

Dialogues



Mother

Second Rebuttal to Dr. James R. White on Predestination

by Robert Sungenis

The following is a response to Dr. James White's rebuttal to my rebuttal posted on March 16, 2001. My current responses, dated March 28, 2001, will be in blue and numbered. My comments from the previous rebuttal will be in gray. Excerpts that I have drawn from later parts of this rebuttal will be in red.

An Excellent Example of Sola Ecclesia: John 6 and Exegesis

James White

(1) By "Sola Ecclesia" I believe Dr. White is trying to say that he thinks I get my information only from the Catholic Church. In response, let me say a few things. First, the Catholic Church believes Scripture, Tradition and the Church are equally coexisting authorities (whereas Protestants believe Scripture alone is inerrant, thus "sola scriptura"). From that premise alone, "sola ecclesia" is inappropriate.

Second, it is a simple fact of history that those who hold to the doctrine I espouse are not only from the Catholic Church. Dr. White has plenty of opponents in his own Protestant denominations who believe something very similar to what the Catholic Church believes regarding Predestination and Free Will. In fact, while Dr. White calls himself a "Reformed Baptist," there is a denomination which calls itself "Free Will Baptist." In fact, the majority of Protestant denominations repudiate Dr. White's view of absolute predestination as being thoroughly unbiblical (Note: "Absolute predestination" is the view that God predestined some men to heaven and the rest to Hell, the former without regard to their Free Will, and in most versions, the latter without regard to their sin).

Third, in my rebuttals to Dr. White, now amassing close to 100 pages, I think I mentioned the Catholic Church only once, which came in a quote from the Catholic Catechism, para. 600: "To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of 'predestination,' he

includes in it each person's free response to his grace." So, again, with only one citation to the Church, the use of "sola ecclesia" is not at all applicable to this present discussion. Ninety-nine percent of my rebuttal is based on an exegesis of the biblical text.

Turning the tables, however, I must warn the reader that, throughout his responses, Dr. White is prone to one very serious, persistent, and devastating error. Every time Dr. White reads a passage of Scripture which speaks of divine action in regards to salvation, he automatically assumes that the passage is either denying or excluding man's Free Will. You will see this throughout his writing.

You will also see that another reason Dr. White finds it impossible to accept any other view than the one he now holds is that, apart from any Scripture he brings forth, he thinks it is logically impossible to believe that predestination and free will can coincide. This is noted in an exchange we have later in the debate, but I will give an excerpt from it here:

[[This is an important point: the problem with Dr. White's theology is that in his attempt to save the sovereignty of God he inadvertently makes God unsovereign. In Dr. White's theology, the only way God can be sovereign is if He overpowers man into believing against his will. The Catholic God is much more sovereign than that, since the Catholic God is the one who remains sovereign and controls all the events of history with respect to, or in spite of, man's free will. As the Catholic Catechism says so aptly, "To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of 'predestination,' he includes in it each person's free response to his grace." (Para 600).

"And parallel railroad tracks "meet" in eternity, too, right? No, parallel railroad tracks, should they ever meet, will result in a train crash. Rome may use high-sounding words to attempt to mix the unmixable, but that doesn't make the result rational. Either God saves perfectly, or He reacts solely to the decisions of finite creatures. Every attempt to rob God of His freedom and subject Him to His creatures has failed, as this one does as well."]]

(2) In answer to Dr. White, I explain later in this paper that such a position is self-refuting, since even Dr. White and the Calvinists must believe that Adam, before he sinned, had a genuine Free Will that coincided with God's foreknowledge and foreordination of all events. The Calvinists cannot explain how this "mixing of the unmixable" is possible, nevertheless, they must believe it exists. Unless Dr. White claims to be a supralapsarian Calvinist (a Calvinist who says that Adam really

had no free will, such that Adam committed sin because God foreordained him to commit it, and that God predestined the non-elect to Hell but not based on their sin but on His own choice and pleasure), then he really has no room to say that a theology which seeks to coincide predestination and free will is not "rational." If Dr. White is an infralapsarian, then he believes that God took into account Adam's free will prior to His ordaining of predestination. If so, then Dr. White would have to agree that Predestination and Free Will can be mixed.

Another issue will be helpful in understanding this debate. As you know, Dr. White and I spend a lot of time arguing about the meaning of the Greek verb tenses in John 6. Later in this paper Dr. White and I have an exchange on the use of the Greek perfect tense in John 6:39 ("has given to Me" or "have been given to Me"). Dr. White's contention is that this perfect tense (which, generally speaking, is a tense in Greek that refers to a previous event with continuing effects into the future) refers to the eternal predestination plan of God by which, in the distant past, all the elect and all of the damned were chosen before the earth was ever created and before man was ever created, without regard to free will. I'll pick up the dialogue in the tail end of my remarks:

[...To claim that the perfect tense is saying that all the people in view, prior to the events in John 6, have already been given is a total distortion of the text. There is simply no referent for the perfect tense that confines its beginning to the primordial past. If such a referent IS there, I challenge Dr. White to show us where it is.

Let's think about it a moment. "It is the boss' will that of all the accounts that have been given to you, Mr. Jones, you lose none of them, but cause them to increase in sales." Is there anyone who would for a moment suggest that what is actually being said here is that these accounts will be given to Mr. Jones at a future point? Remember, Jesus is identifying the Father's will for Him. Is Mr. Sungenis suggesting that the Father's will for the Son was unknown to the Son prior to the Incarnation, for example? If the will was, in fact, known, then does it not follow inevitably that the action of "giving" here carries its normal sense? The perfect tense, especially when used in speech, refers normally to a completed action in the past with abiding results to the present. Upon what principle---contextual or grammatical---does Mr. Sungenis suggest the possibility that we should translate the passage so that it allows for, "of all that shall be given to Me"?

Dr. White still hasn't proven his contention. Let's say that the boss still has accounts to give to Mr. Jones. In fact, the boss will be giving accounts to Mr. Jones until the day the boss' firm goes out of business, which we'll call "the last day." In this

case, we can still say, "It is the boss' will that of all the accounts that have been given to you, Mr. Jones, you lose none of them, but turn them in on the last day." (Notice I had to change the last clause to keep it in conformity to the stipulations in John 6:39, and that Dr. White's clause "but cause them to increase in sales" favors the placement of the perfect tense to his own perspective). It is easy to see how the perfect tense ("have been given to you") can change its time reference based on the time referent in which it is placed. If "have been given" is placed in a time-frame that begins in the past but transpires for a long period of time, then obviously we cannot confine it to a one-time act in the past. This is because verb tenses are not independent entities in themselves. They are subject to the other tenses and thoughts that are in the verse they are placed, and in the context of the verses surrounding them. This is especially true, since Jesus, in John 6:37, uses the present tense instead of the perfect tense in John 6:39, showing that the perfect tense in John 6:39 is not absolute by any means. Thus, this is why I keep saying that Dr. White is abusing the perfect tense of the Greek in order to support his Calvinistic beliefs. He cannot prove that it is being used in the way he is claiming that it is being used.]]

(3) One more issue that will be helpful is the interchange Dr. White and I had regarding the "perfection" of Christ. Here it is:

[[Yes, what a tremendous truth it is that the people of God have been given to the Son. If it weren't for the Father's drawing grace and mercy, none of us would have a chance of salvation, whether it be by predestination or free will.

"Chance of salvation" vs. "a perfect Savior who does the will of the Father without fail." The contrast is striking.

Dr. White keeps confusing Christ's perfection with man's salvation. Can he provide just one verse where Christ's perfection is tied to whether some are saved or lost? No. In fact, 2 Timothy 2:12-13 says just the opposite. It says that Christ cannot deny Himself (which is the same thing as saying He must remain perfect). How does He do so, according to 2 Tim 2:13? By remaining faithful even if we are faithless. How do we become faithless? 2 Tim 2:12 tells us: by denying him. If we deny Him, then He must deny us. If He doesn't deny us when we deny Him, then He will be imperfect, because His nature demands that He deny us if we deny Him. Who is it that can deny Jesus? 2 Tim 2:10 tells us. It is the very "elect." These verses overturn almost every tenet of Calvinism. But what did Dr. White do when I brought up these verses? He said they were "irrelevant."]]

(4) Finally, I think it would be very beneficial for the reader if I

gave a quick overview of the narrative in John 6 so that one can better understand the basis for what I am espousing prior to reading the rest of this debate. Here it is. Prior to John 6, the Jews had a long history of unbelief. In fact, the whole tenor of the New Testament is that God is finally rejecting the Jews (except for a remnant) because of their persistent unbelief (cf., 1 Cor 10:1-5; Hebrews 3-4; Romans 9-11; Acts 1-2; Matt 23, and many other passages). John 5:40, that I used in my last rebuttal, says it so succinctly: "you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life." But the unbelief displayed in John 5:40 and John 6 is a product of the unbelief they have had for centuries. This state of unbelief didn't happen overnight. But here is the dynamic fact that issues from the Jews' persistent unbelief: God is giving up on the Jews. In the language of John 6:44, God is no longer going to draw them to Jesus. In fact, God will become active in keeping them in unbelief by blinding them to the truth (Romans 11:8). That is the kind of God we have; a very dynamic God. Despite the grace that God gave them to respond, the Jews, as a whole, never answered the call of Zech 1:3 or Ezk 33:11, so God decides to withdraw His grace, and the Jews will die in their unbelief. As a result, they are no longer coming to Jesus, because the Father will no longer draw or give them to Jesus. Thus, when Jesus says "All the Father gives to me will come to Me" in John 6:37, He is not intending to give a dissertation on election or free will, per se. He is telling the Jews that the reason they don't believe Him is that God is handing them over to unbelief, blinding them to the truth as a punishment for their sins. They will continue in their unbelief, and finally be judged for it, which is precisely what happened to them (Matt 23:37-39; Matt 24:1ff). In giving this synopsis of John 6, I intend to demonstrate that God has a part and man has a part. This is the only way passages such as Zech 1:3; Ezk 33:11; John 5:40; 8:31 can make sense. There is a dynamic relationship going on between God and man. Unless you grasp this dynamic relationship, you will never understand the intent of John 6. Instead, you will constantly be looking at John 6 for proof texts of predestination, but in the process miss the whole point of the passage. With those preliminary remarks, let us continue the debate between Dr. White and myself:

J. Over the years I have often surprised people by asserting that there is one passage of Scripture that is so clear, so perspicuous, that I have never seen a meaningful, coherent, contextually-based interpretation of it that does not teach with clarity the glorious freedom of God in the salvation of His elect people. That passage is John 6:35-45. This passage formed the basis of a recent discussion with Roman Catholic proponent Scott Windsor on our webcast, the Dividing Line. Mr. Windsor's unique "interpretation" of the passage did not fare well in cross-examination. In his attempt to rehabilitate himself, Mr. Windsor contacted Robert Sungenis of Catholic Apologetics

International. Mr. Sungenis and I have debated many times in the past, not just in person in formal settings (Boston College, Long Island, Clearwater, Florida), but on line as well. Many of those interactions were rather acrimonious. Over the past few years, however, we have sought to disagree, not so much agreeably, as respectfully. It is not an easy task, of course, but both sides have made good faith efforts. It should be noted that I believe Mr. Sungenis has made many elementary errors in his response: elementary in regards to the Greek language, elementary in regards to the reading of the text, and elementary in regards to Reformed theology, which he presumes to critique. Since post-moderns confuse refutation of error with "hate-speech," let me say up-front: I believe Mr. Sungenis wrong on all these issues. In fact, I believe him ignorant of a number of the areas he is attempting to address. It is not hateful, unkind, or unloving to say these things if documentation and reasoned thinking is provided to substantiate the conclusion. If factual support is provided, the assertions are simply truthful, and truth is not hateful. However, if the accusations are made but no reasonable argumentation is provided to substantiate the assertions, a case can then be made that one is engaging in false argumentation and personal attack. Scott Windsor posted some of Mr. Sungenis' comments on his website, and made sure to let me know about it, repeatedly. I finally took the time to take a look at the web page which documented all my "errors," and found Mr. Sungenis' comments intriguing enough to warrant a response. I firmly believe that the more people struggle against the truths of this passage, the more clearly the truth is vindicated, and as this debate continues, I believe that will become more and more evident. My original response is found here. Mr. Sungenis then responded on his own website, and on Mr. Windsor's. I offer my rejoinder here in the hope that believers will be edified, and the soul-thrilling truth of God's all sufficient work of salvation will be ever more clearly understood in the hearts of minds of His people. Refocusing the Discussion One of the most troubling aspects of many back-and-forth discussions is the fact that they can often grow to such proportions that the reader is lost in a myriad of details that may, or may not, actually be relevant to the topic at hand. So I am going to make an effort to refocus the discussion while responding as fully as possible to Mr. Sungenis' attempted response. To help, allow me to make some general observations and comments up front, and then provide the substantiation for these conclusions in the following material.

Observation #1: Sola ecclesia lives. Mr. Sungenis simply does not provide textually based exegesis. Those who are familiar with the rules of meaningful exegetical study of the text can see, by examining Mr. Sungenis' efforts, that his interpretations do not flow from the text, but are made up of assertions joined with a general, "the word X does not have to mean this or

that." The over-riding concern is always the teaching of Rome, which is derived from Mr. Sungenis' own interpretation and understanding of the writings of the Church. This then becomes the lens through which the text is seen, even if this results, as it does here, in the utter reversal of the meaning of the text. This is one of the main reasons why, though almost everything Mr. Sungenis says in his response is fully addressed in *The Potter's Freedom*, I am taking the time to respond separately: it is an object lesson well worth learning.

(5) I don't consider myself an independent determiner of truth apart from the Church God has given us. It is much too easy to fall into error, as the thousands upon thousands of Protestant denominations have proven to us over the last 475 years. Dr. White bases much of his argumentation on the ideas of John Calvin, yet his opponents base theirs on opponents of John Calvin. Each of us has a tradition behind us, whether we want to admit it or not. So its quite disingenuous for Dr. White to color this debate by focusing on my tradition. As for "textually based exegesis," I think we will see that claim of Dr. White's rebutted quite well in this rebuttal.

Observation #2: Mr. Sungenis' handling of the koine Greek language in this article does not present an in-depth, scholarly understanding of syntax. For example, aside from the fact that his original assertion regarding the use of *mh* in interrogatives has been refuted, his handling of such things as participles is a telling sign of a less-than-full understanding of the language. I have commented to Mr. Sungenis in the past that he needs to engage in a study of syntax that goes beyond mere grammar. Syntax involves the relationship of words and phrases. The mere noting of a word being in the present tense, for example, without recognizing it is also in a participial phrase, shows a fundamental weakness of understanding of syntactical categories and functions. These are issues that are introduced, and mastered, in later study of the language, and would not be covered with sufficient depth in a brief Master's program. I was personally very blessed to have begun my study of Greek before seminary, in college, where I minored in the subject. As I teach Greek in seminary now, I am often distressed at the tremendous speed with which we must cover the material. I know all too well the pressures upon the seminary student and the difficulty in mastering not only the grammar, but then the syntax, of koine Greek. The result of all of this is the simple fact that Mr. Sungenis makes a number of rudimentary errors in his handling of the Greek language in context. These errors are noted below. I also note, briefly, that in light of Scott Windsor's taking Mr. Sungenis' words over the words of three published and established Greek grammars, this information is relevant.

(6) I don't know why Dr. White insists on entering debates by trying to make a case that his opponent is not as

knowledgeable as he is. This kind of self-aggrandizing posture really has no place in this debate. Anyone can stand up and tout that he has superior knowledge and experience. I had four years of formal Greek training, and have been studying the language for the last 22 years. As a result, I know when someone is giving a snow-job; I know when someone is trying to make the Greek support a pet idea; and I know when someone is flexing his Greek muscle in front of opponents who don't know Greek.

Observation #3: Mr. Sungenis does not understand Reformed theology. The number of misrepresentations of Reformed thinking in this article (and in his published works) is striking. But, there is a possible explanation. Mr. Sungenis himself admitted, in his personal testimony in *Surprised by Truth*, p. 111, Not being totally convinced that the militant Calvinistic theology espoused at Westminster was correct, I continued to find myself in theological debates with professors and fellow students. In light of this, it is somewhat understandable how one who graduated from Westminster Seminary could still use such phrases as "God forces men to believe" and the like, caricatures which, while common in anti-Reformed polemics, have likewise been refuted so many times it is amazing.

(7) This is a common contention levied by those of the Reformed persuasion. I can say two things: I was a Reformed Presbyterian for 17 years. I know what they teach. I used to teach it myself. Second, I can tell you that Dr. White and his colleagues are the ones who don't understand Reformed theology, because it's a mass of contradictions and conflicting ideas that have never been resolved. Right from the get-go, Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, Melanchthon, Bucer, et al., disagreed on the very nature of salvation. Calvin critiqued Luther for putting faith before regeneration, and Luther critiqued Calvin for giving regeneration the primacy which he said made him too close to Catholic theology; Melanchthon, while an absolute predestinarian in his tutelage under Luther eventually repudiated the whole idea, accepting free will as a necessary process; the Dutch Reformer, Jacob Arminius, had five opposing views of soteriology to each of Calvinism's Five Points; the Swiss Reformers believed in transformational justification much like the Catholics, opposing the mere forensic justification of Luther and Melanchthon. Within Calvinism itself, there are about a half-dozen varieties, everything from surpralapsarians, infralapsarians, sublapsarians, four-point Calvinists, three-point Calvinists, the Zwinglian "God is the sinless author of sin" idea, and a few other wrinkles. To this day they all disagree with one another: Sproul, Boice, MacArthur, Godfrey, Carson, Clowney, Gaffin, Sandlin, Bahnsen, Geisler, et al. Contradictions and oxymorons like this abound in Reformed thought. Read Chapter 9 of *Not By Faith Alone* for a birds eye view into their

conundrum.

Finally, Mr. Sungenis decided to spend a good deal of time focusing upon Augustine in his response. I believe the citation I offered was clear and compelling, and I still do. I simply remind the reader that Augustine changed his views over time on this issue, becoming ever more forceful in his annunciation of the divine decree of the salvation of the elect. Anyone who reads his later works well knows the force of his statements. It is quite easy to quote Augustine against Augustine by ignoring the development of his thought through the Pelagian controversy. The fact that he identified saving faith as a gift of God given only to the elect is truly without question. But I shall not clutter this reply with further discussions of Augustine's changing theology over time: the issue is the divine teaching of Christ in the synagogue at Capernaum, to which I now turn.

(8) The poor Augustine, tossed to and fro by the Calvinists. The fact is that Augustine did not "change his mind." Many of the statements Augustine wrote supporting Free Will were written in *Against Julian*, just a few years before his death. Moreover, you will never find one statement in Augustine that opposes Predestination to Free Will, but you will find many which coalesce Predestination with Free Will, as the quotes I gave in my last rebuttal show very clearly. If Dr. White can produce passages from Augustine that oppose Predestination to Free Will, he has an argument, but I don't think he is going to be able to find any. Read the sections about Augustine and Calvin in *Not By Faith Alone*.

First Issue: mh Does Indicate a Negative Response:

In the web cast discussion with Mr. Windsor the matter of whether Jesus' asking the disciples, "You do not want to go away also, do you" (John 6:67, NASB) came up. Mr. Windsor attempted to read free will into these words, assuming that Jesus was "giving them a choice" and that this implied the existence of free will. In response I pointed out that the form of the question in Greek uses the particle mh, and that this indicates an assumed negative answer, just as the NASB translates it. Mr. Windsor contacted Mr. Sungenis, who commented that the wording did not fit a "rhetorical question." Now, I have no idea what that means, and I do not know if Mr. Sungenis was responding to Mr. Windsor's errant communication to him of what I said, or if Mr. Sungenis just missed the point (I nowhere indicated the question was rhetorical, but that it expected a negative answer, which, obviously, is not the same thing). Mr. Windsor simply failed to provide any meaningful basis for reading "free will" into John 6:67, and seemingly citing Mr. Sungenis' comment was enough to provide him with another "error" on my part. So I wrote to Mr. Sungenis and asked him to explain what I had said that was

in error regarding the fact that John 6:67 is a question using mh that expects a negative answer. When he replied, on March 4, 2001, he attempted to assert that mh does not have to indicate a negative answer, and provided examples. I refuted each example, and noted the most glaring one in my previous response. His specific assertion had been: "1) MH before the main verb does not always expect a negative answer. For example, in John 7:31, MH before POIEESEI expects an affirmative answer, not a negative one. In other words, the implied answer to the question of whether the Christ will do more signs than Jesus is affirmative." I pointed out that, in fact, the only meaningful way of understanding the passage is to understand that the crowd is saying just the opposite: that the expected answer is a negative. I even cited A.T. Robertson's comments that specifically note the use of mh, indicating a negative answer. While it is hardly central to the issue at hand, it does speak to Mr. Sungenis knowledge of basic Greek grammar and to his general approach to exegesis and interpretation. The simple fact of the matter is that I said nothing wrong in the cited comments. No meaningful scholarship would argue I did. The issue is interpretation of the meaning of John 6:67, and the attempt on Mr. Windsor's part to turn the question into a positive support of "free will." In light of this background, note his response:

" For clarification, it is certainly possible that the use of MH in John 7:31 expects a negative answer. Nevertheless, a few things need to be said. Since Dr. White appeals to the statement "many of the multitude believed in Him" in John 7:31, he is inferring that the belief of these people was so strong that they would be able to determine whether Jesus was the Messiah, and thus answer the question of John 7:31 negatively. I don't think that assessment is provable, since we do not know that kind of belief the people had. For all we know their belief could be like the people of John 8:31, who are finally told by Jesus in verse 44 that their father is the devil. This chapter is in close proximity to John 7:31, the verse in question, and thus would have great impact on determining the type of belief present among them."

Comment: This is mere misdirection; Mr. Sungenis said X in his e-mail (quoted above); now he is saying non-X. He seems to be admitting he was in error, but without actually saying it. In either case, the issue is not, as I pointed out, whether these were true believers or not. Personally, I don't believe they were. The point is that they said they believed, and they were arguing in the light of that profession. It simply makes no sense whatsoever to read the text as Mr. Sungenis originally suggested, for you would then have the following: "Then many in the crowd believed in Him and they were saying, "Surely the Christ will do more signs than this man when he comes!" That makes no sense at all! We here have Mr. Sungenis ignoring the

context and attempting to over-turn a simple rule of grammar. Granted, he may well have simply provided a brief response without seriously considering the text. But in any case, he has here been shown to be in complete error on the issue. Instead of dealing with this, Mr. Sungenis continues on with a different topic:

" Furthermore, we know that the crowd is not sure of Jesus' identity, since in John 7:27 they make a declarative statement, "However we know where this man [Jesus] is from; but whenever the Christ may come, no one knows where He is from." Obviously, the people are not certain who Jesus is, which is apparent by their doubt about the origins of the Christ. Thus, when a few verses later the question of John 7:31 is asked ("When Christ comes, will he not do more signs than which this man [Jesus] did"), the uncertainty described in John 7:27, along with the uncertainty suggested in John 8:31-44 regarding the kind of belief the crowd possessed, although still plausible, a negative answer to the question of John 7:31 is not at all certain. Indeed, if a negative response were the only one expected, then we would expect to find such a negative answer somewhere in the context (which is usually the case when questions are introduced by the Greek MH), but we do not find any here, thus the matter remains indefinite. Speaking of proximity, I think I will also add Dr. White's own assessment of the "belief" of the people in John 6, which is stated just one chapter earlier than the people of John 7:31. In a later paragraph of this document, Dr. White writes the following of John 6's people: "The blessed Lord was quite blunt with His audience. He knew they did not possess real faith. 'But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe' (v. 36)."

As kindly as it can be put, that is obfuscation. I made no error regarding mh; its meaning is clear in the passage, despite all the attempts to say otherwise. Let the reader decide.

(9) Suffice it to say, I am not saying X and then saying non-X. When I said, "For clarification, it is certainly possible that the use of MH in John 7:31 expects a negative answer..." I was implying that the Greek is ambiguous here. Second, Dr. White now asserts that my going to the context to answer the question is "obfuscation." Earlier he complained that "Mr. Sungenis makes a number of rudimentary errors in his handling of the Greek language in context..." but now he insists that my appeal to the context is inappropriate. I exposed Dr. White's premise as false. Dr. White was trying to claim that the people of John 7 would answer negatively because they were "believers." By this he meant "true believers," a distinction he made in a later part of his rebuttal. But the context shows that we can't know if they were "true believers," and, in fact, it shows that they were probably just casual believers. Thus, a negative answer to the question in John 7:31 cannot be as

definite as Dr. White would like it to be.

But that is not the main issue here. Scott Windsor used John 7:31 to support Free Will. Dr. White said that Scott could not do so because the Greek MH shows that the people will answer negatively. Dr. White's reasoning was that, because they would have answered the question of John 7:31 negatively, then this means that they were showing the fruit of the fact that they had been predestined. That is a blatant abuse of Greek grammar to support one's pet doctrine. I don't know of anyone in all my study of Greek who has ever made such an audacious claim. It's similar to someone claiming that because a stop sign expects a person to bring his car to a halt, that this can be interpreted to mean that people are predestined automatons who are forced to obey stop signs, with no free will for them to run through the stop sign if they choose. Of course, that is a ridiculous idea, but that is very similar to what Dr. White is trying to ascribe to the Greek MH of John 7:31 - - that the Jews of John 7 really had no choice BUT to give a negative answer to the question, because they were predestined to do so.

The Potter's Freedom

At this point I provided the exegetical section of my book, *The Potter's Freedom*, regarding John 6:35-45. I will simply point out that at times Mr. Sungenis seems to forget that I did not write this section following my discussion with Mr. Windsor, so he faults me for not addressing things as if I were writing it in response to his own comments.

(10) No, I fault him for not addressing issues that Mr. Windsor brought up. *The Potter's Freedom* is not part of this discussion.

Right at the start, however, we encounter a fascinating discussion by Mr. Sungenis regarding the fact that I have written an entire work refuting the Arminianism of Dr. Norman Geisler. Note his words: "Since Dr. White has brought up the name of Norman Geisler, I think it is worth mentioning here that Norman Geisler is one of the most respected and well-known theologian/philosophers in the Evangelical world. He appears on the same radio programs that Dr. White appears (*The Bible Answer Man*; *Janet Parcell's America*, etc), but on these programs he teaches an almost totally opposite view of John 6 and Predestination than Dr. White. It is ironic that two men, with two entirely different views on Salvation, can appear on the same program with the same hosts, and yet both be touted as faithful interpreters of the Bible."

There is, of course, one major flaw in Mr. Sungenis' reasoning: it assumes Norman Geisler offered a "faithful interpretation" of the passage at hand. As anyone knows who read *Chosen But*

Free or my response, The Potter's Freedom, Dr. Geisler did not offer any kind of exegetical interpretation of the passage. It was one of the more amazing elements of the discussion offered in Chosen But Free. Hence, it is not a matter of "dueling interpretations" regarding this passage, and even when it is, is the suggestion being made that since there is disagreement, that the text is therefore unclear? Those who have read The Potter's Freedom realize that the exegetical argument is, in fact, the most compelling argument put forward by the Reformed side.

