Response to the Issue of Total Depravity and Predestination

While I recognize John Calvin as a vessel of God's grace for both his time and ours, my focus lies not on the man himself but on the doctrines he articulated—particularly those relevant to this topic which is upheld till today.

The view of total depravity is one of the basic reasons Calvinists teach irresistible predestination.   
The Calvinistic logic goes like this:

Sinners are so deranged and depraved by sin that they cannot even respond to God’s redemptive initiative. Therefore, God must irresistibly bestow it upon whomsoever He so chooses in His inscrutable wisdom.

Neither the notion of original sin, which strongly suggests total depravity; nor the belief in being born morally neutral; nor the idea of possessing an inherent tendency toward goodness, align with what Scripture teaches.

It is clear that our hearts are naturally depraved and we are unable of ourselves to pursue a right course. Hence we are incapable of choosing or doing good on our own.  
Adam’s sin definitely caused his posterity to be born with inherent tendency to sin. But such “depravity” is not “total depravity”; hence sinners still have the ability (popularly called “free-will”) to respond to God’s saving offer.

The total inability of fallen man, apart from any divine assistance, to keep the Law, arises from the fact that its holiness, as a normal course of conduct, is outside the condition of possible volitional action.

It is not our own will that produces good works, but the grace of God. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” Romans 7:18. We can do nothing good of ourselves, but all things through the grace of God which is given unto us. Hence the grace that enables us to act rightly comes from God, despite our natural inclination toward sin.

The grace of God is not only the power of God, but also the grace which enables us to act according to that power. It is this grace that moves us to seek Him, to do good, and to choose what is right.

Thus, after man’s fall into sin the human will was, by the grace of God, capable of responding to God. It is God’s universal work of grace extended to all humanity that draw them to Him. This universal work of the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of men and women to accept God’s offer of salvation while at the same time never forcing them. They are free to reject the offer of salvation.

But what is the biblical proof of having free will to respond to God’s saving offer despite inherent or natural depravity to pursue and to choose good on our own?

*Revelation 3:20 - “Behold I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*

*Matthew 23:37 – “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”*

*John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”*

**Depravity does not debase us to the point that God has to determine everything for us. But the effects of sin are so pervasive that we need God’s convicting, calling, converting, justifying, and empowering grace at every advancing step in our experience of salvation.**

We can see this in that our sins and sinfulness are deranging and deluding enough to make it necessary for God to send us a wake-up call; otherwise we would never come to our senses.

That the Bible teaches predestination, is true, that it teaches what modern theology defines the term to mean, I beg to differ. As set forth in the Scriptures it is a doctrine full of comfort and consolation.

In the Scripture, it is God’s foreordained plan to conform them who would respond to His grace to the image of His Son. It is the assurance of salvation so long as we maintain a faithful relation to God.

In theology, it is a relation determined for us independently of our own will, and a fixed destiny to a life we cannot loss, or a death, which we cannot avert.

The tendency of this later doctrine must be at once apparent. It leads the individual to throw off all responsibility, and intermit all efforts for himself as the divine volition is logically antecedent, to which the consequent total complex of events must confirm. He says, if my destiny has been fixed from all eternity by an irreversible decree, I might as well resign myself to my fate, and let the current take me where it has been predetermined that it shall take me: if I am to be saved, I shall be saved, and no one can prevent it; if I am to be lost, I cannot avoid it.

However, predestination rather than being a relation determined for us independently of our own will, and a fixed destiny to a life which we cannot lose, or a death, which we cannot avert, it is the assurance of salvation so long as we maintain a certain relation to God.

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. **For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate** to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Romans 8:28-30

It is plainly set forth in the Scriptures that God knows all things. Not only does he know the things that are past, but he sees the future as well. “Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Acts 15:18. “O Lord, thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising; thou understandest my thought afar off.” Psalm 139:1, 2. Thus God can tell what people even yet unborn will do and say.

The free acts that we do are mirrored in the divine mind. The divine knowledge takes them, not makes them. If the act is thus, then thus does the divine mirror receive it; if otherwise, then otherwise. The act could have been otherwise than it is mirrored; for were it otherwise, then the mirroring would be otherwise. The act causes the mirrored reflection, not the reflection the act. The mirrored image that conforms to is shaped by the presented object. Hence Foreknowledge takes shape from the fact.

