter vii. 3.
- [112] Ver. 13.
- [113] Chap ix. 12.
- [114] Chapter x. 1, 2.
- [115] Ver. 20.
- [116] Ver. 27.
- [117] Chapter xi. 10.
- [118] Chapter xiv. 4:
- [119] Exod. xiv. 8, 17.

[120] Deut. ii. 30.

[121] Josh. xi. 20.

[122] Isaiah lxiii. 17,

[123] Rom. ix. 18.

[124] Prov. xvi. 4.

[125] Isaiah xlv. 5, 6, 7.

[126] The Magians began first in Persia, and there, and in India, were the only places where this sect was propagated, and there they remain unto this day. Their chief doctrine was, that there were two principles, one of which was the cause of all good, and the other the cause of all evil. That the former is represented by light, and the other by darkness, as their truest symbols, and that of the composition of these two, all things in the world are made. Therefore when Xerxes prayed for that evil upon his enemies, that it might be put into the minds of all of them to drive their best and bravest men from them, as the Athenians had Themistocles, he addressed his prayer to the evil god of the Persians, and not to their good god. The good god they always worshipped before the fire, as being the cause of light, and especially before the sun, as being in their opinion the perfectest fire, and causing the perfectest light Isaiah xlv. 5, 6, 7. "I am the Lord, and there is none else; there is no God besides me; I girded thee, though thou hast not known me, that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none besides me. I form light and create darkness, I make peace and create evil. I the Lord do all these things." These words, being directed to Cyrus king of Persia, must be understood as spoken in reference to the Persian sect of the Magians, who then held light and darkness, or good and evil, to be the supreme beings." Dr. Prideaux Connection, 9 Edit. p. 252, 253, 304.

[127] James iv. 2.

[128] Gal. v. 15.

[129] Gen. i. 20.

[130] Rom. ix. 19, 20, 21.

[131] "Beza well expresses it, Qui sequitur Deum, emendate fane loquitur. We need not fear falling into any impropriety of speech, when we use the language which God has taught."

Doddridge's Note on Luke xxii. 22.

[132] Calvin represents those as very unreasonable, and perverting the scriptures, who insist that no more is meant than a bare permission, when God is said to harden the hearts of men, shut their eyes, &c. He speaks of them as frigid speculatores, diluti moderatores; to whose delicate ears such scripture expressions seem harsh, and are offensive. They therefore, he observes, soften them down, by turning an action into a permission, as if there were no difference between acting and suffering, i.e. suffering others to act. He says, such who will admit of a permission

only, suspend the counsel and determination of God, wholly on the will of man. But that he is not ashamed or afraid to speak as the Holy Spirit does : And does not hesitate to approve and embrace what the scripture so often declares, viz. That God blinds the minds of wicked men, and hardens their hearts, &c. See Calvin's Commentary on Exodus iv 21. vii. 3.--Joshua ix. 20--Rom. ix. 18. See also West's Essay on Moral Agency, page 241, 246. When the apostle Paul says, "And whom he will he hardeneth," he refers to the words of God, when he repeatedly says to Moses, that he would, and actually did harden the heart of Pharaoh: And he does not attempt to soften or alter the expression in the least, when he applies it to all who are hardened.

[133] Exod. iv. 21.--vii. 3.

[134] Exod. viii. 15.--ix. 34, 35.

[135] Chapter ix. 34.

[136] Rom. xi. 7, 8.

[137] Acts xxviii. 25, 26, 27.

[138] Deut. xxx. 6. Psalm li. 10. Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. Tit. iii. 5.

[139] Deut. x. 16. Ezek. xviii. 31. Rom. xii. 2. Eph. iv. 22, 23, 24. 1 Peter i. 22. 1 John iii. 3. Jam. iv. 8. Isai. i. 61.

[140] Rom. ix. 19, 20, 21.

[141] Isaiah x. 15.

[142] Acts xvii. 28.

[143] Dr. Doddridge gives the following translation of this text. "In him we live, (Kinoumetha) are moved, and exist." And adds the following words. "No words can better express that continual and necessary dependence of all derived beings, in their existence, and all their operations, on their first and almighty cause; which, the truest philosophy, as well as theology teaches."

[144] Psalm xxv. 9.

[145] Gal. vi. 1.--1 Thess. iii. 5.

[146] See page 162, Margin.

[147] Psalm lxviii. 3.