(11) Whether or not Dr. Geisler offered a "faithful interpretation" is a matter of opinion. Certainly Dr. White has a bias in judging Dr. Geisler's work, since he disagrees with it. Again, notice how Dr. White first attacks the credibility of his opponent (just as he did with me above) and only then does he proceed to answer the specific charges. But the main point is this: Dr. Geisler and Dr. White are both touted by Hank Hanegraeff and Janet Parcell as experts in their fields of endeavor, but these hosts never point out, even when confronted, that Dr. Geisler and Dr. White disagree on the most fundamental doctrine in Christendom.

Sungenis goes on to make a very telling statement:

" It may also be worth mentioning that Norman Geisler's view of Predestination and the interpretation of the pertinent passages in John 6 are much closer to the Catholic view than Dr. White's. Catholicism would applaud Norman Geisler for his balanced view of Predestination and Free Will, whereas Dr. White ascribes to the traditional Calvinist view, which believes that God predestined men to Hell without regard to Free Will. I would suggest that, if anyone is interested in a refutation of the Calvinist view of Predestination, consult Chapter 7 of the book "Not By Faith Alone."

As Mr. Sungenis' attempted "refutation" of predestination partakes of the same common category and context errors as this reply, I believe the reader will be helped by what follows here. But it is quite interesting to note the fact that Mr. Sungenis is quite right. In fact, I spent an entire chapter in The Potter's Freedom documenting what Mr. Sungenis here notes. Arminianism is, in fact, very much in harmony with Rome on matters of the nature of the will, God's sovereignty, and the nature of grace. I even provided quotations from the Catholic Catechism that closely parallel, down to the choice of words, the assertions of Norman Geisler. This is surely nothing new to anyone who is Reformed and is aware of the historical and theological realities.

(12) I'll only stop long enough here to say that the Catholic

Church teaches both Predestination and Free Will. Jacob Arminius taught Free Will only. His Remonstrants countered the Five Points of Calvinism with Five Points of Arminianism. I would ask Dr. White to get it right. Catholicism is not Arminianism.

At this point Mr. Sungenis begins to provide a point-by-point response to my exegesis in *The Potter's Freedom*. The reader is strongly urged to consider one main issue: who presents a contextually-based presentation, and who uses a "scatter-gun" approach? Whose conclusions flow from the text, and whose come from pre-existing commitments to external authorities? We believe the answer to that question is clear. The Context: Unbelief I wrote in *The Potter's Freedom* (hereafter TPF): The blessed Lord was quite blunt with His audience. He knew they did not possess real faith. "But I said to you that you have seen Me, and yet do not believe" (v. 36). They had seen Him with their eyes, but unless physical sight is joined with spiritual enlightenment, it profits nothing. Often the importance of this statement is overlooked. Verse 36 is a turning point in the chapter. Jesus now explains their unbelief. How is it that these men could stand before the very Son of God, the Word made flesh, and not believe? Anyone who does not take seriously the deadness of man in sin should contemplate this scene. The very Creator in human form stands before men who are schooled in the Scriptures and points to their unbelief. He then explains the why, and yet so few today will listen and believe. Mr. Sungenis replied:

" I need to interject here that, by an appeal to the "deadness of man in sin," Dr. White is priming his audience to one of Calvinism's major premises - - the total depravity of man.

To which I reply: The phrase "dead in sin" is completely biblical (Eph. 2:1-4, Col. 2:13), and in point of fact, in the context of my book, I had already established the biblical testimony to the deadness of man in sin and total depravity (TPF chapter 4, see especially pp. 100f) through a discussion of such passages as Romans 8:7-8, John 12:39-40, 1 Cor. 2:14, John 8:34-48, etc. I was "priming" no one, but making reference to those who deny man's deadness in sin.

(13) This is the major flaw in the Calvinistic exegesis of Eph 2:1-4 and Col 2:13. Both passages are using metaphors, not providing precise theological definitions. The metaphor is of a dead person who has no life. Metaphors can have any number of meanings, but Dr. White invariably makes the metaphor apply in only one way - - his way, but it is unprovable from the context. The context of Eph 2 or Col 2 does not teach the doctrine of "total depravity" (that Adam had no free will after he sinned). The passages use "dead" as a metaphor of the condition of man before he exercises faith and is baptized (Col

2:12). The context says only that "dead" is a state of not "having forgiveness," of "walking according to the course of this world" (Eph 2:2-4), and not being "made alive together with Christ" (Col 2:13). The passage does not say anything about man's will, or free will, or predestination, yet Dr. White continually sees the one negated and the other supported. Why? Because this is what he has been taught to see by his Reformed heritage. I used to do the same thing as a Reformed Protestant, without even being aware I was doing it. I simply saw the word "dead" and figured that it could only mean that man had no free will. Later, I realized that the context did not support such a conclusion. That is why Augustine, as much as he referred to Eph 2:1, never said that it meant man had no free will. I also saw passages such as Luke 15:32 in which the Prodigal Son, who made the decision to come back to his father, was called "dead," yet the context said nothing about Predestination and a lot about Free Will.

This doctrine teaches that, after Adam sinned, man lost his free will. Actually, it teaches that after Adam sinned, he and his followers have a corrupt nature which results in the enslavement of the will to a sinful nature. The will, of course, remains fully intact: it is simply enslaved to a corrupt and fallen nature, resulting in the clear biblical teaching on the inabilities of the natural man outside of Christ, outside of regeneration.

(14) R. Dr. White is confusing the issue. Catholicism agrees that, outside of God's grace, Adam has no ability within himself to obey God. That condition was true even before Adam sinned. Only by God's grace did Adam have the power to resist the devil (a belief which John Calvin did not hold. He believed that Adam had natural ability - Free Will - to resist the devil, which shows you the definition of Free Will with which Calvin worked, and why he was so confused; INT 1:15:8)). The difference in our views is this: Dr. White believes that when Christ regenerates, the man is irresistibly drawn and cannot refuse Christ, ever. Christ regenerates men arbitrarily. He just picks certain men, avoids others, without any recourse to what they desire. Catholicism believes that, after Adam's sin, Christ draws all men by his grace (John 12:32; Acts 17:24-31). We call this Actual grace. They can accept or reject Christ based on that grace. If they accept Him, Christ will give them saving grace, in baptism, as Col 2:12 says. We call this Sanctifying grace.

"St. Augustine taught, and the Catholic Church has followed his teaching, that man was NOT totally depraved after the Fall. St. Augustine taught that, although estranged from God and marred in his nature, Adam retained a residual grace and thus an ability to respond to God's call."

I refer the reader to the preceding references.

(15) What "preceding references"? Eph 2:1-5 and Col 2:12-14? The claim by Dr. White that Augustine did not believe in Free Will? What references has Dr. White given us that show Augustine made a *de facto* statement which denied Free Will or opposed Predestination to Free Will? If he can find such a statement, then he can make a case about Augustine. Until then, he doesn't have a leg to stand on.

"This is why passages such as 2 Peter 3:9; Romans 2:4-16 and Acts 17:24-31 can say what they do about post-Adamic man's continuing responsibility to answer the call of God."

Mr. Sungenis seems to believe that the general call of repentance and faith implies a capacity that either remains after the fall, or, is graciously given to all. No such capacity is even hinted at in the first two passages,

(16) Notice how Dr. White qualifies his language. He refers to the "general" call of repentance, I assume in opposition to a "special" call. The distinction is one of the major tenets of Calvinism (Institutes 3:24:8). They desperately need it to make their theology work. They claim that the "general" call is given to all men, yet with one important caveat: God does not give most of these men the ability to repent. The general call is made so that God can cover himself and not be accused of not offering them salvation. The objective here is to get God off the hook because they know their system puts Him on the hook. When men don't respond to the "general" call of repentance, God can say, "Hey, I offered it to you, but you didn't accept it," yet all the while the Reformed Protestant secretly holds that the man didn't respond because God never gave him the ability to respond. What a perverted theology! God calls, but he gives most of mankind no ability to respond to the call, because they weren't chosen beforehand to respond. Calvin himself admitted this was the "Decretum Horribile" (The Horrible Decree) yet one that he whole-heartedly accepted, because the logical rigor of his system forced him to accept it. But can Dr. White tell us where Scripture teaches a distinction between a "general" call and a "special" call? I don't think so. In the end, Dr. White makes God a liar, since God doesn't really mean what he says when He calls the world to repentance. He just pleads with the majority of mankind as a matter of course, because that's what God is supposed to do to preserve His justice. Some God.

and the third refers to the very same universal call Reformed people fully believe in and practice.

(17) Now Dr. White proposes a "universal" call. Is this different

than the "general" call? He doesn't tell us.

"As opposed to Dr. White's theology, not only does God issue the call to repentance, He expects man to respond by using the grace God has given him. If man does not respond, it means he has resisted the grace of God. St. Augustine used such passages as Zech 1:3; James 4:8; Luke 11:19; Jeremiah 3:22; 29:13 to prove this point, as did the Council of Trent."

As opposed to Rome's theology, and Mr. Sungenis' interpretation thereof, grace cannot be demanded; it is free, utterly free, and is given on the basis of God's choice and will, nothing more. Repentance, too, is a gift, given by God to His elect people, along with faith, both as part of the work of regeneration.

(18) Notice how Dr. White just asserts the Reformed view without interacting with any of the passages I mentioned in the above quote (Zech 1:3; James 4:8; Luke 11:19; Jeremiah 3:22; 29:13). He just dismisses them as the rantings of "Rome's theology."

Mr. Sungenis' entire view of salvation, and Scripture, is anthropocentric (centered upon man). The Bible's own view is theocentric (centered upon God). Man's religions are invariably anthropocentric, always including at their very heart various rites and rituals (in Roman Catholicism, sacraments) designed to control God and His power, removing from Him His sovereign freedom and placing the ultimate power of salvation squarely in the hands of man. This is where biblical Christianity differs from the religions of men, including Roman Catholicism and all forms of "Protestantism" that likewise refuse to allow God to be free and man to be the fallen creature.

(19) Dr. White tried to use this ploy in our debate in New York two years ago. Again, rather than answering the verses I gave him, he just categorizes the appeal to them as "anthropocentric." If he can make you think that, whatever verse he is challenged with, the challenger is trying to promote an "anthropocentric religion," then he thinks he has won the battle. But it is Dr. White who has the anthropocentric religion. It is so because his conclusions are based on the logic of men's minds. You see, they can't understand how Predestination and Free Will can work together, so they concoct a whole elaborate scheme of theology which favors the former and rejects the latter, forcing them to make conclusions from their own mind about God's decisions. Calvin believed that God predestined the fall of Adam; that He predestined the sin of man; that He predestined some to bliss but most of the human race to Hell, not because of sin, but because of His sovereign good pleasure. His "good pleasure" is His desire to exhibit merciful qualities by

arbitrarily saving a few, but to exhibit qualities of justice by damning the rest. In effect, the Calvinist God is on an advertising campaign to prove His character, all at the expense of man. That, dear reader, is a God of man's making, and is therefore the ultimate anthropocentric theology. Don't fall for the "theocentric/anthropocentric" rhetoric. Catholicism, for 2000 years, has given God His rightful place in the schema of salvation. We fought Pelagianism, semi-Pelagianism, absolute predestination (proposed by Lucidus in the fifth century and Gottschalk in the ninth century) and absolute Free Will (Arminius, Wesley), and we continue to fight the falsifiers of biblical revelation today.

Mr. Sungenis continues: "The above facts are important, since it seems by everything Dr. White has written that he attributes the obstinance (sic) and unbelief of the Jews in John 6 to the fact that God has predestined them to unbelief and eternal damnation."

Correction: all men, outside of God's gracious act of regeneration, are enemies of God, opposed to Him and to His purposes, rebels with a self-centered cause, one might say. The focus of the passage is not reprobation: the focus of the passage is upon the gracious predestination of Christ's elect, which explains their positive faith. Unbelief is natural to the fallen man: faith is unnatural, and requires a supernatural explanation, which is what this passage provides.

(20) Notice how Dr. White avoids saying that God predestined the unbelief of the Jews. That is the major tenet of Calvinism and Reformed theology, but he's scared to say it because he knows how horrified you would be. Instead, he euphemizes the reality by instead referring to "men outside of God's gracious act of regeneration" (read: "predestined to unbelief"), and actually tries to steer you away from that fact that he believes in double predestination by saying, "the focus of the passage is not reprobation." So if someone raises the logical corollary that if some were arbitrarily chosen to salvation then it logically follows that others were not chosen, we're supposed to put our finger in front of our mouth and say, "Shhhh, don't talk about the reprobation part of it, because that's not the 'focus' of the passage. Just pretend its not there, and you'll be able to accept it a lot faster. Just think positive."

"However, if one looks at the context of the Gospel of John, indeed, the context of the whole Scripture in regards to the Jew's obstinacy, it is due to their continued resistance (sic) to God's grace and call. Passages such as Ezek. 18:21-32; 33:11; Matt 23:37, etc., show that God continually pleads with Israel to repent."

No one questions God's call to repentance: the claim this means that man is not what this passage says he is (unable to come to Christ outside of supernatural enablement which is not given to all, but to those given to the Father by the Son only) is what is in dispute. See TPF pp. 136-139 on Matthew 23:37.

(21) I think Dr. White deserves a "sic" for the whole sentence he wrote above, since I can hardly make sense out of it. What does "the claim this means that man is not what this passage says he is" mean? He claims that "No one questions God's call to repentance," but that is precisely what he is doing. The passages (Ezek. 18:21-32; 33:11; Matt 23:37) clearly state that God really wants Israel to repent. The Hebrew language is even more emphatic. But if, as Dr. White believes, most of them weren't predestined with the power to respond, doesn't that make the pleading of God superfluous?? Dr. White admits that they were not given the power to repent when he says, "enablement which is not given to all." So if they aren't given the "enablement," yet they are called to repent, isn't the call to repentance meaningless? "No," Dr. White will insist, "because they deserve to die in their sins and God doesn't have to give them the power to respond." We'll say: "But then why does God give others the power to respond, considering that they are sinners, too, just like the damned"? Dr. White will conclude: "Because, God can pick whomever he wants in order to show His mercy by saving some, and His justice by damning the rest." Here we have a God that is so unsure about Himself that He has to predestine human beings, arbitrarily, to heaven and hell just so He can have enough evidence that He is merciful and just. Gee, I wonder what He thought of Himself before He created man? Was He ambivalent as to His mercy and justice? Dr. White's theology would make someone think so. That's because the whole schema is anthropocentric - - straight from the mind of Dr. White. It does not represent biblical Christianity at all.

"Unfortunately, it is theologies such as Calvinism which teach that God issues such pleadings but without giving all men the power to respond to those very pleadings."

I.e., God is free to give grace as He sees fit, not as man demands of Him. The freedom of God in dealing with the guilty and vile sinner (Calvinism) vs. the enslavement of God to the alleged powers of the creature who will decide if he/she will allow God to accomplish His purposes in salvation (man's religions).

(22) This is the best Dr. White can do? Notice that he doesn't really refute my statement, he just puts it in different words ("God is free to give grace as He sees fit, not as man demands of Him"). Why does he do this? Because he knows what I said is true, but he can't describe it with my words because he knows

people would be repulsed. His is a theology of smoke and mirrors. This theolog holds that God's pleadings, by God's design through predestination, cannot be answered by the majority of men, yet the theology also realizes that this makes God look bad, like an insecure tyrannical despot. So they flower the language to: "God is free to give grace as He sees fit, not as man demands of Him," making it a case of "God's freedom" versus "man's demands." Does Catholicism reject the idea that God is free to give His grace as He sees fit? No, not at all. But does that deny Free Will? No, not at all. Will God give His grace to someone who repents? Yes. Is He forced to do so? Not really, since God owes nothing to anyone (Romans 11:35). Will He give grace? Yes, because God is just and does things that are consistent with His character and promises (Hebrews 6:10). If God said He will give grace for the sinner to repent, then He would be going against His own Word if He didn't give His grace. God cannot lie (Titus 1:2). Hence, God's "freedom" is circumscribed by His divine character. He cannot deny Himself, otherwise He would be a liar. Unfortunately, Dr. White's notion of God's freedom is that He can plead with man to repent but know that He hasn't given most men the power to repent. Therefore, Dr. White makes God a liar, since His pleadings are meaningless for the majority of men. The only freedom Dr. White has given God is the freedom to lie.

"In fact, Calvinism teaches that God pleads with the non-predestined man only because God will eventually use his non-repentance as the evidence for his damnation in the future."

Actually, the basis of condemnation is the same for all: sin. The fact that man in his sin refuses to acknowledge his Creator is, of course, evidence of God's justice in condemning him, but it is not the basis of that condemnation.

(23) Again, this demonstrates the Calvinist's penchant to play with words so as to take the sting out of their theology. They just blame it on man's sin (but don't mention the fact that God predestined the sin). Be that as it may, read what Calvinist Fred Klooster writes of Calvin's view: "Calvin emphatically contended that sinful works are not the cause or basis for God's eternal decree of reprobation...What is the cause of God's decree of reprobation? Calvin's answer is, the sovereign good pleasure of God. No cause other than His sovereign will can be adduced...For Calvin, then, God sovereign will is the ultimate cause of Adam's fall and of reprobation, while human sin is the proximate cause" (Calvin's Doctrine of Predestination, pp. 61, 63, 70). Sounds like either Klooster or Dr. White have put the cart before the horse, since they are saying opposite things. Klooster claims the sovereign will is primary and sin is secondary; Dr. White claims sin is primary and sovereign justice is secondary. These are the kinds of contradictions you will continually find in Reformed theology. And isn't it ironic that

just a few paragraphs ago Dr. White was stressing God's sovereignty ("God is free to give grace as He sees fit") as the primary reason some are saved and others damned? Yet in the above statement he says it is now man's sin that determines God's choice. So which is it, Dr. White?

"In other words, Calvinism makes God a liar. God pretends to plead with the majority of mankind, but He doesn't really mean it; in fact, His pleadings are really condemnations in disguise."

Such rhetoric from a graduate of Westminster who admits he never believed what he was studying there anyway is fascinating, to say the least.

(24) The rhetoric is displayed when someone claims that he "never believed what he was studying." Of course I believed it. I used to use the same exegetical machinations that Dr. White is presently using to reinforce my beliefs. How do you think I know what Dr. White is going to say before he says it? But as time went by, I began to question some of the basic assumptions of the Reformed theology - - as even Westminster did itself when it was embroiled in the Shepherd issue in 1980-1981. You can read about that in *Not By Faith Alone*, pp. 590-593.

But in reality, this kind of accusation is meant solely to inflame emotions, not actually communicate anything. It would be easy to respond with, "Catholicism makes God a liar because God says He accomplishes all His will, yet Rome says otherwise," but is it not far better to simply demonstrate the errors of Rome and allow the reader to decide such things? I surely think so.

(25) No, it wouldn't be the same, since Dr. White is assuming He knows what God's will is. The premise with which Dr. White continually works, but has not proven, is that when Scripture says it is "God's will that this or that happens," it invariably means that nothing can be done by another party to thwart that will, even to the slightest degree. But he can't prove that from Scripture, because for every verse that says God's will is irresistible, there is another verse that says it is not. Dr. White presumes the former because it fits into his theology.

Calvinism says that God's call to repentance goes forth for two reasons: it is used in grace as an instrument in His hands in the effectual salvation of God's people, and for those who are righteously judged for their sin and rebellion (which would include all, outside of grace), the call demonstrates the truth of Paul's words, "they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20).

(26) Let's splice together what Dr. White has just written to see the reality of it: "Calvinism says that God's call to repentance

goes forth...for those who are righteously judged for their sin and rebellion..." Notice that the call of repentance does not go forth to plead with the second group to repent of their sins. It goes forth to righteously judge them for their sin. Now, doesn't it seem reasonable that if God's sole purpose was to righteously judge them for their sin that He would say, "There is no chance of repentance. You will die in your sins and be judged eternally," instead of Him saying what He says in Ezek 33:11: "As I live! declares the Lord, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?" Notice the points of exclamation that the NASB translates from the Hebrew. Have you ever seen such dramatic, pleading language? Have you ever seen a passage in which it clearly tells you that God is waiting for man to repent? But Dr. White would have us believe that Ezek 33:11 is put there only to judge sinners, not to plead with them to repent. Then he wonders why I say that Calvinism makes God a liar.

As for the phrase "they are without excuse" in Romans 1:20, Dr. White is taking this out of context. Already in Romans 1:5 and 1:16-17 Paul said the gospel was going out to the world to call them to repentance and obedience, and part of this gospel is declared in the cosmos, so that they are without excuse. For what? For repentance and obedience - - the very things that are required of a person who is presented with evidence of God's power and might. That is why Paul says in Romans 1:21 that through the cosmos they could "know" God and give Him "honor." That's what God was waiting for, but they didn't give it to Him.

The assumption that causes Mr. Sungenis to use terms like "liar" is that he can somehow see God's purposes in that general call in each person's life, which obviously he cannot.

(27) Dr. White is just proving my point: his theology is based on presuppositions that cannot be violated, no matter how much sense another view makes. When Dr. White says "which obviously he cannot," he expects me to concede that its okay for God to issue a call to repentance to people God knows have no power to repent. But whichever way Dr. White tries to ephemize it, he ends up with the same problem: He makes God demand from people something that they cannot possibly do. In human language we call that double-talk.

John 6:37: Initial Exegesis

I wrote in TPF: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me." These are the first words to come from the Lord in explanation of man's unbelief. We dare not engage in hopscotch across this

text and ignore the very order of teaching He provides. The first assertion is one of complete divine sovereignty. Every word speaks volumes. "All that the Father gives Me." The Father gives someone to Christ. The elect are viewed as a single whole, [footnote: The neuter form pa'n is used when the entire group is in view; when each individual person comes into view with reference to their response of faith the masculine participle ejrcovmeno" is used, showing the personal element of faith.] given by the Father to the Son. [footnote: Two tenses are used by the Lord in this passage: here the present tense is used, "all the Father gives (divdwsin) Me..." In verse 39, however, the perfect tense is used, "all that He has given (devdwken) Me..."] The Father has the right to give a people to the Son. He is the sovereign King, and this is a divine transaction. All that are given by the Father to the Son come to the Son. Not some, not most, but all. All those given by the Father to the Son will come to the Son. It is vital to see the truth that is communicated by this phrase: the giving by the Father to the Son precedes and determines the coming of the person to Christ. The action of giving by the Father comes before the action of coming to Christ by the individual.

To which Mr. Sungenis replied: Robert "Funny as it may seem, there is little with which I disagree here. However, as you read on, it is the Calvinistic doctrine of absolute predestination, which Dr. White tries to assign to these verses that creates the exegetical problem."

But in reality, it is just this section that Mr. Sungenis must disagree with if he is to be at all consistent. The heart of the passage is here laid out: the existence of an elect people; the giving by the Father to the Son resulting in the coming of the elect to Christ;

(28) No, I do agree. But I disagree that the passage contains the word "elect" (Dr. White used it twice in the above sentence, but its not there). By throwing in the word "elect" Dr. White wants you to assume that those who come to Christ are forever saved, will persevere to the end, no questions asked. But he can't prove that. I again implore Dr. White to take that passage only for what it actually states. It says only that all those who come to Christ are given to Him by the Father. It teaches that no one can come to Jesus on their own initiative. The Father is the one who brings them. That's it. Finale. But Dr. White keeps reading his Calvinistic doctrine into the verse.

the use of the masculine participle showing the personal faith that results from the work of grace in the heart; the initial discussion of the present and perfect tense uses of "give"; and the perfection of the work of God in that all who are given come to Christ. The words are plain, as is the meaning. I continued in TPF: And since all of those so given infallibly come, we have

here both unconditional election as well as irresistible grace, and that in the space of nine words! It becomes an obvious exercise in eisegesis to say, "Well, what the Lord really means is that all that the Father has seen will believe in Christ will come to Christ." That is a meaningless statement. Since the action of coming is dependent upon the action of giving, we can see that it is simply not exegetically possible to say that we cannot determine the relationship between the two actions. God's giving results in man's coming. Salvation is of the Lord.

To which Mr. Sungenis replies: "I would agree with Dr. White that we cannot say that 'we cannot determine the relationship between the two actions,' but whether Dr. White's 'determination' is the correct one is something that he can't prove.' There is no question, truly, concerning the relationship of the giving of the Father and the coming of the elect.

(29) You see how Dr. White keeps throwing in the word "elect," even after I pointed this out to him almost a dozen times in my previous rebuttal? Everything he says is colored by his doctrine of absolute Predestination.

Of course, all of man's religions, that refuse to give to God the authority to freely bestow His grace as He sees fit, must find some way to reverse this order,

(30) No, this is a misdirection attempt. Catholicism is not "refusing to give to God the authority to freely bestow His grace as He sees fit." It is disagreeing with the criteria and mechanism Calvinism proports God is using, and it's resulting implications. Catholicism says God is free, insofar as His character allows Him to be. But God cannot lie. The opposite of this would be Nominalist theology, which says God can do anything He wants, even make a square circle, or have a donkey procure the atonement. If God cannot lie, then He is not free to plead with all men to repent, yet know that He has predestined the majority of them not to repent. God is not free to do that, because Scripture is clear that there is one thing that is impossible for God, and that is to lie. This should end the argument, if only Dr. White would see reason.

for if it is the giving of the Father that determines the coming of any human, then salvation is theocentric, all to His glory, and is not under the control of man. As to being able to prove that the giving precedes the coming, that is not even disputable. No argument can be presented that can overthrow the simple grammar of the verse: those given, come. Period.

(31) No one here is "overthrow[ing] the simple grammar of the verse." Those given, come. Period. If Dr. White wants to call that "theocentric" that's his prerogative, but it doesn't disprove

Free Will; it doesn't specify the criteria for how God gave them to Christ. Dr. White keeps working under the false premise that if Free Will is involved that somehow it is no longer theocentric. Theocentric is not defined as God's prerogative to save some and damn the rest, arbitrarily. That is despotism, not theocentricity.

Although we can agree that those whom the Father gives will come to Jesus, there is simply nothing in the passage that says their coming was based on an "unconditional election," nor that, once they come to Jesus, they will remain there "irresistibly" without any chance of falling away.

As we will see, Mr. Sungenis bases the identity of those given upon their "free will" act of coming; this reverses the text, and makes the giving of the Father conditional upon human action (standard Arminianism makes the same mistake).

(32) False. The verse does not eliminate any conditions for the Father's choice. It only says that all those that come to Christ were given by the Father. Period. You can see how blinded Dr. White is to his own theology. He keeps assuming that "giving" or "given" means absolute predestination, but the verse doesn't say that. It only says that the Father gave. What the criterion for the "giving" is the text does not tell us.