If by the absolute perfectness of God’s omniscience that one train of free events, put forth by free will with full power otherwise, be embraced in his foreknowledge, it follows that God foreknows the free act, and that the foreknowledge and the freedom are compatible. Furthermore the person can act otherwise, for there is seen by God in him the element of adequate power for other action. And yet God will not be deceived; for such is his perfection of knowledge that it is known to him which power of action will be exerted. So that there is a perfect compatibility between the two propositions, an agent can act otherwise than the way that God foreknows; and God can never be deceived in his foreknowledge.

Therefore, Foreknowledge is the chronological antecedent, but logical and causational consequent of the fact. The difficulty does not indeed lie in the compatibility of the two i.e., the foreknowledge and the freedom of the will. The real difficulty, (which I distinctly profess to leave forever insoluble,) is to conceive how God came by that foreknowledge. But that is no greater difficulty than to conceive how God came by his omnipotence or self-existence.

**Thayer’s Greek Lexicon**: (προγινώσκω proginṓskō, foreknow) – whom he (God) foreknew, namely, that they would love him, or (with reference to what follows) whom he foreknew to be fit to be conformed to the likeness of his Son.

In the context of Romans 8:29 “predestinate” refers to God’s predetermined plan for believers, wherein He has chosen to conform them to the image of His Son, Jesus Christ. This predestination is not deterministic decree but rather a purposeful intention grounded on God’s foreknowledge of those who would respond to His grace. Hence God’s predestination involves his foreordained plan to shape the lives of those who follow Him, ensuring their ultimate alignment with Christ’s character based on their choices and faithfulness.

The grace of God removes barriers to the human will, allowing for a genuine response to be possible; and the actual act of faith—believing in and accepting Christ—is the fruit of the grace of God. Hence the grace that moves us to seek Him, to do good, and to choose what is right comes from God, despite our natural inclination toward sin.

Hence by the universal work of grace extended to all humanity to draw them to God; this work of the Holy Spirit prepares the hearts of men and women to accept God’s offer of salvation while at the same time never forcing them. They are free to reject the offer of salvation.

**“**Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” Romans 8:30

As noted in the previous verse; predestination is God’s plan to conform them whom He foreknew would accept His grace unto the image of Christ, hence it is the purpose or decree of God by which he has ordained that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.

Called — By his gospel and his Spirit. It is a call from self and earth to God, and Christ, and heaven, as our end—from sin and vanity to grace, and holiness, and seriousness as our way.  
And in Romans 8:28 we learn that those who love God are the “called according to his purpose.” His purpose is that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. If we yield to his purpose, he will see that it is carried out.

As Paul uses the word “justified” throughout the Epistle, for gratuitous imputation of righteousness, we are shown that a more precious compensation is offered to us, than what ought to allow us to shun afflictions; for what is more desirable than to be at peace with God, allowing our struggles to transform from signs of a curse into sources of strength and do not lead us to hopeless destruction?

He then immediately adds, that those who are now pressed down by the cross shall be glorified; so that their sorrows and reproaches shall bring them no loss. Though glorification is not yet exhibited except in our Head, yet as we in a manner behold in him our inheritance of eternal life, his glory brings to us such assurance respecting our own glory, that our hope may be justly compared to a present possession.

Calvin’s Commentary: “We may add, that Paul, imitating the style of the Hebrew language, adopts in these verbs the past instead of the present tense. [Turrettin ] gives somewhat a different reason: ‘Paul speaks of these things as past, because they are as already done in God’s decree or purpose, and in order to show the certainty of their accomplishment.’”  
What Paul then means by this gradation is, that the afflictions of the faithful, by which they are now humbled, are intended for this end — "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection." Romans 6:5

Total depravity of the race, also constituted the basis for Calvin’s doctrine of election. According to this view the divine will is primary. God has every right to condemn and destroy all sinners. He is under obligation to save no one. But by his sovereign will and election He decides to save some and destroy others. God’s justice is thereby not open to question, since he has every right to damn sinners. Grace doesn’t have priority here. Where eternal damnation is justly deserved by all sinners, no one should argue with God’s method of election and His right to save whom He chooses.

Therefore, the thought that sinners are so deranged and depraved by sin that they cannot even respond to God’s redemptive initiation hence the requirement that God must irresistibly bestow it upon whom so ever He so chooses, I find no warrant in the Scripture.

