

**An answer to a great number of
blasphemous cavillations written by
an Anabaptist and Adversary to**

GOD'S ETERNAL PREDESTINATION,

**and confuted by John Knox,
minister of God's Word in Scotland.
Wherein the author so discovereth
the craft and falsehood of that sect,
that the godly knowing that error,
may be confirmed in the truth by
the evident Word of God.**

By JOHN KNOX,

Minister of the Gospel in Scotland.

*"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes,
and yet is not washed from their filthiness." Prov.30:12.*

***With a short Editorial on Divine Reprobation
included at the Conclusion of this volume.***

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INTRODUCTION.

During the years, 1558-1559, {which are most associated with the time period that John Knox wrote this particular book,} Knox was living in Geneva Switzerland, having previously served a congregation of English-speaking refugees in Dieppe, France, and a similar type of congregation in Hamburg, Germany. At this point Martin Luther had already been dead for about 13 years, Queen Elizabeth I was just ascending the throne, and the University of Geneva {a theological seminary} was first opened {1559} by John Calvin. Prior to these years Knox had spent 19 months as a galley slave on a French Warship until the English Government obtained his release sometime in February of 1549. At this point England was being ruled {under a regency} by the young Protestant King Edward VI, with Thomas Crammer as Archbishop of Canterbury. Soon after his arrival in England, Knox was sent by Crammer to Newcastle upon Tyne, and there appointed preacher of Newcastle Cathedral, and was soon thereafter summoned to London to preach before the King himself. In his first sermon before the King, he advocated a change for the second edition of the Book of Common Prayer, as it was felt by Knox that the liturgy which required worshippers to kneel during communion lacked any Scriptural warrant. Whilst in England his preaching was faithful & forcible, and meticulously calculated to repeatedly strike at the root of Popery by boldly pronouncing the pope to be antichrist, and the whole system erroneous and anti-scriptural. Such faithful preaching would make his messages to stink in the nostrils of all that sought to elevate the blind traditions of men above Scripture, ever stressing here, as in all his writings, that all that we attempt to perform in the way of worship must have clear biblical warrant. Knox would repeatedly stress that all worship invented by man is idolatry, and such uncompromising devotedness to the sacred scriptures would characterize his ministry throughout the years.

Knox would remain in England until the death of King Edward VI, as Edward's successor, the 'bloody' Queen Mary Tudor would do all in her power to re-establish Roman Catholicism in England and restore the idolatrous Mass in all the churches, leaving the country no longer safe for Protestant preachers. In 1558, Knox, {although urged by both Heinrich Bullinger and John Calvin to use caution regarding female magistrates,} published {anonymously in Geneva} his First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women, in which pamphlet he sought to affirm that all government by women was "repugnant to nature, an offense to God, and finally, the subversion of good order." Interestingly enough, Calvin and Beza both initially reacted by banning the sale of the book in Geneva; and it is thought that it was the printing of this book that actually delayed his call to return to Scotland around 1559, as Queen Elizabeth, now on the throne, {furious because of this book which spoke out against female monarchs,} refused to allow Knox a safe passage through England; and it is thought that during this six month period in which he lingered in Geneva that he wrote, at the request made from brethren in England, this, his largest theological treatise, on the subject of God's Predestination. The book fully titled, "An Answer to a Great Number of Blasphemous Cavillations Written by an Anabaptist, and Adversary to God's Eternal Predestination, and Confuted by John Knox, Minister of God's Word in Scotland, wherein the Author so discovereth the craft and falsehood of that Sect, that the godly may be confirmed in the truth by the evident Word of God," was printed in Geneva on November 13, 1559, and was a chapter by chapter reply to a book then circulating in England, entitled, "Careless by Necessity."

This work, written by an Anabaptist, denied the doctrine of God's Predestination, and attempted to untie the thread of God's predestinating purpose that governs all things in Christ, by futile arguments that differ none whatsoever from similar arguments found in virtually every author that throughout the ages has hopelessly attempted the same. In this treatise Knox linked the

Anabaptists with other advocates of free will, both past and present, and regarded them as a group to be dreaded more than the Papists. To him these Anabaptists were "more dangerous, and more to be feared. For under the color and cloak of mortification of the flesh, of godly life, and of Christian righteousness, they are become privy blasphemers of Christ Jesus, supplanters of his dignity, and manifest enemies to the free justification which cometh by faith in his blood." Knox regarded their teachings as "most horrible and absurd," as "rotten heresies" and "damnable error." He considered the holders of such opinions as "blasphemers," "venomous liars" and "vile slaves of proud Lucifer," in all their futile attempts to dethrone the LORD from his exalted position as that exclusive ONE that governs all things according to his predestinating purpose in Christ. Knox's view was that God's Decree of Predestination is all-comprehensive, whereby for His own glory alone, the LORD hath most immutably, unconditionally and efficaciously pre-determined whatsoever comes to pass, whereby all things are absolutely controlled, maintained and preserved in such a way that all, without exception, lead to the end which He hath determined. It is the fixed, determined purpose and counsel of God, in which He has ordained irrevocably the destiny of all things, before they are brought to pass, in the exact order and succession of events that He has determined in His infinite wisdom. This is a foundation truth of all real theology. God is the great Originator, Initiator & Architect of all his creation!

Knox would point out that in contrast to that Government of Grace that rests securely upon the shoulders of Christ; these false systems of theology and philosophy begin with man, who in some twisted manner somehow make God subject to his whims, choice and will; which system of belief is in essence completely atheistic and can only make infidels of its adherents. The Arminian world is the world of the atheist, and not the world of the Christian; and in this natural world of self-delusion & theological blunder he shall abide, unless the LORD, {"in the beginning God" - the foundation of all

theology,} by a sheer act of his sovereign & distinguishing grace dispels the darkness of his mind, enlightening his understanding to the acknowledgement of the absolute sovereignty of God's grace in the salvation of those freely chosen in Christ Jesus.

Knox, understanding the vital importance of the truth which he contended for in this volume, wrote in its first few opening pages, "but I say, that the doctrine of God's Eternal Predestination is so necessary to the Church of God, that, without the same, can faith neither be truly taught, neither surely established; man can never be brought to true humility and the knowledge of himself; neither yet can he be ravished in admiration of God's eternal goodness, and so moved to praise him as appertaineth. And therefore, we fear not to affirm, that so necessary as it is that true faith be established in our hearts that we be brought to unfeigned humility and that we be moved to praise him for his free graces received; so necessary also is the doctrine of God's Eternal Predestination. For first, there is no way more proper to build and establish faith, than when we hear and undoubtedly do believe that our election {which the Spirit of God doth seal in our hearts} consisteth not in ourselves, but in the eternal and immutable good pleasure of God, and that in such absolute authority that it cannot be overthrown, neither by the raging storms of the world, nor by the assaults of Satan; neither yet by the wavering and weakness of our own flesh. Then only is our salvation in assurance, when we find the cause of the same in the bosom and counsel of God."

Asserting free grace throughout this treatise Knox often shifts the emphasis of any particular doctrine or practice to the broader spectrum of God's design for salvation in Christ before the foundation of the world, with a repeated emphasis upon a believer's standing IN Christ. "And we fear not to affirm, that the men which this day do attribute Election or Predestination to any virtue or quality within man, do hold and defend {to their great danger} that which none, endued with the Spirit of God, have left or opened to us as written within the holy Scriptures, either yet that any of the chosen

shall confess the same. Let the whole Scriptures be read and diligently marked, and no sentence {rightly understand} shall be found, that affirmeth God to have chosen us in respect of our works, or because he foresaw that we should be faithful, holy, and just. But to the contrary, many places shall we find {yea, even so many as entreat of that matter} that plainly affirm, that we are freely chosen according to the purpose of his good will, and that **in** Christ Jesus."

Knox continues, "because faith is no part of man's work, therefore doth neither his faith nor his election depend upon the inconstancy of his own nature; but God of his sovereign bounty overcoming what imperfections soever be in his chosen children, hath grounded their election in himself and **in** Christ Jesus his Son." Knox continues a few paragraphs later, "it is a thing most certain, that albeit Adam, and all men in him, might and did fall from God by sin, yet cannot the Elect of God, who be elected to life everlasting **in** Christ Jesus, so fall from their election, that finally they perish. The reason is, that as Christ Jesus, the brightness of the glory of his Father, and the expressed image of his substance, is greater than ever was Adam, so is his power of greater virtue to save the Elect than Adam's impotency was to bring damnation upon all. Where you ask, if our election be surer now, after the transgression than before the transgression? I answer, the assurance and firmity of our election was always, and at all times, one. For when we stood in Adam, {as you allege,} yet were we elected **in** Christ; and when we fell in Adam, then did our election burst forth and appear."

The Swiss reformer, {minister of the Church of Zurich,} and one of the most influential theologians of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century, Heinrich Bullinger, in his fourth sermon on Providence and Predestination, {printed about the same time period as this work by Knox,} had this same Christ dominant emphasis, "God's predestination is not stayed or stirred with any worthiness or unworthiness of ours, but it respects Christ alone, of the mere grace and mercy of God the Father. And because our salvation stays only

upon him, it cannot help but be most certain. For those are wrong, who think that the ones saved to life are predestined by God for their merit's sake, or good works, which God foresaw in them. For the apostle Paul says notably, 'he has chosen us in Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, that the glory of his grace might be praised.' Ephesians 1:4-6. And again, 'it is not in him that wills, nor in him that runs, but in God who shows mercy.' Romans 9:16. Again, 'God has saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us through Christ Jesus before the world existed, but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.' II Timothy 1:9. Freely, therefore, of his mere mercy, not for our deserts but for Christ's sake, and only **in** Christ, has He chosen us, and for Christ's sake He embraces us, because he is our Father and a lover of men."

In contrast to those that would attempt to regulate or diminish the Lord's absolute sovereignty to a bare notion of idle permission, Knox had this to say, "if in God's counsel, God's gift, God's hand, and eternal purpose, before decreeing all things to come to pass in the death of his Son, you can see nothing but a bare and simple permission, I cannot cease to affirm, that as by falsifying such plain Scriptures, you labour to take from the Church of God their most singular comfort left to us in Christ's death, so do you walk in darkness, and in the same you shall perish except speedily you repent. How one and the same work, in so far as it proceedeth from God, is most just, most profitable, and most merciful; and yet as it proceedeth from the instruments most profane, most wicked, damnable to themselves, and most cruel, I have abundantly declared, and after, as occasion shall be offered, shall touch by God's grace, so much as may instruct the sober mind, if it be ignorant; and also to put silence to your venomous mouths, be they never so impudent."

Again, "for all these be, and are found within the offenders, which God doth use, not by an idle permission, {for that is a thing most contrary to his

justice,} but effectually, as his wisdom best knoweth, they shall serve to his glory, and that for utility of his chosen children. I say, it is a thing most contrarious to God's justice and power idly to suffer iniquity to be done, if he had no further respect than to the fact as it is committed. For as a man cannot be excused who may impede murder and doth it not, so cannot God's justice be excused by your idle permission, if he had no further respect but to things as they be done by man. And so is God's justice rather accused than maintained by the foolishness of your curious brains, saying, 'God permitteth many things which he would not.' What vanity is this? Is it not a thing confessed amongst all, that God's power is omnipotent? Who then can compel him to suffer that which he would not? And why doth he willingly suffer things which in his law he hath forbidden? I answer, for the manifestation of his own glory, which is more precious than the heaven and the earth, and all the creatures in the same contained. And thus doth vanity cause you to fear, that God's justice shall fall into decay, except it be underset and upholden with your foolish distinction betwixt his will and his permission; but we fear not to affirm, that he permitteth nothing which in some respect he will not; for as He is omnipotent and a most loving Father, so should he suffer no calamity to come nor cruelty to be used against his children, except he did before see, yea, and before determined, their comfort and his glory to arise of the same. And will you say that God's glory, the comfort and the preservation of his church, is an evil work, because that wicked men are instruments by whom God's eternal counsel is brought to pass? Was the exaltation of Joseph to honour, the preservation of Egypt, and of other nations from famine, yea, and the feeding of Jacob and his family, an evil work, because that Joseph's brethren of malice and envy did sell him to the Ishmaelites, and they for lucre did sell him again to Potiphar, whose wife of malice did most unjustly accuse him, and so being in prison, at length he was brought to the knowledge of Pharaoh, and so was promoted for his revelation and wisdom to honour and dignity? O! Say

you, it is not this that we do lay to your charge, but you affirm 'that God was author of the malice, and of the wicked thoughts of Joseph's brethren.' You do belie us most maliciously, for we constantly deny that God either powered in them any malice, or did move by his Holy Spirit any wicked thought into them; for those we say they had of nature, in so far as it is corrupted. But we say, that God used their wicked thoughts and malice to his glory, and to the full comfort of him whose destruction they sought; and that he did not, idly permitting them, but effectually working by such instruments and means as his wisdom had before appointed. Rage now as you list; for albeit to you this saying is vain, that God worketh all things for his own glory; yet will not God have his glory measured by the vanity of your brain."

The thoughts of Knox as pertaining to the order or arrangement of God's decree are grounded in the immutability of God's nature. In fact, all his theology is regulated and conducted by his exalted views of God's attributes, which are all grounded in the Holy Scriptures. In the words of Knox, "God by his eternal Word, and power infinite, hath created all things; so hath he by His wisdom incomprehensible so disposed all things, that as nothing was created for the self, so was nothing the appointer of the self to serve God as his glory required. But He, in his eternal counsel, appointed the end to every creature, to the which they shall once attain, by such means as he most justly hath appointed. And therefore, seeing his glory doth no less require his just judgments {in order} that his superabundant mercy to be known, he hath in his eternal counsel elected some and rejected others, even before the foundations of the world. And albeit he created man after his own image, yet did God never determine that mankind should stand in Adam; but his just counsel and purpose was, that all men should fall in Adam, that the elect might know the price of their salvation, Christ Jesus, in whom they were elected before that in Adam actually they did fall, or were created. And so God, willing to make his glory to shine in all, hath prepared some vessels of mercy and

some of wrath, to the one he hath freely given life everlasting in Christ Jesus his Son; the other he hath, for just causes, so rejected, that albeit with long patience he suffereth their manifest rebellion, yet in the final judgment he shall command them to go to the fire that never shall be quenched."

Again, "the death of Christ Jesus for man's redemption was decreed in the eternal counsel of God before the foundations of the world were laid, as we were elected in him, and as he was the Lamb killed from the beginning; which death also was decreed in the same counsel of God to be in a certain time appointed; and that so certainly, that neither could the malice of any creature prevent the hour appointed of God thereto, neither yet could any policy or chance impede or transfer the same to any other time. For how oft Christ was before assaulted, the Evangelists do witness; but always his answer was, 'my hour is not yet come.' And what impediments did occur immediately before his death is also evident. The feast of Passover was at that time, the fame of Christ was great, the favour of the people with public voices was declared, and the counsels of the High Priests and Elders had decreed, that, to avoid sedition, his death should be delayed till after that feast. But all these were shortly overthrown, and Christ did suffer in the very time appointed, as he before had forespoken."

As one familiarizes himself with the various writings & scholarly assessments as to determine from whence, or from whom Knox acquired his understanding of the truth for which he so passionately contended for in these writings, we see a common thread which binds all of these speculations together, and that is the concept that Knox acquired all his understanding of the Holy Scriptures from this Reformer or that Reformer, this Teacher or that Teacher, completely slaying any concept that perhaps the LORD himself opened his understanding to perceive, love & embrace this blessed testimony of grace & truth, setting forth a salvation that is so absolutely unique to anything that could have ever been conceived by man, and opposite to all world

religion which in some form or another proclaim salvation by works, that is, by man's own efforts to commend himself or make himself acceptable in God's sight; whereas the Bible alone declares from cover to cover that salvation is of the Lord, and emphatically asserts that, if the LORD does not save a man, he cannot be saved. Knox states that, "Satan ever from the beginning hath declared himself enemy to the free grace and undeserved love of God, so hath he now in these last and most corrupted days most furiously raged against that doctrine, which attributeth all praise and glory of our redemption to the eternal love and undeserved grace of God alone."

In essence, Knox was irresistibly constrained to bow before the absolute authority of the inscripted word as the Scriptures were opened to his understanding, by the Spirit of Truth, who dispenses the truth {essentially the doctrine of Christ – as all truth meets, is centered upon & gravitates to Christ, himself being the sum & substance of all truth} to the spiritual minds of those whose eyes have been opened. Knox, "we say not, we teach not, nor believe not, that Christ Jesus doth only offer medicine, and prescribe a diet, as a common Physician, leaving the using and observation of it to our will and power. But we affirm that in the hearts of his elect, he worketh faith, he openeth their eyes, he cureth their leprosy, he removeth and overcometh their disobedience; yea, by violence he pulleth them forth of the bondage of Satan, and so sanctifieth them by the power of his Holy Spirit, that they abide in his truth, according as he hath prayed for them, and so continue they vessels of his glory forever." This is the experience of all the elect, being conducted into all 'salvation' truth by the Spirit of Truth, in full awareness that these truths are of heavenly origin, and therefore our understanding too must be!

In the words of Thomas McCrie, whose classic biography of John Knox was originally published in 1812, we find a parallel thought. "In reading the writings of the first reformers there are two things which must strike our minds. The first is the exact conformity

between the doctrine maintained by them respecting the justification of sinners, and that of the apostles. The second is the surprising harmony which subsisted among them on this important doctrine. On some questions respecting the sacraments, and the external government and worship of the Church, they differed; but upon the article of free justification, Luther and Zwingli, Melancthon and Calvin, Cranmer and Knox, spoke the very same language. This was not owing to their having read each other's writings, but because they copied from the same divine original. The clearness with which they understood and explained this great truth is also very observable. More learned and able defenses of it have since appeared; but I question if it has ever been stated in more scriptural, unequivocal and decided language, than in the writings of the early reformers. Some of their successors, by giving way to speculation, gradually lost sight of this distinguishing badge of the Reformation, and landed at last in Arminianism, which is nothing else but the Popish doctrine in a Protestant dress."

