

On every hand, we are told that mankind is fundamentally good; that God loves every individual of mankind – unconditionally; that Christ died for all the sins of every individual of mankind; that every person is a free moral agent, and has the inherent power to choose whether he will accept Christ and go to Heaven, or reject Christ, and go to Hell. That, Beloved, is the heart of Arminian heresy – the belief of which will take you strait to Hell. And, my friend, if you are a preacher, I tell you candidly, that if you are preaching such garbage, thereby leading souls astray to their everlasting damnation, there is "*greater condemnation;*" to wit:

“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.” (Jas. 3:1.)

Moreover, this is a case of the blind leading the blind; to wit:

“Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” (Matt. 15:12-14.)

It became the happy duty of Baptist Minister John Brine (1703-1765) during his 35 years of ministerial labors in London, to take the lead in Examining and Charging the principal candidates for preaching in Baptist churches and in Dissenting churches. Obviously, no position was more important in maintaining and defending pure 5-point Calvinistic Gospel truth! And the weight that he acquired with his brethren occasioned his being called upon to preach at the ordination of ministers, and in other public services.

His Ordination Charges were remarkable for the weight and solidity of the matter, and the grave and judicious counsels they contained. The advice contained in the following extracts from these valuable discourses, is entitled to the consideration of all those who are now Called to minister in Word and Doctrine. At the commencement of his Charge to Mr. John Ryland, M.A., he thus addresses him; to wit; "*As thou regardest the honor and authority of God, and art desirous to approve thyself to Him, so be thou concerned diligently and faithfully to attend unto the duties of thy station in the church; and as thou expecteth to appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, neglect not those important services which are proper to thy character; for, to Him thou must give an account of thy conduct in thine high and honorable office. Thou art to preach the word; the word of God; the word of truth; the word of life; the gospel of salvation; the gospel of the grace of God, even the true grace of God, and, not the counterfeit of it.*" - "*But how may you know that any doctrine is that of the true grace of God? I answer, – If it exalts the glory of the grace of God, as the sole and entire cause of salvation; – if it humbles the creature, and excludes all boasting; –if it provides for the honour of God’s holy law and justice; – if it is a solid and sure ground of strong consolation to the saints; – and lastly, if it is a doctrine according to Godliness. – These are infallible rules whereby you may form your judgment of the truth of the doctrines you are to preach. No principle can be true, which is not calculated to subserve and secure those important ends. It will be your wisdom to examine well, all sentiments of Divinity; and, according as you find them agreeing, or disagreeing with those rules, so mind that you embrace, or reject them.*"

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In his charge to Mr. Richard Rist, from **1 Tim. 4:15, 16**, He says – be *"diligent to enquire into the proper meaning of every text, which you shall undertake to preach from, explain, and treat upon; content not yourself, (as some preachers do) with expressing what may be true, though it be not the genuine sense of your text; but labour to find out the real import of that portion of the subject of your sermon. Meditate much on the doctrines which are contained in the holy scriptures; that you may discern their admirable variety, adorable depth, strict connection, mutual dependence, and beautiful harmony. This is your proper business, as a minister; and it is that painful, though pleasant, and withal unremitting labour, which claims your constant attention."* – *"If we are negligent and slothful, we cannot reasonably have any expectation of increasing our ministerial furniture, for the service and benefit of the church of Christ."* [The above I consider to be (even now) words of season, fitly spoken, ***"like apples of gold in pictures of silver."***] **Pr. 25:11.**

When Dr. Gill retired from his Wednesday evening Lecture in Great Eastcheap, it was carried on for some years by Mr. Brine, in connection with other ministers; he also preached in his turn at the Lord's day evening lecture in Devonshire square, Bishopsgate-street. His whole course of life was one of ministerial labour. He was also a very considerable writer, whether the number of his publications, or the ability displayed in them are considered. Hervey, in his history of the Baptists, has three closely filled octavo pages, merely reciting a list, more suited to the Biblical student, than to general, readers. They are now very scarce. All are valuable, but this *"Treatise on various subjects,"* especially to ministers, is invaluable, and cannot be too frequently read, too closely studied, for its holy maxims and injunctions too industriously practiced. The result will be health and marrow. – **Pr. 3:8.** But the lives of studious gospel ministers, whose days are mostly spent in retired meditation, and in their pulpit administrations, have but little of general, and certainly less of worldly incident, to attract attention. They have to deal with their master, to obey his directions, to deliver his message, to declare unreservedly the whole counsel of God, and then to leave the result in His hands, who has said, – ***"My word shall not return unto me void,"*** – **Isaiah 55:11.** Every faithful minister must ***"go his way till the end be; for he shall rest, and stand in his lot, at the end of the days."*** – **Dan. 12:13.**

Mr. Brine resided for many years in Bridgewater square, Barbican; but during his last illness he took lodgings at Kingsland, where he died. A little before his decease, he expressed the state of his mind by saying, *"I think I am of sinners the chief, of saints the least; I know that I am nothing, but, by the grace of God I am what I am;"* which words he ordered to be inscribed on his tomb stone. His death took place February 21, 1765, in the 63rd year of his age. He left positive orders that no funeral sermon should be preached for him; and his request, as to this particular, was partly complied with. His very intimate friend, Dr. Gill, preached on the occasion from **1 Cor. 15:10**; *"By the grace of God I am what I am."* In a note appended to that sermon, the doctor says, *"I am debarred from saying so much of him as otherwise I could do. We were born in the same place, and he was among the first-fruits of my ministry. I might take notice of his natural and acquired abilities, his great understanding, clear light, and sound judgment in the doctrines of the gospel, and the deep things of God; of his zeal, skill, and courage in vindicating important truths, published by him to the world, and by which he being dead, yet speaketh. I might also observe to you, that his walk and conversation in the world, was honourable and ornamental to the profession which he made, and suitable to the character he sustained, as a minister of Jesus Christ; which endeared him to his friends, and to all who knew him; but I am forbid to say more."*