Surely I agree that Divine will is primary; God has no obligation to save us as it is not God that has sinned and in need to be reconciled to humanity but humanity to God.   
However the view that by His sovereign will and election he decides to save some and destroy others independent of their choices, I find no warrant in the Scripture.

On the contrary, the Bible says “The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him.” (Ezekiel 18:20); each one is responsible for his own sin. The doctrine of salvation says that Jesus Christ died for the whole world as found in John 3:16; the only possible way this can be without transgressing this principle is in a corporate sense. If the first gospel was told to Adam and Eve who were the representative of the entire race such that their actions and decisions are seen as affecting humanity as a whole; in order for the gospel to apply to them they have to be corporately in Christ and we see that in that they came forth from Christ who is their Creator. Hence all humanity being encompassed in Christ in the death and resurrection. Truly the love of God is shown to the whole world that is to all humanity in that God gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Hence the atonement is provided for all humanity rather than for some only. And the atonement is made effectual when we are born again.   
Because of Adam’s sin a mortal nature was our inheritance from Adam and that not dependent of our work but because of being born from Adam we die (first death); and because of our own sins, we need to be born again to avoid the second death. Therefore, as Adam became a cause of death to his descendants, so Christ has become a Dispenser of righteousness and life. However Adam and Christ are dissimilar in that all receive the gift from Adam, whereas the gift from Christ is received only by those who accept it as we see in Romans 5:17. Christ gifts the state of justification by faith in the new birth that more than makes up for Adam’s gift of sinful and mortal nature to the race at birth. The figure of Adam’s transgression is in us, for we die just as though we had sinned as he did and forfeited the right to life. The figure of Christ is in us, for we shall live just as though we had fulfilled all righteousness as He did.

Faith is gift of God. We read that God hath dealt the measure of faith to every man. Faith – trust in God – comes from a knowledge of his greatness and our littleness, of His strength and wisdom and our weakness and ignorance; of His righteousness and our sinfulness. God tells us these things, so that we may trust in Him. **However God does not force the will of man; He has given us the power of choice.**

The work of the atonement was a work of reconciliation—a removing of barriers to fellowship and love. In other words, there were no hindrances on God's part to man's restoration to Edenic unity and harmony. Now the only barrier would be on man's part, if he refused to accept what Christ had done for him.

1 Timothy 2:4 “Who will have all men to be saved and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”

Ezekiel 33:11-12 “ “Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his ways and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

Hence, those who have accepted what Christ has done for them have simply fulfilled what was originally planned for them from the start. God’s will is that all men should be saved and those who perish will perish because they refuse to be adopted as children of God through Christ Jesus.

The meaning of the word “election” is choosing out selecting” and the elect are simply those who are “chosen out” by God, as the recipients of special privileges, because they are “chosen” and “precious” in his sight.

The question is   
#-# whether this “choosing out” by God is an act independent of our will to a certain plane of life or   
#-#whether this “choosing out” by God is an act that pertains to a certain plane of life in the individual only on conditions which he is himself to supply in accordance to the response made by the individual.

As a direction to thought, let them be considered with reference to these propositions:   
**1**. It is only in Christ that we become conformed to his image. It is in him that we come “unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” Ephesians 4:13. Therefore it is that men are foreordained or predestinated only in Christ. The whole story is told in the following passage of Scripture:-  
“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ; according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good-pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” Ephesians 1:3-6

Everything is in Christ. We receive all spiritual blessings in him; we are chosen in him unto holiness; in him we are predestinated unto the adoption of children; in him we are accepted; and in him we have redemption through his blood.  
**2**. God has ordained that all who will conform to the image of his Son shall be saved. Such are the elect. But **3**. He has not ordained that such and such individuals shall believe on Christ and be saved, whether they will or not; and such and such other individuals cannot believe on Christ, however willingly they would do so, and hence must be lost at last. On the question of accepting or rejecting Christ, our own free moral agency operates. On the plane of believing in Christ or connection with him, God’s fore-ordination or election operates. Reaching that plane, we are its subjects, and become the elect. Falling from it, we lose our title to life, and cease to be the elect. Hence we are exhorted to make our “calling and election sure.” 2 Peter 1:10. We may accept or reject Christ as we will. All else is beyond our control.   
  
