

Preface to the Second Edition

Because I am rarely satisfied with my own prose and often wish after publishing something that I had expressed myself more clearly as well as in greater detail, I have revised this book substantially in its second edition. In addition to minor stylistic changes throughout and a host of new footnotes, major revisions include:

- An additional chapter entitled “Predestination unto Glory,” which is now Chapter 12 of this revised edition;
- Four new sections in previously existing chapters:
 - A section entitled “The Rich Man and Lazarus” in Chapter 6 ESCHATOLOGICAL PUNISHMENT;
 - A section entitled “Concerning the Evidential Argument” in Chapter 10 OMNIPOTENCE AND EVIL;
 - A section entitled “Two Very Different Images: The Lake of Fire and the Outer Darkness” in Chapter 11 GOD, FREEDOM, AND HUMAN DESTINY;
 - A section entitled “The Problem of Evil: Some Further Reflections” in Chapter 13 (formerly Chapter 12) LOVE’S FINAL VICTORY;
- Substantially updated arguments elsewhere in the chapters just cited and in Chapters 4, 5, and 6 as well.

Updated arguments include, among other things, a response to Douglas J. Moo’s rather fantastic effort to explain away Paul’s use of “all” in Romans 5:18 and elsewhere, a further response to his fallacious inference that “the deliberately worded v. 17 [of Rom. 5] ... makes it clear that only certain people derive the benefits from Christ’s act of righteousness,” a response to Anthony C. Thiselton on the correct translation of 1 Corinthians 15:24 and its relevance to the universalism of verses 20-28, and a response to Michael Murray’s quandary about the purpose of an earthly life on the assumption that universalism is true. Elsewhere I have also made relatively minor revisions in an effort to achieve greater clarity and precision—as, for instance, where a few added sentences in Chapter 7 and a reference to Romans 11:16 enabled me to nail down much more forcefully, I hope, the inclusive nature of election, as Paul himself understood it. But new material is never easy to incorporate smoothly into an existing work and often requires both additions and subtractions in other parts of the work. So I can only

hope that the end product here benefits from greater clarity and precision without having become more convoluted and pedantic than the original.

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Behind all of these (omitted) writings, taken as a group, lies my own conviction that St. Paul's pre-philosophical understanding of God's all-pervasive grace provides a perfectly clear picture of how free will, indeterminism, and even sheer chance, if you will, could fit into a predestinarian scheme in which a glorious end for each of us is ultimately inescapable. That God's grace is utterly irresistible over the long run now seems to me the best interpretation of Pauline theology, as a majority of theologians in the West have always insisted. But when I say that this grace is "irresistible over the long run," I in no way endorse the view that God himself causally determines every event that occurs, whether it be the change of state of a radium atom, a dog's leaping this way rather than that while romping in the yard, or the rational choice of an independent free agent. For as I now argue more fully in Chapter 12, God has no need to control our individual choices in order to checkmate each of us in the end; he need only permit us to experience the very condition of separation that we sometimes confusedly choose for ourselves. So even though we are indeed free to resist God's grace for a season, perhaps even for a substantial period of time, that very resistance will at some point produce an irresistible means of grace; hence, no one, I argue, is free to resist that grace forever (see Chapter 12 for the details).

Accordingly, however tragically mistaken a majority of theologians in the West have been about the *limited extent* of God's grace in Pauline theology, they have nonetheless been quite right, in my opinion, about its *irresistible nature* over an indefinitely long period of time. In Part II of this second edition, I thus continue to argue on exegetical grounds that, according to Paul and the New Testament as a whole, the entire human race was unconditionally elected in Jesus Christ; and in Part III, I supplement these exegetical arguments with some additional exegetical arguments not included in the first edition and with a more complete philo-

sophical discussion of human freedom and its essential role in the process whereby God reconciles the entire human race to himself.