Hence, the "condition" he adds is human action (faith), which this passage says is actually the result of the election, not the means.

No, neither John 6:37 nor John 6:39 nor John 6:44 mention the words "faith" or "belief," so it is not correct to say that those words are the "result," nor is it proper to throw in the word "election" again. We can say this much, however: when "belief" is mentioned in John 6:40, we notice that the verse does NOT say that the "belief" is a result of the Father's "giving."

Therefore, unless he wishes to suggest some other "condition," the election is, in fact, unconditional and free.

(33) John 6:37, 39, 44 do not address the issue of conditions, so it is wrong to assume that they are conditionless. If any of the verses had said, "All that the Father has predestined, without the free will of man, to come to Jesus, will come to Jesus," then Dr. White would have a case - - the passage would be teaching the unconditional, irresistible election of those who come to Jesus. Unfortunately for Dr. White, the passage doesn't say such.

Secondly, it seems Mr. Sungenis is confused regarding the term "irresistible grace." The phrase refers to God's gracious act of

regenerating a dead sinner and granting new life. It is not a term referring to the truth that Christ does not lose any of those given to Him. That truth is plainly and without question referred to in 6:38-39.

(34) I know what irresistible grace is. I also know that it must work in conjunction with the other 4 points in Calvinism, which means that irresistible grace leads to "not losing any." One cannot be true without the other.

Those two thoughts are put there by Dr. White, but they are not in the text. If read carefully, the text says only that those who come to Jesus were given to Him by the Father.

Correction: it says much more. It says ALL who are given to the Son by the Father will come to the Father, and every one who comes is never cast out.

(35) Dr. White is making it appear as if I've never noticed the word "all" in the passage. If you check my previous rebuttal, and this rebuttal in earlier paragraphs, you will see that I always include the word "all" in my exegesis. It just happens to be left out of the above statement, but not for any particular reason. But the word "all" does nothing for Dr. White's case. Would we say that only half of those the Father gives come to Christ? Of course not. The criterion God used to decide how He was going to give the people to Jesus is not stated in verses 37, 39, or 44. Dr. White keeps assuming that absolute predestination is the criterion (because his Calvinism forces him to), but that is not in the text. We do know that whatever criterion God used, once He has the people, He will give them all to Jesus, without exception, therefore "all" will come.

Speaking of putting words into John's mouth, look at what Dr. White did to the last part of the verse. The verse actually says, "I will certainly not cast out." Dr. White's version says, "is never cast out." There is a big difference between the two. The Bible's version is qualified. It only says that Christ will not cast out; Dr. White's version is absolutistic. It says that one is NEVER cast out. Now you can see how Dr. White keeps reading his Calvinism into the verses, since Calvinism teaches that once in, one can NEVER be cast out. The Bible is clear, however, that when we sin without repentance we cast ourselves out of Christ (2 Tim. 2:12-13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; and many, many other passages).

The priority of the Father's giving to the coming of the one given introduces election and sovereignty; the "all" introduces election and irresistible grace; the promise of the Son never to cast out any who come to Him introduces the security of the elect in Christ, which is then expanded upon in 6:38-39 where

the reason for His never casting anyone out is fully explained in light of the Father's will. So, nothing has been inserted into the text at all.

(36) I am continually amazed to see at all the Calvinist terms that Dr. White finds in such simple verses: "election and sovereignty," "security of the elect," "election and irresistible grace," and yet he claims that "nothing has been inserted into the text at all"!

"There should be no argument here, since the alternative is to say that the people themselves, without the Father's power, brought themselves to Jesus. Catholic theology has never taught such a thing."

Note that by not dealing with the appearance of "all" in the text, Mr. Sungenis is able to avoid the actual force of Jesus' words. Surely it is a different thing to say "Some general folks the Father gives the Son will come to the Son" than "ALL that the Father gives Me will come to Me." The one involves the necessity of the effectiveness of the drawing of the Father to the Son, the other does not. One leaves room for synergism (as in Roman Catholicism), the other does not.

(37) I've dealt with the word "all," here and in my previous rebuttal. Again, it does nothing for Dr. White's case, except show his desperate attempt to salvage Calvinism.

"Also, the passage says that, once they come, Jesus will not cast them out. It doesn't say that the people cannot take themselves out of Jesus. Dr. White is simply reading into the verse what his theology has dictated to him."

In reality, of course, the reader can see this is untrue. Verses 38-39 will explain that the one who is given by the Father to the Son is the same one the Son will raise up on the last day in perfect harmony with the Father's will for Him.

(38) How does this prove Dr. White's point? Of course those who are given by the Father are the ones the Father wills to be raised on the last day. Why would He desire otherwise? If He gives them He wants them to be raised. But Dr. White is assuming that God's "will" means that there is no possibility that someone could fall out of God's will through unrepentant sin, but he hasn't offered any proof for that contention, other than his own Calvinistic belief that it has to be that way. Again, read Ezek 33:11 and ask yourself: Was it the Father's will that all of Israel repent? If you answer No, you're calling God a liar. In the rest of Ezekiel and you'll notice that not all of Israel repented. So how could one conclude that God's "will" for them in Ezek 33:11 was realized? The only way Dr. White answers

this is to say that God's pleading for them to repent was only for the purpose of bringing them to judgment, not to repentance. In the end, Dr. White's attempt to save God's will from being frustrated only turns out to making God a disingenuous despot.

To posit the idea that the object of the combined love of the Father, Son, and Spirit can be lost by the exercise of man's almighty will is to say that the Son can fail to do the will of the Father, the very thing the text precludes.

(39) Dr. White thinks that if he can emphasize God's power enough then it will seem ludicrous for someone to claim that God's will can be curtailed by the sin of man. But the text does not get into the degree of God's power. We know God is all powerful. That is not the issue. The issue is HOW does God use that power: to overpower man into believing or to give him the Free Will to work in concert with God's grace. That is the only issue at stake here.

The only way to read these words and not see the perfection of Christ's work and the resulting security of the believer is to reject the theocentricity of the text, and adopt, a-priori, a man-centered standard that then allows you to ignore those elements of the text that indicate otherwise.

(40) More rhetoric to make the reader think that if he considers the Catholic position then he is going to have a man-centered gospel. Nothing could be further from the truth. The real theocentric theology is the one that says God remains sovereign even though he gives man Free Will. Calvinism teaches that God can only be sovereign when man *doesn't* have a Free Will. It doesn't sound like the Calvinist God is very powerful to me.

I had written in TPF: But note as well that it is to the Son that they come. They do not come to a religious system. They are coming to Christ. This is a personal relationship, personal faith, and, given that the ones who come are described throughout the passage by the present tense participle, it is not just a coming that happens once. This is an on-going faith, an on-going looking to Christ as the source of spiritual life. The men to whom the Lord was speaking had "come" to Him for a season: they would soon walk away and follow Him no more. The true believer is coming to Christ, always.

This is the nature of saving faith. Sungenis responded:

"Again, Dr. White is reading more into the verse than what is there. I don't desire to make a big issue of the Greek present tense participle, but I should add that Dr. White's interpretation

of it is conveniently applied to his Calvinistic theology, which teaches that once a person starts on the road to faith he will never lose his faith and he will inevitably reach heaven."

Mr. Sungenis has completely missed the point. Yes, saving faith is on-going, as I said: but the reason for the security of the believer is not based upon the actions of the believer, but upon the faithfulness of Christ the Savior. I am not, in the above cited words, addressing what Mr. Sungenis assumes. I am, however, pointing out something that is well known to students of John's gospel: he regularly describes saving faith through the use of present tense participles and verbs (especially the use of the present tense substantival participle "the one believing," οἱ πιστευων), while describing surface-level, fleeting faith through the use of the aorist. My application in the above words is direct and simple: saving faith is not a one-time, surface level thing, but is an on-going faith that keeps looking, keeps believing, keeps trusting. Again, the only way such words can make sense is within the context of a theocentric reading of the text: they are meaningless within the context of Rome's man-centeredness.

(41) I didn't miss the point at all. I know what Dr. White is saying, and what he is not saying. Pay attention to Dr. White's use of "true believer" in the sentence "The true believer is coming to Christ, always." By this Dr. White means that the believer has no choice but to keep coming, since he is irresistibly drawn till he dies. He has no choice in the matter. It was all pre-programmed out for him. If for some reason he no longer "comes" to Christ then, according to the Calvinist system, he was never "coming" in the first place. Calvinism is a system that tries to cover all the bases. That is what is behind Dr. White's statement above, though he has not admitted that to you. He would rather have you make it an issue of theocentricism versus anthropocentrism. Dr White says, "Yes, saving faith is on-going, as I said: but the reason for the security of the believer is not based upon the actions of the believer, but upon the faithfulness of Christ the Savior." When did I ever say that Christ was going to be unfaithful? That is the whole point of John 6:37, 39, 44; John 10:28-29. If Christ wasn't faithful then we wouldn't be able to come for one second, let alone for a lifetime. But how does this prove predestination, election, eternal security, irresistible grace and the lot? No at all. It only comes into play when one comes to the text with a presupposition that "Christ's faithfulness" means "predestination, election, eternal security, irresistible grace."

"That application is not provable from the text. The present participle is merely telling us that the one who comes to Jesus will not be stopped from coming. In other words, if one attempts to come to Jesus, Jesus will not pull the rug out from under him and say, "Sorry, I changed my mind, I don't really

want you to come after all," like the Greek and Roman gods used to do. Jesus is faithful. The question is whether we will be faithful to Him. That is why 2 Timothy 2:12 says: "If we deny Him, He will also deny us. If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself."

There is one problem in the above paragraph: coming and believing are parallel phrases in John chapter six and elsewhere. "The one coming" is "the one believing." Is Mr. Sungenis consistent in his assertion? Would he say that in verse 40 the only meaning to the substantival participle "the one believing" is that it is "merely telling us that the one who believes in Jesus will not be stopped from believing"?

(42) No, since John 6:37 ends with "I will certainly not cast out" whereas John 6:40 ends with "I Myself will raise him up at the last day," they are two different thought structures with two different meanings. Obviously, there is no issue about "stopping the one believing" in John 6:40 since there is no issue of "casting out" to confront. John 6:40 is merely saying that the one believing will be raised. John 6:37 says the one coming will not be cast out. Or John 6:37 could say, "the one believing will not be cast out," since as long as he maintains his belief he has the promise that Christ will not cast him out. But what happens when he stops believing? That is the \$64,000 question. In John 5:40 Jesus uses the word "come" also, yet He says, "you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life." Notice how the responsibility to "come" is put in the hands of the Jews, not merely in the hands of the Father. But Dr. White has eliminated that question from his repertoire, since he presupposes that a "true believer" cannot, under any circumstance, fall from belief. (By the way, "come" in John 5:40 is an aorist infinitive, which counters Dr. White's theory above that aorists refer to "fleeting faith").

I wrote in TPF: "And the one who comes to Me I will never cast out." The true believer, the one "coming" to the Son, has this promise of the Lord: using the strongest form of denial possible, [footnote: Here the aorist subjunctive of strong denial, *ouj mh; ejkbavlw e[xw*, "I will never cast out." The idea is the emphatic denial of the possibility of a future event.]

Mr. Sungenis replied: "So far so good. There is definitely a strong denial here. I have already said above that Jesus is faithful. He will not pull the rug out from anyone. But watch what Dr. White makes of this "strong denial.""

The reader should note again the difference between viewing salvation as the work of God, where it is Christ who actually saves His people (Matthew 1:21) and viewing it as the cooperative effort of man and God where Christ makes

salvation possible but does not actually save.

(43) As Yogi Bera said: This is like *de javu* all over again. I used to use the same verses, like Matthew 1:21 above, to try to prove Calvinism, but you'll notice that the verse only says that Christ saves His people, not that they are predestined without regard to their Free Will. Who else would Christ save?

There is simply no basis in a synergistic, man-centered religion for a belief in the security of the believer, since there is no foundation capable of sustaining the doctrine. In other words, without a Savior capable of saving, you can't have security!

(44) Notice how Dr. White keeps basing his conclusions on his presuppositions. He has already concluded that eternal security is a reality. Thus, he defines what it means to be a Savior in terms of that presupposed definition. That's why he says, "You can't have security!" with an exclamation point, because security is the real issue for him. He can't imagine not having security of never falling away. Unfortunately for Dr. White, there is no verse in the Bible that teaches that a believer can never fall away from the faith, and plenty that say just the opposite.

At this point I had then concluded, "Jesus affirms the eternal security of the believer." Sungenis responds:

"Again, Dr. White has read into the verse a precept from his Calvinistic theology. The verse doesn't mention anything about whether the believer will be eternally secure from losing his salvation (which is what Dr. White means by "eternal security"). It only says that Jesus will not cast him out if he comes to Jesus. The verse teaches that Jesus is faithful, not that the believer need never worry that he could make himself fall from Jesus. I can't impress this upon the reader enough. Dr. White's interpretation is a classic example of reading a passage with one's own colored glasses."

Let's remember a few things. First, it is very easy to dismiss what someone else says as merely their own projection of their pre-existing beliefs onto the text. It takes a positive demonstration of the assertion to make it meaningful.

(45) Agreed. Since John 6 says nothing about whether the believer can take himself out, then let's not assume that John 6 is denying it. Is that not fair, especially when you compare it to a passage such as John 5:40 which says that it is the Jews who "refuse to come to" Christ?

Second, if salvation is a solely divine work then the accusation of eisegesis made here collapses. John 6:37a speaks of the

Father's giving of a people to the Son---it does not mention man's "free will" as determining that divine act. In other words, the action of giving is fully divine.

(46) R. Sungenis 2: As I pointed out earlier, every time Dr. White sees a passage that speaks of divine action he concludes that it is the only action allowed, or even in the realm of possibility. Let me illustrate. Let's say we are reading John 5-6 chronologically. In John 5:40 we find that truth that the reason the Jews don't "come" to Jesus is that they, according to Jesus' own words, "refuse" to do so. That speaks of their will. Then we read a passage such as John 6:37 that all the Father gives will come to Jesus. Can we not conclude, then, that because of the Jews' decision not to come to Jesus in John 5:40 that the Father will not give them to Jesus in John 6:37? Yes, I think that is a reasonable conclusion. In deference to Dr. White, it might also be true that they don't come to Jesus because the Father hasn't given them to Jesus. But the point in fact is that the verse doesn't tell us which one is correct, or if both of them are correct. But Dr. White keeps insisting that only the latter can be true. If anything both are true. John 5:40 and John 6:40 show us one side of the equation; while John 6:37, 39, 44 show us the other side of the equation. Our task is to put them both together and not deny one for the other. That is what Catholicism does. Dr. White, on the other hand, is forced by his Calvinistic system to side with absolute predestination, and then read this doctrine into John 6:37, 39, 44 to the exclusion of any other solution.

Then immediately after this statement of the Lord we find the direct assertion of the Father's will for the Son in saving all those who are so given, and again the actions are entirely divine, not human. So, given that this phrase sits between two clearly theocentric assertions concerning salvation, who, in fact, is separating it from its context and reading into it a meaning that is not there in the original text?

(47) I think this proves my point. Dr. White assumes that divine action precludes human action, but he hasn't proven that assertion, either principally or exegetically.

You see, to deny the ability of Christ to save perfectly any and all who are entrusted to Him by the Father is to make a positive assertion: and upon what basis does Mr. Sungenis ground his claim that Christ is unable to save outside of human cooperation? Surely nothing in this text. He must go elsewhere to attempt to make that claim.

(48) I never said Christ can't save without human cooperation. Christ can set up the salvation program any way He sees fit. If predestination without Free Will was the way Christ designed it,

then salvation without human cooperation would have to be the plan. But the question is: did He set it up that way? Dr. White just can't assume that He did and then castigate everyone who disagrees with him as believing in an "anthropocentric" religion. If Christ designed salvation to be a cooperation of man's will with God's grace, yet someone, like Dr. White, denied it, then the one with the "anthropocentric" religion would be Dr. White, since he would be making up his own salvation design.

So when Mr. Sungenis says I'm reading the text with "colored glasses," this is about the only positive evidence offered for the insertion, on his part, of a completely foreign concept into the text at hand:

(49) No, its not foreign. I already answered this in my previous rebuttal. I pointed to John 5:40, just one chapter earlier than John 6. In John 5:40 Jesus says the Jews refused to come to Him. Now, am I just inventing this doctrine, or did John already set the stage for us before he came to John 6? I think the latter has to be true, especially since we have an almost identical assertion of the element of Free Will in John 6:40.

the idea that Jesus can attempt to save a person, and fail at it due to that person's choice.

(50) That's not the way Jesus sees it in 2 Timothy 2:12-13, or John 6:40. Jesus doesn't consider it His failure. Only Dr. White assumes it would be Jesus' failure.

And is this not just the over-riding assumption of free-will that I identified in my previous article? Of course it is. Hence, Mr. Sungenis is engaging in circular argumentation, assuming the conclusion of his argument before he has in fact proven his argument. That assumption, I believe, comes from his highest authority (Rome), not from the text of Scripture.

(51) No, I don't think that is the full story. If John 6 had made some definitive statement about eternal security I would be the first to accept it. I have no intention of playing with Scripture. But I am warning that simple clauses such as "All that the Father gives to Me will come to Me," do not, in the specific choice of words and syntax, teach eternal security. It only teaches that all the Father gives to Jesus will come to Jesus. Only someone who has already decided that eternal security is true will superimpose that belief upon John 6:37. But that is a theological pretext, not an exegetical argument. Here we are only concerned with the exegesis of the text. Let's say what the text says, and no more. Otherwise, one or both of us is going to go into heresy.

So, the "colored glasses" are firmly planted not on my

exegetical eyes, but upon his, placed there by the authority of the Pope in Rome. This is borne out by what comes next. I had written, "Jesus is the one who gives life and raises His own up at the last day. He promises that there is no possibility whatsoever that any one who is coming to Him in true faith could ever find Him unwilling to save."

Sungenis replies, "No problem here, for this is precisely what I am contending. Jesus, because He is faithful, will never be unwilling to save those who come to Him. But I hasten to add that this present statement by Dr. White is not the same as his previous statement concerning "eternal security.""

I truly hope the reader can see the issue: for Robert Sungenis and the Roman Church, Jesus is more than willing to save, but is incapable of doing so outside of the cooperation of those He is trying to save.

(52) The only thing the reader should see is that Dr. White has already presumed that a salvation plan that includes man's cooperation is principally wrong. But from where does that premise come? From John Calvin and Martin Luther. They were the first to say (outside of Lucidus and Gottschalk) that man's cooperation could not be involved in salvation.

So Christ's willingness does not, in Rome's system, translate into the accomplished fact of salvation. The text, however, says just the opposite: Christ's willingness results in the perfection of the work because Christ is a perfect Savior who is able to save!

(53) Dr. White would first have to prove that "willingness" means that man's sins cannot curtail Christ's desire to see all men saved, but he hasn't shown that to us yet. He just keeps assuming its true, and then shifts to "Rome" and her influence. Dr. White and the Calvinists don't believe that Christ desires to save all men; never did, never will. He believes Christ created them for eternal damnation. That is the only way Dr. White can have a God who "saves perfectly," as he calls it, since only those He predestines without their free will will be saved, and those he predestines without their free will to Hell will not be saved.

I continued in TPF: But this tremendous promise is the second half of a sentence. It is based upon the truth that was first proclaimed. This promise is to those who are given by the Father to the Son and to no one else. Of course, we will see in verse 44 that no one but those who are so given will be coming to Christ in faith anyway: but there are surely those who, like many in that audience in Capernaum, are willing to follow for a while, willing to believe for a season.

This promise is not theirs. Sungenis responds: "Dr. White implies that he has made an important statement above, but there is nothing of real significance here."

The only way I can translate this statement is, "It is not significant to note that the promise of Christ not to cast out any who come to Him is based upon the divine sovereignty of the Father in entrusting His people to the Son, and that despite the fact that Jesus then spent the next two verses explaining that very relationship, so that He obviously felt that it was most important to do so." Of course, those who are not given to Jesus by the Father do not have the promise that Jesus will not cast them out. The reason they don't have that promise is because they have never come to Jesus. According to the verse's premise, you can't have the promise that Jesus will not cast you out unless you come to Jesus. In logic, the condition of the category must be fulfilled in order for the category to enact its stipulations. In effect, Dr. White is making an issue of a non-issue. Please note that Mr. Sungenis forgot that the only ones who come to the Son are those given to Him by the Father, hence the connection I described above.

(54) I forgot? I Don't think so. I've been saying that the Father gave them to Jesus since this debate started.

I continued and brought out the theocentricity of the passage in these words: The promise to the elect, however, could not be more precious. Since Christ is able to save perfectly (He is not dependent upon man's will, man's cooperation), His promise means the elect cannot ever be lost. To which Sungenis replied:

Again, Dr. White keeps adding things to the passage that the passage does not address. Where does the passage mention, let alone deny, "man's will, man's cooperation"??

One is hard pressed to respond to such a question. When the passage presents the Father's divine gift to the Son and preceding and determining the very identity of every single one who, as a result of being given, come to the Son, and then goes on to reveal the Father's will for the Son to save every single one of those given by the Father to the Son, the issue is not "where does the passage deny" synergism, the issue is, how in the world could anyone read synergism into the passage as Mr. Sungenis does at every turn?

(55) I don't "read synergism" into the passage, because its not there. But I also don't read "election" into the passage because its not there either. The only thing I read is that all that the Father gives the Son will come to the Son. It is the theology of Dr. White which is making the verse one which teaches a

monergistic salvation.

Where does the passage conclude that those who come can never be lost?? It does so by stating that 1) all who are given come, and 2) the Son raises up all those who are given to Him in perfection (i.e., He loses none). This is simple contextual reading.

(56) Correction. The passage says it is the Father's "will" that these people are not lost. It doesn't say that some will not be lost. But obviously, to Dr. White, the Father's will and the idea that they will never be lost are one in the same thing. That is because Dr. White comes to the text with a presupposed idea of God's will. That presupposed idea is that, whenever you read of "God's will" in Scripture it refers to a will that cannot be frustrated by the devil or man. Now let me qualify this a little before I go on to rebut it. In one sense, we can say that God's will will be done. God knows the devil and man are going to sin of their own Free Will and thus God makes His ultimate plans accordingly. That is why the passage I earlier quoted from the Catholic Catechism, para 600: "To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of 'predestination,' he includes in it each person's free response to his grace." So in that sense, and that sense only, God's will cannot be frustrated. But that is not Dr. White's view. His view is that God's will cannot be frustrated in any sense of the word. For example, Dr. White believes that the Devil's rebellion and Adam's sin were willed by God's decree, that is, they were both predestined to fall into sin. Thus, their sin didn't frustrate God's will, rather, they fulfilled God's will. Similarly, Dr. White believes that God wills that only certain people will be saved, arbitrarily, without any recourse to their Free Will (and if we follow F. Klooster's remarks of true Calvinism, without any regard to their sin). Thus, when Dr. White reads a passage such as John 6:39, it can have only one meaning for him: Since it is God's will that nothing will be lost, then nothing will be lost. Now, considering that I have proposed two understandings of God's will, is Dr. White's version a plausible interpretation of the passage? Yes, it is plausible. But whether it is the correct interpretation of the passage is another story altogether. The point in fact is that we don't know which understanding of God's will is displayed in this passage, and that's what makes discussions of predestination and free will so difficult sometimes. The temptation is to side with one version of God's will at the expense of the other, which is what Dr. White and the Calvinists are prone to do. That is why they interpret a passage such as 1 Tim 2:4 to mean "God desires to save all the elect (or all kinds of men)" rather than as the text says, "God desire to save all men." They've already presumed that the definition of "God's will" we must work with is the one that cannot be frustrated. In effect, they put God in a box of their own liking. And when it comes to interpreting passages

such as Ezek 33:11, they will ignore the plain sense of the passage and claim that God's pleading is only for the purpose of judging the people for their sin, not for seeking their repentance, as we saw in Dr. White's explanation earlier.

"Those thoughts are simply not there. Granted, "Christ is able to save perfectly," because He is God and does everything perfectly. Would we want a savior who is imperfect? Of course not. But how does Dr. White get from Christ's perfection to the conclusion that Christ does not anticipate "man's will, man's cooperation."

Does not anticipate? Is this stated in the context of accusing me of eisegetical insertions into the text? If Christ saves perfectly, Mr. Sungenis, are you seriously suggesting that He only saves perfectly those who enable Him to do so? The text ostensibly under consideration says that Christ saves perfectly those that the Father gives Him, and that those who come to Him are, in fact, those that are given by the Father (remember, this whole section is about why those who see Jesus do not believe while the Apostles, as we will see by the end of the discourse, do).

(57) The text does not speak of Christ "saving perfectly," whatever Dr. White intends to mean by that phrase. It is Dr. White who keeps throwing the word "perfectly" into the mix, and then using this insertion to prove that "perfectly" means that man's will is not involved in salvation. Here again we have the problem of "will." Dr. White is assuming there can be no fallout from the raising, since God's will to save them cannot be frustrated. But he hasn't proven that such a definition of "God's will" is being used in the text.

I had written in TPF: Since He will not cast out, and there is no power greater than His own, the one who comes to Christ will find Him an all-sufficient and perfect Savior. This is the only basis of "eternal security" or the perseverance of the saints: they look to a perfect Savior who is able to save. It is Christ's ability to save that means the redeemed cannot be lost. If it were, in fact, a synergistic relationship, there could never be any ground for absolute confidence and security.

Sungenis replies: "Without restating the obvious, you can again see how Dr. White has confused Christ's perfection and all-sufficiency with "eternal security.""

The contrast of theocentric and anthropocentric systems is now clear: if Christ is a perfect Savior then He is able to accomplish salvation in the Scriptural view. But in Rome's view, Christ has a lesser task: making salvation possible but not actually accomplishing it. Hence, from Rome's view, Christ can be a

perfect Savior by making men savable, while as we will see in this text of Scripture, the reality is that Christ is a perfect Savior because He actually saves those who are given to Him.

(58) No, the issue is not theocentric versus anthropocentric. That polarity is a red-herring. The issue is how we understand God's will? You'll notice in the above paragraph that Dr. White is working with only one understanding of God's will - - the one he favors for his Calvinistic viewpoint. But that is short-sighted, since he will then eliminate all the other passages in Scripture which speak of God's will differently. That is why the Catholic Church says that the context for interpreting a verse of Scripture is the whole Bible. We have to understand all of what the Bible says before we settle on only one particular viewpoint of God.

"Moreover, we can easily turn the tables here and say that, in being perfect, Christ has an obligation to reject those who, once having come to Him, become faithless and remain so. If He didn't reject them, then he wouldn't be true to Himself, as 2 Timothy 2:12-13 tells us so clearly."

Note that in Mr. Sungenis' view, faith is not the work of Christ either: that is, faith that truly brings a person to Christ can in essence "go bad" (the truth is many come not to Christ but to religion on the basis of a non-saving "faith" in something other than the Savior), resulting in the above scenario.