Again, Knox informs us that, "God, who hateth all iniquity, must needs resist the proud, destroy the lying lips, and remove from his society such as declare themselves enemies to his Eternal Truth; the knowledge whereof, we confess with Job, cometh only by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and doth not proceed from flesh or blood, from study, care, or worldly wisdom, but is the free gift of God revealed to the little ones, and commonly hid from the wisest of the world."

Having established the necessity of Divine Revelation, we do indeed acknowledge that Calvin's influence in this treatise seems somewhat immense, {especially as this volume contains large verbatim quotations from the Reformer's Institutes, which at that time had just recently been translated from the French 1545 Edition, to that of the Latin, 1548 Edition,} and although largely influenced by Calvin in this treatise, it would appear that Knox more closely followed the method of Zwingli and Bullinger who first turned the truth of God's Predestination into a weapon against the

Anabaptists. Knox, building up the ramparts of his defenses by one scripture after another scripture, resulting in inevitable loss for any that would attempt to bash their brains against these walls of Sola Scriptura, which Knox held in the highest estimation, clinging ever so closely to what the LORD had revealed, and opened to his understanding.

Towards the close of the present work, Knox introduces a long historical narrative of the well-known insurrection of the Anabaptists in Münster Germany, {1534-1535,} and for this purpose, he contents himself with giving two long extracts translated from a well-known work then recently published in Latin by one John Sleidan, entitled, "The General History of the Reformation of the Church, from the errors and corruptions of the Church of Rome; begun in Germany by Martin Luther, with the progress thereof in all parts of Christendom, from the year 1517, to the year 1556." This fascinating account of a people gone raving mad was an attempt by Knox to discredit the entire Anabaptist movement, viewing the Anabaptists radicals much as the other Continental Reformers did, lumping them all together and identifying them as fanatics, anarchists, blasphemers, heretics and enemies of God.

Knox principally targeted their appeal to an inner voice, to dreams, reasonings and extra-biblical sources. Like Luther and Calvin, he mercilessly opposed these Anabaptists whom, he believed, substituted an inner light for the written Scripture. Therefore, Knox frequently declared that "the plain Scripture confuteth this your error," – "we affirm nothing which God's Word doth not plainly teach us," and, "ye deserve death as a blasphemous person and denier of God, if you prefer any word to that which the Holy Ghost has uttered in his plain Scriptures."

Overall, this is a tremendous work that deserves a warm recommendation to all enquiring minds, desiring to be established in the faith of God's elect, even whilst building themselves upon their most holy faith in Christ.

Editorial Note: *Prior to commencing this project many of the writings of Knox were explored, consulted and pondered over, including a large assortment of his letters, some of which warmly encouraged our hearts and fortified our minds in the confirmation and truth of God's sacred & everlasting Gospel. Amongst these epistles to various persons, one in particular, {actually written about the time of the construction of this book,} was brought to our attention, and two striking paragraphs which corresponded exactly with the thoughts of Knox as set forth in this present volume, were extracted to include as a foreword to this book, but reading the epistle over, once, twice, and then a third time, it was deemed impossible not to include the entire letter as an additional introduction to this volume. This letter, addressed to his brethren in Scotland, was written in December of 1557, whilst still residing in Dieppe, France.*

A LETTER TO HIS BRETHREN IN SCOTLAND.

Grace mercy, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, with perpetual increase of the Holy Spirit.

Albeit of diverse letters written unto you, dearly beloved brethren, since the month of May last bypast, I have received no answer to this hour, which more I impute to the troubles of these wicked times than to any negligence and oblivion in you; yet, coming to Dieppe for the performance of my promise and satisfaction of your requests, if God so permits, I could not but renew somewhat of my former rude writing, the tenor whereof was, in effect.

That ye considering, by the signs forespoken of our Master Christ Jesus, {which for the most part are now present,} the days of this most corrupt world to be short, and therefore the joyful deliverance of that oppressed and afflicted flock to approach, may walk in God's presence as becomes his saints and chosen

children; having your consciences assuredly grounded upon the free mercy promised to the faithful in Christ Jesus; and also, that your conversation among men be such as it becomes the children of light, having a testimony by your fruits that your faith is not dead. And as this is a thing most acceptable before God, so it is not a little necessary in these most wretched and wicked days. For, as some never taking trial of the ground of their faith, have shamefully slidden back, to the great offence of many, openly denying the eternal truth of God, the sweetness and power whereof, by all appearance, they never tasted, {whatsoever thereof they babbled with their tongues,} so hath the dissolute life of such as have professed Christ's holy Evangel been the occasion of two extreme evils. Former, thereby have the conjured enemies of Christ's truth taken a boldness to blaspheme the same as a diabolical doctrine, which looseth the bridle of all impiety. For the pestilent Papists, perceiving the licentious and inordinate life of some professors, did not only judge the whole number to be likewise infected, but also did neither fear nor shame to accuse the doctrine as the principal cause of such enormities. And thus, alas! Do we expose the sacred and blessed word of God to opprobrium and rebuke by our inordinate lives. The second inconvenience which is ensued of our riotous and light behavior is no less to be lamented. For thereby some, which began with us to follow God, to profess Christ Jesus and to abhor superstition, are declined from the sincerity and simplicity which is in Christ Jesus; and have separated themselves from the society and communion of their brethren, in sects damnable and most pernicious; being bold to affirm, that among us there is no true church, by reason that our lives do not agree with the word which we profess.

Albeit I am not ignorant that neither of these two sorts of men shall escape sharp judgment, {except by repentance God speedily calls them to better mind and purpose,} yet ought we, dear brethren, take diligent heed that we be not offensive neither to Jew, neither to Gentile, as we shall hear and I hope, consider after that

I have touched wherein this last sort of men do err. God is witness I am not their enemy, neither do I write of malice towards any person; but rather lamenting their blindness, I desire to communicate with them the light which God hath offered and revealed unto me in Christ Jesus his Son. Of some of them, I trust, I may witness, as man may judge of man, that they have a zeal toward godliness; but alas, it is not according to knowledge, for they do stumble at the same stone which offended the Jews.

But to the purpose, that this sort of men fall from the society of Christ's little flock, with contempt of his sacraments and holy ordinances by us truly ministered, {because some men, having a knowledge of the truth, do abuse the sweet liberty of the same,} they are abused and deceived in two points. Former, they do judge and pronounce of the doctrine and religion by the lives of the professors. Secondly, they require a greater purity and righteousness {denying any true Kirk to be where vices are known} than ever was found in any congregation since the beginning. Of which two errors must needs follow most horrible absurdities; for first, if the life of man, be it good or be it bad, were either assurance, either yet any just condemnation of any doctrine or religion, then were the ancient idolatry of the Gentiles and the blasphemous law of Mohammed to be approved for good religion. And by the contrary, the holy law and ordinances of God were and are to be rejected as false and vain; for in the ancient idolatry, men of most singular virtues, temperance and external righteousness, did live, as faithful histories do witness unto us. And this day, amongst the Turks, the common multitude do live a more straight life in many things than God's word doth require; yea, and some of them, as concerning their external behavior, may be judged irreprehensible. But what folly were it to prove and allow therefore their damnable doctrine and false religion, and on the other part, what age shall we find from Abraham to Moses, from Moses to David, and from David to Christ in which iniquity did not abound, yea, even in the household of God? Abraham himself, the father of the

faithful, denied Sarah his lawful wife, which, no doubt, was a horrible sin; but was therefore his religion vain? God forbid. The patriarchs, moved by envy, sold their brother. The Israelites, after deliverance from Egypt, and after they had received the law, fell to idolatry, grudged, murmured, and committed horrible fornication. David was found guilty in adultery and murder. And finally, the Holy Ghost doth witness, by the mouths of the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and of the rest, that the people under the most godly kings, and when religion was in the greatest purity, then, I say, do the prophets witness that the people were most infected with vices, and so continued until the time of captivity. Yea, and after their reduction, their lives did nothing amend till the days of our Saviour Christ Jesus. But did this common iniquity of the people prove or argue the religion which was established by God and was taught amongst them, to be false and vain? Far be such cogitations from the hearts of Christians.

Further, let men consider if it was lawful for any man to have despised God's holy ordinances, appointed to be used in his assembly, because that wicked men were participants thereof; yea, or if such as separated themselves apart in sects {as did the Pharisees, Sadducees, and others} did lack their just punishment. Plain it is they did not; for they all, in process of time, declining from the simplicity which God had approved by his law and prophets, fell into damnable idolatry and errors. Some arrogantly pretending to be saved not only by the works of the law, but also by such constitutions as they themselves had invented; others denying the immortality of the soul, the substance of angels or spirits, and the resurrection of the flesh; and others contemning and refusing holy matrimony. Thus, I say, did God revenge the contempt of his holy ordinances upon such as would not humble themselves under the same, but dividing themselves from the society of his congregation, pretended to a greater perfection than the law prescribed.

I would that every man should diligently mark this argument of the apostle, "if he," says Paul, "who

despised the law of Moses, by the testimony of two or three witnesses, did suffer death without mercy, with how greater torments, trust you, shall he be punished who treadeth underfoot the Son of God, and esteemeth the blood of his testament as a profane thing?" Hebrews 10:28-29. The Son of God, who is the wisdom of his Father, hath commanded us to assemble together in his name. He hath appointed his holy word to be preached, and his sacraments to be ministered, and to be received of such as profess him to be their sovereign Lord and Saviour; which sacraments he hath sanctified to us, not as was the book of the law, with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own precious blood, once shed for our redemption, the memorial and remembrance whereof he hath straightly commanded us {convened together in his name} to celebrate to his return.

These things being weighed, do we think that such as contemn this his precept, withdrawing themselves from the congregation, where they cannot deny but Christ Jesus is preached without all mixture, and sacraments ministered according to his word, shall escape judgment? How the Papists are plagued for the like pride and disobedience, the most part of men do see. And evident it is, that the origin of diversities of their religion amongst them had the same end which men now seek; to wit, they would not stand content with the common righteousness promised to the members of Christ's body by faith in him, but they would aspire and contend for a greater perfection than the common believers could have; and therefore did they divide themselves apart, contemning Christ's flock and ordinances. But to what holiness they are attained, let the world witness. I am sure God is immutable, and doth no less abhor the sectaries of this age than he hath done those of former times; and would God that such as most brag of perfection in these our days had not given so manifest declaration of their own blindness as that they have done. If any think and object, the Kirk after Christ's death, resurrection, and ascension, is of greater purity and perfection than was the Kirk under the Law, for it is called the holy and undefiled spouse of Christ,

without spot and blemish, Ephesians 5:27, and therefore where vices do reign and openly be known, that there cannot be the true Kirk, let that same man consider that the holy apostle, yea, the Holy Ghost speaking in him, did salute and acknowledge the congregations of Corinth, Galatia, and Thessalonica, for the true kirks of Christ Jesus, in which not the less were crimes most grievous; fornication, adultery, incest, strife, debate, contention, and envy. Yea, some had declined and were bewitched by false apostles, some denied the resurrection, some were idle bellies, and some affirmed circumcision after Christ a thing necessary to salvation. True it is that the apostle sharply reprehended as well the wicked life as the erroneous opinions, affirming that such persons, without repentance, could not enter in the kingdom of God. But, in the meantime, he did reverence and acknowledge {as I have said} the same congregations to be the true kirks of Christ Jesus; and therefore, I say, that neither the life, neither the opinion of particular persons, is {nor can be} either sufficient approbation, either yet just condemnation of any doctrine or religion.

The iniquity of man declares himself to be wicked, but it is not able to deface the religion which God hath approved by his expressed word; for if it were so, as before I have touched, then hath no religion been sincere and pure from the beginning, for that age hath never been in which wicked men did not abound, even in the bowels of the external Kirk of Christ. And therefore I say that the life and conversation of men is no assured note, sign, or token of Christ's visible Kirk. But the substance of that doctrine and religion which is publicly preached and universally received in any congregation, assembly, or company doth witness and declare, whether the Spirit of the Lord Jesus doth there rule the Kirk or not. Wheresoever God's word hath supreme authority; where Christ Jesus is affirmed, preached, and received to be the only Saviour of the world; where his sacraments are truly ministered; and finally, where his word rules, and not the vain fantasy of man, there is the true Kirk of Christ Jesus. From the society and

ordinances whereof {I mean such as Christ hath commanded to be used} ought no man to separate himself, notwithstanding that in the same the darnel and cockell appear to surmount the wheat and good seed. But here do such as will join themselves to no congregation, except with that which is perfect in all things, object to us, "but you have left the assembly of Papists, and have gathered yourselves in companies apart." I answer, "just cause have we and all men to flee from the synagogue of Satan, not only because of the wickedness of the lives of such as therein be assembled, but chiefly because that our sovereign captain Christ Jesus is therein blasphemed, his sacraments and holy ordinances being altogether polluted and profaned by the vain inventions of men." Let them convict us and our congregations {as they never shall be able to do} of these crimes, or else they shall not escape judgment and condemnation, because they do despise Christ Jesus and his holy ordinances.

But now, dear brethren, let us return to ourselves, for albeit that neither Papist, neither the other sort, shall escape God's judgment and vengeance, yet it becomes us ever to bear in mind the sentence which our Master by himself, and his Holy Spirit by his apostles, have pronounced in these words, "let so your light shine before men that they may see your good works, and that they may glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matthew 5:16. "Be ye holy as I am holy, for I have chosen and appointed you to go forth and to produce fruit." I Peter 1:16. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, to whom I leave my own example, that ye love one another." John 15:16. "For you I pray, {but for the world I pray not,} that ye may be sanctified in the verity; and the word and doctrine which ye have heard and professed is the verity, by which ye have learned to put off the old man with his lusts and concupiscence, and to put on the new man, which is according to the image of him who hath created you to walk in justice and cleanness of life; that ye refusing yourselves, may unfeignedly study to obey the good will of God, which is your sanctification; abstaining

from all filthiness and impiety, giving occasion and offence to none, knowing that woe and malediction are pronounced against such as by whom slander cometh." John 17:9,17; Ephesians 5:3-6; Colossians 3:5-6; Luke 17:1-2 & Matthew 18:7.

By these and like sentences, dear brethren, it becomes us to consider the excellency of our vocation, and the due and voluntary obedience which we as children ought to render to so loving and gracious a Father, who of his free grace hath called us from darkness of error, and from bondage of Satan, to the bright knowledge of his glory, and to the glorious liberty of his saints, whose kingdom, and glory, and joy he hath appointed most assured and triumphant with Christ Jesus his only beloved. In consideration, I say, of this our glory to come, and of that excellent our present dignity, which assuredly we possess in hope, {for even now are we the sons of God although our glory be hid,} ought we with all diligence watch, lest that oblivion and forgetfulness of our God and of his kingdom creep into our minds; being also careful and vigilant in all assaults, as well to try and examine the infallible signs of our election, {which thing St. Peter calls "the making of our election sure,"} testing if we stand in faith, and if our consciences do bear record that in vain we have not received the grace of God; as also, that we declare before this wicked generation, by the fruits which we produce, what trees we are, to wit, the faithful branches of the very vine. And in these two points ought our principal and chief study be occupied, considering, first, that without faith it is impossible to please God; and, on the other part, that the eyes of our enemies are ever bent upon us.

The Papists are busy to espy our offences, faults, and infirmities, to the end that, as is said, they may blaspheme the blessed word of the eternal God, by which is uttered and revealed to us his fatherly mercies, godly counsels, and free graces towards us which as they never tasted, so they may not abide to be preached to the world. But as they shall bear their just condemnation, because they accuse us, not hating our

sins, but hating our persons and the truth we profess, so are they not the enemies most to be feared. For the venom and malice of Satan reigns in all Papists {for the most part} is now more evident, even to infants, than that it can greatly hurt any, except such as willingly, and with insatiable appetite, do drink the poison of that harlot's cup, either for fear of corporeal punishment, or else for hope of worldly promotion.

But of the other sort, {ed., a reference to the Anabaptists,} of whom before we have somewhat spoken, the craft and malice of the devil fighting against Christ is yet more covert, and therefore it is more dangerous and more to be feared; for under the color and cloak of mortification of the flesh, of godly life, and of Christian justice, they are become privy blasphemers of Christ Jesus, supplanters of his dignity, and manifest enemies to the free justification which comes by faith in his blood. For some of them do not fear to deny Christ Jesus to be the eternal Son of the eternal God, and so, with Arius, blasphemously deny his Godhead. Some do affirm that it is impossible but that a man may obey and perfectly fulfill the law of God in this life, in which he may attain to as great perfection of righteousness as ever Christ had. Others do hold for a sure conclusion, that Christ's righteousness avails us nothing except that we have a perpetual righteousness {as they term it} of their own. And finally, the general consent of all that sect is that God, by his foreknowledge, counsel, and wisdom, hath no assured election, neither yet any certain reprobation, but that every man may elect or reprobate himself by his own free will, which he hath {say they} to do good or evil. The rest of their opinions, most horrible and absurd, I omit at this present, touching only for your advertisement those which they think inexpugnable, and in which they glory as of most precious pearls, forged by their own brains, and polished by the finest of their wits, when yet in very deed they are but the rotten heresies of Arius and Pelagius, long ago confuted by Augustine, and by ancient writers before him. And of such teachers or professors I beseech you, dear brethren, to take heed, for by them

are not only the glory of Christ Jesus and his dignity trodden under foot, but also is God in effect denied to be God. For whosoever goes about to remove from God, either yet to call in doubt his wisdom and foreknowledge, his justice, power, mercy, goodness, or free election, goes about, so far as in them is, to destroy and call in doubt his whole Godhead. For if there is anything which he did not cause; yea, which he did not also predestinate and appoint, then lacked he wisdom and free regiment. Or, if anything was ever done, or yet after this shall be done, in heaven or in earth, which he might not have impeded if so had been his godly pleasure, then he is not omnipotent. Which three properties to wit, wisdom, free regiment, and power, if they are, denied to be in God, I pray you what rests in his Godhead? But far be such blasphemous and impious cogitations from the hearts of such as hope to reign in the kingdom with Christ Jesus. The wisdom of our God we acknowledge to be such that it compels the very malice of Satan and the horrible iniquity of such as are drowned in sin, to serve to his glory and to the profit of his elect. His power we believe and confess to be infinite, and such as no creature in heaven or earth is able to resist. And his regiment we acknowledge to be so free, that none of his creatures dare present themselves in judgment, to reason or demand the question, "why hast thou done this or that?" But the fountain of this their damnable error which is, that in God they can acknowledge no justice except that which their foolish brain is able to comprehend at more opportunity, God willing, we shall treat.