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The celebrated John Ryland enumerates him among the seven noble divines, who by his daily reading their writings in his family, took it by turns to lead the worship there. These were, "*Dr. Owen, Mr. Stephen Charnock, Dr. Witsius, Mr. James Hervey, Dr. Gill, Mr. George Whitfield, and Mr. John Brine.*" Of the latter person he says, "*Mr. John Brine entertains us with most manly reasoning on all the branches of doctrinal and practical religion, and teaches us the most intense personal holiness by his own example.*" Indeed so highly did Mr. Ryland rate him, that in speaking of Bunhill-Fields burial ground, he used to say, "*There lie the ashes of the three great Johns; – John Bunyan, John Gill, and John Brine.*"

Mr. Brine was buried in Bunhill-fields, that great Puritan cemetery and repository of sacred dust. Beloved, These all died in faith, and who, being dead, yet speak to us the living, as a great cloud of witnesses, testifying to us, urging us on – and of whom the world was not worthy. (Heb. 11:38.)

"Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." (Heb. 12:1-4)

Whether ancient saints whom we meet in the Bible, or more recent saints such as John Brine and his wife, Anne, whom we meet thanks to the printing press and to their relatively prolific use thereof. Down to the last jot and tittle of a righteous man's life, and including the inscription on John Brine's tomb stone, all of which in the defense of the cause of God and truth, expounding the 5-points of Calvinism and the beauties of the Gospel of the Pure Grace of God; to wit: "*On his stone may be read the following inscription: – Here lie interred, the remains of The Rev. John Brine, who departed this life Feb. the 21st, 1765. In the 63rd year of his age. His ministerial abilities were very extraordinary, And his zeal and faithfulness in asserting and defending the great truths of religion equally conspicuous.*" Not long before his decease, he expressed his sentiments in the following words: "*I think I am of sinners the chief, – of saints the least; I know that I am nothing; But, by the grace of God, I am what I am.*"

Preceding her husband in death, Mrs. Anne Brine's funeral also was preached by John Gill, lifelong friend of the Brine family. She died August 11, 1745. Dr. Gill's text at her funeral was those glorious words in **Rom. 8:33,34**. And it is one of the greatest sermons of Dr. Gill's which ever appeared in print. To wit:

"Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." (Rom. 8:33,34)

The doctor divides his discourse for the funeral audience into two distinct heads – "*1. That no charge shall be brought against, nor any condemnation brought upon, the elect of God. 2. That the Father's justification; the Son's dying for them, His resurrection from the dead, ascension to the right hand of God, and, intercession on their account, are a sufficient and full security to them, from all charges and condemnation whatever.*" At the conclusion the Doctor adds, "*Thus have I endeavored to improve this passage of Scripture upon the mournful occasion of the death of Mrs. Anne Brine, late member of the Church of Christ in this place, and late wife of the Pastor of it.*"

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Just before she died, Mrs. Brine wrote, *"I leave myself, my all, in His hands, and desire cheerfully to submit to His will in all things; and not be anxious about this, or the other trying dispensation of Providence; knowing that He can make hard things easy, and crooked things straight; hoping that these things He will do for me, and not forsake me."* This was the comfortable result of her thoughts, occasioned by a melancholy scene of troubles she had in view; but she got safe to her Father's house, and is secure from them all. She was a person afflicted with frequent disorders of body, and which often came upon her on Lord's days; whereby she was prevented waiting upon the Lord in His Word and Ordinances, which were delightful to her; and in which she received much spiritual advantage.

There is a more enlarged account of Mrs. Brine, written by her bereaved husband, and which contains some of her interesting letters, so exceedingly pertinent as to demand insertion. In one letter she says, *"I was for a considerable time, as it were, dandled on the knee of love. I seldom was a day without fresh and repeated discoveries of pardoning grace and mercy, which so melted my heart, and raised my affections, that I was, at times, in such transports of joy as cannot be expressed. I was ready to say with Paul, Nothing shall separate me from the love of God; nor interpose to hinder my enjoyment. But soon after this, the Lord was pleased to withdraw the light of His countenance; whereupon I began to question my interest in Him, and to fear that what I had experienced, was only a delusion from Satan, or some notion that I had imbibed, by giving more attention than usual under the word preached."*

Dr. Gill stated that her last illness was very short. *"Her husband had conversation with her, about some sublime truths of the Gospel, on the Saturday preceding her departure; and on the Wednesday following, (which was August 11, 1745,) after two days' sharp pain, — without a sigh, or a groan, she stretched and soared away to glory! Her last illness was unexpectedly fatal. Under it she was very comfortable, resigned to the will of God, and trusting in Christ. And so, she **"died in the Lord."** Wherefore, you, my brother, and the rest of the surviving relations, have no reason to mourn as do those without hope, since **"them that sleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him,"** and her amongst the rest, when you will meet, and never more part; and **"so shall we ever be with the Lord."** (1 Thes. 4:17.)"*

More than 4,500 years ago the patriarch Job queried, *"If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee."* (Job 14:14,15.)

"For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth; And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." (Job 19:25-27)

"Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed...O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (1 Cor. 15:51,52-55)

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."
(1st Cor. 15:58)

I love you. Amen.