(59) Faith is a gift of God. But that doesn't mean faith does not involve man's cooperation with God's grace. Again, we have Dr. White falling into the same trap. Every time he reads of a divine action, this means that man's cooperation cannot be involved. He hasn't proved that assertion, he just assumes it to be true.

However, are we not told that Christ is the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-2)?

(60) He is the author and finisher of our faith, but what Dr. White failed to do was look at this verse in context. He just throws the verse out there, one which refers to God's action, and then implies, "See, does this not teach that it is all God's action and none of man's?" The answer is No. It only says that Christ is the author and finisher of our faith. Similarly, we can both agree that God is the "author" of the Bible. Does that mean that man is not involved at all in the writing of the Bible? That man's will is not involved in the writing of the Bible? Of course not. We have a mysterious synergism between God and man in the writing of the Bible, something that cannot be explained by our limited understanding. Moreover, if Dr. White had quoted Hebrews 12:1 he would have seen man's cooperation. The writer says, "let us also lay aside every

encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Now, why would the writer plead with them to do such things if they were all predetermined eventualities? Again, Dr. White's view is that these are not pleadings, they are declarative sentences, ie., "you WILL lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin does NOT so easily entangle us, and you WILL run with endurance the race set before us." This is what Dr. White's view does with the whole Bible - - any verse that portrays man's involvement is reworded and reworked to eliminate man's involvement.

Not only that, look at Hebrews 12:15-17: "See to it that no one comes short of the grace of God; that no root of bitterness springing up causes trouble, and by it many be defiled; that there be no immoral or godless person like Esau, who sold his own birthright for a single meal. For you know that even afterwards, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears." Now you can see why the writer warns them in verse 1 to "lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles them." If not, they will end up like Esau, despised and cursed. But you can depend upon it that Dr. White will come back and say, "Yes, but people like Esau were never truly saved in the first place, so naturally they are going to fall away." So in this case, instead of turning the pleadings into declarative sentences, Dr. White will keep them as pleadings, but with one caveat - - they are not pleadings to get the people to repent (since if they are not "truly saved" they can't repent no matter how hard they try) but they are pleadings to convict them in sin and bring them to judgment, as we have seen him say before. Either way, Scripture is twisted to conform to the wax nose of Calvinism.

The divine nature of saving faith is here denied by Mr. Sungenis. The person who has been drawn by the Father to the Son (John 6:44-45) hears and learns from God and does not deny Christ, hence 2 Timothy 2:12-13 is not making reference to such a person. Keep these statements by Mr. Sungenis in mind as we come to the discussion of 6:38-39 and the will of the Father for the Son.

(61) Dr. White has proven my point about his siding with only one understanding of "God's will" in John 6. To maintain this understanding of God's will, Dr. White dismisses 2 Timothy 2:12-13 (which gives a different understanding of God's will than the one Dr. White sees in John 6) as not relevant to the discussion. Even at that, notice that Dr. White has not explained 2 Tim 2:12-13 even in its own context, rather, he just ignores the impact of the passage altogether.

I had addressed this tremendous passage in TPF in these words: Many stop at verse 37 and miss the tremendous

revelation we are privileged to receive in the following verses. Why will Christ never cast out those who come to Him? Verse 38 begins with a connective that indicates a continuation of the thought: verses 38 and 39 explain verse 37. Christ keeps all those who come to Him for He is fulfilling the WILL of the Father. "I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." The divine Messiah always does the WILL of the Father. The preceding chapter in John's Gospel had made this very clear. There is perfect harmony between the work of the Father and the Son. And what is the WILL of the Father for the Son? In simple terms, it is the Father's WILL that the Son save perfectly. "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." It is vital to remember that this continues the explanation of why He does not cast out the one coming to Him. We must see this for some might be tempted to say that the Father has entrusted all things into the hands of the Son, and that this passage is saying nothing more than the Son will act properly in regards to what the Father has given Him. But the context is clear: v. 37 speaks of the Father "giving" the elect to the Son, and v. 39 continues the same thought. Those who are given infallibly come to the Son in v. 37, and it is these same ones, the elect, [footnote: Jesus uses the neuter pa'n again to refer to the elect as an entire group, though the fact that this group is made up of individuals is seen in their being raised to life and in their individually coming to Him.] who are raised up at the last day.

(62) Notice how many times Dr. White refers to the WILL of the Father. (I have capitalized them). Again, Dr. White is working on the unproven premise that John 6 is using "God's will" such that it cannot be frustrated by man's sin.

Sungenis replies: Notice how Dr. White inserts the word "elect" into John 6:37, but the verse does not mention the word elect. It only says, "ALL that the Father gives to me..." The neuter of pa'n does not mean anything crucial here, since most pa'ns in Greek are neuter, unless a masculine or feminine referent is in view.

Two obvious replies: 1) the term "elect" is thoroughly biblical (Romans 8:33, 11:7, 2 Timothy 2:10).

(63) I find it interesting that Dr. White refers to 2 Timothy 2:10 to support his prerogative to use the word "elect," yet this is the very context (2 Timothy 2:12-13) that I used above to counter Dr. White's assertion that those chosen could not eventually deny Christ, to which he said that 2 Tim 2:12-13 was not making reference to such a person. In fact, 2 Timothy 2:10-13 is one of the clearest passages to support the Catholic position. Paul mentions the "elect" in verse 10, so we know who he is addressing. But then, addressing the same "elect" people,

he says two verses later, "If we deny Him, He also will deny us." Who else is addressed here beside the "elect"? The only ones involved are the "elect," yet it is said that they could "deny" Christ and that he would "deny" them. So, from now on, every time I see the word "elect" in Dr. White's writings, I'll just refer him to 2 Tim 2:10-13, the great anti-Calvinist passage teaching synergism - - that the elect could deny Christ.

Of course it is not used in John 6:37-39, but one must seriously ask Mr. Sungenis who, then, is being referred to if, in fact, the people given by the Father to the Son in John 6:37-39 are not the same body in view in Romans 8:33 or 2 Timothy 2:10?

(64) I refer the reader to 2 Tim. 2:10-13, as I stated above.

Did Paul endure "all things" so that someone other than those given by the Father to the Son would obtain salvation in Christ Jesus? Of course not. So the term is not being "inserted." The term is used in Scripture of this very group, so why not use it here? 2) The Greek term *pan*/*pasa*/*pan* is 3-1-3 adjective declinable in all three genders: every instance of *pan* is, of course neuter: *pan* is never masculine or feminine, for obvious reasons. So, Mr. Sungenis is simply wrong to say "most *pans* in Greek are neuter." All uses of *pan* in Greek are neuter. His statement would be as erroneous as saying "most uses of *tauth*" in Greek are feminine." No, all uses of *tauth*" in Greek are feminine. That's just basic knowledge.

(65) Dr. White knows that I was just making a hyperbolic/satirical comment about *pan*, yet he tries to make it appear as if I don't know what I am talking about. See below regarding more detail on *pan*.

Secondly, since it seems Mr. Sungenis is not familiar with the declension and forms of *pan*/*pasa*/*pan*, he has missed the point, a point noted in most critical commentaries on the passage. *Pan* is a neuter singular. Yet, it is being used of the people the Father gives the Son. Generally, one would use a masculine plural to refer to a group, or at least a masculine singular when emphasizing the "singularity" of the group (similar to using the singular word "crowd" though there is a composite unity inherent in the term: a crowd is a singular entity made up of a plurality of individuals). Yet, as I pointed out, when speaking of the elect of God as a singular whole, Jesus uses the neuter singular. The object of God's elective decree is a distinct and definite people, entrusted to Christ for full salvation. Then, when the Lord speaks of the individual who, upon being drawn and enabled of the Father, comes infallibly to Christ, the masculine singular is used (6:40). Mr. Sungenis may not think this relevant because he is unfamiliar with the discussion of the text and the forms found therein, but it is relevant to any

meaningful exegesis.

(66) The commentaries that make the point about the use of the neuter *pan* are careful not to throw the word "elective decree" into the grammar as Dr. White has done. The commentaries are careful to say that *pan* simply refers to all believers throughout time. The same commentaries say that a masculine adjective could have been used, but the neuter is just a little stronger in getting across the point. Yet Dr. White assumes that there is a big distinction between the neuter and the masculine.

Mr. Sungenis then added: "Incidentally, with regard to inserting the word "elect," Calvinists do the same thing with 1 Timothy 2:4. The verse says, "God desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." John Calvin and his followers say that the only way this verse can be understood is to read it as: "God desires all the elect to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth." Likewise, they will say of 1 John 2:2, "and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the elect of the whole world." But neither verse is saying what the Calvinist wants it to say."

A couple of quick points: the actual interpretation offered by Reformed writers regarding 1 Timothy 2:4 is that "all men" means "all kinds of men." I discussed this in TPF, pp. 139-145 (and 1 John 2:2 in TPF pp. 274-277).

(67) We'll have to thank Dr. White for admitting that he has changed the words of 1 Tim 2:4 to read "all kinds of men" rather than what the text says, "all men." They are two totally different propositions. The Greek word for "kind" is "*genos*," but that is not used in 1 Tim 2:4.

But just to show that Calvin's interpretation was hardly anything new, I offer the following words from Augustine, Chapter 103 of the *Enchiridion*: Accordingly, when we hear and read in Scripture that He "will have all men to be saved," although we know well that all men are not saved, we are not on that account to restrict the omnipotence of God, but are rather to understand the Scripture, "Who will have all men to be saved," as meaning that no man is saved unless God wills his salvation: not that there is no man whose salvation He does not will, but that no man is saved apart from His will; and that, therefore, we should pray Him to will our salvation, because if He will it, it must necessarily be accomplished. And it was of prayer to God that the apostle was speaking when he used this expression. And on the same principle we interpret the expression in the Gospel: "The true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world:" not that there is no man who is not enlightened, but that no man is enlightened except by

Him. Or, it is said, "Who will have all men to be saved;" not that there is no man whose salvation He does not will (for how, then, explain the fact that He was unwilling to work miracles in the presence of some who, He said, would have repented if He had worked them?), but that we are to understand by "all men," the human race in all its varieties of rank and circumstances, - kings, subjects; noble, plebeian, high, low, learned, and unlearned; the sound in body, the feeble, the clever, the dull, the foolish, the rich, the poor, and those of middling circumstances; males, females, infants, boys, youths; young, middle-aged, and old men; of every tongue, of every fashion, of all arts, of all professions, with all the innumerable differences of will and conscience, and whatever else there is that makes a distinction among men. For which of all these classes is there out of which God does not will that men should be saved in all nations through His only-begotten Son, our Lord, and therefore does save them; for the Omnipotent cannot will in vain, whatsoever He may will? Now the apostle had enjoined that prayers should be made for all men, and had especially added, "For kings, and for all that are in authority," who might be supposed, in the pride and pomp of worldly station, to shrink from the humility of the Christian faith. Then saying, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior," that is, that prayers should be made for such as these, he immediately adds, as if to remove any ground of despair, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." God, then, in His great condescension has judged it good to grant to the prayers of the humble the salvation of the exalted; and assuredly we have many examples of this. Our Lord, too, makes use of the same mode of speech in the Gospel, when He says to the Pharisees: "Ye tithe mint, and rue, and every herb." For the Pharisees did not tithe what belonged to others, nor all the herbs of all the inhabitants of other lands. As, then, in this place we must understand by "every herb," every kind of herbs, so in the former passage we may understand by "all men," every sort of men. And we may interpret it in any other way we please, so long as we are not compelled to believe that the omnipotent God has willed anything to be done which was not done: for setting aside all ambiguities, if "He hath done all that He pleased in heaven and in earth," as the psalmist sings of Him, He certainly did not will to do anything that He hath not done.

It surely seems Augustine held to the view that "all men" in this passage is contextually defined as all kinds of men long before Calvin did. If viewing the passage in this way indicates a Protestant predisposition, does it follow that Augustine was a Protestant?

[\(68\) Augustine had four interpretations of 1 Tim 2:4 in his theological career. I point this out in *Not By Faith Alone*. Why did he? Because Augustine struggled with understanding the](#)

proper sense of "God's will" that I brought up previously. But the Calvinists don't struggle with it at all. They have only one interpretation of 1 Tim 2:4 - - their interpretation. Why? Because they have presupposed that there is only one will of God - - a predetermined will. But as we have seen, other Scriptures will not support that one-sided view of God.

Be that as it may, I continued in TPF by stating, "Resurrection is the work of Christ, and in this passage, is paralleled with the giving of eternal life (see v. 40). Christ gives eternal life to all those who are given to Him and who, as a result, come to Him."

Mr. Sungenis replies: "I can't help but notice that Dr. White has skipped over the details of verse 40."

Please note: Anyone who reads the chapter in TPF knows that I did no such thing: what Mr. Sungenis is responding to here is my discussion of 6:38-39. The last time I checked, verse 40 still comes after 38 and 39! Secondly, I dealt with verse 40 in the specific comments I offered in the article Mr. Sungenis is responding to. To say I "skipped over" anything in light of the facts to the contrary either shows that Mr. Sungenis began responding without reading the entirety of the article first,

(69) I didn't know he was quoting from TPF. I was just going by what Dr. White wrote to Scott Windsor, so I can't be faulted for not referring to TPF.

or he is simply misled.

(70) Ditto.

The verse says, "this is the will of Him that sent me, that every one who perceives the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life..." In Greek, "perceives" (or "see") and "believes" are in the Greek active voice, which means that the individual is doing the perceiving and the believing. If the perceiving and believing were irresistibly forced upon them by God, and it was Jesus' purpose to emphasize such passivity, then we would expect the Greek passive voice. Again, it is hard to know how to respond to this kind of assertion, as it 1) shows such an incredible lack of understanding of the Reformed position it seeks to critique, and 2) is based upon another errant conclusion based upon the original language. First, the Reformed position that Mr. Sungenis was exposed to at Westminster Seminary says that man actively believes in Christ. It is the function of the regenerated spirit, made in the image of Christ, to trust in Christ, cling to Christ, hold to Christ, look to Christ. I would challenge Mr. Sungenis to find anything in Reformed theology that says otherwise. Someone just wasn't

listening during Systematic Theology class!

(71) I wish Dr. White would spare me his opinions of my seminary years, because obviously he wasn't there to know what went on. Yes, I know the Calvinists try to make it appear that man "actively" believes. I used to say the same thing. This is how we did it: God draws the elect irresistibly, without their free will. Once drawn, God justifies and regenerates them. Once regenerated, they have a will that is now "active" for Christ, a will that "actively" believes, shall we say. But notice, this "active" belief is after the fact that they have been irresistibly drawn without their free will. But is that what John 6:40 says? No. The active voice of John 6:40 is used coincident with the Father's will and prior to receiving eternal life and being raised. There is no chronological sequence of unconditional election and irresistible grace that precedes the active believing of John 6:40. Dr. White is just reading those concepts into the verse, as he usually does.

Next, Mr. Sungenis is perfectly correct in identifying the voice of the terms in the passage, but he misses the truly significant point: these are not finite verbs, but substantival participles. Literally the text says that every "seeing one" and "believing one." John often uses the present participle as a substantive, especially οἱ πιστευόντων, "the one believing," and that in contrast to those who do not have abiding and saving faith. To take the simple appearance of the active, ignore the fact that it is found in a participial form, and then apply this to a straw-man misrepresentation of the Reformed position, provides us with a glaring example of poor argumentation. There is nothing in either the Reformed position, and much less the grammar and syntax of substantival participles in the Gospel of John, that would begin to explain why Mr. Sungenis wrote what he wrote above. Is he seriously suggesting that Jesus would have to have used a present passive participle to describe the result of God's work of regeneration in the heart of His elect? "The one being believed" makes no sense, of course: John never puts "believe" in the passive participial form. Since Mr. Sungenis insists that this is what John would have to do, could we ask him to provide us with a translation of the text as he insists it would have to be? Just how would Mr. Sungenis change the active voice present participle into a passive, and how would he then translate it? To insist that John would have to use a passive voice for the truth of God's work of regeneration to be true is utterly and completely vacuous.

(72) Another red-herring. Dr. White is assuming that there are such things as passive substantive participial forms. The active participial substantive is referring to the action performed by the subject, as in John 1:12 (But as many as received Him, to them He gave..." where "received" is an active voice, substantive participle). If either John 1:12 or John 6:40 had

wanted to teach that belief was only a result of the Father's decree and not also a volition act of the human will, John would have used a passive voice with a present, aorist, or perfect tense, and most likely in the indicative mood. But he didn't. Instead, he used a tense and voice (an active substantive participle) that can signify only one thing: an individual who was not programmed to believe but an individual who is believing by an act of his will.

Mr. Sungenis continued, "Also, note that the verse does not say that the "will" of the Father is directed to making the individual perceive and believe, but only to raising them up on the last day."

Again one is hard pressed to know how to reply to such a statement. Obviously, the ones Jesus raises up at the last day do perceive and believe: hence, if the Father's will for the Son is that He raise them up at the last day, and they must perceive and believe, how can the Son be held accountable for the end of the process and not the means?

(73) The Son is not held accountable for the means. The verse does not say such. The Son is accountable for one thing: raising those that are given to him. He is not accountable for the giving. Only the Father is. And yet the verse also says that the Father is not making them believe.

That would be like saying to the coach of the Los Angeles Lakers basketball team, "We are holding you accountable to win the championship, however, that has nothing to do with winning any games before then." One does not attain the end (the championship) without the means (winning games).

(74) Bad analogy, since a basketball team only has one head coach. John 6:40 has two participants, the Father and the Son.

All those raised up on the last day looked and believed on Christ: if Jesus alone is held accountable for the resurrection of the people of God to eternal life at the last day, as 6:38-39 teaches, then it follows with absolute and undeniable inevitability that He must be able to fulfill the Father's command.

(75) According to John 6:40, Jesus raises, and is responsible to raise, those that the Father gives him. Jesus does not determine, or is responsible for determining, who will come. Jesus obeys the command of the Father by raising up those that the Father gives him. Period. Dr. White, on the other hand, is adding a reciprocal relationship into the verse that is not stated in the verse.

This means He must be able to raise dead sinners to new life, and that is exactly what He does!

(76) Of course. Who denies that? But he raises only those the Father gives him. He doesn't determine who will be raised.

In fact, there is no verse in John 6; or the entire gospel of John; or the entire New Testament, that says God irresistibly forces belief upon the individual. Conversely, if Dr. White can find just one, then he wins this argument.

Given that Mr. Sungenis' assertions have been shown to be uniformly a-contextual, it would seem the "argument" is already over. Of course, we must again refute the false use of the term "force," as resurrection is not "forced" on dead men. Jesus did not "force" Lazarus from the tomb: He gave Him life, and Lazarus responded the only way a resurrected man can: by coming forth.

(77) Notice how Dr. White tries to create theological euphemisms in order to tone down the absolutism of the Calvinistic position so as to make it palatable to the human ear. People aren't "forced" they are "given life." People aren't "predestined to hell" they are "rightly judged for their sins." People aren't necessarily "predestined to heaven without free will" they "actively believe after they are drawn by God." Yet Dr. White's attempted argumentation is even more subtle. He believes Lazarus is not "forced," but only because once resurrected he has the choice of laying in the tomb, alive, or of coming out of the tomb and walking toward Jesus. Some choice. But we're not talking about Lazarus' "coming forth." We're talking about the resurrection itself. Lazarus was dead. He had no choice in being raised. Whether you want to call it "forced," "compelled," "constrained," "involuntarily exercised," "acted upon," or whatever, the principle is the same. Calvinism teaches that God decides, before Adam ever sinned or before his sin was even a consideration, that some people are arbitrarily chosen for heaven and the rest are chosen for Hell. Be that as it may, the challenge for Dr. White still stands: find a verse of Scripture which teaches that God acts independently of man's will in giving salvation. Mind you, we don't want verses that speak only about God's divine action. We would like a verse of Scripture that says something to the effect "It all depends on God's predestination; man's free will has nothing to do with salvation."

In the same way when the Spirit of God brings new life to the dead sinner, the resultant "new creation" believes and looks to Jesus naturally.

(78) Again, we're not talking about AFTER the fact, but BEFORE

the fact.

The testimony to divine and free sovereignty in regeneration is extensive in Scripture. See TPF chapters twelve and thirteen for a full accounting and defense of this glorious truth. I continued in my initial exegesis of the passage, "We must ask the Arminian who promotes the idea that a truly saved person can be lost: does this not mean that Christ can fail to do the will of the Father?"

(79) Dr. White seems bent on determining the poles in this discussion, but they are invariably misplaced. The issue is not "a truly saved person can be lost" over against "Christ cannot fail to do the will of the Father." Christ always does the will of the Father, but the identification of the Father's will is the problem Dr. White keeps facing but doesn't have any proof to support his view.

Mr. Sungenis is quick to defend the idea that one of Christ's sheep can, in fact, by exercise of "free will," be lost:

Notice how Dr. White has to qualify his language before he goes on to form an argument against the Arminian. He qualifies his words by referring to "a TRULY saved person." Where does John 6 talk about "truly" saved people?

The amazing thing here is that John six is all about the very thing Mr. Sungenis here misses: remember, John calls those who follow Jesus to Capernaum "disciples" (6:60-66) who then leave Jesus. These surface level followers are then contrasted with the true followers who are drawn to Christ by the Father. So the entire context screams the very issue Mr. Sungenis says is not there!

(80) It is not there in this sense: John 6:37-40 is speaking in the abstract about those who are finally redeemed and raised to life. That is why the end point is "raising on the last day," because the text is pointing to the final outcome of all believers. John 6:37-40 doesn't name any of these people because it can't. That is why Jesus confronts even the apostles with the question "You do not want to go away also, do you?" in John 6:67, the very passage that started the debate between Windsor and White. The people of John 6:37-40 come from every century, from every generation. They are an abstract entity of which no one knows the identity except the Father. Conversely, John 5:40-8:30 is speaking about specific people, often with names, present in the time of Jesus. This is not an abstraction or final outcome. It is the temporal situation of the people of Israel, most of which do not believe. Dr White is trying to mix the abstract teaching with the temporal teaching, making the latter dependent on the former in such a way that

the Jews of John 6 don't believe Jesus because they were not predestined to believe in Jesus. That's what Dr. White is really saying, but I'm the one who has to point it out to you.

Further, Reformed theology has always differentiated between surface level followers (such as those seen in John 8:30 who, in only a matter of moments, go from believing in Christ to seeking to stone Him) and those who are the true objects of God's work of redemption. Jesus' parable of the soils likewise brings out this very fact,

(81) How convenient for Reformed theology. The point in fact is that Reformed theology makes an absolute distinction between the false believer who never believed originally from the true believer who sincerely believed initially. In other words, ANYTIME someone falls away, Reformed theology says that it is ALWAYS because they were never truly saved. That doctrine is not taught in Scripture. Scripture maintains that there are SOME people who pretend to believe and then fall away, but not everyone. Look, for example, at the people of Hebrews 10:32f. They "endured a great conflict of sufferings," were made a "public spectacle through reproaches and tribulations," they showed "sympathy to prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of their property." The writer tells them to continue in "endurance" in verse 36. Now, do they sound like people who are pretending to believe? No, I don't think so. Yet Dr. White and company will insist that if they fall away the people of Hebrews 10:32-36 never truly believed and were never truly saved. Why? Because even though there is no Scripture that says ALL those who fall away were never truly saved, Dr. White must believe it in order for his Calvinistic position to survive. The whole theology is based on that one principle.

a fact that seemingly Mr. Sungenis denies. "What Dr. White wishes to promote is precisely what his Calvinistic theology dictates, that is, there are two kinds of people in the Church; those who are truly saved and those who only appear to be saved. To him, the TRULY saved are those who have been justified, once for all, and cannot lose their salvation. Without this doctrine, Calvinism falls completely apart."

Reformed theology is founded upon exegesis: it is the text that determines what we are to believe, not an external authority.

(82) I think we have seen enough evidence to conclude that Reformed theology, while not giving allegiance to an external authority, as such, gives allegiance to the ideas of men who superimpose their philosophies and systems of logic upon the Scripture, making the Scripture into the wax nose they want it to be. Cases in point: putting the words "all kinds" or "all the elect" in 1 Tim 2:4; claiming that God pleads with unrepentant

sinners in order to righteously judge them instead of desiring them to repent; claiming that Scripture opposes predestination and free will working together when there is no such verse that denies such a working; claiming that anyone who falls away was never truly saved when Scripture gives no such evidence; claiming that 2 Tim 2:12-13 cannot apply to John 6:37-40; claiming that "dead" means total depravity when the Scripture does not define "dead" in that way but only as the state before forgiveness; claiming that Jesus would be a failure if He didn't save without free will; and many other such things. Calvinism doesn't really look at the "text." Calvinism looks at the text through Calvinism.

Yes, the visible Church has believing and unbelieving people within its ranks, those who have experienced true regeneration by the grace of God and those who have not. Of this there is no doubt. But we have to ask again, what does this have to do with the text at hand? In order to account for those who fall away from the faith, the only solution a Calvinist has is to say that they were never saved originally. As Jesus Himself taught, not only here (those "disciples" who walk away were plainly not drawn by the Father to the Son, and hence were not given by the Father to the Son in the first place) but in the parable of the soils, as in Luke 8:13: "Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away." Note how these "receive the word with joy," but, since there is something missing regarding their nature, they "believe for a while" but fall away.

(83) How does this passage support Dr. White's position? Dr. White thinks it does because he comes to the text with a preconceived idea what "believe" means in Luke 8:13. He thinks it can only mean that they never truly believed, but that is not what the text says. The text says they "believed," period. It is the temptation that draws them away from belief, not that they never believed in the first place. Again, I think it is clear that Dr. White brings his rose-colored spectacles to the text before he interprets it.

" As John Calvin tried to do, his followers invariably point to one passage of Scripture, 1 John 2:19, to back up their claim. For a thorough critique of their use of 1 John 2:19, I refer the reader to pp. 261-265 of Not By Faith Alone. There you will find that although 1 John 2:19 can indeed refer to people who were never Christians originally, this only applies to SOME people, not to all people. Calvinists try to make 1 John 2:19 an absolute teaching that applies to everyone, but that simply is not the case."

Mr. Sungenis is perfectly correct in saying that the immediate application of 1 John 2:19, in John's epistle, is to the antichrists

who went out from amongst the people. And in his book he admits that "some will leave the church who were never sincere believers originally" (p. 264). So the question is, does the Bible teach us that true saving faith is the gift of God given to God's elect, so that those whose faith does not endure do,

(84) Notice how Dr. White tries to shift the statement I made in NBFA to his persuasion. The operative word in my sentence is "SOME will leave the church..." but Dr. White tries to turn this into a proof that ALL people who fall away do so because they were never saved originally, yet here he puts it more gently as the following

... by their leaving the faith, show that they had no "root within themselves" (Matthew 13:6)? This is the issue.