At this present I thought it my duty, and very love constrained me thereto, to advertise you that Satan hath sent forth his messengers almost in all quarters, to disperse and sow abroad these his pestilent opinions; and therefore, in the bowels of Christ Jesus, I exhort you to try the spirits of such as shall come unto you. Suffer no man without trial and examination to take upon him the office of a preacher, neither to travel amongst the simple sheep of Christ Jesus, assembling them in privy conventions. For if every man shall enter

at his own appetite into the vineyard of the Lord, without just trial of his life, conversation, doctrine, and condition as some, more to serve their own bellies than the Lord Jesus, will offer their labours, so no doubt shall Satan have his other supporters by whom he purposes to destroy the very plantation of our heavenly Father. And therefore my prayer is, and shall be unto our God, that in this behalf you be circumspect, prudent, and wary. For as the matter and business you have in hand is high, and to the advancement of God's glory, and to no small comfort and consolation of your brethren; if in the same constancy with godly wisdom you proceed, so shall Satan be the most vigilant to trouble and impede the same, by all means possible; the powers of the earth shall no doubt stand against you; and the dissolute life and ungodly behaviour, perchance, even of some preachers, may slander and offend weak ones in Christ. But neither of both {except, as God forbid, you turn back from your godly enterprise} do I so much fear as the assault of Satan by false teachers or dissembling brethren; for seldom it is that open tyranny doth utterly suppress in any realm or province the true religion earnestly received by a multitude. And albeit the ungodly life of preachers for a time troubles the quietness of some consciences, yet such is the mercy of our God towards his own elect, that by his Holy Spirit he comforts the simple; and by the power of his blessed word, in the end, he confounds the dissembling preacher or professor, {I mean him that is the mercenary, who seeks the belly, and not the glory of Christ Jesus,} so that neither the open tyranny, neither yet the cloaked and disguised preacher, can hurt much.

But deceitful and false doctrine is a poison and venom which, under the taste and name of truth, once drunk and received, with great difficulty can afterward be purged as the epistles of St. Paul, and the history of all ages, entreating the estate and matters of religion, do teach us. If, therefore, the doctrine and persuasion of any man tend to the exaltation and advancement of any righteousness or perfection, except Christ Jesus alone; if any affirm that Christian righteousness, which is

available before God, is any other perfection than remission of our sins, which we have only by faith in Christ's blood; or if any promise such perfection in this life, that unfeignedly we need not to say, "remit to us our offences, for we are unprofitable servants," Luke 17:10; and finally, if any persuade that our merits, good works, or obedience are any cause, either of our justification, or yet of our election; let him be accursed, suppose that he were an angel from heaven. For he preaches to us another evangel than the Son of God hath revealed to the world, and the Holy Ghost hath sealed up to us, by the mouths and writings of the apostles, which plainly affirm, "that there is no other name given to men under the heaven in which they may be saved, except in the name {that is, in the power and virtue} of Jesus crucified, who is made to us from God, justice, wisdom, and sanctification, and redemption," Acts 4:12; I Corinthians 1:30, "by whom alone we have access to the throne of God's mercy," Hebrews 4:16; as by one only propitiator and obtainer of grace to us that of nature are sinful, the flesh {even after our regeneration} ever rebelling against the spirit during the travail of this life, in such sort that, with the apostle Paul, the rest of God's children are compelled to confess, "that in them, that is, in their flesh, there remaineth no good," Romans 7:18; and therefore shame they not to confess, and that openly and from the heart, "that not of the works of righteousness which we have done, but of his mere mercy and grace, who loving us when we were enemies, did give to the death of the cross his only Son for us, are we saved." Titus 3:5; Romans 5:10.

And further, they acknowledge that this salvation doth not proceed of our works, neither yet that it was appointed to us in time, but that before the foundation of the world was laid did God elect us in Christ Jesus, that we should be holy and blameless before him by love, by the which he loved us even when we were dead in sin, and did predestinate us, and freely chose us to be his inheritors with Christ according to the good pleasure of his will. So that we are his creation, created in Christ Jesus to good works, which God hath prepared that we

should walk in them, so that through grace, and that by free and undeserved favour are we saved, by faith, neither of ourselves, neither yet of our works, lest that any should glory. Ephesians 2:8-10. But all the children of God do acknowledge and confess that salvation and the life everlasting are the gift of God the Father, freely given with Christ his Son, as the twenty-four elders, casting their crowns before him that sits upon the throne, with one voice do cry, giving glory and praise to him, in these words, "worthy art thou, O Lord, to receive glory, honour, and empire, for thou wert killed and hast redeemed us, and hast made us to our God priests and kings." Revelation 4:11.

This doctrine, I say, hath the Holy Ghost sealed up unto us, which Satan from the beginning hath impugned; but now in these last days most cruelly doth he rage, omitting no occasion by the which he is able to deface the same; so that what he cannot do by open tyranny, that he travails to bring to pass by false doctrine and damnable errors; that is, Satan continually labours to intermeddle and mix somewhat proceeding from us, besides Christ Jesus and his righteousness, in the cause and matter of our redemption and salvation; for nothing to him is more despiteful than Christ Jesus exalted, truly preached, and constantly affirmed to be the only Saviour of the world. For that word of verity, being the power of God to the salvation of all those that believe it, is the plain subversion of Satan's kingdom; and therefore he, our mortal enemy, the old serpent, perceiving his head to be bruised by the power of Christ Jesus so preached, that Christ alone may be known conqueror, doth now spit forth his deadly venom, and fiercely stirs his terrible tail, to the end that he may trouble for a time the very elect, and utterly blind, envenom, and deceive those whose names are not written in the Book of Life.

But my hope is good of you, dearly beloved in the Lord Jesus, that even to the end you shall continue in that doctrine which once you have professed, notwithstanding that the winds of unstable and deceitful opinions are blown in your ears; and also, that you shall

proceed and march forward in the battle begun, {remember, I beseech you, with what conditions we did first break bread together in the name of the Lord Jesus,} whatsoever impediments be prepared in you contrary; that so doing, at the last you may attain to the participation of that kingdom, the possession whereof is not gotten but by the suffering of many tribulations. The mighty power, illumination, and grace of the same Spirit, who raised from the death the Lord Jesus, the great Bishop of our souls, move, illuminate, and inspire your hearts, senses, and understandings, that clearly you may behold the length, breadth, the height and deepness of that love of God our Father, shown and confirmed to us in Jesus Christ; and so enlighten the eyes of your inward man, that continually you may contemplate the unspeakable riches of that glorious inheritance, prepared for such as believe and profess him in the presence of men, and of this wicked generation; that you, in deep consideration of the same, may contemn and despise the deceitful and transitory pleasures that are present, in a sure hope to possess with the Lord Jesus those things that are permanent and eternal. Amen.

This letter is more ample than was that which I sent first, and therefore, notwithstanding the copies of the other, I pray you provide that the double of this be sent to our brethren in Kyle, and to the others that shall require it. The grace of the Lord Jesus rest with you.

From Dieppe, the first of December 1557.
Your brother to command in godliness, **John Knox**.

Note: In an attempt to transcribe this entire volume word for word it was felt necessary to retain the Old Elizabethan English, along with quotations from the Geneva Bible.

THE PREFACE.

AMONGST the manifold blessings wherewith God hath blessed his chosen children, {whom before all beginning of times he hath predestinated to life in Christ Jesus,} it is not the least, most dear Brethren, that he hath given unto us plain advertisement, how diverse unto diverse persons shall be the effect and operation of his Word, so oft as it is offered unto the world. To wit, that as He himself was appointed by his Heavenly Father, and forespoken by the Prophets, to be the Stone of Offense, the Stumbling Block, and a Snare to the two houses of Israel; and yet that he should be to others the Sanctuary of Honour, the Rock of Refuge, and Author of Liberty; so should his Word, I say, truly preached, be to some foolishness and the savor of death, and yet unto others, that it should be the sweet odor of life; the wisdom and power of God, and that to salvation, to all those that believe.

I purpose not at this present to entreat nor to reason, how and why it is, that God's eternal Word, which in itself is always one, worketh so diversely in the hearts of those to whom it is offered; but my only purpose is, in few words, to admonish us, {to whom it hath pleased God, of his own free mercy, more plainly to reveal the mysteries of our redemption than he hath done to many ages before us,} not to esteem this a small and common blessing of God, that we have not only his truth, but also the effect and operation of the same, confirmed to us by experience of all ages. Great and infinite is that benefit of God, and rightly can it never be weighed whensoever he doth offer his truth unto the world. But such is either the dullness of man or else his extreme ingratitude; that he will not acknowledge the face of this truth, shine it ever so bright. The ingratitude of the Jews is hereof unto us a sufficient witness. For albeit that long they did look for the Messiah and Saviour promised, yet, nevertheless, when he came with wondrous signs and works supernatural, they did not only not know him, but also refusing, and utterly denying him, they did hang him

betwixt two thieves upon a cross. The cause hereof in some part we know to be the carnal liberty which continually they did thirst after, and their preconceived opinion of worldly glory; which because Christ Jesus appeared not to satisfy according to their fantasy and expectation, therefore did they contemptuously refuse him, and with him all God's mercies offered unto them. Which fearful example, dear Brethren, is to be observed of us. For by nature it is evident, that we be no better than they were. And as touching the league and society with God, which privilege long made them blessed, we be far inferior unto them. For in comparison of that league made with Abraham, the time is short that the Gentiles have been avowed for God's people, and beloved spouse of Christ Jesus. Yea, Paul feareth not to call them the very natural branches, and us the branches of a wild olive. And therefore if their contempt was so punished, that blindness yet remaineth upon them, what ought we to fear? They, not considering the office of Christ, and the cause of his coming, were offended with his presence and doctrine. And doth any man think that we be free from the same dangers? Few shall be found that in mouth praise not truth, and every man appeareth to delight in liberty; but such companions do follow both the one and the other in this life, so that both are despised and called in doubt when they be offered most plainly to the world.

To speak this matter somewhat more plainly, it is a thing {as I suppose} by many confessed, that after darkness light hath appeared; but alas! The vices that have abounded in all estates and conditions of persons; the terrible cruelty which hath been used against the saints of God; and the horrible blasphemies which have been, and daily are, vomited forth against Christ Jesus and his eternal truth, hath given {and justly may give} occasion to the imprudent beholder of such confusion, to prefer the darkness of superstition, which before did reign, to the light of salvation, which God of his great mercy hath now of late years offered again to the unthankful world. For what natural man can think that the righteousness of faith, plainly and truly preached,

should be the occasion of sin? That grace and mercy offered, should inflame the hearts of men with rage and cruelty? And that God's glory declared should cause men impudently to spew forth their venom and blasphemies against him who hath created them? The natural man, I say, cannot perceive how these inconveniences should follow God's Word, and therefore do many disdain it, a great number deny it, and few, as it becometh, with reverence do embrace it. But such as with grave judgment shall consider what was the common trade of living, when Christ Jesus himself did, by preaching and working, call men to repentance; what was the treatment of his dearest servants whom he sent forth to preach the glad tidings of his death and resurrection; and what horrible sects followed, and daily did spring after the publication of that joyful Atonement made between God and man by Christ Jesus, by his death, resurrection, and ascension. Such, I say, as diligently do observe these former points, shall not only have matter sufficient to glorify God for his graces offered, {be the lives of men ever so corrupted, and the confusion that thereof ensues ever so fearful,} but also they shall have just occasion more steadfastly to cleave and stick to the truth, whose force and effect they see always to have been one from the beginning. The givers of these offenses shall no doubt sustain the woe pronounced against them by Christ Jesus. But yet must the children of God understand, that of necessity it is that such offenses come, that the elect may first be tried, and after be partakers of that blessing pronounced by our Master in those words, "blessed is he that is not offended in me."

The cause of these my former words is, that as Satan ever from the beginning hath declared himself enemy to the free grace and undeserved love of God, so hath he now in these last and most corrupted days most furiously raged against that doctrine, which attributeth all praise and glory of our redemption to the eternal love and undeserved grace of God alone. By what means Satan first drew mankind from the obedience of God, the Scripture doth witness; to wit, by pouring into their

hearts that poison, that God did not love them; and by affirming, that by transgression of God's commandment they might attain to felicity and joy; so that he caused them to seek life where God had pronounced death to be. This same practice hath Satan ever from the beginning used, to infect the Church with all kind of heresy; as the writings of Moses, of the Prophets, of the Apostles, and of the godly in the Primitive Church, do plainly witness. But alas, to such blasphemy did never the devil draw mankind as now of late days, in the which no small number are become so bold, so impudent, and so irreverent, that openly they fear not to affirm God to be unjust, if that He in his eternal counsel hath elected more one sort of men than another, to life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord; which thing of late days is more plainly come to our knowledge than before we could have suspected; and that by the sight of a book, most detestable and blasphemous, containing, as it is entitled, THE CONFUTATION OF THE ERRORS OF THE CARELESS BY NECESSITY. With that odious name do they burden all those that either do teach, either yet believe, the doctrine of God's Eternal Predestination. Which book, written in the English tongue, doth contain as well the lies and the blasphemies imagined by Sebastian Castellio, and laid to the charge of that most faithful servant of God, John Calvin; as also the vain reasons of Albert Pighius, Sadoletus, and Georgius Siculus, pestilent Papists¹, and expressed enemies of God's free mercies.

¹ Sebastian Castellio, 1515 – 1563, was a French preacher and theologian; an able scholar, who professed the Protestant Faith, and for some time was intimate with Calvin; but, differing from him upon the important doctrines here adverted to, he afterwards became a decided opponent of the Swiss Protestant Reformers, and wrote against Calvin with much bitterness and animosity.

Albert Pighius, 1490 – 1542, was a Dutch Roman Catholic theologian, mathematician, and astronomer, who studied philosophy and theology at the Catholic University of Leuven, a bigoted supporter of the Papacy, and a violent opponent of the Reformation.

The despiteful railing of which book and the manifest blasphemies in the same contained, together with the earnest requests of some godly Brethren, moved me to prepare an answer to the same. Others, I doubt not, might have done it with greater dexterity; but with reverence and fear do I lay the talent committed to my charge, upon the table of the Lord, to bring to his Church such advantage as his godly wisdom hath appointed.

But lest that some should think, that my labours might better have been bestowed in some other exercise, I thought expedient to admonish all brethren, and charitably to require of them, not to esteem the matter to be of small weight and importance. For, seeing that God's free grace is openly impugned and disdainfully refused, I judge it the duty of every man that looketh for life everlasting, to give his confession to Christ Jesus, whose glory is by these blasphemers, to the uttermost of their power, suppressed. Some do think, that because the reason of man cannot attain to the understanding, how God shall be just, making in his counsel this diversity of mankind, that therefore, better it were to keep silence in all such mysteries, than to trouble the brains and minds of men with curious disputations. I willingly confess, that all curiosity ought to be avoided, and that with great sobriety we ought to contemplate and behold that incomprehensible mystery of our redemption.

I say, that the doctrine of God's Eternal Predestination is so necessary to the Church of God, that, without the same, can faith neither be truly taught, neither surely established; man can never be brought to

Jacopo Sadoletto, 1477 – 1547, was an Italian Roman Catholic Cardinal who was decidedly opposed to the views of Augustine and then German Reformers respecting free-will and grace, and noted for his correspondence with and bitter opposition to John Calvin, who in 1539 wrote a passionate plea to the people of Geneva, urging them to return to the Roman Catholic Faith.

Camillo Renato, 1500 – 1575, a Sicilian scholar, {hence sometimes called Camillus Siculus,} was essentially a radical Anabaptist, an anti-Trinitarian, who denied the vicarious suffering of Christ.

true humility and the knowledge of himself; neither yet can he be ravished in admiration of God's eternal goodness, and so moved to praise him as appertaineth. And therefore, we fear not to affirm, that so necessary as it is that true faith be established in our hearts that we be brought to unfeigned humility and that we be moved to praise him for his free graces received; so necessary also is the doctrine of God's Eternal Predestination. For first, there is no way more proper to build and establish faith, than when we hear and undoubtedly do believe that our election {which the Spirit of God doth seal in our hearts} consisteth not in ourselves, but in the eternal and immutable good pleasure of God, and that in such absolute authority that it cannot be overthrown, neither by the raging storms of the world, nor by the assaults of Satan; neither yet by the wavering and weakness of our own flesh. Then only is our salvation in assurance, when we find the cause of the same in the bosom and counsel of God. For so do we by faith apprehend life and peace manifested in Christ Jesus, that by the direction and guiding of the same faith we look further, to wit, out of what fountain life doth proceed. In Christ Jesus now presently do we find liberty and life; he is made unto us of God, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and in the promise of his Gospel is founded the stability of our salvation. But yet we have a joy which far surmounteth this. For albeit that we should hear that the mercies and the graces of God were offered unto all men, and albeit also that we should feel that our hearts were somewhat moved to believe; yet unless the very cause of our faith be known, our joy and comfort cannot be full. For if we shall think that we believe and have embraced Christ Jesus preached, because our wits be better than the wits of others, and because that we have a better inclination, and are of nature more tractable than be the common sort of men, Satan, I say, can easily overthrow all comfort built upon so weak a ground. For as the heart of man is vain and inscrutable, so may it be that those that this day be tractable and obedient, having also some zeal toward godliness, yea,

and also both sense and feeling of God's mercy; such, I say, may shortly hereafter become stubborn in some cases, disobedient in matters of great importance, tempted with lusts, and finally they may be left so barren, that rather they shall tremble at the sight of God's judgments, than that they can rejoice in the free adoption of his children. And therefore, I say, that except our comfort be grounded upon that foundation which never can be moved, it is not perfect. And that ground is this, that when we understand that presently we believe in Christ Jesus, because we were ordained before the beginning of all times to believe in him; as in him we were elected to the society of eternal life; then is our faith assuredly grounded, and that because the gifts and vocation of God are without repentance, and he is faithful that hath called us. His infinite goodness, which moved him to love us in another than in ourselves, that is in Christ Jesus, according to his free benevolence, which he had purposed in him, is to us a tower of refuge, which Satan is never able to overthrow, nor the gates of hell shall never prevail against it. For howsoever we be changeable, yet is God in his counsel stable and immutable; yea, how weak, how feeble, how dull that ever we be, yet is there nothing in us {even when we be in our own judgment most destitute of the Spirit of God} which he did not see to be in us before we were formed in the womb, yea, and before the beginning of all times, because all is present with him. Which imperfections, infirmities, and dullness, as they did not stop his mercy to elect us in Christ Jesus, so can they not compel him now to refuse us. And from this fountain doth flow this our joy, that with the Apostle we are bold to cry, "who is able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?" For seeing that the Father, who hath given us for a peculiar inheritance to his only Son is so mighty, that out of his hand is none able to take us away; what danger can be so great, what sin is so grievous, or what desperation so deep, that is able to devour us! For seeing it is God himself who will absolve us from all iniquity; and seeing that Christ Jesus his Son will avow us to appertain to his

body, what is he that dare rise against us to condemn us! The comfort hereof doth none feel except the chosen children of God, and that in the days when man's justice faileth, and the battle of their conscience is most grievous and fearful. Therefore, as Faith springeth from election, so is it established by the true knowledge of that doctrine only, which this day is most furiously impugned by those who do not understand the same.