Therefore, God’s elect – i.e., chosen by God to obtain salvation through Christ – That is true believers, who have so received Christ [“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name” John 1:12] – as to have obtained the privilege of becoming God’s children, and who only have the title of God’s elect in the New Testament, God having chosen such, and only such, for his people, instead of the disobedient Jews, whom he rejected for their unbelief in Christ.  
Believing in him, we are elected and fore-ordained to be saved, as surely as God’s throne is to stand; rejecting him, we are as sure to be lost as sin is to be punished. So the election is found in Christ.

“And this is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.”

God came to this world to save us, not that we deserved it but “In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, so that we might have life through him” 1John 4:9

***One of the common arguments that is raised is that “freedom of will exalts man and dishonors God by contradicting God’s sovereignty”***

“Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.” Acts 15:18.  
Yet one might ask, are His actions determined by necessity, or are they choices made from a free will that is unbound by any constraints?

It is one of the deep sayings of Whichcote, “Liberum arbitrium, Free Will, which men so brag of, as it includes pose male agree, the ability to do evil, is an Imperfection: for such liberty or power is not in God. To do amiss is not Power, but Deficiency and Deformity; and infinite Power includes not in it a Possibility of evil.”   
It is a contrary saying, not so deep, of another writer, (In a Foreign Quarterly Review,) “Pelagianism, and Arminianism, and modern Mortisonianism pander to the pride of Human Will; and to exalt man’s Will would deny Will to God, negating the decrees of God, and nullifying the Spirit’s influence and special grace.”

Neither of these sayings, expresses the exact truth. [For if we consider the angels], it is not the power to do evil which is an imperfection; if it were, a statue would be in this respect superior to the first angels before they fell; but it is the evil exercise of that power which is the deficiency and the deformity. He who is right from incapacity is safely, but not nobly, nor meritoriously, right. It is the height of virtue to be in full possession of the mastery of both good and of evil, and yet to do good alone. Such a mastery and supremacy belong in the highest degree to God. For it is eternally that he possesses full power for choice of right or wrong; and it is eternally that he chooses solely right.

“To exalt man’s will,” which is the charge of the later, is to exalt man in that respect in which he is in “the image of God,” and in which to depreciate him below his measure is to dishonor his Original. But when we so exalt man’s Will it is not merely to assert his dignity of nature, which in its place is a just procedure, but to show him responsible for his deeds, and to proclaim the justice of God’s judgment.

It is indeed an exalted prerogative to be a responsible subject of the Government of God; and it is but honoring that government to place in its full relief that faculty in which does mainly lie the qualification for that high citizenship. The freedom of the Will in the moral agent does thus furnish the true condition for the moral government of God.

The very existence of retributive moral government requires of God the concession to his creature of a power which in its course of action he will neither annihilate nor violate; leaving the capability, but not the necessity, of freedom to guilt, which is judiciable, or freedom to good desert, which is rewardable, and of a free holiness, worship, honor, and glorification of God, which are the highest result of a moral kingdom.

The denying of the freedom of man does not honor but degrade God’s sovereignty, sinking him from the position of a Ruler of free subjects to a manipulator of mechanisms. It takes from him the possibility of justice by making him propel the act he is to punish. Nor is there any ascription of meanness to God more mean than that which makes him attempt to inaugurate a glorious free probationary system, and yet to fail, purely from a penurious grudging of the necessary bestowment of power to constitute a true responsible agent, and from a fear that the possession of an alternative power of Will by the finite agent might disturb the stability of the throne of the Omnipotent.

**[**However it is apparent that the prevalence of free will by the finite individual does not disturb the stability of the throne of the Omnipotent as God is Omniscient foreknowing every choice of the individuals to be made. God is sovereign, and His sovereignty includes the freedom of choice.

As mentioned in Romans 9, the purpose of God in raising Pharaoh up, or causing him to stand, was that he might show to him and in him his power, and that his name might be declared throughout all the earth. This purpose was accomplished in the destruction of Pharaoh because of his stubborn resistance. But it would have been accomplished just as well if he had listened to the word of God. For the scripture does not teach us, as is commonly supposed, that God brought Pharaoh to the throne for the purpose of wreaking his vengeance upon him.

If Pharaoh had believed, he would have been saved, because the power of God is salvation to every one that believeth. When we resist, as Pharaoh did, He utilizes stronger measures to get our attention and bring us to repentance. In Pharaoh's case, his heart only grew harder.