(85) He's doing it again. As he did with the use of "dead" in Eph 2:1, Dr. White commandeers the metaphor "no root within themselves" and assumes that this means they never truly believed. His preconditioned response to these metaphors is very predictable. But "no root" only means that they didn't endure, not that they were never saved. Its only when Dr. White superimposes his theology upon the metaphor does it suddenly turn into a "never saved" doctrine that is used to support Calvinism's major tenet.

And moving the focus back to the passage, so far Mr. Sungenis has not addressed the actual topic at hand: the Father's will for the Son is that He lose none who are given to Him. "In context, John is speaking about the antichrists who come into the church by stealth to upset the faith of Christians. If those antichrists leave the church, John assures the Christians that they were never Christian in the first place, as does Jesus in Matthew 7:21 when speaking about the Pharisees. But that 1 John 2:19 does not apply to everyone is made very clear not only by the context of 1 John 2, but by the overwhelming amount of passages in the New Testament which teach that a Christian can fall from the faith he once possessed. For lack of space, I refer you to the book of Hebrews 2:1; 3:1,6, 12, 14; 4:1, 11-14; 6:4-6, 11-12; 10:26-27, 35-38; 12:1,3, 14-17, 25-29. For a more thorough study of this, I refer you to pp. 275-293 of Not By Faith Alone."

I can only assume, then, that Mr. Sungenis has no meaningful reply to the question I asked above and instead needs to leave the context of John 6:38-39 to substantiate his assertion of the imperfection of the work of Christ in saving His elect people (the doctrine of insecurity, I have often said).

(86) I've answered this about a dozen times. Here it is again: it is wrong to make the perfection of Christ dependent on the

doctrine of eternal security. Scripture does not do that, only Dr. White does that. Dr. White has presupposed that if someone falls away then Christ is not perfect, but that's because his Calvinist system demands such a conclusion. If he doesn't accept this, let him show us one Scripture which says that Christ will become imperfect if someone falls away. Unless he can produce such a passage, then he is only working with a presupposition, not an actual fact. His presupposition is that eternal security and the perfection of Christ are mutually dependent.

But how does any of this relate to the simple facts we have seen thus far, those being that 1) The Father has given a distinct people to the Son; 2) all thus given as a result come to the Son; 3) the Son will not cast out any of those coming to Him; 4) the Father's will for the Son is that of all that the Father has given Him, He lose nothing but raise it up on the last day. The question then remains for every person who believes that it is possible to be a true Christian, united to Christ, one of His sheep: if such a person is lost, does it not follow that Christ has failed to do the will of the Father?

(87) This is getting a bit repetitive, but that's what happens when you really have little support for your position. You just keep asserting things without proof.

Wrapped up in this question is the simple fact that this passage defies any and all attempts at forcing it into an anthropocentric model. It is theocentric to its core: 6:38-39 makes no sense whatsoever unless it is understood from the start that Christ is able to save without the synergistic "enablement" of the elect coming into play.

(87a) Nope, sorry. Unless Scripture says that Free Will cannot be involved with God's election, then Dr. White has no basis for making such conclusions about John 6. If not, then he gets into the syndrome which forces him to deny Free Will in every passage he sees divine action. .

Otherwise, you are left with the Father expressing a will for the Son that He cannot possibly fulfill. Mr. Sungenis' response completely misses this basic fact. As I had said in TPF: "If the will of the Father for the Son is that He lose none of those that are given to Him, does it not follow inexorably that Christ is able to accomplish the Father's will?"

Mr. Sungenis attempts to reply: "Again, it is obvious that Dr. White has misconstrued what the Father's will is. The Father's will is that everyone who perceives and believes will have everlasting life and be raised up at the last day, but Dr. White is assuming that those who once believed can never stop

believing. If they stop believing, then obviously, according to verse 40, it can no longer be the Father's will that they attain eternal life. Thus, we have answered the passage for what it states."

It is Mr. Sungenis who is missing the Father's will by ignoring 38-39 and making 40 his key interpretive passage, removing it from its native context, and forcing it to function in a way that is utterly eisegetical in nature. Verse 38 says that the Son has come to do the Father's will; verse 39 expresses the Father's will for the Son, that being that the Son not lose any that are given to Him. Verse 40 then expresses the Father's will for those who are given to the Son, that being that they look and believe upon Christ. Because Mr. Sungenis, and the Roman Catholic system, is dedicated to the defense of human autonomy and the resultant concept of synergism, the text is stood on its head, the natural flow of thought that would, of course, be from 38 to 39 to 40, is reversed, so that the contextual meaning of verse 40, which surely, in light of the preceding three verses, and what follows (6:44-45, 6:65, etc.), could not possibly be taken as an assertion of human autonomy or "free will," is replaced with an eisegetical interpretation designed to support the synergistic viewpoint. Mr. Sungenis says he has answered the passage for what it states, but in fact, nowhere does he actually offer a contextually-based exegesis of the passage. Instead, we are only told what the passage isn't saying, not what it is.

(88) I guess Dr. White doesn't like it when I keep insisting that we only draw from the passage what the passage says. Let's look at John 6:37-39 again. Does verse 37 deny that those whom the Father gives to Jesus used their free will in conjunction with God's election? No, so Dr. White has no right to deny it. Would we expect John 6:37 to deny Free Will, implicitly, if other Scriptures exist that teach Free Will presently exists? No. Do other passages in John show us that man uses his free will to accept or reject Christ? Yes, John 5:40 and 6:40 do. Does verse 37 say that the one who comes to Jesus cannot cast himself out? No, it only says Jesus will not cast him out, because Jesus is faithful. Are there other passages of Scripture which teach that an elect person can deny Christ? Yes, 2 Timothy 2:10-13 does. Is there anything in John 6:37-40 which would prohibit us from saying that man's free will is involved in coming to Jesus? Unless someone presumes, without proof, that the Father's "giving" and Jesus' "receiving" means that man's free will is excluded, and that the Father's impetus for "giving" has nothing to do with a man's decision to accept Jesus, the answer is no. The series of questions and answers I posed above what we call logical deduction. John 6:37-40 is not an isolated passage of Scripture that we can conclude with our own ideas and make dogmatic conclusions. I would implore Dr. White not to deny anything the passage does not deny, and not

assert anything that the passage doesn't assert. I know its hard, especially with John 6:37-40. I used to swing these verses as a club over the head of anyone who believed in free will - - but that was until I really looked at what the passages said, but most of all what they didn't say.

" Dr. White is also presuming, but cannot prove, that the "will" of the Father is such that it predetermines someone's belief, and that in such belief the individual will keep on believing indefinitely, without the possibility of disbelieving in the future."

Actually, the text is unambiguous despite Mr. Sungenis' unwillingness to hear it: the will of the Father for the Son is expressed in 6:39. This revelation is given as an explanation of the statement of 6:37. The Son will not cast out any who are given to Him by the Father. All that the Father gives Him will come, infallibly, in faith to Him. There is no question whatsoever that the one coming to Christ does so in faith. Since all who are given come in faith, it is an obvious fact that then that faith results from being given: that is, there is none who is given who does not, upon the experience of regeneration, experience true, saving faith in Christ. Hence, the text does tell us that it is a divine act that brings about the salvation of the elect, it is a divine act that causes a person to come in faith to Christ, and hence the expression of the Father's will for the Son in saving all those thus given does speak directly to the necessary nature of saving faith (borne out by the Bible's teaching concerning the subject elsewhere).

(89) Look carefully at Dr. White's statement and you will see that he NEVER really answers the challenge put to him. The challenge is to show us where John 6:37-39 teaches that one who believes today cannot disbelieve in the future. Knowing that the verse does not specifically teach such, Dr. White then appeals to what he calls the "nature of saving faith." He has a preconceived idea of the "nature of saving faith." Dr. White's "nature of saving faith" is that once one has faith one can't lose it; once one has faith one cannot fall. Where does he get that understanding? Not from the text of John 6:37-40. So, he can't disprove my assertion (that John 6:37-40 does not teach that a person cannot disbelieve in the future) based on the text itself, and that is all we are arguing here - - the grammar of the text.

"This is why, as I pointed out above, that Calvinists such as Dr. White will insert the word "elect" into 1 Timothy 2:4, since they are working from the premise that God's will to save "all" cannot be thwarted. The only way they can maintain this premise is by saying that Paul's "all" can refer only to the "elect." If not, then their whole theology crumbles."

And as I pointed out, and as Mr. Sungenis should know, the

consistent Reformed (and contextually accurate) assertion regarding that passage is that it refers to all kinds of men (as in Revelation 5:9-10), not merely to "the elect."

" As I said before, I would suggest that the reader consult such passages as Ezekiel 18:21-29 and 33:11 where God pleads with the wicked to repent and declares that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Does that sound like God's will cannot be thwarted? If not, then I think you would have to conclude that God pleads with crocodile tears. I think it should also be pointed out that a position like Dr. White's would have to say that, contrary to Ezek 33:11, God DOES have pleasure in the death of the wicked, because by their death, God's will, which did not predestine them to salvation, is satisfied. If, in that respect, God's will is satisfied, then He must have pleasure in it."

The reader will, it is truly hoped, see the direct parallel between this kind of rhetoric and that offered by the general Arminianism of Protestant evangelicalism. And it should speak to all that rather than dealing with the plain words of Jesus regarding the specific subject of His salvation of His own people, Mr. Sungenis is reduced to quoting passages from the Old Testament in a foreign context, assuming a particular meaning, and then attempting to use that to blunt the force of the clear didactic teaching of the Lord.

(90) This is usually what happens to the Calvinist position. They get into the unending trap of classifying other Scriptures as irrelevant to the issue. I used to do the same thing when I was a Calvinist. You'll remember that Dr. White did the same thing with the New Testament passage of 2 Timothy 2:12-13 ("if we deny him he will deny us"). He said it wasn't applicable to John 6:37-39. Yet, a few paragraphs later, he had the ironic experience of citing 2 Timothy 2:10 to prove election but forgot that just two verses away in 2 Timothy 2:12-13 those very elect are told that if they deny Christ he will deny them. Be that as it may, I wonder if the Jews gave Paul the same argument Dr. White just gave me about the Old Testament. In Romans, for example, Paul quotes from the OT about three dozen times or so in order to support his doctrines, some of them are quoted in order to support Predestination in Romans 9-11. Yet Dr. White insists I can't use Ezek 33:11 or Ezek 18:23 to shed a little light on the nature of God's will in John 6:37-39 because according to Dr. White it is not "didactic teaching." Tell that to Ezekiel. Before you do, check Ezekiel's context in Ezekiel 18:1-32 and you will see that its theme is very similar to that in John 6.

I continued in TPF: And does this not force us to believe that the Son is able to save without introducing the will of man as the final authority in the matter? Can any synergist (one who

teaches, as Dr. Geisler does, that God's grace works "synergistically" and that man's free will is a vitally important part of the salvation process, and that no man is saved unless that man wills it) believe these words? Can one who says that God tries to save as many as "possible" but cannot save any man without that man's cooperation fully believe what this verse teaches?

Sungenis replies: "We have seen that John 6 does not make a contest between Free Will and Election, but such a contest Dr. White invariably sees in almost every verse."

Actually, of course, my point is that there is no contest at all: there is no such thing as creaturely autonomy in the semi-Pelagian idea.

(91) In other words, Dr. White believes there is no contest only because his presuppositions demand it of him, not because the text of John 6 opposes Election and Free Will.

Man is dead in sin, incapable of seeking God, the enemy of God, unable to come to Christ outside of the effective work of drawing on the part of the Father (John 6:44). No person reading the text in its native context, as those in the synagogue that day long ago in Capernaum would have heard the words as they were spoken, would for a moment think of such ideas as "free will" or "synergism."

(92) The false analogy meter is red-lining again. Do you see how Dr. White couples the idea that man has no power to come to God with the idea that there can be no free will or synergism? Really think about this. Dr. White has made an assumption. The assumption is that (a) man is incapable of seeking after God without God's power is the same thing as saying (b) man has no free will. Is that what people who include free will into the schema of salvation believe? No, not at all. Like Dr. White, those who believe in Free Will say that God gives us Free Will and the power to use that Free Will. If it weren't for God's power, we would not even have a Free Will, let alone use it independently of God's grace. Thus, does John 6:44 deny that man has a Free Will? No, of course not. All it says is that no man comes to Jesus unless he is drawn by the Father. Its only when Dr. White's Calvinism is applied to the verse is it then made to teach absolute predestination.

In fact, it was the strong proclamation of the sovereignty of God in drawing men to Christ, and the fact that He alone is the source of true spiritual nourishment, that offended them so!

"This is the problem with Calvinistic interpretation of Scripture: passages which seem to support their doctrines are invariably

set on the highest plateau, and those verses which give an opposite view are subsumed. In the end, the subsuming of the verses they don't like shows that they have misunderstood the verses they wish to put on the highest plateau. As Dr. White has shown, they consistently add extraneous thoughts and qualifications to the text that are simply not there."

Each assertion of "adding" to the text has been thoroughly refuted, and I leave it to the reader to determine who it is who is allowing the text to stand on its own, and who is allowing external authorities to determine interpretation. Almost every paragraph of Mr. Sungenis' response gives evidence of this.

(93) No, Dr. White is "adding," because the verses don't deny free will, but Dr. White is denying free will from his interpretation of the verses. If Dr. White would just teach what the passage says, and not what his presuppositions about the workings of election are, then we could get somewhere in this discussion. But as long as he posits that election and free will are mutually exclusive, then he will invariably interpret John 6:37 and other such verses to his own liking.

I continued in TPF: "Is it not the Father's will that Christ try to save but that He save a particular people perfectly? He is to lose nothing of all that He is given." The anthropocentrism of the Roman Catholic position continues unabated in the response:

"Notice again how Dr. White inserts premises from his Calvinistic theology. The verse does not say "He IS to lose nothing" but "It is the Father's WILL that...I should lose nothing." Before Dr. White can insert the word "IS" into John 6:39, he must prove from Scripture that, in regards to God's desire to save all (cf., 1 Timothy 2:4; 4:10; 2 Peter 3:9; 1 John 2:2; Acts 17:25-31, et al), that the Father's "will" does not seek or need the cooperation of man. In doing so, Dr. White cannot just point to his favorite predestinarian verses, such as Romans 8:29-30 or Ephesians 1:5-11, which speak only in general terms, but he must answer all the passages in Scripture which show that God is waiting for man's cooperation (eg., Zech 1:3; James 4:8; Acts 17:25-26; Luke 11:19; Matt 11:21; Jeremiah 3:22; 29:13; Matt 6:33; 7:7-8; Luke 12:31; 17:33; Rom 2:7; Col 3:1; John 1:12; 5:40; Rom 10:9-13; 10:16-21, and many other such passages). He cannot reply by giving the standard Calvinist answer: "God only asks for man's cooperation so that he can have evidence to convict them at judgment day," since that would incriminate God for telling falsehoods."

The reader is invited to re-read this response and consider well the ideas that underlie it. First, whether it is Mr. Sungenis inserting his Roman Catholic ideas at the expense of the biblical

text or I inserting Calvinistic ideas must be determined on the basis of something more than mere assertion. Thus far we have found precious little solid evidence that the text says anything other than its plain meaning.

(94) Notice how Dr. White just avoids the passages I cite above, a passage that will give us a balanced view of this situation. He just resorts to mere assertions that John 6 is "plain," and thus he is at the point of circular reasoning to defend his position.

Next, is there truly some kind of difference in summarizing the Father's will for the Son by using the term "is"? Surely not! The text says, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day." Such is accurately summarized as I wrote it.

(95) Is Dr. White now going to engage in a Clintonian quibble about the meaning of the word IS in order to make his point? Surely Dr. White must realize that the "is" he is using in "This IS the Father's will" is in a different syntactical position than saying "he IS to lose nothing," but "is" has no variation in meaning as does the word "will." The word "is" denotes existence, an existence that is undeniable. If I say, "The sky IS blue" that means it exists as a blue sky. It is not green or red or purple. But if I say, "It is my WILL that the sky is blue," that may or may not come true, depending on what we mean by the word "will." If I take "will" to mean that I have power to make the sky blue even when it is gray, then that is one meaning. If I take "will" to mean it is my desire to have the sky blue but I cannot force it to be so, then that is a totally different meaning. Again, Dr. White's Calvinism has settled on only one meaning of "will" in John 6:37-39, the one that turns the sky blue. But he can't prove that definition from the text, especially in light of passages such as John 5:40; 2 Timothy 2:10-13; Ezek 18:23, 1 Timothy 2:4, without doing violence to the "plain" meaning of these verses.

But note that Mr. Sungenis then gives us a glowing example of eisegesis by simply refusing to believe that Jesus could, in fact, fulfill the Father's will without the assistance of man!

(96) I did no such thing. I only refuse what the Scripture tells me to refuse. If it doesn't refuse free will in John 6:37-40, who am I to refuse it? Again, if Dr. White can find one Scripture which opposes election to free will, I'll listen to it and he wins the debate.

Rather than dealing with the text, he instead lists his favorite allegedly non-predestinarian verses (none of which even begin

to support his assertions, see the relevant discussions in TPF)

(97) Deal with the passages, Dr. White. Just don't dismiss them.

and then makes the accusation that Reformed theologians engage in over-weighting some passages at the expense of others. Just a few observations: first, this provides us with no meaningful exegesis of John six. As such, it is primarily misdirection.

(98) I gave a "meaningful" exegesis of John 6 already. Here it is again: Prior to John 6, the Jews had a long history of unbelief. In fact, the whole tenor of the New Testament is that God is finally rejecting the Jews (except for a remnant) because of their persistent unbelief (cf., 1 Cor 10:1-5; Hebrews 3-4; Romans 9-11; Acts 1-2; Matt 23, and many other passages). John 5:40, that I used in my last rebuttal, says it so succinctly: "you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life." But the unbelief displayed in John 5:40 and John 6 is a product of the unbelief they have had for centuries. This state of unbelief didn't happen overnight. But here is the dynamic fact that issues from the Jews' persistent unbelief: God is giving up on the Jews. In the language of John 6:44, God is no longer going to draw them to Jesus. In fact, God will become active in keeping them in unbelief by blinding them to the truth (Romans 11:8). That is the kind of God we have; a very dynamic God. Despite the grace that God gave them to respond, the Jews, as a whole, never answered the call of Zech 1:3 or Ezk 33:11, so God decides to withdraw His grace, and the Jews will die in their unbelief. As a result, they are no longer coming to Jesus, because the Father will no longer draw or give them to Jesus. Thus, when Jesus says "All the Father gives to me will come to Me" in John 6:37, He is not intending to give a dissertation on election or free will, per se. He is telling the Jews that the reason they don't believe Him is that God is handing them over to unbelief, blinding them to the truth as a punishment for their sins. They will continue in their unbelief, and finally be judged for it, which is precisely what happened to them (Matt 23:37-39; Matt 24:1ff).

Secondly, while it would be profitable to go through each and every listed verse and demonstrate that each is fully compatible with the Reformed position, the main problem here is that Mr. Sungenis does not understand the Reformed position to begin with, making the effort a waste of time.

(99) The only thing that is a waste of time is when someone keeps making the same tired old excuses that his opponent somehow doesn't understand his position. I understand Dr. White's position thoroughly. He just pretends I don't because

that will make it appear to the reader that I'm just missing something.

It is truly difficult to understand how someone can hold a Master's degree from Westminster Seminary and list Matthew 6:33 as if it is relevant to the topic at hand.

(100) Well, Dr. White has finally addressed one of the 17 passages I listed a few paragraphs ago. Actually, he doesn't really address Matt 6:33, he just dismisses it as irrelevant, just as he did with Ezk 33:11 and 2 Tim 2:12-13 a while back. But for the sake of you, the reader, here's why I included Matt 6:33. It says "seek first His kingdom and all these things shall be added to you." This is just one of many passages which show the same principle as that in Zech 1:3 ("Return to Me....that I may return to you"). God is not going to force or impose Himself upon us for either salvation or His blessings. We have to cooperate with His grace and use our wills.

But such an endeavor would take us far a field, and this response is already far longer than most but the most hardy individuals can handle as it is. I had continued in TPF: How can this be if, in fact, the final decision lies with man, not with God? It is the Father's will that results in the resurrection to life of any individual. This is election in the strongest terms, and it is taught with clarity in the reddest letters in Scripture. Sungenis replies: "It is inappropriate to say "the final decision lies with man." No one in all of Christian history has been able to plumb the depths of the workings of predestination/foreknowledge and free will/responsibility. We simply don't know how they work together, any more than we know how the Trinity is 3 in 1 and 1 in 3 at the same time. All we know is that Scripture speaks of both, not only with Adam but with those after him. To deny one and exalt the other is doing injustice to both Scripture and God."

We know how God is three Persons in one Being: Being and Person are not synonymous terms. Such is not a parallel at all.

(101) So now Dr. White has discovered and revealed the mystery of the Trinity. Let me clue you in. He has not done so. All he has done is given us words. "Being" and "Person" are mere words that help us get at least some handle on what is going on in the Trinity, but they don't by any stretch of the imagination explain the Trinity to us. It took them four centuries in the early Church just to tell us what we CAN'T say about the Trinity, but no one has ever explained the essence of the Trinity.

The fact of the matter remains that there are only two possible positions on the matter of man's salvation: either it is a free act

of God's grace based upon His own purpose and will (as the Bible explicitly teaches!) to the praise of the glory of His grace, or, it is a cooperative effort between God and man in which God does all He can do to save every single person but, in the final analysis, the decision is man's.

(102) Translation: In the Reformed view it is God's will that some be saved and some be damned based purely on God's pleasure, not on any factor of man, be it goodness or evil. God predestines some to Hell, without giving them a choice in the matter, because by sending them to Hell He shows Himself just in condemning evil. In the Catholic view, God's grace and man's free will work together. God predestines no one to hell. God did not cause the fall of Adam. God abandons no one without them abandoning God first. God gives grace to everyone to repent. That sounds like the God of Ezek 18:23; 33:11; Zech 1:3; 2 Tim 2:10-13; John 5:40. And we can also include John 6:37-39, since those verses do not deny man's free will, rather, they only explain to the Jews that God is giving up on them because of their persistent refusal to repent.

As many a preacher has put it, "God has voted for you, the devil has voted against you, and now you get to cast the tie-breaking vote." This is the true dividing line, soteriologically speaking: the Reformers stood firmly for the sovereignty of God's grace, and Rome stood firmly for the sovereignty of man's will so that God's grace, while necessary to salvation, does not in and of itself save anyone outside of their cooperation. If nothing else, this dialogue has surely shown the chasm that exists between the theocentricity of Scripture and the anthropocentricity of Roman Catholicism and Arminianism.

(103) I would agree there is a chasm. That's why we are spending such time on this topic. But let's get the terms straight if we're going to polarize the two views. Catholicism believes in the sovereignty of God, much more than the Calvinists do. Any God who can control all events in history, and yet do so with man's free will operating, has got to be the more sovereign God. Second, Catholicism does not believe in the "sovereignty of man's will." We don't use such terms. It is not man who makes the "final decision," as it were. The decision is, without compromise or confusion, a result of God's grace and man's cooperation. A mystery, indeed, yet nevertheless true.

I wrote in TPF: Verse 39 begins with "This is the will of Him who sent Me," and verse 40 does the same, "For this is the will of My Father." But in verse 39 we have the will of the Father for the Son. Now we have the will of the Father for the elect. "That everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." Amazingly, many wrench this verse out of its context,

misunderstand the reference to "every one who beholds...every one who believes in Him," and say, "See, no divine election here! Any one can do this." But it is obvious, when the text is allowed to stand as a whole, that this is not the intention of the passage. Who is the one "beholding" the Son and "believing" in Him? Both these terms are present participles, referring to on-going action, just as we saw in "the one coming" to Christ in verse 37.

"Appealing to Greek present participles is not going to prove Dr. White's case."

Note: as anyone can see, it was not intended to! The point I have often made on the basis of this is to contrast the continuing nature of saving faith against the idea prevalent amongst some Evangelicals of a kind of "one time" faith that has no abiding results.

(104) I find it fascinating that here Dr. White uses the participles of John 6:37-39 as evidence of "continuing action," but earlier in his rebuttal he tried to deny my use of the active voice of these very participles because he said they were substantives. So which is it, Dr. White?

"These verbs could just as well be aorists ("those who did believe in Him") or perfects ("those who have believed in Him") without infringing on the intention of the text."

I remind the reader of the contrast between the aorist and present tense regarding "believe" in John, and the common discussion in the scholarly literature of John's use of the present participle as a substantive in contrast to the surface-level faith of the disciples who turn out to be unable to "hear" the word.

(105) Is that why John 4:48; 5:44; 6:30; 7:39; 8:24; 9:18; 9:36; 11:15; 11:40; 11:42; 13:19; 14:29; 19:35; 20:25 all use the Greek PISTEUO in the aorist tense of a belief that Dr. White would call "true belief"?

"The key point that Dr. White misses here, as I noted earlier, is that "beholding" and "believing" are in the active voice, not passive. The action is done by the subject who is "beholding" and "believing." If anything, there is a unique combination of God's election and man's cooperation in this verse, not the one-sided view of election that Dr. White wishes us to see."

We have seen Mr. Sungenis' error here already, and have seen that the active/passive distinction he makes is utterly without foundation in the text, let alone is it relevant to the Reformed position, which affirms that the gift of faith is actively exercised

by the regenerated sinner.

(106) Actually, what we saw was a red-herring argument by Dr. White in which he postulated that there is such thing as a passive participle used as a substantive. I don't know of such an instance in the NT. Thus, the active participle only speaks of the action of the subject of the participle.

Mr. Sungenis is seeking to turn the phrases "the one seeing" and "the one believing" into proof-texts for his view of free will:

(107) Proof texts? Not really. I'm just showing, and as Dr. White has already admitted earlier, that John 6:40 does not have the exclusive predestinarian flavor he would like it to have.

there is nothing in the phrases, however, that supports his assertion, for neither of them address, even slightly, the real question: does the decree of God to elect a people unto salvation result in the infallible awakening of those elect at a point in time to spiritual life, resulting in their actively seeing and believing? I continued:

(108) I already answered this in my previous rebuttal. The answer is that whomever the Father gives to Jesus will come to Jesus. That's what the text says. There is nothing about "election" or "infallible awakening" or "actively seeing and believing" (Dr. White's view of seeing and believing) in the text. Those are all concepts added by Dr. White due to his Calvinist beliefs.

Jesus raises up on the last day all those who are given to Him (v. 39) and all those who are looking and believing in Him (v. 40). Are we to believe these are different groups? Of course not. Jesus only raises one group to eternal life. But since this is so, does it not follow that all those given to Him will look to Him and believe in Him? Most assuredly. Mr. Sungenis replied: "I agree. No one has suggested that they are different groups." No one has? Did we not read of Mr. Sungenis telling us, regarding 1 John 2:19, that there will, in fact, be true believers who do not persevere in their belief? If this is the case, does it not follow that the identity of the two groups, those given, and those raised up, will differ, unless it is Mr. Sungenis' suggestion that the identity of the first group is determined solely on the basis of the perseverance of the second?