And from that same Doctrine floweth the very matter of true humility. For while we behold the condition of those whom nature hath made equal, to be so far divers the one from the other, it is impossible but that the children of God in their own hearts unfeignedly shall be humbled. For whither soever they shall direct their eyes, they shall behold fearful examples of blindness, and of such iniquity as all men justly ought to abhor; but when they consider themselves to have received light in the midst of such darkness, and themselves to be sanctified in the midst of so wicked a generation, from what fountain can they say that this proceedeth? Who hath illuminated their eyes while that others abide in blindness? Who doth bridle their affections whilst that others do follow the same to perdition? If they say, nature; their own conscience shall convict them, for nature hath made us all equal, "by nature are we the children of wrath as well as others." If they say education, reason, or their own study; common experience shall declare their vanity. For how many have been nourished in virtue, and yet become most filthy in life! And by the contrary, how many have long remained without all virtuous education, and yet in the end have attained to God's favour? And therefore, we say, that such as attribute anything to themselves in the grace of their election, have not learned to give to God the honour which to him appertaineth, because they do not freely confess what maketh them to differ from others. It is universally received for a sentence most true, that as humility is the mother of all virtue, so it is also the root of all godliness. But how is it possible that that man shall be humbled, that cannot abide to hear the former misery in the which he was born, neither yet

the means by the which from the same he was delivered?

If a beggar being promoted to great honours by the liberality of a king, should be remembered of his former condition; and for declaration of his gratitude, he should be commended to reverence the ambassador or herald that thus should say unto him, "remember, and call to mind, how wretched, poor, and miserable sometimes thou wast, and praise the goodness of the King, by whose mercy and gentleness thou livest now in this honourable estate." If this beggar, I say, should stomach that his poverty should be so often objected unto him, who would say that either he were humble, either yet thankful to the King? No more can it be said, that such as cannot abide the mention of God's Eternal election, {by the which only the elect be raised up to dignity in Christ Jesus,} be either humble in God's presence, either yet thankful for that infinite benefit which exceedeth all measure; to wit, that we be elected in Christ Jesus to life everlasting; and that God, according to the good pleasure of his eternal counsel, hath made separation betwixt those who did fall into equal perdition, as touching the offense and sin committed.

Such as desire this article to be buried in silence, and would that men should teach and believe that the grace of God's election is common unto all, but that one receiveth it, and another receiveth it not, proceedeth either from the obedience or disobedience of man; such deceive themselves, and are unthankful and injurious unto God. For so long as they see not that true faith and salvation {as in the Discourse shall be more plainly declared} spring from election and are "the gift of God, and come not of ourselves," so long are they deceived and remain in error. And what can be more injurious unto God's Free Grace than to affirm that he giveth no more to one than to another; seeing that the whole Scriptures do plainly teach, that we have nothing which we have not received of free grace and mere mercy, "and not of our works, nor of anything in us, lest any man should boast himself?" And therefore let wicked

men rage as they list, we will not be ashamed to confess always, that only grace maketh difference betwixt us and the rest of the world. And further, we fear not to affirm, that such as feel not that comfort inwardly in their conscience, can never be thankful to God, neither yet willing to be subject to his eternal counsel; which is the only cause that these wicked men most irreverently do storm and rage against that doctrine which they do not understand. But let us, dear Brethren, be assured, that none other doctrine doth establish faith, nor maketh man humble and thankful unto God. And finally, that none other doctrine maketh man careful to obey God according to his commandment, but that doctrine only which so spoileth man of all power and virtue, that no portion of his salvation consisteth within himself; to the end that the whole praise of our redemption may be referred to Christ Jesus alone; whom the Father, of very love, hath given to death for the deliverance of his body, which is the Church, to the which He was appointed Head before the beginning of all times. To Him, therefore, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all praise and glory for ever and ever. **SO BE IT.**

TO THE READER.

FOR the understanding of the numbers, the Readers shall observe, that as the Writer in his pestilent book hath divided the whole into certain arguments, so likewise have I divided my answers into certain sections. And because that many things in his railing reasons are either unworthy of any answer, or else not necessary to be answered so oft as he repeats the same, I thought good to sign those things in every several section which I thought in the same most necessary to be answered. And this I have done as well in his Reasons as in mine answers, so that the figure of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, which be marked in the margin of his reasons, are answered where the like number is found in mine answers. This I thought good to admonish the Reader.

THE FIRST SECTION: THE FIRST ERROR OF THE CARELESS BY NECESSITY.

WE are not ignorant, neither yet do you dissemble, whom you accuse; but how justly you term our doctrine error, and us careless, at this time I omit to speak, because that after we shall have occasion more largely to common with you in that matter. Only at this present I demand of you, with what conscience can you burden us with the odious name of Stoical Necessity, which so often most impudently you lay to our charge, in this your most ungodly and confused work, seeing that no men do more abhor that devilish opinion and profane name than we do? It is easy to persuade you, as I suppose, that we dissent not from the judgment of the reverend servant of Christ Jesus, John Calvin, {whom you in scoffing and despite call our god,} and therefore from henceforth, to put silence to your venomous tongues, and to cause your impudence more to appear to such whose eyes Satan hath not blinded with like pride and malice, as in you is more than evident, I will faithfully recite his words and sentences in this behalf, written thus in his Christian Institutions.

"Those, {saith he,} that study to make this doctrine, meaning of God's eternal Providence and Predestination, odious, falsely do calumniate, that it is the paradox, that is, the doubtful and hard opinion of the Stoics, who did affirm that all things chanced and come to pass by fatal or mere necessity. The which also was objected to Saint Augustine. As touching us, we do not willingly debate nor strive for words; nevertheless in no case admit we nor receive the term which the Stoics used in Latin, called *Fatum*. As well because it is of the number of those words, the profane and unprofitable novelties whereof Paul willeth us to avoid; as also because that by hatred of it, our enemies go about to charge the verity of God. As touching the opinion, we are falsely and maliciously burdened therewith; for we imagine not a necessity which is contained within nature by a perpetual conjunction of natural causes, as did the Stoics; but we affirm and mention that God is Lord, Moderator, and Governor of all things; whom we affirm to have determined from the beginning, according to his wisdom, what he would do; and now we say, that he doth execute according to his power whatsoever he hath determined. Whereof we conclude, that not only the heaven and earth and creatures insensible, but also the counsels and the wills of men are governed by his Providence, so that they tend and are led to the scope and end which he hath purposed?" He proceedeth further, answering the objection which may be made, saying, "what then, is there nothing done by fortune and chance? I answer, that well and goodly it is written by Basil called the Great, that fortune and adventure are the words of Paynims, the signification whereof ought in no wise to enter into the heart of the faithful. For if all prosperity be the benediction of God, and adversity his malediction, there remaineth no place to fortune in such things as come to men." And further, to the end of that section, he bringeth forth the mind of Augustine concerning fortune, whereof perchance we may after somewhat speak.

This one sentence is sufficient to convict both your master and you of malicious envy and most unjust

accusation; for herein doth not only John Calvin, and we all with him abhor from the term of *Fatum* called *Destiny*, but also from that diabolical opinion which the Stoics maintained. When I consider what should be the cause that thus maliciously you should burden us with that which so plainly by word and writing we oppugne, I am compelled to suspect, that either you understand not the nature of the term which you lay to our charge, or else that you have a further fetch than at first sight doth appear.

We plainly do affirm that the opinion of the Stoics is damnable and false; for they did place such power in the stars and in their oppositions, that impossible {they affirmed} it was to change or avoid that which by their constellation and influence was appointed to come. Insomuch, that they held that Jupiter himself {whom they called the great and supreme god} could neither alter nor stop the operation of the stars and the effects that should follow thereupon; and so they affirmed, that the mutations of kingdoms, the honours of some men, the dejection of others, and finally, that both vice and virtue were altogether in the power of the stars. Against this pestilent opinion, strongly and learnedly disputeth Augustine in diverse places, but chiefly in his fifth book of that work, entitled, OF THE CITY OF GOD, affirming, that only by the providence of God are kingdoms erected, maintained, and changed; that stars have no power, neither to incline man to virtue nor to vice, that such blasphemies ought to be repelled from the ears of all men. Which sentences, because they do most perfectly agree with God's infallible Word, we reverently embrace, and constantly do believe; and so, why that you should thus impudently accuse us of that which we never thought, wise men may wonder.

Oh, say you, you take away the word of stoical necessity, but yet you affirm the self-same thing which they affirmed. I answer, if you can make no difference betwixt the omnipotent, most perfect, most just, and immutable will of God, and the opposition of stars, called Constellations, you have evil profited, not only in God's school, but also in those arts in which some of you

would seem to be subtle. Do we affirm that of necessity it was that Pharaoh, after many plagues sustained, should with his great host be drowned? That Nebuchadnezzar should be transformed into a brute beast? That Cyrus should first destroy Babylon, and after proclaim liberty to the people of God, {after their long and dolorous captivity,} because the influence of the stars did lead them to that end? Or do we not rather most constantly affirm, that the eternal counsel of God, his immutable decree and most holy will {which only is the most perfect rule of all justice and equity} did bring all these things to pass by such means as He had appointed, and by his prophets forespoken!

But here you storm, crying in your accustomed fury, what is this else but stoical necessity, to make God's will the only cause of all things, be they good or bad? How dull and ignorant you are, if you cannot make difference betwixt God's will and that necessity which the Stoics maintained, I have before touched; and how maliciously you impute unto us words and sentences, whereof you be never able to convict us, shall shortly {God willing} be declared.

But by this I perceive where the shoe doth wring you. If God's will, his counsel, his providence, and decree bear rule in the actions of man's life, then foresee you and fear that your free will shall be brought into bondage; and so can you not come first to the perfection of angels, and in process of time to the justice of Christ, by the means of your free will. Whether I wrongfully suspect you, and so have erred in my judgment, your own words shall after witness. For seeing that we have plainly proved, that most unjustly and most maliciously you accuse and traduce us of the vain opinion of the Stoics, I will proceed to that which you call our First Error, after that I have {for the better instruction of the simple reader} declared what we understand by Prescience, Providence, and Predestination, which terms do so offend you that you cannot hear them named.

When we attribute **PRESCIENCE** to God, we understand that all things have ever been, and

perpetually abide present before his eyes, so that to his eternal knowledge nothing is by-past, nothing to come, but all things are present, and so are they present that they are not as conceived imaginations, or forms and figures, whereof other innumerable things proceed, {as Plato teacheth, that of the form and example of one man many thousands of men are fashioned;} but we say that all things be so present before God, that he doth contemplate and behold them in their verity and perfection. And therefore it is that the Prophets oftentimes speak of things being yet after to come, with such certainty as that they were already done. And this Prescience of God do we affirm to be extended to the universal compass and circuit of the world, yea, and unto every particular creature of the same.

God's **PROVIDENCE** we call that sovereign empire and supreme dominion, which God always keepeth in the government of all things in heaven and earth contained. And these two {that is Prescience and Providence} we so attribute to God, that with the Apostle we fear not to affirm, that in him we have our being, moving, and life. We fear not to affirm, that the way of man is not in his own power, but that his foot-steps are directed by the Eternal; that the sorts and lots, {which appear most subject to fortune,} go so forth by his providence, that a sparrow falleth not upon the ground without our heavenly Father. And thus we give not to God only Prescience by an idle sight, and a Providence by a general moving of his creatures, {as not only some philosophers, but also more than is to be wished in our days do,} but we attribute unto him such a knowledge and providence as is extended to every one of his creatures, in which he so worketh, that willingly they tend and incline to the end to which they are appointed by him. What comfort do the sons of God receive in earnest meditations hereof this time will not suffer to entreat. But at one word to finish, alas, to what misery were we exposed, if we should be persuaded that Satan and the wicked might, or could do anything, otherwise than God hath appointed, let the godly consider.

PREDESTINATION, whereof now this question is, we call the eternal and immutable decree of God, by the which he hath once determined with himself what he will have to be done with every man. For he hath not created all {as after shall be proved} to be of one condition. Or, if we will have the definition of Predestination more large, we say, that it is the most wise and most just purpose of God, by the which, before all time, he constantly hath decreed to call those whom he hath loved in Christ, to the knowledge of himself and of his Son Christ Jesus, that they may be assured of their adoption by the justification of faith; which working in them by charity, maketh their works to shine before men to the glory of their Father, so that they {made conformable to the image of the Son of God} may finally receive that glory which is prepared for the vessels of mercy.

These latter parts {to wit, of vocation, justification of faith, and of the effect of the same} have I added for such as think that we imagine it sufficient, that we be predestinated, how wickedly so ever we live. We constantly affirm the plain contrary; to wit, that none living wickedly can have the assurance that he is predestinated to life everlasting. Yea, although man and angel would bear record with him, yet will his own conscience condemn him, unto such time as unfeignedly he turn from his wicked conversation.

These terms I thought good in the beginning to explain, to the end that the reader may the better understand our meaning in the same, and that we be not after often compelled to repeat them again. Now to that which you call the First Error.

THE ADVERSARY.

God hath not created all men to be saved by any manner of means, but before the foundation of the world he hath chosen a certain to salvation, which is but a small flock, and the rest, which be innumerable, he hath reprobated and ordained to condemnation, because so it pleaseth Him.

ANSWER.

They are not only reputed liars and called false witnesses, that boldly and plainly affirm a lie in plain and express words, but such also as in reciting the minds of other men, change their meaning by altering their words, by adding more than they spake, or by diminishing that which might explain the things that remained obscure, or more fully might express the mind of the speakers. And in all these three vices are you criminal in this your first accusation or witnessing laid against us. For our words you have altogether altered; to them you have added, and from them you have diminished that which you think may aggravate and make odious our cause. And therefore, I say, you are detestable liars and malicious accusers. For probation hereof I appeal to our writings, be they in Latin, French, Italian, or English, {in so many tongues this matter is written,} if that any of you be able to bring forth our propositions in any of them in this your form, and containing your whole words, I offer to make satisfaction unto you, {whether you will by word or writing,} that I have highly offended in calling you detestable liars. But if you be never able to show any such words used by us, {as plain it is you be not,} then your Master Castellio and you both are far from that perfection {to speak no more bitterly} which you pretend. For you are manifest liars, and whose sons they are called you cannot be ignorant, accusing men of what they never meant. For thus forms Castellio his first false accusation against Master Calvin. "*God hath created to perdition the most part of the world, by the naked, bare, and pure pleasure of his own will.*" And this same you affirm in more words more impudently patched; so both you and he do add to our words of your own malicious mind. These sentences, that God hath created the most part of the world, which is an innumerable multitude, to perdition, only because it so pleased Him, you steal from our words, and suppress that whichever we join when we make mention of God's Predestination, to wit, that he hath created all things for his own glory. That albeit the cause of God's

will be incomprehensible, secret, and hidden from us, when of the same mass he ordained some vessels to honour and some to destruction, yet it is most just, most holy, and most to be revered.

Now to the further declaration as well of our mind as of your shameless malice, I shall recite some sentences of Master Calvin, as doth that godly and learned man, Theodore Beza, against the crafty surmise of your Master Castellio. "I say {saith John Calvin} with Augustine, that of God they were created, whom without doubt he foreknew to go to perdition; and that was so done because so he would. Why he would, it appertaineth not to us to inquire, who cannot comprehend it; neither yet is it convenient, that the will of God shall descend and come down to be decided by us. Of the which, so oft as mention is made under the name of it, is the supreme and most high rule of justice so designated. And further, we affirm that which the Scripture clearly sets forth, to wit, that God did once by his eternal and immutable counsel appoint whom sometime he should take to salvation, and also whom he should condemn to destruction. We affirm, those whom he judgeth worthy of participation of salvation, to be adoptive and chosen of his free mercy for no respect of their own dignity; but whom he giveth to condemnation, to the same he shuts up the entrance to life by his incomprehensible judgment; but yet by that judgment that neither can nor may be reproved."

And in another work, "if we be not ashamed, {saith he,} of the Gospel, it behooveth us to confess that which therein is manifestly taught, that is, that God of his eternal good pleasure, whose cause dependeth upon none other, hath predestinated to salvation whom it pleased him, the rest being rejected. And whom he hath honoured with his free adoption, those He illuminated by his Spirit, that they may receive the life offered in Christ. Others by their own will so remaining unfaithful, that being destitute of the light of faith they continue in darkness." Also that which Saint Augustine writes, "so is the will of God the highest rule of justice, that whatsoever he will, in so far as he willeth it, it is to

be esteemed just." Therefore, when the question is, why did God so? It is to be answered, because so he would. But if thou proceed asking, why he would? Thou seekest a thing greater and more high than God's will, which cannot be found." And after, saith he, "we must ever return to the pleasure of his will, the cause whereof is hidden within himself."