The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay. Just as the sun's warmth can soften wax, making it pliable and receptive, God's grace has the potential to transform hearts open to Him, leading to faith and salvation. Conversely, for those who resist or reject this influence, like clay that hardens under the same sun, their hearts become unyielding, impervious to God's call.

On the one hand it will actually and truthfully be said that God was a wise, a good, and a holy God. He neither intended, nor necessitated, nor countenanced, nor purposed, nor decreed, nor ordained, nor instigated any wrong. No one ever sinned by any necessitative motive-force, or law of invariability. Each one had power for other volition.

On the other hand it will be popularly and elliptically, though not with literal accuracy, be said that the sinners were instruments in God’s hand to accomplish His will when its standpoint is to express the divine side of events.

As in matter of physic, if you take such and such simples alone, they may poison rather than cure; but then take them in their composition, as they are made up by the direction of a skilful physician, and so they prove an excellent medicine. It is not from any specific quality in the providences themselves, but from the power and grace of God working in, with, and by, these providences.

God's sovereignty encompasses the entirety of creation, allowing individuals to exercise their free will, even when they choose to oppose Him. In His supreme wisdom, He weaves their decisions into the tapestry of His divine plan, ensuring that their actions, whether in agreement or defiance, ultimately serve to fulfill His purposes and glory.

As we see in Romans 9; “even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.”  
God’s providence had overruled events to place him upon the throne at the very appointed time for Israel’s deliverance. The disposing of events is of God’s providence. He could have placed upon the throne a more merciful king, who would not have dared to withstand the mighty manifestations of divine power. Though this haughty tyrant had by his crimes forfeited the mercy of God, yet his life had been preserved that through his stubbornness the Lord might manifest His wonders in the land of Egypt.

Hence when men, or even Satan, thus subserve the accomplishment of God’s end, Scripture does often give only the divine side of the transaction, and elliptically speaks as if the whole were done by God. That is, God, without causing the wicked act, or sharing its performance or guilt, accomplishes through it his holy purpose. In this sense does Scripture represent God as performing what the wicked instrumentally accomplish.

Thus, indeed, is God a wonderful king. Great in truth is Divine Sovereignty. Other monarchs have friends and servants to fulfill their orders; but for God the king, even enemies in the crimes run, without orders, connivance or thanks, and with ready spontaneous subservience perform his purposes and win his battles.**]**

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL AS A BASIS OF HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY AND DIVINE GOVERNMENT **P 322-324**

“For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; to make the weight for the winds; and he weighs the waters by measure.” Job 28:24-25

What is lighter than the wind? Yet God hath ways of poising (balancing) it. He knows how to make the weight for the winds which he brings out of his treasures (Psalms 135:7), keeping a very particular account of what he draws out, as men do what they pay out of their treasures, not at random, as men bring out their trash. Nothing sensible is to us more unaccountable (not to be called to account) than the wind. We hear the sound of it, yet cannot tell whence it comes, nor whither it goes but God gives it out by weight, wisely ordering both from what point it shall blow and with what strength.  
The waters of the sea, and the rain-waters, he both weights and measures, allotting or assigning the proportion of every tide and every shower. A great and constant communication there is between clouds and seas, the waters above the firmament and those under it. Vapors go up, rains come down, air is condensed into water, water rarefied into air but the great God keeps an exact account of all the stock with which this trade is carried on for the public benefit and sees that none of it be lost.  
Hence people say; if in this things, Providence be so exact much more in dispensing frowns and favors, rewards and punishments, to the children of men, according to the rules of equity.

In Job’s mind, God is the one in charge. Nothing happens without God willing it. It is God who has caused all his troubles, even though Job cannot see any reason why he deserves such treatment. Job argues that his suffering is undeserved and questions the rationale behind his misfortunes. He maintains his innocence and insists that he has lived righteously, challenging the idea that suffering is always a punishment for sin. There is no place to turn except to God, but he doubts he will get a fair trial. It is as if God is both the accuser (prosecuting attorney) and the judge.