(109) I've already said that those who fall away in disbelief do not remain in the Father's will, and thus they are not given to Jesus. This is especially true of John 6:39, which uses the perfect tense of "give" in an effort to encompass, from the point of view of the consummation, all those who will be saved. Thus,

there are not two groups. There are only those who remain faithful who will be raised.

I continued, Saving faith, then, is exercised by all of those given to the Son by the Father (one of the reasons why, as we will see, the Bible affirms clearly that saving faith is a gift of God).

Mr. Sungenis replied: "Of course saving faith is exercised by all those given to the Son by the Father. If they don't have faith, then the Father is not going to give them to Jesus. So this statement is inconsequential for Dr. White's position."

This shows us clearly that Mr. Sungenis does not understand the very heart of the whole issue! Plainly he assumes an order here that is the very center of the argument, yet his words tell us he is unaware of how he has accepted this assumption without any foundation at all. Listen to the sentence, "If they don't have faith, then the Father is not going to give them to Jesus." In other words, foreseen faith, human action, is the basis upon which the Father gives anyone to Jesus. Rather than the clear order already seen in 6:37, where the giving of the Father results in the coming of anyone in faith to Christ, Sungenis reverses the order without even noticing it. This means he has not "heard" almost anything that has been said in the presentation I have offered to this point. He thinks the statement inconsequential, yet it is a restatement of the very heart of the passage and the very heart of the debate!

(110) No, its Dr. White who doesn't understand. I didn't mean or say anything about human action as the basis of the Father's giving. All I said is that if they don't have faith, then the Father is not going to give them to Jesus - - no matter how that faith was supposed to come into their lives (predestination, free will, or both). Its really very simple, but Dr. White apparently misunderstood what I said, which is the cause for his exclamations above.

Thus ended the discussion of the quotation I provided of the positive exegesis of the text in John 6:37-40. All this and we haven't even gotten to the actual response to my last article! Verbosity reigns supreme! At this point in the last article I quoted Mr. Sungenis' initial remarks based upon our web broadcast with Mr. Windsor. These can be found in the previous article on this subject, as I shall not repeat them here. To simplify, I shall simply put JRWPrev for the previous article, Sungenis for his response, both indented, and then my current reply.

JRWPrev: What shall we say in response to this? A striking fact to note is that Mr. Sungenis assumes the presence of "free will"

in the exact same way an Arminian does (and Mr. Windsor did). Yet, the text never makes reference to such a concept, and instead denies the very heart of that concept in 6:44.

"Again, Dr. White is reading into the verse what his theology dictates."

So Mr. Sungenis says, but so far, we have found the case to be just the opposite. John 6:44 states: "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him..." "...and I will raise him up on the last day" is the rest of the sentence. Without that final phrase, which is so often ignored, the passage is not whole. As we shall see, it is vital to a full and proper understanding of the text.

"All the passage says is that anyone who comes to Jesus has to be drawn by the Father.

That's all the passage says? It does not start out by speaking of the inability of man? It does not go on to assert that all who are drawn are also raised up?" Surely the passage says much more than Mr. Sungenis wishes to admit!

"We would expect nothing less. Anything less would be teaching Pelagianism - - that man has the free will, apart from God's drawing grace, to respond to God. But then how does Dr. White see a "denial" of free will here?"

Perhaps in the section Mr. Sungenis doesn't see, the one that says, "No man is able"?

(111) No, I saw it, but it doesn't change anything. No man is able to come unless the Father draws him. What is so hard to understand about that? No man, apart from God's drawing grace, can come to Jesus. Didn't I just say that in the immediately preceding paragraph Dr. White quoted above from my previous rebuttal? I just said that if someone claims to be able to come to Jesus apart from God's drawing grace then he is teaching Pelagianism. What Dr. White has missed is the real reason why Jesus makes the remarks in John 6:44. Jesus is telling the Jews that God is giving up on them - - that He is no longer going to be drawing them (as a nation) to Jesus. Now is the time for judgment for their sins, and part of that judgment is God blinding them in their sin (Rom 11:8). Dr. White hasn't seen this motivation, and thus he keeps thinking that John 6:44 teaches predestination. No, its teaching the Jews blindness because God is withdrawing His drawing grace. That is the real story.

"He does so by seeing more in the verse than what it actually says, and by relying on his unproven presupposition that

election and free will cannot coincide. In order to prove this presupposition, Dr. White would have to find a verse or verses of Scripture which explicitly state that election and free will are totally antithetical to each other."

The reader will note that Mr. Sungenis has excised the phrase "no man is able" from John 6:44, seemingly not even seeing it on the page before him;

(112) Not true. I already said John 6:44 teaches that no man comes to Christ unless drawn by the Father.

further, there is no such phrase as "free will" in Scripture outside of "free will offerings" in the Old Testament which were simply offerings not demanded by law. The phrase "free will" came into existence in Western theology primarily through the influence of Tertullian writing long after the New Testament period. So of course there is no such passage: the idea of human autonomy is nowhere found in Scripture.

(113) Yes, human autonomy is found nowhere in Scripture, and Catholicism doesn't believe in human autonomy. They believe in God's grace working with man's Free Will, a Free Will he received by grace. Be that as it may, its my turn to question what Dr. White learned in systematic theology. Lesson 101 tells us that we don't have to see the precise words "free will" in the Bible to see synonymous ideas and principles in the Bible. Give an honest read to Zech 1:3; Ezek 33:11; and 2 Timothy 2:10-13 and see if they don't teach the concept of Free Will. Then look at the other 14 verses I gave Dr. White a while ago, which he never bothered to address, except for some shallow comments about Matt 6:33.

God is free in the Bible: man is a creature, limited both by his creatureliness and by his fall into sin. The biblical testimony to the utter freedom of God and His sovereignty over creation, and the biblical testimony to the deadness of man in sin, has been fully proven from Scripture so often that it almost seems silly to prove it again. Both issues are fully discussed in The Potter's Freedom.

(114) Yes, God is sovereign, man is a creature. God is in control over his creatures and his creation. But none of those premises denies the existence of Free Will in man.

But, to refocus upon Mr. Sungenis' attempted discussion of John 6:44, we can only say that it utterly fails to even begin to seriously deal with the text. It ignores the clear assertion of man's inability due to sin;

(115) No, I've already said man is unable unless drawn by

God's grace.

it didn't even bother to cite the rest of the verse which teaches us that those who are drawn are also raised up (identifying the drawing of the Father as coterminous with the giving of the Father to the Son and refuting all universalistic applications of the text), which would seem to indicate that Mr. Sungenis is unaware of the many issues relevant to the exegesis of the text itself.

(116) I may not have cited the last part of the verse every time, but I cited it at other times, so Dr. White's accusation is hollow. The point in fact is that "raise up on the last day" does not do what Dr. White claims it is doing. John 6:40 says it best. Everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him may have eternal life and will be raised up at the last day. Agreed. No argument. But here is the question: what if they stop believing? The verse only says that those who are beholding and believing, that is, they must have an active ongoing belief that does not stop, and then they will be raised. If they believed once but then disbelieved later then we cannot say they will be raised at the last day. The problem with Dr. White's view is he has conveniently left no room for contingencies in the verse. He has assumed, and quite wrongly, that the Father's "will" means that they cannot disbelieve once they believe, but he hasn't proven that assumption. In fact, he dismisses all the verses that would have an impact on John 6:37-40 as "irrelevant," except the ones he likes, like Romans 8:29 or Eph 1:5.

"Suffice it to say, there is no such verse of Scripture. The only thing Scripture denies is that man, without God's prompting grace, can make a decision for God by his own power."

Actually, the text says much more than that, it is just that Mr. Sungenis seems intent upon not seeing that. John 6:44 says nothing about "prompting grace." Such is eisegesis. The passage says that God draws men who are unable to come to Christ to the Son, and, that the Son raises those who are drawn to eternal life, connecting this directly with the assertion of 6:37 that all that the Father gives the Son will come to the Son. This drawing is not merely "prompting grace," it is effectual calling! This is not "wooing," it is drawing that results in coming. It is divine, powerful, and efficient! The passage says far more than Rome can possibly accept, and hence those elements that are contrary to Rome's theology are simply ignored as if they do not even appear on the page.

(117) Well, if Dr. White thinks that's what "drawing" means in this verse, then he must prove it, not merely assert it. Scott Windsor has previously shown Dr. White that "draw," especially as used in John 12:32 (same Greek word), cannot mean what

Dr. White is claiming as its exclusive meaning. Since, as John 12:32 says, Jesus will "draw all men to Myself," yet we know all men don't eventually come to Jesus, is there not a distinction between the "drawing" and the "coming"? Yes, there certainly is, but Dr. White's Calvinism won't let him see it.

JRWPrev: He asserts, "From our perspective, it is very easy to interpret this as the Father having given to Jesus those who responded to the grace the Father gave them. They respond by their free will." Yet, there is nothing about God giving "grace" to anyone, nor is there any reference to "free will."

Granted. The words "grace" and "free will" are not used in John 6, but then neither is the word "elect," the very word that Dr. White inserted in several places in his exegesis of John 6."

See previous refutation of this complaint, and note that the Roman Catholic concept of grace and "free will" is not hinted at anywhere in the passage, as we have proven.

(118) Try John 5:40; John 6:40; John 6:45.

JRWPrev: The point I made in the program is completely skipped by Mr. Sungenis in his response, that being the fact that the giving of the Father to the Son precedes the coming of those so given to the Son.

I didn't skip that at all.

Actually, he did, and continues to do so, in the original context of the webcast. Mr. Windsor had insisted that men are given to Jesus at the final judgment. I would like to ask Mr. Sungenis again: does he agree with Mr. Windsor, or disagree with Mr. Windsor?

(119) I've already stated that John 6:39 uses the perfect tense because it is looking at history from the perspective of the final consummation.

"And I have reiterated it again, several times, in this post. Obviously, the Father has to give them before they can come to Jesus. The remaining question, however, is HOW did the Father determine to give them to Jesus? Dr. White keeps insisting that they were given by the Father's command of predestination apart from the individual's free will, since his theology insists that he make such conclusions."

As we have now proven many times already, Mr. Sungenis has failed to bear the burden of his assertions. It is not a pre-existing theology that drives my exegesis, as it is with Mr. Sungenis. The action of the giving of the Father both precedes

and determines the action of the coming of the believer to Christ. To say otherwise is to throw out not only the plain and simple meaning of this text (including the above comments on 6:44),

(120) In almost 100 pages of material, I cited the Church just once, in para 600 of the Catechism. All my other analysis has been exegetical. Be that as it may, Dr. White just asserts that it "both precedes and determines the action of the coming" but John 6:44 does not teach "determination." Read it carefully. It says that no man has the ability to come unless drawn by the Father. It doesn't say that once drawn by the Father the man will irresistibly come to Jesus. Men resist the drawing all the time, as the Jews continued to do and now are being punished for it. Dr. White is so used to reading the verse with his Reformed glasses that he doesn't realize how far away he is from the actual grammar of the text.

but to contradict the straightforward testimony of Paul in such incredible passages as Ephesians 1:3-11, Romans 8:28-9:24, etc.

(121) Yes, they are straight forward, but then so is John 6. Thus, I can just imagine what Dr. White is going to do with these verses, considering how he has distorted John 6.

But to make this overthrow of God's sovereign decree work, we must realize that Rome must turn this passage on its head. Instead of explaining why those surface disciples would walk away in unbelief, the passage would in essence be saying, "You do not believe because you do not believe."

(122) Not quite. They do not believe because they have ceased to be drawn by the Father. God is giving up on them. Thus Jesus can say very assuredly, you do not believe because the Father has not drawn you.

All that the Father gives me based upon your deciding to believe will come to Me since that's why the Father gives them to me in the first place;

(123) Never said that.

. and I will not cast those who come to me out, except when they choose to get thrown out themselves. I've come down out of heaven to do my Father's will, which is to save those who choose to allow Me to save them, and who do not commit mortal sins that will prevent me from doing so. All those who actively by a free and autonomous will look to me and believe I will raise up at the last day....No man is able to come to Me by unaided free will, but all men are able to come to me due to the

presence of prevenient grace, which may or may not lead to their conversion...." How any of that ties together 6:35 and 6:65 only the reader can attempt to figure out.

(124) I've never said any of this. This is merely Dr. White's caricature of Catholicism and anyone who disagrees with his Calvinistic beliefs.

"But that is not what the text says. The text only says that they were given to Jesus. It does not say what the mechanism for the giving is. Thus, my point above still stands: the only thing the perfect tense does is tell us that the giving preceded the coming and the raising up at the last day. Conversely, Dr. White seems to have a penchant for making any tense which is prior to the present tense refer only to predestination."

As was noted before, Mr. Sungenis is ignoring the original context of Mr. Windsor's comments. The text says, obviously, much more than Mr. Sungenis is letting on.

JRWPrev: Further, the context of the passage, that being the unbelief of those who are hearing His words, is ignored as well.

"This is a misuse of the context. The only thing that can be concluded from the context is that some of the Jews of John 6 were not among those that the Father "gave" to Jesus, and therefore they didn't "come" to Jesus. It is not said that they were not "given" because the Father did not predestinate them. The text implies that they were not "given" to Jesus because of their unbelief, not that they were in unbelief because they were not "given.""

This again turns the text on its head: it is completely backwards. Jesus makes the statement that these followers do not believe. That is an established fact in 6:35. What follows, plainly, is an explanation of this assertion. Remember, these men the Lord identifies as unbelievers had not only listened to Him preach the entire day before, and wanted to make Him king (6:15), but they had followed Him across the lake and were actively seeking Him! So why say they are unbelievers? The text we are considering explains this fully, if the context is allowed to stand. Mr. Sungenis' atomistic interpretation does not provide any meaningful explanation of the text as a whole unit. None of it "hangs together." It does not flow. The ideas are disjointed and disconnected. Such is not the case with the common Reformed exegesis that simply allows the Lord to speak the truth.

(125) No, there is no disconnection here. Dr. White simply has misread the context. He keeps inferring that the people of John 6:35 don't believe because God predestined them not to

believe, but the text does not say that - - no bible verse says that. To flesh this out, here again is the explanation of the context I gave a few pages ago so that the reader can see the reasoning of the position I espouse.

I gave a "meaningful" exegesis of John 6 already. Here it is again: Prior to John 6, the Jews had a long history of unbelief. In fact, the whole tenor of the New Testament is that God is finally rejecting the Jews (except for a remnant) because of their persistent unbelief (cf., 1 Cor 10:1-5; Hebrews 3-4; Romans 9-11; Acts 1-2; Matt 23, and many other passages). John 5:40, that I used in my last rebuttal, says it so succinctly: "you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life." But the unbelief displayed in John 5:40 and John 6 is a product of the unbelief they have had for centuries. This state of unbelief didn't happen overnight. But here is the dynamic fact that issues from the Jews' persistent unbelief: God is giving up on the Jews. In the language of John 6:44, God is no longer going to draw them to Jesus. In fact, God will become active in keeping them in unbelief by blinding them to the truth (Romans 11:8). That is the kind of God we have; a very dynamic God. Despite the grace that God gave them to respond, the Jews, as a whole, never answered the call of Zech 1:3 or Ezk 33:11, so God decides to withdraw His grace, and the Jews will die in their unbelief. As a result, they are no longer coming to Jesus, because the Father will no longer draw or give them to Jesus. Thus, when Jesus says "All the Father gives to me will come to Me" in John 6:37, He is not intending to give a dissertation on election or free will, per se. He is telling the Jews that the reason they don't believe Him is that God is handing them over to unbelief, blinding them to the truth as a punishment for their sins. They will continue in their unbelief, and finally be judged for it, which is precisely what happened to them (Matt 23:37-39; Matt 24:1ff).

Note what Mr. Sungenis is saying here: the unbelief of the men is why they are not given to the Son. So, if they believe, they will be given. But that means, "All that believe in Me, the Father will give to Me." Wait, that's backwards: the giving is before the coming.

(126) Yes, the giving is before the coming, but John 6:37 does not say what the criterion for the "giving" is. Dr. White keeps assuming that the "giving" is based solely on predestination without free will. He has yet to prove that. Again, whenever he sees a verse speaking about divine action, Dr. White automatically excludes free will from the realm of possibility.

"Well, it's a foreseen faith, resulting in the giving." Which then results in the coming? "All those that are foreseen to come to Me the Father gives to Me and they then come to Me" is obviously a tautology that has no meaning. The text simply

cannot be bent and twisted this far.

(127) I've never mentioned one word about "foreseen faith." Dr. White is debating an imaginary opponent. As I explained above in my analysis of the context, the Jews are being rejected by God for centuries of unbelief (cf. Hebrews 3-4). They don't believe because God is no longer drawing them (Rom 11:8; Zech 1:3; Ezk 33:11). On the other hand, those that are given to Jesus (John 6:37) have been drawn by the Father (John 6:45) and have responded to his call (John 6:45), and will be raised on the last day if they continue to behold and believe (John 6:39-40). Its really very simple.

JRWPrev: Instead, a foreign context of "free will" theology is inserted out of nowhere, and the text is left in a jumbled mess.

"Foreign?? Out of nowhere?? Already in John 5:40 Jesus said to them: "and you are unwilling to come to Me that you may have life." Sounds very much like Jesus expects them to make a volitional act of their will to come to Him. Jesus puts the onus on them for refusing, not upon God for not predestinating them."

Yes, out of nowhere and foreign: think for just a moment about what John six, as a unit, teaches. Jesus gets a "good crowd." He works a miracle that excites them and puts them in awe. They want to make Him king. He sends them away, and sends His bewildered disciples away in a boat, only to come to them in their need on the water. The next day the would-be disciples follow Jesus to Capernaum. What does He do? He preaches a sermon that John tells us causes them to question, and grumble, and eventually walk away because they will not look to Him for anything other than physical food (not spiritual sustenance). Quite literally He drives away false professors and fake disciples with words that continue to make men stumble to this day. He is in control over every event: sovereign, purposeful. And so I repeat: to insert into this text the idea that the rebellious creature man is, in fact, able to control His ultimate work through the exercise of his fallen and enslaved will is to turn it on its head, to call night day and white black. There is no reason to be found on any level for doing this: outside of the previous commitment to that belief that causes a person to read it into the text of Scripture. And that is exactly what we have seen over and over thus far in this dialogue. Even if John 5:40 formed the context of the next chapter (which it doesn't),

(128) Okay, let me call the reader's attention to what Dr. White has just done, again. He has casually divorced John 5:40 from the discussion. To him it is irrelevant, even though it comes just one chapter earlier than John 6. A few paragraphs ago, he did

the same thing with the belief of the people in John 8:31 - - he dismissed it as irrelevant. Earlier he did the same thing with 2 Timothy 2:12-13 ("if we deny him he will deny us"), but then later quoted 2 Tim 2:10 to prove there was an "elect" people. He did the same thing with Ezek 33:11; 18:23, claiming that they were merely "Old Testament passages." Yet in another place, Dr. White appealed to Romans 8:29-30 and Eph 1:5-11 to support his exegesis of John 6:37-39. By this arbitrary selection of verses, we can see what is really happening: Dr. White has developed an acute syndrome - - one which disclaims any verse that doesn't support his exegesis of John 6. And yet we are told the Reformed theology is "biblical" and that people like me go by "sola ecclesia." Go figure.

it would hardly help Mr. Sungenis overthrow the immediate context of the chapter itself. The text says: "You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify about Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life." The irony is that the phrase "come to Me" does echo the subject of 6: 37ff, but to just the opposite conclusion that Mr. Sungenis is suggesting! Jesus said they were unwilling to come to Him, and, as He taught in 6:44, unless the Father supernaturally draws a person to Christ, they will always remain unwilling! This is the God-glorifying, ego-shattering truth that man's religions simply will not accept.

(129) Yes, but none of this proves Predestination without free will. I agree, as Dr. White wrote so eloquently, "unless the Father supernaturally draws a person to Christ, they will always remain unwilling! but where have I ever said anything differently? But how does that truth deny Free Will? As Romans 3:11 says, "There is none who seeks after God." You see, Dr. White cannot disprove that the Father gives us free will and then draws us. He keeps assuming that the "drawing" is the only movement of God in view. But from our vantage point, it would be silly for God to draw a man unless the man had the free will to make a decision - - a free will that was given to him by God's grace and works with God's grace. That's why Zech 1:3 and Ezk 33:11 say what they do. The way Dr. White deals with this is to claim that the "drawing" is irresistible, but we have shown that such use of "draw" is denied by John 12:32 and have also shown that no passage in John 6 explicitly teaches his view. Dr. White's view of John 6 is contrived, in keeping with his Calvinism. My view deals with the text as it is given, not only in John 6, but John 5-8. Let me reiterate. The Jews are being given up to unbelief as a punishment from God. He is blinding them. They have, of their free will, refused to come (John5:40) and therefore God is ceasing His drawing of them. If they are not drawn, they cannot be given, and they will not come.

JRWPrev: In fact, the reader may well notice that Sungenis'

interpretation does not follow the flow of the text: it skips from one section to another, even making 6:40 determinative in the meaning of the words that come immediately before it, rather than following the logical method of realizing that 6:40 is to be interpreted in light of what comes in 6:37-40.

By this I think Dr. White has implicitly admitted that John 6:40 gives him much trouble, just like John 5:40 would probably give him much trouble, since both verses speak about the responsibility of man to make a decision for God."

No, this is an implicit admission that Mr. Sungenis' attempted response did not engage in exegesis that follows the flow of the text, allowing a thought to develop in the order presented in the text. Secondly, man is responsible to make that decision: and unless it is being suggested that God is unrighteous to hold men accountable to His law even when man is dead in sin and living in rebellion (and enjoying it, I might add), there is no contradiction between these truths.

(130) No, we're not complaining that it is unrighteous for God to hold men accountable to His law when man is dead in sin and living in rebellion. Quite the contrary. We object to the suggestion, that Dr. White makes on one side of his mouth, that "man is responsible to make that decision," yet on the other side of his mouth claim that God's pleading with man to repent is only for the purpose of eventually judging man in sin and not for the purpose of hoping that man will repent (Zech 1:3; Ezk 33:11; Matt 23:37). I used to do this as a Calvinist, too. I used to preach from the pulpit and say, "Yes, man is responsible to accept God and repent of his sins," but all the while I knew, and didn't want to advertise too heavily, that, in reality, God did not give them the power to repent of their sins, because He had predestined the majority of them to Hell without considering their free will. Once I discovered what an insidious and contradictory theology this was, I abandoned it. But I understand why someone like Dr. White holds to it. He, like Calvin, thinks it is so logical. But what happened to Calvin will happen to you. If you think out his position to its logical conclusion, you will, at sometime, realize that you have made God the author of sin. Huldreich Zwingli DID take Calvin's view to its logical conclusion, and he declared that "God is the sinless author of sin."

Be that as it may, I am not ignoring John 6:37-39. I have stated before, and I will state again, that John 6:37-39 teaches that the Father is responsible for bringing people to Jesus. But John 6:37-39 does not say that the Father brings them to Jesus because they were predestined, without their free will. All the passage says is that whoever is given by the Father comes to Jesus. There is no way Dr. White can disprove that the reason the Father gives them to Jesus is due to the individuals free will

response to God's grace.

We have seen that this is a complete misreading of the text that not only ignores many portions, words, and phrases, but ignores the relationship they hold to one another.

This is sola ecclesia in glowing letters: Rome's theology precludes the teaching of the text, hence, those portions of the text that contradict Rome's theology are simply removed by ecclesiastical fiat: "the text doesn't say...." or "you can't disprove this."

(131) That's funny. I don't remember mentioning the Catholic Church in my last paragraph. Nevertheless, I and the Catholic Church teach people (1) not to make Scripture say anything more than what it actually says, (2) and make sure you check everything else in the Bible before you make an exegesis of one text of Scripture. Dr. White violates both of these persistently.

Mr. Sungenis can take a passage that speaks with crystal clarity of the Father's sovereignly giving a people to the Son, the infallible coming of those so given to the Son, His perfect work of raising that people to life, and the utter incapacity of man to come to Christ outside of the work of effective drawing, and somehow come up with such things as "free will," and then insist that there is no way I can "disprove" his assertion that it was man's free will response to grace that determined God's "giving."

(132) Notice the qualifiers Dr. White puts in his language: "sovereignly giving" "the infallible coming" "His perfect work of raising" and "utter incapacity of man." Dr. White needs these qualifiers to support his position because John 6 doesn't use any of them.

Of course, we are not told how this comes from the text: it is an assertion from outside, as I have said. But given Mr. Sungenis' failure to even begin to show us how this assertion is derived from the text itself, to ask me to disprove it is meaningless.

(133) As long as Dr. White refuses to "disprove" it, then he will constantly be muddled in the "Predestination syndrome."

JRWPrev: In fact, it is unfair to say that Mr. Sungenis is even offering exegesis here: he is offering Mr. Windsor a way around the offered exegesis, but is not actually exegeting the passage at all.

"I think you will find that, unlike Dr. White, I am not reading into the passage something I would like to see. As far as I'm

concerned, the mechanism for how the people are given by the Father is not specified in the text, be it predestination or free will. All it says is that what the Father gives Jesus receives, period."

We have already responded to this claim.

(134) No he hasn't really. He has not shown us how predestination and free will can be incompatible. In fact, he assumes that whenever we see "predestination" (or some similar term) this automatically excludes free will from the discussion. But he hasn't proven that. Let's go back a few thousand years. Dr. White believes Adam had a free will. Yet he must also believe that God foreknew Adam would sin and that God predestined the elect and the damned before Adam's free will decision. So, Dr. White has two seemingly contradictory tenets to his theology: how can God foreknow and predestinate and yet still give Adam a genuine free will? He doesn't have an answer to that anomaly. No one does. Yet he holds both to be true. But when we come to a passage like John 6, Dr. White finds it logically impossible that predestination can coincide with free will. He will claim, of course, that Adam lost his free will when he sinned and thus became "totally depraved." But there is no Scripture which supports that doctrine. There is no Scripture which teaches that God totally withdrew his grace from Adam. There is no passage which says Adam lost his free will (or the equivalent) when he sinned. Dr. White's attempted use of the metaphor "dead" in Eph. 2:1 is not going to prove the point, as we have shown earlier.

JRWPrev: I emphasized the use of the perfect tense with Mr. Windsor because he was inserting into the text his concept of free-willism, and limiting God to the role of responding to the actions of man.

"Mr. Windsor was not "limiting God to the role of responding to the actions of man." Mr. Windsor was saying, as I have said, that God draws men by his grace. Hence the initial action is God's. God does so for all men. Through grace, God even gives man the power to respond to God's drawing. At some point, man has to make a decision, just as Jesus denotes in John 5:40 when He tells the Jews that their decision was to refuse to come to Him. Man either accepts or rejects. In the workings of this decision, we do not know how God's grace and man's volition work together. That is a sublime mystery that no one on this earth is probably ever going to solve. But the point remains that God's role is not "limited to the role of responding," especially since it is God who initiates the whole action."