But to make this matter more evident, I will adduce one or two places more, and so put end to this your forged accusation for this time. In his book which he writes of the Eternal Predestination of God, thus Calvin saith, "albeit that God before the defection of Adam had determined for causes hidden to us, what he was to do, yet in Scripture we read nothing to be condemned of him except sin." And so it resteth, that he had just causes {but hid from us} in rejecting a part of men, for he hateth nor damneth nothing in man but that which is contrary to his justice." Also writing upon Isaiah, the 23rd chapter, upon these words, "the Lord of Hosts hath decreed to profane the pride of all the noble ones," &c., he saith, "let us learn of this place, that the providence of God is to be considered of us, that to him we may give the glory and praise of his omnipotency, for the wisdom and the justice of God are to be joined with his power. Therefore, as the Scriptures teach us, that God by his wisdom doth this or that, so do they teach us a certain end why he doth this or that, for the imagination of the absolute power of God, which the Schoolmen have invented, is an execrable blasphemy; for it is as much as they should say, that God were a tyrant that appointed things to be done, not according to equity, but according to his inordinate appetite. With such blasphemies be the schools replenished; neither yet differ they from those who did affirm that God jested or did sport in the matters of men. But we are taught in the school of Christ, that the justice of God shineth in all his works, whatsoever they be that the mouths of all men may be stopped, and glory may be given to him alone. And therefore the prophet rehearses just causes of this destruction, {meaning of the destruction of Tyre,} that we shall not think that God doth anything

without reason. Those of Tyre were ambitious, proud, avaricious, lecherous, and dissolute."

What, is he so simple, which may not now consider and understand what was your malice and devilish intention, in patching up this your first accusation? Not the zeal of God's glory, as you falsely pretend, but the hatred which you have conceived against them who have sought your salvation. For if you had meant anything simply, you should not have added that which you be never able to show in our writings; neither yet can you lawfully prove that we have spoken the same in reasoning with any of you. We {so taught by the Scriptures} with reverence do affirm, that God for just causes, albeit unknown and hid to us, hath rejected a part of men. But you, making no mention of any cause, affirm, that we hold "that He hath created the most part of the world {which is innumerable} to no other end but to perdition; in which shameless lie your malice passeth measure. For neither do we rashly define the number of the one nor of the other; howbeit the Scripture in divers places affirmeth Christ's flock to be the little flock, the number to be few that findeth the way that leadeth to life. This notwithstanding, I say, we use not boldly to pronounce, whether of the numbers shall be the greater, but with all sobriety we exhort the people committed to our charge, not to follow the multitude to iniquity. For if they do, there is no multitude that can prevail against God. And so to us in this behalf you are greatly injurious.

But yet in the second part, your malice is more manifest, for you burden us that we should affirm, that the end of the creation of the reprobate was none other but their eternal perdition. From which calumny Master Calvin clearly purgeth us in these words, "all ought to know {saith he} that which Solomon saith, that God hath created all for himself, and the wicked also to the evil day." Consider and mark, that we {instructed by the Holy Ghost} do first affirm, that the cause and end why the reprobate were created, neither was, nor is not, their only perdition, {as you burden us,} but that the glory of God must needs appear, and shine in all his

works. And secondarily, we teach, that their perdition doth so depend upon God's Predestination, that the just cause and matter of their perdition is found within themselves; and that albeit the decree and counsel of God be incomprehensible to men's understanding, yet nevertheless it is most just and most holy. And thus have I so plainly, and in so few words as conveniently I could expound in what points you are malicious liars, what you have added of hatred to our words, and what you suppress, that the equity of our cause should not appear to men. God grant you {if his good pleasure be} with greater modesty to write, and with more humility to reason in those high mysteries, which far surmount the reach of man's capacity. But now I proceed to the preface of your Confutation, which thus beginneth.

THE ADVERSARY.

To prove this true, they can bring forth no plain testimony of the Word. For there is no such saying in the holy Scripture, that God hath reprobated man before the world. But the sentences which they allege be far set and forged, contrary to the meaning of the Holy Ghost, as God willing it shall plainly appear. And where Scripture will not serve, they patch their tale with unreasonable reasons, for their whole intention is contrary to true reason.

ANSWER.

In very deed, if all were true which you have heaped up in your unjust accusation, I, for my part, would not be ashamed to confess, that more were affirmed than plain Scriptures do teach; but your additions, which before we have touched, being removed, and that added which of malice you have omitted, I hope that our proposition shall be so plain and simple, that the reasonable man {if he be godly} shall neither lack good reason nor plain Scriptures to confirm the same; albeit that you are bold to affirm, that we have neither Scripture nor good reason, and that our whole intention is contrary to true

reason. But now let us form our own propositions. God, in his eternal and immutable counsels, hath once appointed and decreed whom he would take to salvation, and whom also he would leave in ruin and perdition. Those whom he elected to salvation, he receiveth of free mercy, without all respect had to their own merits or dignity, but of undeserved love gave them to his only Son to be his inheritance; and them in time he calleth of purpose, who, as his sheep, obey his voice, and so do they attain to the joy of that kingdom which was prepared for them before the foundations of the world were laid. But to those whom he hath decreed to leave in perdition, are so shut up for the entirety of their lives, that either they are left continually corrupted in their blindness, or else if grace be offered, by them it is impugned and obstinately refused; or if it seem to be received, that abideth but for a time only, and so they return to their blindness, and crooked nature, and infidelity again, in which finally they justly perish.

Because the whole controversy standeth in this, whether God hath chosen any to life everlasting before the beginning of all times, leaving others in their just perdition or not. My purpose is first by plain Scriptures to prove the affirmative; and after, in weighing the same and other Scriptures that by God's grace shall be adduced, so plainly as I can to show unto you what horrible absurdity inevitably followeth upon your error, in which you affirm, that God hath chosen no man more one than another; that your blindness be removed, and you turn with all humility to the eternal Son of the eternal God, against whom you arm yourselves, or else that your damnation may be the more sudden and just for your refusal of the plain light offered.

That God hath chosen before the foundation of the world, witnesseth the Apostle, saying, "blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ; as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world was laid, that we should be holy and without blame before him by love." Eph.1:3-4. Here the Apostle in express words affirmeth, that God hath

chosen a certain number, for he speaketh not to the whole world, as you either ignorantly or else maliciously do after allege, but to his beloved congregation of Ephesus, who with all obedience had received the word of life offered, and with great patience had continued in the same, even after the departure of their Apostle from them, yea, after his bonds and imprisonment. Such, I say, doth the Apostle affirm that God hath chosen, and that before the foundations of the world were laid, so that we have God's election before all beginning plainly proved. Here might I bring forth many places, but I, having respect to brevity, stand content with this one place.

That this He hath done once in his eternal and immutable counsel, without respect to be had to our merits or works, {which you allege to be causes of God's election,} witnesseth the same Apostle, proceeding as followeth, "who hath predestinated us that he should adopt us in children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will, that the glory of his grace, by the which he hath made us dear by that Beloved, may be praised. In whom we have redemption, and by his blood remission of sin, according to his abundant grace; of the which he hath plentifully poured upon us in all wisdom and prudence; opening to us the secret of his will, according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself, to the dispensation of the fulness of times summarily to restore all things by Christ, both those that be in the heavens, and those that be in the earth; by whom we are chosen in a portion or lot, predestinated according to the purpose of Him by whose power are all things made according to the decree of his will, that we should be to the praise of his glory." Eph.1:5-12. Here the Holy Ghost, as it were of set purpose, foreseeing man's unthankfulness, useth words not only most proper, but also most vehement, and often repeats the same, to beat down all pride and arrogancy of man, presuming to arrogate anything to himself in the matter of his salvation. He first saith, "God hath predestinated," and lest that some might have thought, as you, following the Papists, do now blasphemously affirm, that

so he did in respect of our worthiness, of works, or faith; in one sentence, he secluded all which is without Christ Jesus and without himself, saying, "he hath predestinated us to adopt us in children by Christ Jesus in himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." If Christ Jesus, yea, if God the Father, in his eternal counsel, and his decree and purpose, be other than our worthiness, our faith, our quality, or our good works, than neither for them, nor in respect of any of them, were we chosen to life. For plainly he affirmeth, that by Christ in himself, according to his good pleasure, which he had purposed in himself, were we adopted to be children, yea, and that according to the purpose and decree of his will.

Here have you the same and more words than we used. For here are those words, "the purpose of his good will, that he hath purposed in himself to predestinate and adopt us in children," which words do most lively express that which we affirm. But yet, perchance, you lack the proof of this part, that God in his immutable counsel hath once chosen. For after, I perceive, that this doth much offend you, I trust you will not reject the testimony of James, for you seem upon his words much to lean. And he saith, "that every good and perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of light, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadowing by turning. He hath {saith he} of his own will begotten us by the word of verity." James 1:17-18. If with God, as he affirmeth, there be no variableness, then must his counsel be immutable. If in him there be not now darkness and now light, but that as He dwelleth in the light which is inaccessible, so are and ever have been all things present in his sight; then in his eternal counsel there falleth neither ignorance nor repentance, and so what he once decreed, that he faithfully will perform to the praise of his own glory. But if you will not admit my reasons, then must I bring unto you plain Scriptures, "that God hath chosen before the foundations of the world; that he hath predestinated, purposed, and decreed to adopt us in children," is before proved.

The Prophet Isaiah, from the fortieth chapter of his prophecy to the end of the same, entreateth chiefly these two arguments; upon the one part to comfort the afflicted and despised Church, {which then was sore oppressed, and after was to be led captive to Babylon,} upon the other part, to threaten just vengeance as well upon the condemners of grace offered, as also upon the cruel enemy. The estate of the Church was such, that all hope of liberty, redemption, and comfort was taken from them. They were as dead carrions, buried in desperation, against the which the Prophet continually fighteth, calling them from the contemplation of the present miseries, and from the sight of such impediments as to them appeared to stop their liberty, to the infallible promise of God, and to his counsel, which he affirmeth to be constant, and to his love which is immutable. And therefore so often doth he repeat, "it is I, the Eternal, who hath created the heavens; and hath laid the foundations of the earth. It is I, it is I that will do it, for my own name's sake. I will establish the word of my servant, {he meaneth of Isaiah and of his other prophets, who in his name promised deliverance to the people,} and I will perform the counsel of my messengers. I say to Jerusalem, be thou inhabited, and to the walls of Zion, be you built." Isaiah 44:24-26.

By these and many other places the Prophet travailed to lift up the people from the pit of desperation in which they were to fall by reason of their grievous calamity and long captivity; and that he might with more efficacy persuade the same, he bringeth them to the league made with Abraham, to the remembrance of their wonderful deliverance out of Egypt, and to the lenity of God which their fathers had found at all times. But in vain had all his labour been if God's counsel, decree, and purpose had been changeable. For easily they might have objected, to what use serveth us the promise made to Abraham, or the kindness of God which our forefathers tasted? We have refused God, and therefore hath he refused and rejected us! He hath broken his league and covenant with us! But against all these desperate voices, and against your blasphemous

error, who affirm that God's counsel and purpose changeth as man doth, fighteth and prevaieth the prophet, saying, "my cogitations are not your cogitations, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Eternal. But like as the heavens are higher than the earth, so do my ways excel your ways, and my thoughts your thoughts. And the word that passeth forth of my mouth shall not return void to me; but it shall do whatsoever I will, {note, and give glory to God,} and it shall prosper in those things to the which I have sent it." Isaiah 55:8-11. I doubt not but that the godly reader doth clearly see the mind of the Prophet to be to rebuke the vanity of the Jews, believing that God's counsel, covenant, and love, were subject to such mutability as they themselves were in their counsels, love, and promises. But the Prophet maketh so much difference betwixt the one and the other as is betwixt the heaven and the earth; and doth further affirm, that as the dew and rain do not fall and come down in vain, so shall not the word which God speaketh {which is of more excellency than all creatures} lack its effect; but it shall work the will of God, and shall prosper as he hath appointed it, and that because it is God who hath spoken that which was purposed in his eternal and immutable counsel before all times.

Upon this ground and foundation {that is upon God's immutable love and counsel} buildeth the prophet the salvation and deliverance of the Church, as more plainly he speaketh in these words, "for this shall be to me as the waters of Noah; for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah shall no more overgo the earth; so have I sworn that I shall not be angry at thee, neither yet rebuke thee. Rather shall the mountains leave their place, and the hills shake, than that my goodness shall leave thee, or that the covenant of my peace shall waver, saith the Eternal, who hath compassion upon thee." Isaiah 54:9-10. Which only one place is sufficient to prove whatsoever we have affirmed, that is, that God's counsel, love, and goodness towards his Church is immutable. For the example and the similitude which he bringeth in are most plain and evident. The waters have

never universally overflown the earth since the days of Noah, to whom he made his covenant to the contrary, and yet no less iniquity {yea, greater} hath reigned in all ages since then did before. What is then the cause that the like or greater vengeance is not taken? The certainty, no doubt, of his promise which he hath made to his Church in Christ Jesus his only well-beloved. The mountains we see in all tempests and storms do keep their place, they do not flite, neither yet are they shaken with the vehemence of winds. But if they should, saith the Eternal, my goodness shall not leave thee {O, mercy without measure,} neither shall the covenant of my peace shake nor waver.

Thus I suppose, that the godly reader doth perceive and see, that we lack not Scripture {as you affirm} to prove that God's love and counsel towards his elect is stable, and that because it is grounded upon himself and not upon us, as {to your condemnation, if by times you repent not} you falsely imagine. But yet lest that you shall complain that these Scriptures be not plain enough, I will bring in yet one, and so end this part, "hear me, O house of Jacob, and all you residue of the house of Israel, who are born of me from the womb, and born of me from the birth; and even to the age I am He {the same God} and even to the white hairs I shall bear, I have done, and I shall bear; yea, I bear, and deliver." Isaiah 46:3-4. What words can be more vehement and more plain, to prove that the love of God can never change from his Elect? For that is his conclusion which he collected upon the former parts, saying, "I shall bear, and I shall deliver." And why? Because I have born you. Is this a good reason that God shall deliver because that he hath once born? Howsoever it seems to the Anabaptist, it seemeth good to the Holy Ghost; and David and Job did, with the like remembrance, comfort themselves in their greatest tribulations. The one saying, "thou art he that hast drawn me forth of my mother's womb. In thee I trusted, hanging upon my mother's breasts; upon thee was I cast from the birth; from my mother's womb thou art my God." Psalm 22:9-10. In these words David did arm

himself against the horrible temptations which did assault him in those most grievous persecutions which under Saul he sustained. For so must not that Psalm be interpreted of Christ and his passion, that David had no portion of it; by the which, when, to his own judgment, and to the judgment of all men also, he appeared to have been oppressed, he gathered new strength and comfort by the benefits of God, which before he had received. And so he concludeth here, "thou that art the author of my life, thou that didst nourish and preserve me even in the midst of darkness, wilt continue my God still, and so shalt thou deliver me." What is the reason of this conclusion? David himself doth express it saying, "O Lord, thy mercy is everlasting; thou shalt not leave the works of thine hands." Psalm 138:8. In which words David, from the midst of troubles, is lifted up to the contemplation of God's nature, who as he chooses of free mercy, and bestoweth his gifts upon his children before that either they can deserve them or yet know them; so doth he continue the same most constantly to the end unto the members of Christ's body.

And upon this same ground alone stayed the faith of Job, in his most extreme anguish, for in these words he doth as it were complain to God, "thy hands have made me, and fashioned me wholly round about; and wilt thou destroy me? Remember, I pray thee, that thou hast fashioned me as the potter doth his clay; and wilt thou bring me into dust again? Hast thou not poured me out as milk, and turned me to curds like cheese? Thou hast clothed me with skin and flesh, and joined me together with bones and sinews. Thou hast given me life and grace, and thy visitation hath preserved my spirit. Though thou hast hid these things in thine heart; I know that it is so with thee." Job 10:8-12. Here it is plain that Job fighteth against desperation, which vehemently did assault him by reason of his pains intolerable. And in his battle he apprehendeth this hold, "God hath begun to show mercy unto me, which in many things I have felt, and I still depend and hang upon the same; therefore my God may not despise the works of his hands." And so far proceedeth he in this disputation, till that he

maketh this conclusion, which God after did approve, "I know {saith Job} that my Redeemer liveth, whom I shall see; yea, mine eyes shall see him and none other." Job 19:25. Upon what ground, I say, did this faith of Job stand? No doubt upon this, that God's counsel is stable, and that his love is immutable towards such as once he had taken in to his safeguard. And if you doubt that this is rather our collection than the plain sentence of the Holy Ghost, confer our proposition with the former words of Isaiah, and let it be judged by them. And if that yet you cry, that we have brought forth no plain Scripture affirming that the counsel of God is immutable, then hear what the same Prophet saith, "it is I {saith he} that from the beginning show the things that be last, and from the beginning those things that be not done. It is I that do speak, and my counsel is stable, and whatsoever I will that I do." Isaiah 46:10.

Consider and behold that the Prophet affirmeth the counsel of God to be stable, yea, to be so immutable, that neither could the tyranny of the enemies, neither yet the former sins of the people, neither yet their present unthankfulness, stop God from showing his mercy, because that his infinite goodness found a way even in the midst of death to manifest his own glory. Such as by malice be not altogether blinded, having any exercise in the Scriptures of God, may easily perceive that I have wrested no part of the prophet's mind. For continually one thing doth he beat in their ears, to wit, that God will show mercy, will deliver, and will be Saviour unto them for his Name's sake, for his promise made to Abraham, and for the glory of himself.