However we see in Job 9:11 “Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not.” “He goes by me in his operations, and I see him not, I perceive him not. His way is in the sea,” Psalms 77:19.  
The operations of second causes are commonly obvious to sense, but God does all about us and yet we see him not.  
Our finite understandings cannot fathom his counsels, apprehend his motions, or comprehend the measures he takes; we are therefore incompetent judges of God’s proceedings because we know not what he does or what he designs.

Then after God heaped up many hard questions upon Job, to show him, by his manifest ignorance in the works of nature, what an incompetent judge he was of the methods and designs of providence, he clenches the nail with one demand more “shall he that contendeth with the Almighty instruct him? Shall he pretend to dictate God’s wisdom or prescribe to His will? Shall God receive instruction from every peevish complainer and change the measures he has taken to please them?

Shall any teach God knowledge? It is intimated that those who quarrel with God do in effect, go about to teach him how to mend his word. For if we contend with men like ourselves, as not having done well, we ought to instruct them how to do better but is it a thing to be suffered that any man should teach his Maker? But those are very proud and very ignorant both of God and themselves, who, to clear themselves, will condemn God.

And so we see Job’s repentance in Job 42:3 “Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? Therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.”  
Lord, the first word thou sadist was, who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?   
I have ignorantly overlooked the counsels and designs of God in afflicting me, and therefore have quarreled with God and insisted too much upon my own justification: Therefore I uttered that which I understood not; that is, “I have passed a judgment upon the dispensations of providence, though I was utterly a stranger to the reasons of them.”

Job owns himself imprudent (lacking discretion, wisdom, or good judgment) and presumptuous (overstepping due bounds) in undertaking to discourse of that which he did not understand and to arraign (accuse of wrong) that which he could not judge of. Job 40:3-5 “Then Job answered the Lord, and said, Behold I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea twice; but I will proceed no further.”

Nevertheless, we see Job as a type of Christ, who for the work that was set before Him endured the cross, who was persecuted, for a time, by men and devils, and seemed forsaken of God too, but was raised to be an intercessor even for his friends who added affliction to his misery. “Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” James 5:11

“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28

All the providences of God are theirs—merciful providences, afflicting providences, personal, public. They are all for good; sometimes for temporal good, as Joseph's troubles; but always as it is here chiefly intended, **for spiritual and eternal good, which is best of all.** All occurrences of providence shall serve **to bring them nearer to God spiritually here, and to heaven hereafter**. That is good for them which does their souls good.

They work together, as several ingredients in a medicine concur to answer the intention. Take this or that providence singly, or by itself, and you shall not see the good it doth; but take it in its conjunction and connexion with others, and then you may perceive it. As in matter of physic, as afore mentioned, if you take such and such simples alone, they may poison rather than cure; but then take them in their composition, as they are made up by the direction of a skilful physician, and so they prove an excellent medicine. It is not from any specific quality in the providences themselves, but from the power and grace of God working in, with, and by, these providences.

Note further that the text does not say that we know how all things work together for good to them that love God. People in trouble often sigh piously and say, “Well, I suppose that it is all for good, but I can’t see how.” However, there is no trust in the Lord if we must see how He does everything.

**But let it all always be our prayer, amidst all things that we face**

**PRINCE OF PEACE, CONTROL MY WILL**

1. Prince of Peace control my will,  
   Bid this struggling heart be still;  
   Bid my fears and doubtings cease,  
   Hush my spirit into peace.
2. Thou hast bought me with Thy blood,  
   Opened wide the gate to God;   
   Peace, I ask but peace must be,  
   Lord, in being one with Thee.
3. May Thy will, not mine, be done,  
   May Thy will and mine be one;  
   Chase these doubtings from my heart,  
   Now Thy perfect peace impart.

Conclusion

The love of God is universal, and the calling is extended to all; yet, those who respond in love are the ones who experience the promise of good. The Lord draws us, but does not employ force. He calls, but does not drive. It remains therefore for us to make our “calling and election sure” by yielding to the influence that God throws round us. He says, “Follow me,” and we must make the calling effectual by following Him.

God calls us “in the grace of Christ.” Galatians 1:6. “He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love.” Ephesians 1:4. Still further, we read that he hath “called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” 2 Timothy 1:9

And here in Romans 8:28 we learn that those who love God are the “called according to his purpose.” His purpose is that we should be holy and without blame before him in love. If we yield to his purpose, he will see that it is carried out.

Additional References used as Commentary on the cited Bible verses

Biblehub – commentaries

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