While this is surely a summary of synergism, it does not

comprise either a meaningful exegetical summary, nor does it respond to the actual assertion I made. Anyone can listen to Mr. Windsor's comments and they will surely know that he was subjecting God's decision to man's, even to the point of saying that the "giving" of men to the Son takes place only at the final judgment!

(135) He said it in relation to the perspective of John 6:39, which looks at the ones given to Jesus from the perspective of the final consummation, due to the presence of the Greek perfect tense.

Further, we have surely seen that Mr. Sungenis' position does result in God's decision being determined by the free actions of man, not man's actions being determined by the free actions of God. This is the nature of synergism. No matter how the synergist struggles, man remains the final decision maker.

(136) Obviously, Dr. White refuses to accept the explanation I gave above. I said, mark my words, that "In the workings of this decision, we do not know how God's grace and man's volition work together. That is a sublime mystery that no one on this earth is probably ever going to solve." I didn't say that God's decision precedes, I didn't say that man's decision precedes, yet to make a caricature of my position, Dr. White makes it an either/or issue, and this is precisely why he does not understand the Catholic position. Dr. White is battling Arminians. He's not battling the Catholic Church.

JRWPrev: In fact, he introduced a very unusual, very difficult to understand idea of how men are given to Christ "at the last day." I pointed out this was impossible, since the action of giving by the Father obviously comes before the "last day." Look again at the text: "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. Obviously, "raise up on the last day" is a terminal action: the danger of "losing" then must come before the last day. The giving, therefore, is logically prior to the last day, which contradicts what Mr. Windsor was trying to say. Further, and naturally, the "giving" would precede the experience of danger on the part of any who might otherwise be lost, hence, it precedes (as is seen in 6:37) any action on the part of those who are so given.

I will grant Dr. White that the perfect tense comes before the "losing" and before the "raising" at the last day, but that is all that I will grant him, because that is all that the text says."

I will take that as a, "OK, White was right on that point, and Windsor was wrong."

(137) No, actually it was said to point out that Dr. White's exegesis of John 6:39 is quite wrong, since he was trying to use the Greek perfect tense to teach Calvinistic predestination.

Dr. White keeps working on the false premise that those who come to Jesus by the giving of the Father are secured for eternity, but the text does not say that. The text does say that all who are so given come, are never cast out,

(138) No, Dr. White is going to keep making the same mistake over and over again unless he gets the text right. The text says "I [Jesus] will certainly not cast [him] out," not they will "never [be] cast out." We can see why Dr. White keeps stumbling over these verses. It's due to the fact that he keeps assuming they teach Predestination without Free Will. One of the major tenets of Predestination is that once one enters he can never be cast out. Again, if you can't see it in John 6, read 2 Tim 2:10-13 again to see if the "elect" can "deny" Christ and cast themselves out of His presence.

and the Son loses none of them,

(139) No, it's the Father's "will" that the Son lose none of them, not that the Son will lose none of them. Dr. White first has to prove that "will" refers to an irresistible decree of God rather than God's desire to see man saved that man can refuse. We were discussing this issue a while back. When I used Ezek 33:11 to try to prove that God's will includes desire, not merely a decree, Dr. White told me that that passage was in the Old Testament and was irrelevant to our discussion.

but when you refuse to embrace the theocentrism of Scripture and import the anthropocentrism of Rome into the text, words no longer mean what they used to.

(140) I was wondering when this was going to be restated. He hasn't had one of these comments for at least five paragraphs.

The Father's will is that of those He gives to Jesus none are lost, just as He said He doesn't want any lost in Ezek 33:11; 2 Peter 3:9 and Zech 1:3. Again, the only way Dr. White can fit in the Father's will is by inserting the word elect both in John 6 and 1 Timothy 2:4.

We have already seen that 1 Timothy 2:4 refers to all kinds of men (of which the elect are made up),

(141) Do you see how Dr. White is so used to inserting words and concepts into Scripture that he can glibly say, "We have already seen that 1 Timothy 2:4 refers to all kinds of men," without the slightest pangs of conscience. Even though he is

fully aware that "kinds of men" and "all men" are two entirely different ideas, he is cock sure that "kinds" should be in the translation or interpretation. Until Dr. White ceases from making these inordinate insertions into the text, he will never see the truth.

and that it is perfectly consistent to see those given by the Father to the Son as the elect noted in Ephesians and Romans.

(142) Sure Ephesians and Romans are "perfectly consistent" with John. Why would anyone, who believes Scripture is inerrant, claim that they were inconsistent? The problem is not with Paul and John, the problem is with Dr. White's interpretation of Paul and John.

Further, we note that 2 Peter 3:9 does, in context, refer to the elect as those who will indeed repent (see the discussion in TPF), and the other passages are surely not addressing the issue of God's decree of the salvation of His elect people.

(143) The word "elect" is not used in 2 Peter 3.

JRWPrev: Mr. Sungenis divorces this passage from the context. As I noted in my exegesis, 6:38-39 explains the glorious claim of 6:37: "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." Why do all who are given by the Father to the Son come to the Son? And why will He not cast out the one who comes to Him? Verses 38 and 39 explain this in the text, but not in the attempted explanation offered by Mr. Sungenis. He joins Mr. Windsor in reversing the order of the action of 6:37 (i.e., he makes the giving of the Father dependent upon the coming of the believer, when the text says it is the other way around).

"I did no such thing. Check what I said. I stated clearly here and in the post I sent to Scott Windsor that the giving of the Father precedes the coming to Jesus. How could I say anything different, since it is clear in the text? I challenge Dr. White to show us where (Scott or) I said that the "coming" of John 6:37 precedes the "giving" of John 6:37."

As the reader will note, Mr. Sungenis has repeatedly asserted that it is the belief or unbelief of men that determines whether the Father gives men to the Son or not. To quote him directly, "The text implies that they were not 'given' to Jesus because of their unbelief, not that they were in unbelief because they were not 'given.'"

(144) Dr. White is confusing two different things. The first issue is that the Father's giving precedes the coming to the Son. The second issue concerns how the unbelief of the Jews relates to

God's giving. If Dr. White would keep these things separate, things would go a lot smoother.

Obviously, in my comments I am referring to logical priority and dependency, not temporal: if the Father's giving of men is dependent upon their free will actions, as Sungenis says, these must be foreseen actions. Hence, the actions of man in time determine the actions of God in eternity. This is the simple fact of how synergism works: creatures determining what the Creator can, and will, do. Pots in charge of the Potter.

(145) No, this is where Calvinists continually misrepresent the Catholic Church. What the precise relationship is between God's eternity and man's temporal existence we don't claim to know. All we know, and claim, is that God's election does not exclude man's free will. Dr. White's attempt to make this an issue of "foreseen actions" and free will "determin[ing] the actions of God in eternity" are misplaced and inappropriate. Also, his attempted explanation of his own view as one which deals with "logical priority" as opposed to the "temporal," is convenient for him, but it doesn't really answer the question at issue. If Dr. White wants some real "logical priority," he and the Calvinists better give "priority" to the "logical" fact that God does not lie, and therefore can't ask men to repent who don't have the power to repent.

JRWPrev: The perfect tense makes sense in the context in which it is used: Christ came to do the will of the Father. Surely Christ knew, when He came to earth, what that will was, did He not? Are we to actually believe that what Jesus is saying here is that He came to perform a general salvation of an unknown group, so that the text really should say, "This is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He will give Me upon the basis of their free will action I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day"? How would that be relevant to the assertion of 6:37?

No, He wouldn't say that, since John 6 is not creating a contest between predestination and free will - - a contest Dr. White desperately wishes to see in the context to support his Calvinistic beliefs.

As I have said before, there is no contest, because "free will" is no more a concern of the text than "the Book of Mormon" or "space aliens." The reason I am addressing it is because Mr. Windsor and Mr. Sungenis keep inserting it! Surely there is no place for it in the text, but the synergist must keep sneaking it in where it doesn't belong. I am addressing the resultant confusion in the text that comes from the very position Mr. Sungenis has already enunciated.

(146) Again, I don't call John 5:40; 6:40; 6:45 (2 Timothy

2:10-13; Zech 1:3) "sneaking in" Free Will. What Dr. White fails to grasp is that John 6 is not a dissertation of predestination, but a narrative explaining that God is giving up on the Jews and thus will cease drawing them to Jesus. That is why the "Free Will" of John 5:40 is so important to the discussion. Without it, one cannot know why God will no longer draw the Jews to Jesus.

JRWPrev: Remember, Jesus is explaining the unbelief of the crowd: how would this explain their unbelief, since such would involve the assertion that they have the very ability to believe that is denied to them in 6:44 and 6:65?

Again, Dr. White reveals his false presuppositions. Dr. White believes that every time he sees a passage which says that a man cannot come to Jesus except by the giving of the Father, that passage teaches predestination. That is an unprovable assertion.

Denial of the obvious does not rid us of the obvious. Note that above Mr. Sungenis failed to even begin to interact with the fact that John 6:44 teaches utter inability and that it teaches that all those who are drawn are also raised up (i.e., that this is not merely prevenient grace, but an effectual calling).

(147) I have interacted with it. John 6:44 does teach man's utter inability unless God draws. I've never even hinted of denying that fact. But what Dr. White misses is that the point of John 6:44 is that the Father will cease His drawing of the Jews because of their persistent unbelief, not to teach a doctrine of absolute predestination. Also, "drawing" is not defined in John 6 as an irresistible force that brings the person to Jesus.

Mr. Sungenis assumes that "giving" means "trying to give, but often failing." If "giving" actually means that the Father will draw that person to the Son effectively, so that Jesus' words are true, "all that the Father gives Me will come to Me," then this "unprovable assertion" is, in fact, proven.

(148) No, the giving is different than the drawing. God draws first. If the person responds, then God gives that person to Jesus. Thus, the "giving" doesn't fail. However, if the person does not continue to believe, then the Father will no longer "give" that person to Jesus.

The passages do not tell us the Father's criteria for giving the people to Jesus.

No, it does not: it simply denies that the criteria lies in the person thus given. That is, the "criteria" is simply the mercy and grace of God, as we are told elsewhere (Eph. 1): Jesus'

words tell us clearly that it is not the actions of man that result in the elect being given by the Father to the Son. If it is not the actions of man, then the "criteria" must lie solely in the Sovereign Creator, and that is the consistent biblical truth.

(149) Again, Dr. White is becoming a victim of an acute syndrome. When he reads of a divine action in regards to salvation this automatically excludes a corollary human action. But that is wrong. The only way John 6 could "den[y] that the criteria lies in the person thus given" is for John 6 to say it specifically.

All the passages say is that those who come to Jesus are given by the Father, period. Whether the Father's criteria for bringing them to Jesus was predestination, free will, or a combination of the two, is not stated in the text, but Dr. White keeps insisting that it is only predestination. Again, he is reading into the text what he wants to see.

By selectively ignoring certain phrases, or simply denying that other phrases are relevant, Mr. Sungenis misses the entire thrust of Jesus' words, as we have seen repeatedly already.

(150) What phrases have I ignored? What phrases have I said are irrelevant? Instead of answering the challenge I wrote above, Dr. White tries to go on the offensive, but without any evidence. The point in fact remains. John 6 specifies neither predestination or free will. It simply teaches that all that come to Jesus are given by the Father. The criteria for the giving is not developed, except that it is in answer to the Jews' persistent unbelief (John 5:40) that I mentioned earlier.

JRWPrev: Instead, the Father's will is obviously well known to the Son. He is entrusted with God's elect, and His unlimited power and salvific ability explain His assertion in 6:37: not only will He never cast those who are given to Him by the Father out, but all who are given will come to Him, since He has the capacity to bring this about! If this were not the case, nothing in 6:39 would make any sense.

Again, Dr. White has inserted the word "elect" into the mix, and he has confused God's "unlimited power and salvific ability" with forcing people to believe apart from their free will.

Note the use of the term "force," a word that is, obviously, meaningless in this context. It makes as much sense as saying Jesus "forced" Lazarus from the tomb.

(151) I've dealt with Dr. White's theological euphemisms in an earlier paragraph.

This is an important point: the problem with Dr. White's theology is that in his attempt to save the sovereignty of God he inadvertently makes God unsovereign. In Dr. White's theology, the only way God can be sovereign is if He overpowers man into believing against his will. The Catholic God is much more sovereign than that, since the Catholic God is the one who remains sovereign and controls all the events of history with respect to, or in spite of, man's free will. As the Catholic Catechism says so aptly, "To God, all moments of time are present in their immediacy. When therefore he establishes his eternal plan of 'predestination,' he includes in it each person's free response to his grace." (Para 600)."

And parallel railroad tracks "meet" in eternity, too, right? No, parallel railroad tracks, should they ever meet, will result in a train crash. Rome may use high-sounding words to attempt to mix the unmixable, but that doesn't make the result rational. Either God saves perfectly, or He reacts solely to the decisions of finite creatures. Every attempt to rob God of His freedom and subject Him to His creatures has failed, as this one does as well.

(152) There you have it. It is precisely what I have been contending. One of the main reasons Dr. White doesn't accept predestination working with free will is that he thinks they are an attempt to "mix the unmixable" and that such an attempt would not be "rational." For Dr. White only one can be true: "Either God saves perfectly, or He reacts solely to the decisions of finite creatures." To him, both cannot be true. This is where the human logic of the Calvinist system becomes their death-trap. In fact, Calvin's "logic" led him to only one conclusion: God is the author of sin. Anybody who is honest with Calvinism will eventually come to the same conclusion. And by the way, no, parallel lines do not meet in eternity.

JRWPrev: Mr. Sungenis says the perfect tense is not "crucial" to the passage. Then why does he later lay weight upon the present tense of the same verb, if the verb tenses are not crucial? (Mr. Windsor said on the program that discussing these issues was really irrelevant anyway. Mr. Sungenis seems to disagree).

This is an attempt by Dr. White's to 'damn if you do and damn if you don't.' I am alert to such Catch 22 ploys, since I have been debating for quite a while now. Be that as it may, the only reason I brought up the present tense of DIDWMI in John 6:37 is because Dr. White tried to make an issue of the perfect tense of DIDWMI in John 6:39. His claim was that the perfect tense denotes predestination. If that is the case, then my question was what does he do with the present tense of DIDWMI in John 6:37? If his thesis about the perfect tense in John 6:39 were correct, wouldn't that mean that the present tense in John 6:37

would say something opposite?? Yet you don't find Dr. White making a case for the present tense of John 6:37 like he does for the perfect of John 6:39. Obviously, in his frame of mind about the purpose of Greek tenses, John 6:37 doesn't help his case, so he ignores it. He thought that Scott Windsor, who doesn't know the Greek, wouldn't catch this little inconsistency. That is why Scott contacted me, and that is why I am telling what I am."

Those who have now read all the material to this point are undoubtedly amazed at what was just said. To say I "ignore" John 6:37, when I brought it out in TPF, and in my previous response, and discussed it fully, is amazing indeed.

(153) We are not debating TPF here. Regarding the above incident, I was only debating what Dr. White wrote to Scott Windsor. In that exchange Dr. White did not give an explanation of the present tense of DIDWMI in John 6:37.

Further, I simply pointed out the inconsistency in Mr. Sungenis' assertion: if the perfect is irrelevant, the present would be too, would it not? Surely Mr. Sungenis has approached this passage in a significantly different way that [sic] Mr. Windsor did. Mr. Windsor eschewed any discussion of the grammar of the text as irrelevant. Such a viewpoint would render a large portion of Mr. Sungenis' books irrelevant as well, but Mr. Sungenis seems hesitant to point out Mr. Windsor's errors at this point. Finally, again, I raised the perfect tense in the context of Mr. Windsor's assertion that men are given to the Son at the final judgment, after they have come to Christ. Mr. Sungenis has said that "of course" the giving precedes the coming, but it is based upon foreseen faith.

(154) Apparently, Dr. White is so used to battling straw men of his own choosing that he comes to believe that what he opined about someone's belief is actually true. Above Dr. White states: "Mr. Sungenis has said that "of course" the giving precedes the coming, but it is based upon foreseen faith." I have NEVER said that in this exchange. You won't find the words "foreseen faith." in all the 100 pages I wrote, except to deny the claim.

So, Mr. Sungenis disagrees with Mr. Windsor.

JRWPrev: The perfect tense tells us that the Son has already been given, at the time of the speaking of these words, a people. Mr. Sungenis neglects to note the use of the neuter *pa'n* as the object of what has been given to the Son. As I pointed out in my exegesis, it is a people, a whole, that has been entrusted to the Son. [We will see this helps us to see the consistency of the use of the present tense in 6:37 below as well.] This people is defined by God's act of giving, not by any

human act of "free will."

Pay attention, this is important. This is where Dr. White has totally misconstrued the meaning of the Greek perfect tense. Dr. White is trying to use the perfect tense ("has given") to prove that, prior to the words spoken to the Jews in John 6, the sum total of people who would come to Jesus had already been given to Jesus prior to the discourse in John 6, and for that matter, prior to any event in history. Note well: the perfect tense in Greek does no such thing. Again, let me state, the ONLY thing the Greek perfect tense does in John 6:39 is tell us that the action of the Father's giving precedes the action of "lose nothing" and "raise it up on the last day." The "giving" may occur in the past, the present or in the future, but whenever it occurs it will be before the "lose nothing" and the "raise it up on the last day." That is all the verse is saying. To claim that the perfect tense is saying that all the people in view, prior to the events in John 6, have already been given is a total distortion of the text. There is simply no referent for the perfect tense that confines its beginning to the primordial past. If such a referent IS there, I challenge Dr. White to show us where it is.

Let's think about it a moment. "It is the boss' will that of all the accounts that have been given to you, Mr. Jones, you lose none of them, but cause them to increase in sales." Is there anyone who would for a moment suggest that what is actually being said here is that these accounts will be given to Mr. Jones at a future point? Remember, Jesus is identifying the Father's will for Him. Is Mr. Sungenis suggesting that the Father's will for the Son was unknown to the Son prior to the Incarnation, for example? If the will was, in fact, known, then does it not follow inevitably that the action of "giving" here carries its normal sense? The perfect tense, especially when used in speech, refers normally to a completed action in the past with abiding results to the present. Upon what principle---contextual or grammatical---does Mr. Sungenis suggest the possibility that we should translate the passage so that it allows for, "of all that shall be given to Me"?

(155) Dr. White still hasn't proven his contention. Let's say that the boss still has accounts to give to Mr. Jones. In fact, the boss will be giving accounts to Mr. Jones until the day the boss' firm goes out of business, which we'll call "the last day." In this case, we can still say, "It is the boss' will that of all the accounts that have been given to you, Mr. Jones, you lose none of them, but turn them in on the last day." (Notice I had to change the last clause to keep it in conformity to the stipulations in John 6:39, and that Dr. White's clause "but cause them to increase in sales" favors the placement of the perfect tense to his own perspective). It is easy to see how the perfect tense ("have been given to you") can change its time

reference based on the time referent in which it is placed. If "have been given" is placed in a time-frame that begins in the past but transpires for a long period of time, then obviously we cannot confine it to a one-time act in the past. This is because verb tenses are not independent entities in themselves. They are subject to the other tenses and thoughts that are in the verse they are placed, and in the context of the verses surrounding them. This is especially true, since Jesus, in John 6:37, uses the present tense instead of the perfect tense in John 6:39, showing that the perfect tense in John 6:39 is not absolute by any means. Thus, this is why I keep saying that Dr. White is abusing the perfect tense of the Greek in order to support his Calvinistic beliefs. He cannot prove that it is being used in the way he is claiming that it is being used. End

Next, Mr. Sungenis continues to ignore the original context in which I raised this issue, but even in these comments, he refutes Windsor's suggestion that the giving takes place at the last day. To assert that my comments were in error but not to admit that my comments were perfectly correct in the context originally given is an obvious error. So, Mr. Sungenis is simply in error to say that the ONLY thing communicated by the use of the perfect tense is that the action of giving by the Father precedes "not losing" and "raising up." This can be seen so easily that it is startling that someone of Mr. Sungenis' education could miss it: replace the perfect with a present. The present tense action would still precede the future tense "not lose." So is Mr. Sungenis seriously suggesting that the present and perfect are interchangeable? Is this how one does Greek exegesis?

(156) With my explanation above, we can see that the issue is a little wider than that which Dr. White has confined us. In fact, we can now see that the present tense of John 6:37 fits right in with the perfect tense of John 6:39, IF we understand that the perfect tense of John 6:39 is not confined to the distant past. This is why: since the present tense of John 6:37 represents an ongoing action with no limit to where it stops except the last day, then the perfect tense of John 6:39, which, as I proposed above, is not confined to the distant past but includes all those given right up until the last day, then it too represents an ongoing action by the Father. That is also why the participle in John 6:40 are present tense participles, since they represent the ongoing action of people "beholding and believing" right up until the last day when all will be raised.

Or do we recognize, as I have pointed out in my exegesis, the consistency of all of the text? That the present tense in 6:37 is associated with the personal pronoun and the personal coming of the believers as individuals;

(157) That may or may not be true. Present tenses are not

confined to personal referents. In fact, if Dr. White's thesis is correct, we would have to ask the fair question: why does Jesus make a distinction between the "All" of John 6:37 and "the one" of John 6:37, if, as Dr. White contends, the "All" will "infallibly" come to Jesus? Why personalize it by using "the one" if it is a foregone conclusion that the "All" will come? Moreover, the Greek could have said, using the aorist or perfect tense "and the one who has come to Me I will certainly not cast out," and mean virtually the same thing as the present tense "and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." All this is trying to point out is that the tenses are not the deciding factor here, despite what Dr. White is trying to impose on them. Greek verbal tenses are not little wax noses that we can mold any way we want. And this is the extreme danger when someone knows a little Greek. He thinks that because there is a general rule that Greek perfect tenses refer to a previous act which has effects in the future that this means that such a tense, when used of God's action, refers to the primordial act of predestination without free will. But that assumption is simply a theological imposition on the Greek, not a grammatical analysis at all.

that 6:38-39 backs away from that present-tense, "in the now" situation and provides the background, the reason for the assertion of 6:37; that it does so by switching to the neuter singular pronoun so as to bring the entire people of God into view as a singular whole (the common use of the neuter singular)

(158) As I said before, if John 6:39's sole purpose was to give the reason for the formula in John 6:37, then it would most likely be preceded by a Greek HOTI clause, or some other Greek indicator, that Jesus was making such a connection. As it stands, the connection of verse 39 as the "reason" for verse 37 is merely the opinion of Dr. White without any proof.

and by moving to the perfect tense verb, "has given," and then the future tense "will not lose" and "will raise up," setting up the contrast between the completed expression of the Father's will in eternity past (the very time frame provided for the same action in Ephesians 1 and Romans 8) and the future fulfillment of the entire work of redemption. [Note: "will not lose" can also be interpreted as an aorist subjunctive, but such would not impact the point being made in light of the use of the future "raise up".] The charge of "distortion" is best directed at Mr. Sungenis for gutting the text of its meaning so as to safeguard Roman tradition.

(159) No, I am being fair with the text. I am not going to make the text say anything more than it says. It is Dr. White's contention that "has given" is connected only to the primordial past. The text doesn't give us any such referent. The focus of

the text is that because the Father gives then they will come. This applies to the situation with the Jews because, from everything we read in the NT, God is ceasing His giving them to Jesus, and He is turning to the Gentiles.

JRWPreV: The perfect tense points to a completed action. Mr. Sungenis says that we cannot tell when this action took place. That is quite true, but we can surely determine that it took place prior to other actions. It took place prior to the coming of anyone to Christ; and it takes place prior to Jesus' action of "not losing" those who are given to Him.

I would have to say that the reason Dr. White is admitting to this is that I pointed it out to him, for it surely wasn't admitted in his radio program or the subsequent Internet debate he had with Scott Windsor.

Basic facts are not "admitted." Nothing I have written on this subject is contradicted by basic facts. Mr. Sungenis' reading is so unusual, and so a-contextual, that responding to it does at times require one to go over things so basic that they otherwise would not require attention.

JRWPreV: I certainly do believe that this giving took place in eternity past: but as I said on the program, I prove that by direct reference to such passages as Romans 8:29-30 and Ephesians 1:3-11.

But we are not interested in what Dr. White "believes" to be true. At this juncture, we are only interested in what the grammar of John 6:37-39 allows us to say, since Dr. White attempted to use the Greek grammar to support predestination and deny free will.

No, I used Greek grammar to refute Mr. Windsor's false assertion that men are given to Christ at the final judgment, not before.

If Dr. White wants to deal with Romans 8 and Ephesians 1 at some other time, I will be glad to oblige. In fact, I think Dr. White and I should have a formal debate on this very topic, since he believes this issue is the real dividing line between our two faiths, and the faith of a man such as Norman Geisler.

Of course....and this interchange has surely shown the vast differences between us.

(160) Is that an agreement to debate or a refusal to debate?

JRWPreV: The key in John 6 is that the giving results in the

actions of coming and believing.

No, the "giving" of John 6:37 results only in the "coming" not in "believing."

As a brief review of the text bears out, the two are synonymous in John's gospel, and in this passage as well. Think about it just a moment: one can come without faith?!

I agree, but John 6:37 does not say that. It only says that the giving results in coming. The reason faith becomes an issue is that we don't know when the faith occurred, before, during or after the giving.

John 6:37 does not even mention belief. When the issue of "believing" is added to the mix in John 6:40, the formula changes somewhat. In John 6:40, those that "perceive" and "believe" do so in the Greek active voice, which denotes an action of their wills, an action that is not included in John 6:37. The only actions in John 6:37 are those between the Father and the Son. In John 6:40, however, there are three actions: the Father's will, the person's volitional belief, and the Son's raising them on the last day.

We see again the atomistic, a-contextual methodology employed by Mr. Sungenis. We have already refuted each element of this section in the previous material. However, it is hard not to stand in simple amazement at Mr. Sungenis' inability to see the relationship of "coming" and "believing," as if they are separate things! All one has to do is read 6:35 to see the error of such thinking: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst.'" Given Mr. Sungenis' position, the one who comes to Christ and the one who believes in Christ are different people! Surely that is not the case! Instead, the careful exegete sees that there is no coming that is not in faith; and no faith that does not involve coming to Christ. The two are synonymous terms in this passage, so to make the distinction Mr. Sungenis does is simply incredible.

(161) I will simply reiterate what I wrote above: "...John 6:37 does not say that. It only says that the giving results in coming. The reason faith becomes an issue is that we don't know when the faith occurred, before, during or after the giving."

JRWPrev: So in summary, the perfect tense is surely very important: it not only refutes the erroneous application Mr. Windsor made (and which Mr. Sungenis did not repeat---we truly wonder what he thought of it), but it does communicate to us vital information concerning the absolute freedom of God in giving a people unto the Son. The people of God have been

given to the Son. What a tremendous truth!