But now shortly let us hear two or three places of the New Testament spoken to the same purpose, and so let us put an end to this part. Our Master Christ Jesus plainly affirmeth, that all which the Father gave him should come unto him, pronouncing, that whosoever cometh he would not cast him forth, but will raise him up and give him life. "For this {saith he} is the will of the Father that hath sent me, that I shall lose nothing of all those which the Father hath given to me, but that I might raise them up in the last day, for this is the will of

him that hath sent me, that all that seeth the Son and believest in him may have life everlasting." John 6:40. Of those words of our Master, it is evident, first, that the Father hath given some to the Son Christ Jesus, yea, and also that some be that are not given, but more of that after. And secondarily, that it behooveth the same to come unto him, for so he affirmeth, saying, "all that my Father gave unto me shall come unto me." He leaveth it not in doubt, but plainly affirmeth, they shall come. Thirdly, the end and fruit of the coming is expressed, to wit, that they obtain life everlasting. Which to them that of the Father are given and of the Son received is so sure, that Christ Jesus himself pronounceth, "that out of his hands is none able to pluck them away." Plain it is, that the counsel of God is stable, and his love immutable towards his Elect, because {all other conditions set apart} Christ affirmeth, that the life everlasting pertaineth to them that are given by God, and received by him in protection and safeguard. But more plainly doth he speak in that his solemn prayer; for after that by divers means he had comforted the sorrowful hearts of his disciples, he giveth comfort to the whole Church, affirming, "that he did not pray only for those that there were present with him, but also for all those that should after believe, by their preaching, in him." These words he added for our singular comfort, "I have given unto them the glory which thou hast given to me; that they may be one, as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know, that thou hast sent me, and that thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me." John 17:23. O that our hearts could, without contradiction, embrace these words; for then with humility should we prostrate ourselves before our God, and with unfeigned tears give thanks for his mercy!

Three things in these words are to be observed; first, that the same glory which God the Father hath given to his Son, the same hath he given to such as believe in him. Not that either Christ Jesus had then the full glory, as he was man, for as yet he had not overcome the death; neither that his elect at any time in

this life can attain to the fruition of the same, but that the one was as assured in God's immutable counsel as was the other. For as the Head should overcome the bitter death, and so triumph over Satan the author thereof, so should his members in the time appointed; as he doth further express, saying, "I will, Father, that where that I am, there also be those which thou hast given unto me, that they may see my glory." The second is, that so strait and near is the conjunction and union betwixt Christ Jesus and his members, that they must be one, and never can be separated. For so did Christ pray, saying, "that they all may be one, as we are one; I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one."

Let the conjunction be diligently marked, for much it serveth to our comfort. As the Godhead is inseparably joined with the humanity in Christ Jesus our Lord, so the one, that is the Godhead, neither could nor can leave the humanity at any time, how bitter that ever the storms appeared; so cannot Christ Jesus leave his dear spouse the Church, neither yet any true member of the same. For that he includeth, under the general word "all" for any incident, how horrible that ever it be, that came to pass in their life. And albeit that this appear strange, and also a doctrine that may seem to give liberty to sin, yet may not the children of God be defrauded of their food, because that dogs will abuse the same. But of this we shall {God willing} after speak.

The third thing to be noted is that the love of God towards his Elect, given to Christ, is immutable. For Christ putteth it in equal balance with the love by the which his Father loved him. Not that I would any man should so understand me, as that I placed any man in equal dignity and glory with Christ Jesus touching his office. No, that must be reserved wholly and only to himself; that he is the only Beloved, in whom all the rest are beloved; that he is the Head, that only giveth life to the body; and that he is the sovereign Prince, before whom all knees shall bow. But I mean, that as the love of God the Father was ever constant towards his dear Son, so is it also towards the members of his body; yea,

even when they are ignorant and enemies unto him, as the Apostle witnesseth, saying, "God specially commendeth his love towards us, that when we were yet sinners Christ died for us; much more being justified now by his blood, we shall be saved by him from wrath. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, we, being reconciled, shall be saved by his life." Romans 5:8-10.

To some these words may appear contrary to our purpose, for they make mention of a reconciliation, which is not made but where there is enmity and dissension. But if they be righteously considered, they shall most evidently prove that which we affirm, which is, that God loved the members of Christ's body even when they are ignorant, when they by themselves are unworthy and enemies. For this is his first proposition, that we being justified by Faith, have peace with God by our Lord Jesus Christ. Where he maketh mention of peace, he putteth us in mind of the dissension and war which was betwixt God's justice and our sins. "This enmity {saith he} is taken away, and we have obtained peace." And lest that this comfort should suddenly vanish, or else that men should not deeply weigh it, he bringeth us to the eternal love of God, affirming that God loved us when we were weak. Where we must observe, that the Apostle speaketh not universally of all men, but of such as were and should be justified by Faith, and had the love of God poured into their hearts by the Holy Ghost which was given unto them. To such, saith he, if God did love us when we were weak, and his enemies, much more must he love us when we are reconciled, and begin, in faith, to call him Father. The Apostle affirmeth, that our reconciliation proceeded from God's love, which thing Saint John more plainly doth witness in these words, "in this appeareth the love of God towards us, that God hath sent forth his only Son into the world, that we should live by him. In this, I say, is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and hath sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." I John 4:9-10. So that both those Apostles in plain words do speak that which before I have affirmed, to wit, that

God loved the members of Christ Jesus even when they were enemies, as well touching their knowledge and apprehension, as also touching the corruption of their nature; which was not regenerate. And so I conclude as before, that the love of God towards his elect is stable and immutable, as it which beginneth not in time, neither dependeth upon our worthiness or dignity; which truth is contrary to that which I perceive you hold and affirm.

Thus far, I trust, we have sufficiently proved, and that by plain Scriptures, and by no patched unreasonable reasons, {as the author of your book accuseth us,} that God hath his elect, whom in Christ Jesus he hath chosen, and that of decreed purpose, to give them life. Which purpose, counsel, and love of God is sure, stable and immutable. Now resteth to prove, that God hath rejected some, and also to note the absurdities which follow upon your doctrine, and so shall I not be compelled after in the discourse to spend time and travail to confute your error. That God hath reprobated any appeareth to you horrible; yea, and you affirm God to be more cruel than any wild beast, if so he did. For thus you write in your book as followeth.

THE ADVERSARY.

God hath given to all his sensible creatures a natural inclination to love their births; then doth God also love his birth, as he saith, "shall I cause other to bear, and shall not I also bear?" Likewise, shall God make others to love their births, and he not love his own birth? Man is the birth and child of God, created to his own image and similitude, {as the Prophet saith,} "have we not all one Father? Hath not one God made us?" And Paul saith, "we are the generation of God." Wherefore God loveth his own birth, that is man. Then did He not reprobate and cast away man before he was, for that were a proof that he hated and abhorred his own birth above all other. Now, there is no wild beast, much less any man, which would bring further their birth to destruction. How much less than becometh it the goodness of God to

make and bring forth, like to his own image and similitude, unto perpetual confusion?

ANSWER.

How bold, how shameless, and how blasphemous thou declares thyself, {I speak to thee and thy companions that collected these blasphemies,} it shall shortly appear after that I have, by God's grace, with simple perspicuity declared the truth.

True it is, that to the natural man nothing appeareth more absurd, nor more repugnant to good reason {as men term it} than that all shall depend upon God's will and appointment; for so think they that God cannot avoid the suspicion of injustice; yea, say they, he cannot be purged nor made free from malice and cruelty. But let such as, entering within themselves, do but in a part consider what is their own condition, what is their ignorance, and how far they are inferior to the angels in justice and knowledge; to his holy angels, I say, that be most obedient, and continually stand before his face, and yet, nevertheless, do cover their faces, and of very reverence neither dare, nor will rashly behold the brightness of his glory. If further we shall consider that as in God, his wisdom, his power, his goodness and mercy are infinite, so are his judgments and justice {in itself most righteous} incomprehensible to the dullness of our wits. For as his wisdom and power far surmounts all that we can imagine, so are his judgments and justice a great deep, {as David affirmeth, and in the book of Job is plainly described,} able to swallow up and utterly to confound all our senses. Alas! shall I, whose corporal eye is so feeble and weak that directly it cannot behold the sun, which is a visible creature, but that it shall be blinded and dazzled, shall I, I say, direct the eye of my mind {corrupted by sin} to measure and comprehend the brightness of his justice, who dwelleth in the light inaccessible!

If man could impose or prescribe to God a law and measure of wisdom, power, mercy, and goodness, so that none of them should otherwise be in his eternal

Godhead, then man could understand and approve; then some appearance might they have to bring his justice {which is no less infinite and incomprehensible than the others} under the censure and examination of their judgment and reason. But what bold and foolish presumption is this; that man, who knoweth not fully what lieth within his own heart, shall, without all reverence, enter to judge the secret mysteries, the full knowledge whereof doth only abide in the eternal Godhead; that impudently he shall pronounce, this cannot be just, because we do neither see nor understand the cause of the justice! God grant us greater humility, more reverence and fear {which righteously is called the beginning of wisdom} than that so rashly and proudly we shall presume to damn that which we understand not. Lest that doing the contrary, that malediction pronounced by Isaiah fall upon us, where he saith, "woe be to him that reasoneth with his Maker, the vessel of clay with the potter! Doth the clay say to the potter, what makest thou? And, why thy work hath no hands. Wo be to him that saith to his father, what shalt thou beget?" Isaiah 45:9.

This I thought expedient, briefly to admonish the godly reader before I did enter into plain battle with the Adversary. Beseeching further such as do not err in this article of set purpose and malice, but rather of ignorance and simplicity, not to be offended, as though I did stomach against them, if at any time I shall handle the impudent writer or collector of this book {whose nature is better known unto me than unto many of them} according to his malicious frowardness. But now shortly to the matter.

The proposition and conclusion of this writer are both one, to wit, "*God hath not rejected nor reprobated any man.*" His reasons and arguments {as the reader may perceive} are, "*for that were against the nature of God,*" which he thus proveth, "*God causeth others to bear, and therefore he beareth.*" And so bringing his argument from this similitude, "*God maketh beasts love their births, therefore he loveth his births, but all men are the births of God; for God is the Father of Adam, of*

whom are all men born, and therefore he loveth all men. If he loveth, then did he reprobate none, for that should declare that he hated and abhorred, and were more cruel than a wild beast." These be thy arguments, {blasphemous mouth,} in answering whereto, if I shall seem to exceed modesty, let the godly consider that thy horrible blasphemies are intolerable.

And first, I call the heaven and earth, the insensible creatures, and the judgment of reasonable men to witness with me, how beastly be thy cogitations of the eternal Godhead, when thou sayest, "*God must love his births, because he hath given a natural inclination to all beasts to love their births.*" If thy reason be good, then must God forget some of his births in their youth, and reject all care of them. For that same nature giveth God to some fowls, as the book of Job doth witness in these words, {speaking of the ostrich,} "*which leaveth his eggs in the earth, and maketh them hot in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot might scatter them, or that the wild beast might break them. He sheweth himself cruel unto his young ones as they were not his, and is without fear, as if he travailed in vain. For God hath deprived him of wisdom, and hath given him no part of understanding.*" Job 39:14-17. If thy reason, I say, be good, God must love his birth, because he causeth all other beasts to love their births. Then, I say, it must also follow, God shall forget, and hardly entreat some, for such nature and inclination hath he given to some of his creatures, as is plainly proved.

"I do mean {thou wilt say} of love only," but the Scripture {which either ignorantly or else maliciously thou corrupts} declareth the contrary, for thou wilt make God to bear, because he causeth others to bear. That Scripture, I say, thou doest pervert, as thou doest all the rest. For what the Prophet of God applies to the miraculous restoration of the Church which then was most afflicted, that thou doest allege to make God have like affections with brute beasts. And that neither thou nor any other shall have occasion to report that I accuse thee wrongfully, I will recite the whole words of the

Prophet, who thus speaketh, "before she hath travailed of child-birth, she hath born; and before that pain came, she brought forth a man. Who hath heard the like? Or who hath seen the like unto this? Was the earth built {he means set in order} in one day? Was there ever a nation born at once? And yet Zion hath travailed of child-birth, and at once hath she brought forth her children." Isaiah 66:7-8. He addeth the cause of this supernatural multiplication and felicity, saying, "shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth, saith the Eternal, shall I cause to bring forth, and shut the womb, saith thy God." Isaiah 66:9. They are more than blind which do not see that God, in these words, hath neither respect to the natural inclination of beasts, neither yet to any common love that he beareth to his creatures, but to that incomprehensible and unchangeable love which he beareth to his Church, the multiplication, the joy and felicity whereof, he will at once bring forth in such sort, that his elect shall never remember to their grief that they sustained any passion or pain.

Let the indifferent reader compare this interpretation with the plain words of the Prophet, and so let thyself judge how irreverently thou doest abuse the most comfortable words of the Holy Ghost to establish thy error. But let it be that thou didst mean of love and of no affection else, art thou become so bold and impudent, that thou dost dare subject God to the law, limits, and bounds of nature? To speak the matter more plainly, I ask of thee first, if thou wilt deny the love of God to be perfect, except that he do for all manner of men that which beasts naturally do for their births? Secondly, thou dost charge God with cruelty, as now thou doest in thy blind rage, if he hath not created and made all men of equal estate, condition, and dignity? Thirdly, if thou shalt stand in judgment and lay injustice to his charge, if he show mercy to whom he will, and also indurate and make hard whom he will? For all these three will I plainly prove that God does.

First, that he doth not for his dearest children, to our judgment, that which beasts naturally do for their births, I trust thyself will easily confess. For the tiger,

the bear, the lion, and others, do so tender their whelps, that even against the strength of man {were he never so valiant} will they fight for defense of their young ones; but we do see that God commonly doth so permit his dearest children to the cruel appetites of the most wicked men, that for a season he appeareth to have forgotten them, and to have turned his face and countenance from them. And shall we therefore think that God's love is not perfect, or that his power is diminished, or his good will towards his children changed? God forbid. *"But this {say you} doth not offend us; but that God should reprobate any man whom he created to his own image and similitude, that we cannot bear, for it is repugnant to his love and justice."*

Well, of your first reason which you draw from nature, I suppose we have established that God is not bound in all things to follow the natural love of his creatures. For he doth often suffer {and I trust you will not say that he is enforced so to do} his dearest children most cruelly to be handled, which no beast willingly will do. Now, let us weigh your second reason. *"Man {saith your book} is the birth and child of God, created to his own image and similitude, {as the prophet saith,} therefore God loveth his own birth, that is man. Then did He not reprobate and cast away man before he was, for that were a proof that he hated and abhorred."* Omitting your ignorance, by the which you apply generally to all men those promises which the Prophet Malachi spake to the people of God, let it be granted unto you, that as all men were created in Adam, so God in some manner of way is their Father. What will or can you thereof conclude? That God loveth all, say you. If you understand and affirm, that equally God loveth all because all were created by him, the common experience and the diversity of God's gifts shall reprove your vanity; for unto one man we see greater gifts given than unto another; some we see virtuous, and others given to nothing but to iniquity. If you say, He loveth them, in that he offereth unto them his grace, which when they refuse, then beginneth He to hate them, you

have proved nothing of your intent; and further, the plain Scripture confuteth this your error. And first, I say, that before you can prove your conclusion to be good, you must prove that all men stood, do stand, and are born in the same perfection that Adam was created in. For it doth not follow, that God still loveth all men because he loved Adam, created to his own image and similitude. The reason is, Adam did fall from that image, became rebellious, disobedient, and enslaved to the Devil, and in the same damnation wrapped all his posterity; so that now from Adam we can claim nothing but sin, wrath, death, and hatred; as the Apostle affirmeth, "that of nature we were all the sons of wrath." If you allege that the Apostle speaketh in that place of man as he is corrupted in Adam, and so justly deprived from God's favour, then I demand of you, if man doth yet stand in Adam? Which if you confess, the Holy Spirit shall convict you of a lie. For by the mouth of the Apostle he affirmed, "that by one man sin entered into the world, and by the means of sin death came upon all men," so that in the first man Adam {who fell from his purity} have we neither love, justice, nor life, but the contraries, to wit, hatred, sin, and death. But God, as he had chosen his Elect before all beginning in Christ Jesus his Son, so hath he placed these gifts in the second Adam alone, "that of his fulness we may all receive even grace for grace." And thus you may easily perceive, how vain be your arguments which you judged most strong. Your first, drawn from nature and natural inclination, proveth nothing, because that God, who is always free, cannot be subject to the laws of nature; albeit that for our weakness he sometimes useth similitudes taken from nature. Your second argument is like vain, seeing that neither Adam himself did stand in his perfection; neither is any of his corrupted seed, as he is the son of Adam born in that condition and dignity, but contrary wise, we must refuse flesh and blood, nature and our first Adam, if ever we shall be partakers of life. This only were sufficient to confute both your unreasonable reasons; but that hereafter you shall have no occasion to complain of obscurity, neither yet that we relent in

any part, I will first simply propose what we teach and believe; and thereafter, by God's grace, evidently prove the same.

You make the love of God common to all men; and that do we constantly deny, and say, that before all beginning God hath loved his elect in Christ Jesus his Son, and that from the same eternity he hath reprobated others, whom for most just causes, in the time appointed to his judgment, he shall adjudge to torments and fire inextinguible. Here you stomach and storm, here you cry, Blasphemy, and here you say, that we affirm that which cannot be proved by God's Scriptures. How sure is the probation of the former part, let the indifferent reader judge by that which is already spoken.

Let us now come to the second. And that you shall not think that I shall more depend upon arguments and reason than upon Scripture, I will begin with Scripture, and let arguments and reason serve only instead of handmaids, which shall not command, but obey Scripture pronounced by the voice of God. After that by rebellion man was spoiled of all graces, and that the contrary vices had taken place and possession in the hearts of both these miserable creatures, of Adam I mean, and of the woman, God pronounced this sentence against the serpent, "because thou hast done this, cursed art thou amongst all the beasts of the earth. I shall establish enmity betwixt thee and that woman, betwixt thy seed and her seed. That seed shall break down thy head, and thou shalt break down his heel." Genesis 3:14-15. As I suppose, no man will be so impudent as to deny that this is the voice of God, pronouncing and promising that he will establish and put a battle where none was appearing to be, for Satan before had obtained such victory, and so had vanquished both the woman and Adam, that they could never have resisted that servitude by themselves. And therefore doth he disclose the bowels of his mercy, and doth communicate with them that counsel which was secret with himself before all beginning.