Yes, what a tremendous truth it is that the people of God have been given to the Son. If it weren't for the Father's drawing grace and mercy, none of us would have a chance of salvation, whether it be by predestination or free will.

"Chance of salvation" vs. "a perfect Savior who does the will of the Father without fail." The contrast is striking.

(162) You see how Dr. White keeps confusing Christ's perfection with man's salvation? Can Dr. White provide just one verse where Christ's perfection is tied to whether some are saved or lost? No. In fact, 2 Timothy 2:12-13 says just the opposite. It says that Christ cannot deny Himself (which is the same thing as remaining perfect). According to 2 Tim 2:13, how does He do so? By remaining faithful even if we are faithless. How did we become faithless? 2 Tim 2:12 tells us: by denying him. If we deny Him, then He must deny us. If He doesn't deny us when we deny Him then He will be imperfect, because His nature demands that He deny us if He is denied. Who is it that can deny Jesus? 2 Tim 2:10 tells us. It is the "elect." These verses overturn almost every tenet of Calvinism. But what did Dr. White do when I brought up these verses. He said they were "irrelevant."

JRWPrev: John 6:40 indicates that man actively believes. The single most common means of attempting to get around the meaning of John 6:37-39, which so strongly precludes the insertion of human will and effort into the sovereign work of salvation, is to literally turn the text on its head and read it backwards. That is, rather than following the natural progression of thought, from the topic of unbelief in 6:35, through the assertion of v. 37, into the will of the Father in 38-39, and then into verse 40, they start with an a-contextual interpretation of 6:40, and then insist that the preceding verses cannot bear their natural meaning because of their assumed, but undefended (and indefensible) interpretation of that one verse.

As I have shown above repeatedly, we are doing no such thing. What is happening between John 6:37-39 and John 6:40 is that Dr. White has already presumed that the perfect tense of John 6:39 teaches predestination. Thus, anything anyone says to him about the sequential verses will mean that Dr. White will invariably discount them by using his pre-interpretation of John 6:39. But once Dr. White sees (and I truly hope he does) that John 6:39 is not saying what he thinks its saying, then perhaps he will be open to a more fair reading of John 6:40, or even of John 5:40.

Which is no defense of turning the text on its head. Each of these issues has been thoroughly addressed above.

JRWPrev: There is no doubt on anyone's part that 6:40 clearly presents man as active and believing. That is not even relevant to the debate, since no one is asserting that man does not believe in Christ as an active agent. Note the plain assertion of the text: "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." The "free will" argument is clear: "beholds" and "believes" are active verbs. Men behold the Son, men believe in the Son. Hence, it is argued, this act of beholding and believing forms the basis upon which God elects. Such an explanation takes a partial truth (the elect surely come to Christ, behold Christ, believe in Christ) and turns it upside down in clear violation of the text. The careful reader, however, will note that 6:40 follows 6:35-39. Hence, if the flow of thought means anything, we already have the identity of those who will come, behold, and believe, established in these preceding verses. Remembering that Jesus is explaining the unbelief of those who have seen Him work miracles, we have the identification of those who do come to Christ as those who are given to the Son by the Father (6:37); the same ones who will be infallibly raised up by the Son as per the Father's will (6:38-39). We have already been told in 6:37 that those the Father gives to the Son come to the Son: coming is active. Believers believe. Saving faith is a gift of God, given to His elect people.

(163) [Flow of thought is important, but if the issues in the initial flow are distorted, then what do you think is going to become of the issues in the latter flow?](#)

Without repeating myself, let me refer the reader to my above remarks. If I have missed anything, please bring it to my attention and I will address it. Yes, the outline just provided in my comments has been thoroughly defended in the previous materials. It is simply my hope that the reader has as clear a grasp of the context and flow as possible.

JRWPrev: So it is completely true that every believer believes, every believer comes to Christ. But the wonder of the passage is that every single one given by the Father to the Son, all, without exception, look to Christ in faith and receive eternal life. It is a gross misuse of the passage to turn it into a proof-text for "free will" by removing it from its context and turning it backwards.

Now, here is where this issue gets a little confusing for some. On the one hand, we can agree with Dr. White's statement that "it is completely true that every believer believes, every

believer comes to Christ. But the wonder of the passage is that every single one given by the Father to the Son, all, without exception, look to Christ in faith and receive eternal life." Believers believe; they come to Christ; every one given by the Father without exception, and they receive eternal life. Am I, Robert Sungenis, throwing in the towel? Not quite. First, the above statement doesn't deny free will. If Dr. White had said, "believers believe without recourse to their free will, such that God imposes belief on them against their will," then, of course, I would object. Second, the above statement doesn't tell us anything about whether those who believe and receive eternal life keep on believing and actually enter into heaven. One can believe but then fall from belief. One can be given eternal life but could later forfeit eternal life for disobedience. That is why Scripture speaks about "losing the inheritance," if we fall away. Many of the passages in Hebrews that I cited above state that very thing."

Such provides a good summary of how Rome's over-riding theology destroys meaningful exegesis. We have seen how clearly the text speaks of God's giving resulting in the coming in faith of the elect; we have seen the Father's will for the Son so that the Son loses none who are given to Him;

(164) Such provides a good example of Dr. White's continual ignoring of the book of Hebrews -- the book that speaks about falling from the faith in 51% of its contents. And Of course, God's giving results in the coming, but the problem here is the Father's "will." Dr. White hasn't proved his understanding of that will.

we have seen that there is no such thing as person who comes to Christ in faith without the drawing of the Father, and that the Son raises up all those who are drawn (6:44). And yet, despite all of this, due to an external, allegedly infallible source (and I just note in passing, Rome has never infallibly interpreted this passage, hence, all of the comments Mr. Sungenis has provided are his own private interpretation, from the Roman viewpoint), these truths are subsumed and, I believe, ultimately denied.

(165) Not quite. Those who come will be raised on the last day. But if they fall away in disbelief then they have ceased to come. That is why 2 Tim 2:10-13 says what it does, about the very "elect" Dr. White keeps inserting into John 6.

JRWPrev: Such is very much like those who read the words of Jesus in John 8:47: "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God," and hear it saying the opposite of what it actually says. When tradition is allowed to over-ride the text, people hear the text saying the opposite of what it really says: they hear it say,

"the reason you do not belong to God is because you refuse to hear," rather than what it actually says, the reason they do not hear is because the pre-existing condition which allows them to hear, that of belonging to God (being of the elect, being one of Christ's sheep) is not present.

Contrary to what Dr. White is proposing, I take the words "He who is of God hears the words of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God" just as they are. The verse does not say "the reason you do not belong to God is because you refuse to hear," so I wouldn't venture to make it say that. But the question remains whether Dr. White himself has understood John 8:47, or is he trying to make more out of the verse than what is actually there, just as he did with John 6:37-39? I am sorry to say that the latter is the case. I agree that only those who are "of God" are going to listen to God's words. But that does not tell me HOW these people came to be "of God" (ie., whether by predestination, free will, or a combination of the two). Dr. White is assuming that they became "of God" only by an eternal decree in the distant past that bypassed their free will. Again, every time he is faced with a passage that speaks of God being involved in the salvation process, Dr. White invariably interprets this to mean that God has predestined the recipients without regard to their free will. Why does he do this? Because his theological system forces him to do so.

Another incredible example. Think about what is being said. How could these men, by an act of "free will," embrace the message when they cannot hear it? The point of the passage is that 1) men lack a fundamental ability due to sin, and 2) God is the one who chooses who belongs to Him and who does not. The same is true of the matter of Christ's "sheep" in John 10. The Shepherd chooses the sheep, not the sheep the Shepherd. The Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep, and then tells the Pharisees that they are not His sheep! The synergist who grounds salvation upon the final decision of the grace-aided will of man simply cannot avoid the logical conclusion of their system, which involves the reversal of these passages.

(166) Yes, think about what is being said: (1) "men lack a fundamental ability due to sin," and (2) "God is the one who chooses who belongs to Him and who does not." This means that God, with no thought of any criteria beyond His arbitrary choice, decides who is saved and who is damned. Ergo, God predestined certain men to Hell just because He wanted to send them there. Why? Because He has to show how great He is in condemning sin, yet of people of whom He has given no power to get out of that sin. Dr. White's God can lie. He can demand repentance but never, for all eternity, give someone the power to repent. That's the God, or should I say god, of Dr. White.

Yes, really think about what is being said.

JRWPrev: So too, here in John 6, while verse 40 is surrounded by the testimony of God's sovereignty (6:37-39, 44-45, 65, etc.), those who exalt man's will due to their traditions refuse to listen and understand.

Here is another problem in Dr. White's exegesis: he puts verses of Scripture at odds with other verses of Scripture, and then he decides which set of verses he is going to let hold more weight.

Such is utterly untrue. The passage is a whole. The reader has seen clearly that only one side can offer a consistent, textually-based interpretation of the text. There has been no pitting of texts against each other at all.

(167) I am constantly amazed at what Dr. White thinks the reader has "seen clearly." Why doesn't he just let the reader decide what he "sees clearly," instead of implying that if he doesn't see it Dr. White's way then something is wrong with his thinking process.

Above, he has pitted John 6:40 against John 6:37-39, 44-45; 65, as if the final decision is going to be based on a head-count of verses.

Such is again obviously untrue. I have provided a consistent interpretation of John 6:40 in the context of its appearance, rather than what Mr. Sungenis has done, which isolates the passage from what comes before and after. This is the difference between my offered exegesis, and Mr. Sungenis' eisegetical response.

(168) I submit that Dr. White doesn't know what the "context of its appearance" is, since he has missed the real point of John 6, which is to tell the Jews that God is finally rejecting them (except for the remnant) for their centuries of unbelief (cf., Acts 13:46-48; 15:15-18; Zech 1:3; Ezk 33:11). If one doesn't catch this theme, then he will be tempted to see passages like John 6:37, 39, 44, 65 as proof texts for absolute Predestination because he presumes that the Jews of John 6 represent everyone in the world. But that is a false conclusion. The Jews in John 6 are the Jews in John 6. They had the opportunity to repent but spurned it. Therefore they are cut off without a chance for repentance, just as Hebrews 6:4-6 warns of those in the NT who do the same thing (cf., Romans 11:22; Hebrew 3-4; 1 Cor 10:1-12).

What makes him do this? Sorry to say, but it is his "tradition" of Calvinism that makes such demands on him. Conversely, the Catholic position says, "let's take all the verse together, not

make one stronger than the other, and make a conclusion that is fair to all of Scripture." In doing so, the Catholic Church sees both God's sovereignty and man's free will, not only in John 6, but in the whole Bible. I only wish Dr. White would be as fair with Scripture. I believe we can see who has been fair and who has not.

JRWPrev: The answer is not difficult to see. John 6:37 speaks of the person coming to Christ in faith. All that the Father is giving Him, as a result of being given, will come (future tense) to Him. This fits perfectly with John 6:44, where the Father is actively (and effectively, without failure), drawing those He has given to the Son to Christ.

This kind of exegesis shows precisely the danger inherent in using Greek with no boundaries. One can just rearrange the pieces, snip a little here, bend a little there, and presto, we have Greek grammar that conveniently supports the doctrine we wish to propose, in this case, Calvinism, and no other will be allowed, says Dr. White.

I believe we have already documented that it is Mr. Sungenis who engages in this kind of activity, not I.

[\(169\) I refer the reader to the discussion of the perfect tense of John 6:39 I mentioned earlier. That is a sufficient example of the distortion I am talking about.](#)

First of all, John 6:44 does not get into the issue of failure or success. All it says is that whoever comes to Jesus has to be first drawn by the Father. It is a simple cause and effect relationship. It doesn't tell us whether the person who came was predestined; used his free will; stays indefinitely once he comes; or any other detail about salvation.

Please note the above refutation of Mr. Sungenis on this passage, and how it was he who has given us a tremendous example of 1) ignoring the text as it stands, and 2) only citing a portion of it, not seeing the relationship the skipped part bears to the rest. The reader is strongly encouraged to consider well how Mr. Sungenis constantly says, "All it says is....." while then ignoring major elements of the text.

[\(170\) Notice how Dr. White keeps claiming that I "skipped" some passages. I don't know of any I haven't addressed that Dr. White has brought up. Just because I disagree with Dr. White's exegesis, he claims that I have "skipped" over something.](#)

John 6:44 says much more than "whoever comes to Jesus has to be first drawn by the Father." The reason Mr. Sungenis is

blind to the rest can be found in one simple word: tradition.

(171) I don't remember once mentioning Catholic tradition in this or my previous rebuttal. I think Dr. White has developed another syndrome - - the "Tradition syndrome": When a Catholic offers exegesis that doesn't agree with his exegesis then it is obvious the Catholic is going by Catholic tradition. But I think it is obvious in this rebuttal and my previous rebuttal that I have stuck with Scripture: the grammar, the context, related passages, biblical themes, etc. I leave it to Dr. White to show where I have relied on tradition.

Second, John 6:37 does not say that the effect of "giving" is due to the cause of being "given," regardless if there is any truth to that relationship. If it were saying such, then the verse would read: "Because of all the Father has given to Me, then all the Father gives to Me shall come to Me."

What? Such doesn't even make sense. The action of giving precedes the action of coming; the combination of the verbal element and the assertion that all who are so given come, starts the chain of truths that Mr. Sungenis just can't escape: that the giving of the Father is free. He has to prove it is synergistic, not free, and he has not even made the first attempt to do so from this text. Such is simply impossible to do.

But John 6:37 contains no Greek HOTI clause that connects its outcome with the proposition in John 6:39. They are two independent verses giving two different perspectives on the same event. The "giving" of John 6:37 looks at it from the perspective of history wherein each century is providing a group of people who come to Jesus. John 6:39 looks at it from the perspective of the final consummation, wherein all those that have finally been "given" will be raised on the last day. That's all the verses are saying.

We would challenge Mr. Sungenis to explain to us how he places 6:39 solely in the future. We have already seen his error regarding the perfect tense verb in this passage.

(172) I refer the reader to the previous analysis I gave of John 6:39 in rebuttal to Dr. White's assertions. Here it is again: "Dr. White still hasn't proven his contention. Let's say that the boss still has accounts to give to Mr. Jones. In fact, the boss will be giving accounts to Mr. Jones until the day the boss' firm goes out of business, which we'll call "the last day." In this case, we can still say, "It is the boss' will that of all the accounts that have been given to you, Mr. Jones, you lose none of them, but turn them in on the last day." (Notice I had to change the last clause to keep it in conformity to the stipulations in John 6:39,

and that Dr. White's clause "but cause them to increase in sales" favors the placement of the perfect tense to his own perspective). It is easy to see how the perfect tense ("have been given to you") can change its time reference based on the time referent in which it is placed. If "have been given" is placed in a time-frame that begins in the past but transpires for a long period of time, then obviously we cannot confine it to a one-time act in the past. This is because verb tenses are not independent entities in themselves. They are subject to the other tenses and thoughts that are in the verse they are placed, and in the context of the verses surrounding them. This is especially true, since Jesus, in John 6:37, uses the present tense instead of the perfect tense in John 6:39, showing that the perfect tense in John 6:39 is not absolute by any means. Thus, this is why I keep saying that Dr. White is abusing the perfect tense of the Greek in order to support his Calvinistic beliefs. He cannot prove that it is being used in the way he is claiming that it is being used.

JRWPrev: Sungenis' point, however, is fully refuted by simply thinking about the use of the present in context. In John 6:37, the present tense giving results in the future tense coming. Sungenis' idea is that our "free will" decision predicates and informs the "giving" of the Father, so that it is our choice that determines the Father's choice. But the text refutes this clearly.

Not only does the text refute it, but I refute it. I have never said that the "'free will' decision predicates and informs the 'giving' of the Father, so that it is our choice that determines the Father's choice." Rather, I have made two things very clear: 1) that the Father's choice works with our choice, and 2) that Dr. White's theology egregiously dismisses free will from John 6 based on a presupposition in his Calvinistic theology.

We have already seen, over and over again, that Mr. Sungenis is presenting synergism, and he does insert free will into the passage, so that man's decision determines God's decision. Such is truly beyond question by this point, and the reason why he would wish to contradict himself is difficult to understand.

(173) Its one thing to disagree with me, but I would recommend that Dr. White not keep claiming that I am saying something when I have denied I am saying it. Above, Dr. White said, "so that man's decision determines God's decision." In the preceding paragraph I said: "that the Father's choice works with our choice." Notice I did not say that man's choice determines God's choice, but that the Father's choice works with our choice. They are completely different truths, yet Dr. White refuses to recognize that distinction, since obviously he would rather battle an opponent of his own making.

JRWPrev: Those who will come will do so not out of some mythological "free will" but due to the gracious work of the Father wherein He will draw them to the Son: and the Father performs this miracle of grace only in the lives of those He gives to the Son.

I think the above statement by Dr. White proves my point. Notice how he satirizes free will as being "mythological." That's because his mentor, John Calvin, despite any verse of Scripture that suggested otherwise, determined there could be no free will.

Please note: Mr. Sungenis has never provided a verse that uses the phrase "free will," yet, he assumes it so basically, he can say that Calvin never produced a verse that denied what he only assumes. The circularity is glaring.

(174) Again, Systematic Theology 101 will allow me to use synonyms and related concepts to free will rather than confine me to the literal words "free will," just as we use the word "Trinity," though it is not found in the Bible. One such related concept is in 2 Tim 2:12: "If we deny him he will also deny us." But remember, Dr. White said this verse was irrelevant to the discussion in John 6, even though Paul uses the word "elect" in 2 Tim 2:10.

Any verse that taught free will was either subsumed under predestination or interpreted to say that it only seemed as if men had free will, since behind such statements God was secretly setting them up for a fall so he could eventually condemn them for not repenting. If you want to see the contortions he had to go through to arrive at such a position, I suggest you read pp. 457-472; 554-570 of Not By Faith Alone.

And I suggest you read The Potter's Freedom.

JRWPrev: Now, it seems Mr. Sungenis is insisting that the present tense here must be emphasizing an on-going action (though, for some reason, the normal meaning of the perfect is said to be less than definitional in 6:39), which while possible, is not the most logical syntactical choice.

This is simply not true. Check the record and you will find that I do not press the "ongoing" nature of the present tense of John 6:37.

OK, here is the record. Mr. Sungenis said: "Also, the verb "give" in John 6:37 ("All that the Father gives to me will come to me") is a Greek present tense, not a perfect, which shows that the action of "giving" is occurring presently, and is not confined to whatever White conceives the perfect tense of 6:39 to be

saying."

It certainly seems that he said, "...which shows that the action of 'giving' is occurring presently...."

(175) I said I did not "PRESS" the issue of the present tense in John 6:37, not that I did not mention the present tense and its meaning. As anyone can tell from my debate thus far, I don't put a whole lot of weight on Greek tenses, since I know they are not absolute determiners of the meaning of the text. Greek is much too vast and complex for me to put such exegetical weight on one tense, especially at the expense of other tenses in the context. What I object to is people like Dr. White trying to confine the Greek tense of a verb to one meaning, and one meaning only, and it just so happens that the meaning he assigns to it is the one that agrees with his theology. How convenient.

I simply mentioned the present tense to counterbalance the inordinate use of the perfect tense by Dr. White in John 6:39. I said that 1) it was wrong for Dr. White to make the perfect tense of John 6:39 refer to some primordial decision of God's in the distant past irrespective of man's free will, since the verse did not specify such a referent;

And I did so in the context of Mr. Windsor's errant assertion that the giving takes place at the last day, a point that has been fully established; as to the consistency of seeing this giving as the same referred to in Ephesians 1:3-11, let the reader decide.

(176) Whether Mr. Windsor's interpretation is correct or not is not at issue between Dr. White and I. I am attacking Dr. White's application of the perfect tense in John 6:39, irrespective of what Mr. Windsor thinks it to be.

2) regarding the perfect tense one can only say that its definitive action precedes the action of the main verb;

and What? Such makes no sense. What if the only verb in a sentence is a perfect tense, and is the main verb? The perfect speaks of past, completed action with abiding results in the present.

(177) Dr. White is proving my point about the danger of misapplying the Greek. Above, he did exactly what I said he did. He assumed that because perfect tenses speak of a previous action that has abiding results, he feels he has the right to assign the past to an election decree before the world was created. But as we noted in the very example Dr. White gave of the boss and Mr. Jones, it all depends on which time

reference is chosen for the perfect tense, which is only determined by the other verbs in the sentence, or the context of the passage.

3) that the verse does not specify the starting point for the perfect tense.

But it does preclude the application Mr. Windsor made of it!

JRWPre: In fact, given his position, Sungenis would have to assert a kind of "iterative present" understanding of this present tense verb, since the action of "giving" would be dependent upon the free-will actions of men.

For those who are not familiar with such terms, "iterative" refers to something that repeats. With that, I don't know how Dr. White is applying it. Nevertheless, Dr. White has continually misrepresented the Catholic position by insisting that we are only interested in the "free will" angle of things. Let me make it clear that we are interested in both predestination and free will. Both of those aspects are working in John 6, as I have stated iteratively.

There is no predestination in synergism. Such is an oxymoron.

(178) Its an oxymoron for Dr. White because he thinks it is a logical impossibility for predestination to coincide with Free Will. That is where the "logic" of the Calvinist system traps them in the abyss of no return.

JRWPre: This makes the future action of coming determine the present action of giving, just the opposite of what the text indicates.

Obviously, since Dr. White has misunderstood the Catholic position, his statement above is also incorrect, both grammatically and theologically.

Mr. Sungenis has not demonstrated an error in understanding Rome's position: if our free will choice is necessary, then God's predestination is limited to merely offering a plan, not choosing a people.

(179) No, its not limited, because we don't claim to know how they work together. God's predestination plan in the Catholic theology is just as real and potent as that of which Dr. White claims for his own theology. It is not just a "plan," it is a choosing, but it is a choosing that includes man's free will.

Secondly, there is nothing grammatically wrong with the sentence when one remembers that I am making reference to

the terms in the text under discussion.

(180) ???

JRWPrev: Instead, the fact that this present tense is used in tandem with a future tense (gives/will come) throws the emphasis upon the timing of the action into the future, hence the normative translation "All that the Father gives me" (NASB, NIV, KJV "giveth", NRSV) rather than the unusual "All that the Father is giving me...." While not fully a "gnomic" present, surely it exists in the same general area, stating a general truth of the Father's giving of a people to the Son, and the emphasis lies squarely upon the result of that giving, the coming of the elect to Christ.

Obviously, I would have no problem with the grammar of John 6:37, since I am not out to distort the grammar, whatever it may be. What I am opposed to is Dr. White's application of the grammar to his Calvinistic beliefs, as, for example, throwing in the word "elect," as he did above, to persuade the reader to his theological perspective. All the verse states is that those who come to Jesus had the Father's giving as its antecedent cause, period.

And that giving is election! Hence the validation of what I have said from the start.

(181) The only thing Dr. White is validating is my accusation that he keeps throwing the word "elect" into John 6 without the word "elect" being there. But if he insists on adding the word "elect" (an "elect," as he proposes, which cannot fall from salvation) then ask him to show us how the "elect" of 2 Tim. 2:10 can turn around and "deny" Christ in 2 Tim 2:12.

JRWPrev: Contextually this is the point: those who stood before the Lord in unbelief, who, despite seeing miracles, would not come to Him, did not because they were not given to Him by the Father. This explains their continued unbelief.

Although this is beside the point, it really doesn't explain their unbelief. For if it is true, as Dr. White asserts, that they were not chosen, in the primordial past, to believe when Jesus came, then it would make little difference whether they saw miracles or not when Jesus came.

Mr. Sungenis has completely missed the entire discussion, if these words are representative. Of course it explains their unbelief! And of course it is not beside the point, it is the point! They can stand before the very incarnate Son of God and yet stand in unbelief. Why? Is it because they are somehow "worse" than those who believe? Or, better put, that those who

believe are smarter, more insightful, "better" people? NO! The reason is found in the grace and mercy of God alone, for those who are redeemed are so only by mercy. There is nothing in the elect that make them "better" than the others, more likely to "choose" God. We were all, Paul reminds us, dead in our transgressions and sins. This is the whole point, and Mr. Sungenis continues to miss it.

In actuality, then, the notion of using miracles as an impetus for belief really undercuts the Calvinist position. All the Calvinist can say is that the miracles are performed in front of the Jews so as to have more evidence to convict them at Judgment Day for not repenting of their sins, as if God is some kind of ogre who has to grind the point into the sand before He can unleash His fury. But for the Catholic position, the use of miracles fits in very well, since the free will component of their salvation allows the miracles to work their intended effect - - to consider more seriously their responsibility to repent. On occasion, the miracles were instrumental in turning the people to Jesus.

Aside from the rhetoric that flies in the face of so much biblical evidence, let the reader note how again the text is stood on its head: did the miracle of feeding the 5,000 join synergistically with the "free will" of the crowd to lead them to true conversion? Is that the point of the passage? Or is Jesus preparing the Twelve for the result in John 6:65-67? Let the reader decide.

JRWPrev: To throw the emphasis in 6:37 upon the present tense rather than the future action is to miss the context;

To claim that your opponent is "throwing the emphasis on the present tense rather than the future action" when he is not doing so, is the first and only error here.

Let the record stand on its own: "Also, the verb "give" in John 6:37 ("All that the Father gives to me will come to me") is a Greek present tense, not a perfect, which shows that the action of "giving" is occurring presently, and is not confined to whatever White conceives the perfect tense of 6:39 to be saying."

Again, the only reason I mentioned the present tense in John 6:37 was to offset the unwarranted emphasis Dr. White was making of the perfect tense in John 6:39. I neither dwelt on the "ongoing" nature of the present tense in John 6:37, nor did I postulate that its effect was overshadowing the future tense of the verse. See above.

JRWPrev: to miss the weight of the perfect in 6:39 in defining

the will of the Father is likewise an error.

The Perfect tense in Greek grammar does not define the will of the Father. The Perfect tense merely tell us when an action took place relative to the main verb, or other verbs, in the sentence structure. Once again, let me reiterate: the only thing the Perfect tense of John 6:39 is doing is showing that the action of "giving" must precede the action of "raising" on the last day. That's not too hard to understand. You don't even need to know Greek to figure that out. It is only when someone tries to inject their own theology into such a simple grammatical construction that problems start to arise.

And since we have seen that Mr. Sungenis is in error even on this basic point of Greek grammar, we encourage the reader to consider this when evaluating so many other claims made in a similar vein.

In Conclusion This file is more than 200K in length. It's probably way too long. But a full response was warranted, if only to make sure that a few items were clear: 1) the flow and meaning of the text is unambiguous and clear; 2) the attempts on Mr. Sungenis' part to interact with the text on a grammatical and syntactical level failed; 3) God is free and sovereign in His work of salvation. Soli Deo Gloria!

(182) Conclusion: Thank you, Dr. White, for participating in this debate. As always, I remain cordial with you, even though I vehemently disagree with your theology. May God bless us both and lead us to truth. Soli Deo Gloria!!