And if you demand, "how can it be proved that this was his eternal counsel?" I answer, "because that He, in whom there is no changing nor variableness, hath now pronounced it," and whether this reason be sufficient or not in answering to your objection, we shall after consider. Now resteth it only to be observed, whether it was the will of God or not, to make a difference betwixt man and man? Plain it is, that before his face, as touching the first birth, there standeth but one lump, or mass, {as Saint Paul terms it,} and yet from the same are two seeds appointed to spring, which are the two Churches. The Elect contained under the seed of the woman, and the reprobate or malignant Church comprehended under the name of the Serpent's seed. To the one is promised victory; to the other is denounced, by the irrevocable sentence of God, the bruising of the head, which is destruction and confusion. I think you will not say, that he was constrained thereto by any force exterior, as we speak, seeing he is the Eternal which changeth not, ever abiding Lord over all creatures, who may and doth perform whatsoever he will in heaven and in earth. Then of necessity it must follow, that this battle is appointed by his will. And that do the words plainly bear, for he saith not, "I know that there shall be a battle," or "I will suffer and permit {as you use to interpret such places} a battle to be," but he plainly saith, "I will put and establish the battle and enmity," declaring thereby, that as he was the force, strength, and the conductor to the seed of the woman, so would he most assuredly give victory to the same. Which thing S. Augustine diligently did note, and godly admonished, affirming, that our condition in Christ Jesus is now better and more sure, than before was the condition of Adam in his own free will; for that, that he had none other strength but that which might be, and was overcome, but we have the strength that is invincible, because it is the power of the Eternal. This one place, I say, doth most evidently prove, that God willingly maketh a difference betwixt man and man, appointing to the one sort victory and life, to the other subjection and death. But yet you reply, "*this cannot be*

proved to be the eternal counsel of God, for it is pronounced in respect of the faith, works, and obedience of the one, and in respect of the infidelity, vicious living, and disobedience of the other."

Your objection {which here I now entreat, that after I be the less troubled} hath two members; the former will I now touch, abiding better opportunities for the other. Where you allege that this cannot be proved to have been the eternal counsel of God, because it was pronounced in time, your reason appeareth, and is, more than foolish. For what is he that against the plain Scripture of God will affirm this reason, that the kingdom of heaven shall be given in the end of the world to the elect of God; therefore it was not prepared to them before the beginning! Doth not, I say, the plain voice of Christ condemn this vain reason? Or if I should say, "the death of Christ was four thousand years after the beginning; therefore the Lamb was not killed from the beginning." Were not this most foolish, and contrary to the plain Scriptures? But is not the contrary reason most sure, most true and strong? God in time hath pronounced, and his sentence being once pronounced, most constantly doth he execute the same. Therefore it was his eternal and immutable counsel. As our election was purposed and decreed in God's eternal counsel before the beginning of all times, and yet from age to age was the same revealed to his chosen children. Did therefore the Apostle, or rather the Holy Ghost, lie, who doth affirm that we were elected, as before is proved, in Christ Jesus before all time? Even so is it in this matter, the sentence by the which the battle came forth first to the knowledge of man was temporal; but the stability and continuance of it plainly proveth, that it was and is the eternal purpose and counsel of God.

But yet more deeply to descend into the matter. Was it the eternal purpose and counsel of God to create the world, and so to make man to his own image and similitude? I suppose that every reasonable man will confess that so it was. Then do I ask, if God was ignorant what should become of all mankind before that any creation was? So to affirm is to deny his eternal

knowledge, wisdom, and Godhead. He did know and foresee his end, and yet he did create him. Then, if it was not his eternal counsel, that to his glory this difference and diversity should be in mankind, which then was but one lump or mass, why did He not give unto him such strength as could not be overcome? It shall nothing relieve nor help you to shift with the Papists, alleging, that God gave him free will and abundant graces, by the which he might have resisted and grandstand all assaults and temptations if he would. That we deny not; but yet we ask, why did not God give unto him the will to resist? Or why did he not so bridle Satan, that he might not have tempted him? I trust you will not with the Manichees affirm, that there was a power greater than the power of the good God, and that this wicked power did for a time overcome the power and destroy the counsel of the good God, who was Creator and Lover of mankind. For that were plainly to deny the Omnipotency of our God. If you say {as after you write} that God did only permit and suffer his fall, you have said nothing to the purpose; for still I demand, whether he did suffer it willingly or unwillingly. If you say willingly, then are you caught in the snare which you would avoid. If you say it was against his purpose and will, then fall you into that horrible blasphemy of the Manichees, denying God's omnipotent power. And if yet you would escape, imagining God to look and behold the end of the matter, and yet neither willing the one nor the other, then fall you into the blasphemy of Epicurus; who although in plain words he durst not deny God, yet did he affirm, that he regarded not the works of men, but did idly occupy the heavens. But how far this is repugnant to our faith, who believe God to be omnipotent, not only because he may do all things, but also because that it is He that created light and darkness, good and evil, and finally, that worketh all in all things according to the purpose of his good pleasure. Let such as be but meanly exercised in the Scriptures judge. And so, I say, that man's fall, and the difference that came to our knowledge by the same, was no less determined in the eternal counsel of God than was his

creation. And that in this sentence is yet most evidently to be espied, for if God had not purposed in himself to establish this battle, and so to make a difference perpetually, why did he not wholly restore man again to honour, to purity, and innocency? Why did he not stay the fountain of sin in our first father? Why did he suffer his first corruption by propagation to come to his posterity? Was it because he lacked power? Or was it not rather, as the Apostle does teach us that He wrapped all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all? That He might show mercy to whom he would, and harden also whom he would? If these things do displease you, remember first, that they are the voices of the Holy Ghost; and secondarily, call to your mind the condition of mankind; to wit, that both you and we {compared with that Sovereign Majesty} be but worms here creeping on the earth, and therefore can we not climb up to the heaven, and so reason or plead with the Almighty. Call to mind, I say, that question of the Apostle, calling man to the consideration of himself; in the same matter, saying, "O man, what art thou that thou mayest answer in contrary to God," that is, contend or plead with him. This sentence, I say, ought to humble us, and make us rather to tremble at the remembrance of his judgments, than rashly, and with proud stomachs, to damn that which we are not able to apprehend.

But let us yet prosecute this matter further, to the end that we may see if that this hath been and is the constant will of God, and that plainly declared by his Word, that this former difference be kept in all ages. No other difference was made than this general, till the days of Abraham, and then a more special and express difference was made; for that which before was common to the woman's seed was then by the expressed voice of God appointed to Abraham and unto his seed, in these words, "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, I will bless thee and multiply thee; such as bless thee shall I bless, and such as curse thee shall I curse." In which words is no less the battle than the benediction established. For as all nations were

pronounced to be blessed in his seed, {which as the Apostle doth interpret was Christ,} so is it pronounced, that there shall be some that shall curse, and therefore shall be accursed of God. Yea, it is plainly spoken, that for four hundred years should his seed and posterity be evil entreated in a strange country; nevertheless, the people whom they shall serve shall I judge, {saith the Lord.} So have we again the difference plainly confirmed by the voice of God. But yet God doth proceed one degree further, and in Abraham's seed he maketh difference. "For in Isaac, saith he, shall thy seed be called." By the which voice he did seclude both Ismael and the rest of his carnal sons from that honour, affirming, that from none of them should the benediction come, but only from Isaac, which was the son of promise, and not of nature only. But that difference was most evidently declared in Isaac's two sons, being yet in their mother's bosom, before they had done either good or bad, as the Apostle affirmeth. It was said by the voice of God, "the elder shall serve the younger." By which voice of God revealed, did Isaac and Rebecca plainly understand what was the cause of the battle which the mother felt in her bosom and womb, to wit, that because from her womb were two peoples and nations to proceed, which could not be of equal honour and dignity. For the one had He determined in his eternal counsel to elect for his peculiar people, the other to reject, and to leave them in the common corruption as the other nations; as the sequel in process of time did evidently declare. For the Edomites, descending of Esau, were cut off from the body of the Church, and became manifest enemies to the posterity of Jacob, because that their father was subject to Jacob, and pronounced to be his servant. Such as understand this place of corporal service and worldly riches or dignity only, do nothing else but show their own ignorance, corrupting the meaning of the Holy Ghost. For Saint Paul, in the 9th chapter to the Romans, after that he hath affirmed that the promise and election of God were sure, {albeit that many of the carnal seed had refused Christ preached,} he bringeth in this former sentence to remove all

slander, saying, "all are not sons because they are the seed of Abraham, that is, those that be the sons of the flesh are not therefore the sons of God; but those that be the sons of promise are accounted for seed." And so to prove that which before he had affirmed, to wit, that all were not Israelites that came of Israel, he added these words, "not only this; but also when Rebecca had conceived of one, our father Isaac, while the children were not born, while they had neither done good nor evil, {that the purpose of God should abide according to election, not of works, but of the caller,} it was said to her, "the elder shall serve the younger."

Such as be not more than blind, may easily perceive that the Apostle looketh to another end than to worldly dignity. For his purpose was not in that place to dispute and reason, who should be rich in this world and who should be poor, who should be lords temporal and who should be servants; but his purpose and mind was to declare, to whom did that benediction promised unto Abraham appertain, and to whom it did not appertain. So that the Holy Ghost, speaking by Saint Paul, is a commentary of the words spoken to Rebecca. And I doubt not but so she did understand them, to wit, that that promise which appeared to have been common with all the seed of Isaac, {of whom it was spoken,} "in Isaac shall thy seed be called," was now restrained and made proper to one head, and to the people descending of him, that is to Jacob, who after obtained the name of Israel. So that both the peoples neither were reputed, neither yet in very deed were the church and chosen people of God, but the one was chosen and the other was refused. The one by grace, and of the caller, was honoured with the name and privilege of his Church, the others were cast out as strangers; upon the one remained the benediction of the which the other was deprived. In this manner, I say, did both Isaac, Rebecca, yea, Jacob and Esau, in process of time, understand this oracle of God.

But yet because this former place of the Apostle is by many evil understood, and by some maliciously wrested from the simple meaning of the Holy Ghost, in

as few and plain words as I can, I purpose to declare how aptly and properly the Apostle useth the testimony and words of Moses. Christ being preached to the Jews, who were reputed the chosen people of God, to whom, and for whose comfort and deliverance the Messiah was especially promised; the most part of the Jews remained unfaithful, refused the Saviour who was sent, blasphemed him, and cruelly did persecute him and his members. This could not be without a great offense and slander to many thousands both of the Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, puffed up with pride because they were the peculiar people, because to them were given the Law, promises, and oracles, did brag and boast that God could not reject them except that he should be found a liar, for to Abraham and to his seed had he made a promise. And the Gentiles might be troubled with the like cogitations; for they might think, if God shall refuse his own people, which so many years he tenderly had nourished, what stability can we look for though we should receive this Christ preached? Against both these sorts of men most valiantly fighteth the Apostle, and most aptly alledgeth the Scriptures, to the confutation of the one and comfort of the other. First against the Jew he reasoneth, that albeit they be Israelites after the flesh, yet it may be that they be not the very Israelites of God; neither yet is God indebted unto them, though they be descended of Abraham. The reason is, that God made no promise to the whole seed of Abraham, but to a part of it, that is to Isaac. And if they should say, but we are of Isaac; he, granting that, doth nevertheless prove that God doth not choose the whole seed of Isaac, but in the mother's womb, {as is said,} by his own decree, he made the difference. And if further they should reply, O, but we are of Jacob, he then comes to the proof of his first proposition, affirming, that albeit they were of Jacob, yet did it not thereof follow that they were all the elect people of God. For what prerogative {would he say} can Jacob have above his father Isaac or what can Isaac have above Abraham? Abraham, who many years faithfully obeyed God, could not obtain that all his posterity {no, not

Ismael for whom he prayed} should be reckoned to be his seed. Neither could Isaac obtain the same; but God appointed and did choose whom it pleased him. And shall Jacob have greater prerogative than had they both? Shall he that of grace was preferred to his brother, when neither the one had done good, neither the other had done evil, give that privilege to all his posterity, that without exception they shall be the chosen people of God? No, {will the Apostle conclude,} but God now, after the revelation of his dear Son Christ Jesus, doth make the same difference in the posterity of Jacob that sometimes he made in the seed of Abraham and Isaac; that is, he chooses whom it pleaseth him, and rejecteth also such as in whom he hath no pleasure; and that not only amongst the Jews, but also amongst the Gentiles; and that to make the riches of his glory known towards the vessels of mercy which he had prepared unto glory, whom he hath called, even us not only of the Jews, but also of the Gentiles, {as the Prophet Hosea saith,} and so, to the end of the chapter, he establisheth the faith of the Gentiles, and comforteth them, affirming that their vocation and election was forespoken by Moses and the Prophets, and therefore that it was not a thing that came by chance, but was appointed in the eternal counsel of God; and therefore in his conclusion he assureth them, that such as believe in Christ Jesus shall never be confounded.

Thus simply, but truly, {I doubt not,} have I explained the mind of the Apostle in the former place, which is, that God's election dependeth not upon man, upon his will, purpose, pleasure, or dignity; but as it is free, proceeding from grace, so is it stable in God's immutable counsel, and is revealed to God's Elect at such time as he knoweth most expedient. But because that of this we must after speak more, now we return to our former purpose. From the beginning, we hear that God maketh a difference; first, by that general division, separating and setting apart the seed of the woman from the serpent's seed. After calling Abraham, {neglecting, as it were, the rest of the whole world,} in Abraham's seed he maketh plain difference, secluding

Ismael, that he should not be heir with Isaac. But most especially in the womb of Rebecca, making the difference betwixt the two children and their posterity. Which difference did continue even to the days of Christ Jesus, in such firmness and stableness, that neither could the sins of the Patriarchs, the subtle cruelty of Pharaoh, the inobedience and grudging of the people, their apostasy and defection from God by manifest idolatry, nor finally, their long bondage and captivity, alter or change this immutable counsel of God, "that the elder should serve the younger," that the Messiah should come of the tribe of Judah, and "that of the loins of David should spring forth one to sit upon his seat forever." And this difference, which God by his own voice did establish before the coming of his dear Son Christ Jesus, did the same Christ Jesus, our Master, {appearing in the flesh,} ratify and confirm. For he plainly affirmeth, "that he was not sent but to the lost sheep of Israel," and "that it was not good to take the bread of the children and give it to dogs." By which two sentences he maketh an express difference betwixt the sheep and the goats, and betwixt the children and the dogs. He feareth not to say to the faces of those that boasted themselves to be the sons of Abraham, "ye are not of God, for if you were of God you should love me; but you are of your father the Devil, and his desires you will obey." John 8:42. As this sentence is fearful, so may it appear very bold. For they might have objected, as they did, are we not his creatures, created to his own image? Are we not the seed of Abraham? Do we not bear the figure of circumcision? Are we not collected in Jerusalem, and do we not frequent the Temple? Yes, verily, but none of all these things made them to be of God, in such sort as Christ denied them to be of him. For all these things may the reprobate have in common with the elect. But Christ denied them to be of God, that is, to be the sons and vessels of his mercy, elected in his eternal counsel, born of him by the Spirit of regeneration, by the which their stubborn blindness being removed, and they made obedient, durst be bold to call him Father. In this sense Christ denieth them to

be of God. If any think that their wickedness and willful refusal of grace offered was the cause that they were not of God; as I neither excuse their manifest rebellion, neither yet deny it to be a most just cause of their condemnation, so utterly deny I that their present sins were the only or the chief cause of their reprobation. For Christ himself feareth not to assign another cause, saying, "therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." John 8:47. If they had heard, that is, received and believed Christ Jesus and his doctrine, their sins had been purged and their blindness removed; but him could they not receive, and why, because they are not of God.

But to the objection, that the fore-knowledge of good works, or of rebellion to come, should be the cause why God doth elect or reject, we shall {God willing} after answer. Now only I mind to follow that which I have purposed, which is that Christ Jesus himself maketh a plain and manifest difference betwixt one sort of men and another. How often doth he affirm, "that his sheep do hear his voice, that he knoweth them, and that they know him," "that it hath pleased the Father to give the Kingdom to the little flock," "that many are called and few chosen," "that some there be whom Christ Jesus never knew, not even when they wrought great miracles." In all these, and many places more, it is evident that Christ maketh difference betwixt one and another; but one place most notable of all others I will shortly touch, and put an end to this matter. Christ Jesus, in that his most solemn and most comfortable prayer, after other things, saith, "I have manifested thy name to the men whom thou hast given to me of the world. They were thine, and thou hast given them unto me; and they have kept thy word." John 17:6. And shortly after, "I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them whom thou hast given unto me; because they are thine." John 17:9. If in the whole Scriptures there were no more places to prove that in the eternal counsel of God there is a difference of one sort of men from another, this only one were sufficient. For first he maketh mention of men given unto him by the Father, who were {as he before affirmed} chosen out of the

world. And why were they given unto Christ? He answereth, because they were the Father's, and how they appertained to God more than others is before said. He further declareth what he had done unto them; what they also had done; and what he did and would do to the end, for them. He had opened unto them the name {that is, the mercy, goodness, constant truth, and perfect justice} of his heavenly Father, which doctrine they had received and kept, as they that were the ground appointed to bring forth fruit in abundance. He did pray for them that they should be sanctified and confirmed in the truth. The virtue of which prayer is perpetual, and at all times obtained mercy in the presence of his Father's throne for his elect. And lest that any doubt should remain, as that these graces were common to all the world, in plain and express words he affirmeth, "that he prayed not for the world, but for those {saith he} whom thou hast given unto me." If any deny a plain difference here to be made betwixt one sort of men and another, I will pray to God to open his eyes, that he {if God's good pleasure be} may see the light that so brightly shineth. Other places for this present I omit. For of these precedents, I suppose it be evident, that in the eternal counsel of God there was a difference of mankind even before the creation, which by his own voice is most plainly declared to us in time.

Now to that objection which Pighius, that pestilent and perverse Papist, {and you all after him,} doth make, to wit, that God did predestinate according to the works and faith which he foresaw to be in man. I might object to the contrary, that if Predestination proceedeth from God's purpose and will, {as the Apostle affirmeth it doth,} that then the purpose and will of God being eternal, cannot be moved by our works or faith which be temporal. And that if the purpose of God be stable and sure, that then cannot our works, being unsure, be the cause thereof. But to avoid prolixity and tediousness, I will by plain Scriptures prove, that of free grace did God elect; that of mere mercy doth he call; and of his only goodness, without all respect had to our dignity, {as to be any cause first moving him,} doth he

perform the work of our salvation, and for the proof of the same, let us take Abraham and his posterity for example. Plain it is, that he and his seed were preferred to all the nations of the earth; the benediction was established to spring from them; the promise of the land of Canaan was made unto them; and so were they extolled to the honour and dignity of God's peculiar people. But let us consider what either faith or obedience God found in them which might have moved him thus to prefer them to other nations. Let us hear Moses, "the Lord thy God {saith he} hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest be a peculiar people to him, above all the peoples which are upon the face of the earth. God hath not so vehemently loved you, and chosen you, because you are more in number than other nations, seeing you are fewer than all other people, but because he hath loved you, and would keep the oath which he made to your fathers." Deuteronomy 7:7-8. And after it followeth, "say not in thy heart, my power, my strength, and my hand have prepared this abundance to me; and think not in thy heart, it is for my justice that the Lord hath brought me into this land." Of these places, it is plain Moses leaveth no cause, neither of God's election, neither yet of performance of his promise in man, but establisheth it altogether upon God's free love and good pleasure. The same did Joshua, in that his last and most vehement exhortation to his people a little before his death, in which plainly he affirmeth, that Abraham and his father were idolaters before they were called by God; which place Ezekiel the prophet most evidently declareth, rebuking the unthankful defection of the Jews from God, who of mercy had given them life, honour, and dignity, they of all others being the most unworthy. For he saith, "thus saith the Lord God to Jerusalem, thy habitation and thy kindred is of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite; and in thy nativity, when thou wast born thy navel was not cut, thou was not washed with water to soften thee; thou was not salted with salt, neither yet was thou swaddled in clothes." Ezekiel 16:3-5. By the which the Prophet signifieth that all was imperfect, all was filthy, all was

corrupt and stinking as touching their nature. He proceedeth, "none eye pitied thee, to do any of these unto thee, for to have compassion upon thee; but thou wast cast out in the open field, to the contempt of thy person, in the day that thou was born. And when I passed by thee, I saw thee polluted in thine own blood, and I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, {that is in thy filthy sins,} thou shalt live," and this he repeats, to the end that he may beat it more deeply in their minds. "I {saith the Lord} said unto thee, being in thy blood, thou shalt live." Ezekiel 16:6. And so he proceedeth, declaring how that God did multiply them, did give unto them beauty, strength, honour, and dignity. These three places do plainly witness what perfection God did find in this people whom thus he did prefer to all others; and what obedience did they render unto him after the vocation of Abraham, the whole histories do witness. For perfection and obedience was not found in Abraham himself, yea, neither in Moses nor in Aaron, but contrary wise; the disobedience of all we find noted, to the same end that Moses hath before spoken, to wit, that none shall boast that either justice proceeding or following was the cause why God did choose and elect that people. For how shall God choose that which the Holy Ghost plainly denieth to be in any man descending of the corrupt seed of Adam. For Isaiah plainly doth affirm that all our justice is as a cloth most polluted and spotted. Isaiah 64:6. If our justice be polluted, as the Prophet affirmeth it to be, and God did predestinate us for our justice, what followeth, but that God did predestinate us for that which was filthy and imperfect? But God forbid that such cogitations should take place in our hearts! God did choose us in his eternal purpose, for his own glory to be manifested in us; and that he did in Christ Jesus, in whom only is our full perfection, as before we have said.

But let us yet hear some testimonies of the New Testament. St Paul, to his disciple Timothy, saith, "be not ashamed of the testimony of our Lord; neither be thou ashamed of me who am his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Evangel, according to

the power of God, who hath made us safe, and hath called us with an holy vocation, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and free grace, which was given to us by Christ Jesus before all times; but now is made apparent by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ." II Timothy 1:8-10. Here plain it is, that neither are we called, neither yet saved, by works, much less can we be predestinated for them, or in respect of them. True it is, that God hath prepared good works, that we should walk in them; but like true it is, that first must the tree be good, before it bring forth good fruit; and good can never the tree be, except that the hand of the gardener have planted it. To use herein the plain words of Saint Paul, he witnesseth that we are elected in Christ, to the end that we should be holy and without blemish. Now, seeing that good works spring forth of election, how can any man be so foolish as to affirm that they are the cause of the same? Can the stream of water, flowing from the fountain, be the cause of the original spring? I think no man will so hold nor affirm. Even so it is in this matter, for faith and a godly life that ensued our vocation, are the faults proceeding from our election, but are not the causes of the same. And therefore the Apostle, to beat down all pride, asketh, "what hast thou, O man, which thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why goriest thou, as though thou hadst not received it?" I Corinthians 4:7.

The Apostle in that place speaketh not of one or two graces, but whatsoever is necessary to salvation, that he affirmeth to be received, and that of free grace; as he yet more plainly doth witness, saying, "of grace are you saved, by faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, and not of works, lest any should glory." Now if man hath nothing but that which he receiveth of grace, of free gift, of favour, and mercy, what odious pride and horrible unthankfulness is this, that man shall imagine that for his faith and for his works, God did elect and predestinate him to that dignity? Even as if two or three beggars, chosen from the number of many, were, of the liberal mercy of a Prince, promoted to honour, should after brag and boast that their good

service was the cause that the Prince did choose them. Shall not every wise man mock their vanity? Yea, might not the Prince justly deprive them for their arrogant unthankfulness? Might not the Prince have left them in their wretched estate? And what then should have become of their service? Is it not even so with man, lost in Adam, {whose fall, in God's prescience and purpose, was before his creation,} of which mass or lump God, of his own free grace, did choose and predestinate vessels of his mercy prepared unto glory, that they should be holy, as before is said. Shall these then that find mercy to work good works boast as though works were the cause thereof? God forbid! For if the posterity of Adam did not obtain the inheritance of the land of Canaan for any justice that was in them; yea, if God did not choose them to temporal nor eternal felicity, but of love and free grace only, as Moses doth witness, how shall we think that the eternal inheritance, or God's election to joy and life everlasting, dependeth upon any quality within us? Wonder it is that the Apostle Saint Paul, entreating this matter of God's free election, was ignorant of this cause, if it be sufficient. For by that means, in few words, he might have put silence to many dogs, which then {as men do now} barked against this doctrine. For if he had said, God hath chosen before all times, to the participation of life, a certain number, because he foresaw that they should be faithful, obedient to his commandments, and holy in conversation; and upon the other part, he hath rejected and reprobated others, because he foresaw that they should be unfaithful, disobedient, and unclean of life; this, I say, {if those causes had been sufficient,} had been a sensible manner of doctrine. But the Apostle alleges no such reason, but first beateth down the pride of man, {as before we have touched,} and thereafter bursteth forth in this exclamation, "O, the height of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how incomprehensible are his judgments, and how unsearchable are his ways!" This exclamation, I say, had been vain, if either works or faith foreseen had been the cause of God's election.

Saint Augustine doth mock the sharp sight of men that in his days began to see more deeply than did the Holy Ghost, speaking in the Apostle. And we fear not to affirm, that the men which this day do attribute Election or Predestination to any virtue or quality within man, do hold and defend {to their great danger} that which none, endued with the Spirit of God, have left or opened to us as written within the holy Scriptures, either yet that any of the chosen shall confess the same. Let the whole Scriptures be read and diligently marked, and no sentence {rightly understand} shall be found, that affirmeth God to have chosen us in respect of our works, or because he foresaw that we should be faithful, holy, and just. But to the contrary, many places shall we find {yea, even so many as entreat of that matter} that plainly affirm, that we are freely chosen according to the purpose of his good will, and that in Christ Jesus.

And what shall be the confession of the whole body assembled, when they shall receive the promised glory, is expressed in these words of the four and twenty elders, who, casting their crowns before Him that sitteth upon the throne, do say, "worthy art thou, O Lord and our God, to take honour, and glory, and power, for thou hast created all things, and by thy will they are and were created." Revelation 4:11. And after, they fall before the Lamb, and sing a new song, saying, "worthy art thou to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast killed, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood; and hast made us to our God, kings and priests, and we shall reign upon the earth." Revelation 5:9. No mention is here made of any worthiness of man; the creation is given to God, and that all things are in that perfect state, which then the chosen shall possess, is attributed to his will. The death of the Lamb is assigned to be the cause of the redemption, yea, of that great dignity to which they are promoted. I am fully persuaded, that if any cause of God's election, and of the fruit preceding of the same, were or could be in man, that the Holy Ghost, who is author of all justice, would not have defrauded man of anything which of right did appertain unto him, but seeing that in no place

the Holy Ghost doth attribute any part of man's salvation to his own merits or worthiness, I fear not to affirm, that this pestilent opinion is the instigation of Satan, labouring by all means to obscure the glory of Christ Jesus, and to retain man in bondage, whom he infected with that first venom which he made him to drink, saying, "ye shall be as gods."

Thus far with such plain simplicity {as it pleased God to minister unto me for the time} I have proved, that God's election is eternal, that it is stable, that he hath made a difference betwixt one sort of men and another, which difference, although it came to the knowledge of man in time, yet was it in God's purpose and counsel before all time, no less than his creation was. And last, that God's election dependeth neither upon our works nor upon our faith, but proceedeth from his eternal wisdom, mercy, and goodness, and therefore is it immutable and constant. Now shortly will I go through {if God permit me} the reasons of your book, noting upon the one part the imperfections of the same and upon the other your ignorance, or else malice, in corrupting the Scriptures.

THE ADVERSARY.

To prove this similitude good, and to show how much his love towards his children exceedeth the love of all creatures towards their births, he saith, "can a woman forget the child of her womb, and not pity the same whom she hath born? And though she do forget it, yet I will not forget thee." Here he speaketh not only to the Elect, {as some say,} but also to them which did forsake and despise him, as there, "alas, for these disobedient children {saith the Lord} that they will take counsel without me." Here he calleth the wicked, which heaped sin upon sin, and were disobedient, his children. Christ saith, "if you when you are evil can give your children good gifts, how much more your heavenly Father?" After the same manner may I reason with you, {Careless by Necessity,} if none of you, though you be evil, would beget a child to misery, how much less would God,

which is all good, beget and create man, his own image, to perpetual pains? Here we may see how much this naughty opinion is contrary to nature and to reason; and that it is contrary to the Word, God willing, I will prove. If God hath ordained the most part of the world to be damned, then were his wrath greater than his mercy. But the Scripture witnesseth, "that his mercy is over all his works; and that God is slow unto wrath and ready unto mercy, so that his wrath is extended only to the third and fourth generation, but his mercy to the thousand generation." "Wherefore thus, {saith he,} a little while I have forsaken thee; but with great mercifulness shall I take thee up unto me. When I was angry I hid my face from thee for a little season; but through everlasting mercy have I pardoned thee." And David saith, "His wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye, and his pleasure is in life; heaviness may well endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." And so Moses called him "a merciful and gracious God, long-suffering, and keeping mercy in store for thousands." By these Scriptures and many more, it is evident that God's mercy is greater than his wrath, contrary to their sayings.

ANSWER.

How blasphemous be your similitudes yourself may consider, if malice have not utterly blinded you, for I have already proved that God is not bound to the laws and bounds of nature; and how shamefully you do abuse the Scriptures which you allege, few words shall declare. Ye deny that God doth speak here to his Elect in the place of Isaiah the Prophet, but to all men in general, and even to those that had forsaken him, as you would seem to prove by the words of the same Prophet, spoken before in his thirtieth chapter. First, I say, that those two places do no more agree than do those words of Christ spoken after his resurrection, "go to my brethren and tell them, I pass up to my Father, and unto your Father, and unto my God, and unto your God," and those which he spake before his death against

Capernaum, Bethsaida, and Corosaim, or unto Jerusalem, against whom he pronounced woe and malediction, because they did not know the time of their visitation. For in the former place, God speaketh to Zion, which long had been waste, and to his people, which long had been oppressed. And to the end, that the reader may better understand how deceitfully you withdraw and steal the words which explain the whole matter, I will bring forth the words of the Prophet, "rejoice {saith he,} O heavens; and rejoice thou earth; O you mountains break you forth in gladness, for the Eternal hath comforted his people, and shall have mercy upon his poor ones. Zion hath said, the Lord hath left me, and my Lord hath forgotten me. May a woman forget her child, that she shall not have compassion upon the son of her bosom? But let it be that they forget, nevertheless I shall not forget thee, for lo, in these my two hands have I engrafted thee; and thy walls are forever before me." Isaiah 49:13-16. If these comfortable words were spoken in general to all men, {as you affirm,} let indifferent men judge. If all men were Zion, that long had laid desolate; if all were his people, that long had been oppressed, in the captivity of Babylon; if all did so complain, that they thought God to have forgotten his league and promise, which of mercy he made with them; and finally, if all have this promise, that their deliverance is joined with God's infinite power, then is your application to be approved. But if God did make a plain difference betwixt Israel and all nations in the earth; if he had chosen his habitation in Zion, and if He will keep promise with the afflicted for his own name's sake, be they never so unworthy, then are you too bold to give the honour and prerogative of the children and heirs to strangers and bastards. The words which you allege of the thirtieth chapter make nothing for your purpose; for albeit he speaketh to those that were disobedient, yea, that were treasonable traitors, yet had they the name, the title, yea, the honour and dignity of God's people; and among them were some of God's chosen children, for whose comfort {after long affliction sustained in Babylon} were those other words

spoken. And so, except that you be able to prove, that the people of Israel and the city of Jerusalem had no greater prerogative, even in the time of their greatest blindness and unthankfulness, {before the coming of Christ Jesus in the flesh,} than had other nations, you conclude nothing.

But yet wonder it is, that you can make no difference betwixt the times in which the one words and the other were spoken. The woe was pronounced {you say, "Alas," which the text hath not} against them, what time they had declined from God, when they took counsel of themselves, when they could not abide the admonitions of the prophets; but the comfortable promise of deliverance was made after that vengeance was poured forth upon the proud condemners, and after that the whole body was sore tormented by great oppression and long imprisonment. Do you not think that there might be great alteration in that people within the space of an hundred years, for so long was it betwixt the days of the Prophet and the days of their last captivity under Nebuchadnezzar, after which time also did this former promise of God's remembrance of them only take place. Might not the one be spoken of those which should be punished, {yea, let it be that they were the reprobate,} and the other to the people of God, to whom by his own holiness he had promised deliverance? Do you think, that because the same Prophet speaketh both the sentences, that therefore they do appertain to one estate and condition of people? I have proved the contrary by Christ's plain words. For his mouth pronounced destruction against Jerusalem, and yet sendeth he the joyful tidings of his resurrection to his Disciples, with that most singular comfort, that God remained unto them both God and Father. And even so does our Prophet Isaiah, for in the one place he speaketh to the obstinate condemners, but in the other place he speaketh to the afflicted children. Weigh, I beseech you, the Scriptures of God with greater reverence. The words of Christ you likewise falsify; for he speaketh not of any common love which he beareth to all men, but affirmeth, that our heavenly Father

giveth good things, or, as Luke affirmeth, giveth the Holy Ghost to such as ask of him. Ye must prove first, that all ask in faith, and according to his will, {which be the peculiar prerogatives of the children of God,} before that Christ's words can serve for your general multitude; either yet that you shall thereof be able to prove that God loveth all men alike.

Ye take your pleasure in reasoning with us, whom you term Careless by Necessity. I will not recompence railing with railing, but I pray God that thou {the writer of this book} show hereafter greater diligence in godliness, than of many days thou hast done whatsoever thou hast wanted. We do not subject God to our corrupt affections, but with reverence and fear we leave to his godly wisdom the ordering of his creatures; neither yet can you be able to prove, that we either by word or writing have affirmed, that the principal end of any man's creation was perpetual pain. But we affirm, as before we have declared, that God for himself, and for the manifestation of his own glory, hath created all things. But of this we must after more largely speak.

The final conclusion which you collect of nature is, that God hath created none to misery nor to pain. For that your Master Castellio feareth not most blasphemously to affirm, saying, "that if he hath so done, he is more cruel than any wolf." Oh, heaven and earth! Revenge this blasphemy.

That man, which here suffereth misery and much calamity, yea, and that also shall be adjudged to the fire inextinguishable, is created of God, or {as you affirm} is the birth of God, I suppose yourselves will not deny. And that he suffereth all miseries of God's just judgments, and by his will expressed in his word, the Scripture beareth record. For God saith to the woman, "in sorrow and dolor shalt thou bear thy children," and to the man, "in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread," and also, "cursed is the earth for thy sake." Which {and many more places} plainly witness, that God hath inflicted pain upon man whom he hath created. You answer, "that did God for the sin of man," I confess; but yet is your foot fast in the snare. For after sin, man

ceased not to be the creature and {as you will term him} the birth of God. If then God be subject to the law of Nature {as before we have said, and now again repeat, that your vanity and ignorance may the more appear,} so that he is bound to do the self-same thing to his births, that nature moveth us to do to our children. I ask first, why did God suffer man created to his own image to fall into sin? Assuredly no natural father will wittingly and willingly suffer his children to fall into a pit or dungeon to destruction. And secondarily I ask, why did not God {who is omnipotent, having all wisdom and goodness} provide another medicine for man, than by death to overcome so many miseries? Thirdly, if God would that none should be born to misery, why did he not clearly purge the nature of Adam, why did he not stay that venom and corruption in our first father, why did he permit it to infect all his posterity? There is no shift that here can serve you. For if you say, God was provoked by the sins of the posterity, which he did foresee to be in them, so to do, I answer, that he foresaw nothing which his eternal and infinite power might not have removed and remedied, if so had pleased his godly wisdom. For then, as now, was he the God who alone may do whatsoever He will in Heaven and in Earth. And further, I say, that the fountain being shut up, the flowing of sin by natural propagation should have ceased. To God's permission we shall after answer.

To put an end to this matter; if you consider nothing else in the great variety of God's works but the only misery of the sufferer, and sin, which we deny not to be a cause of the same, you have no better profited in the school of Christ than had the Disciples, when seeing him that was born blind, they demanded this question, "Master, {say they,} who hath sinned, whether this man or his parents, that he should be born blind?" No other cause did they see of his misery but sin. And to them it was strange that any man could sin so grievously before he was born, that for the same he should be punished with perpetual blindness during his life. And that he should suffer such misery for the

offences of his parents appeared to them to repugne to God's justice, and to that sentence which before he had pronounced by the Prophet Ezekiel, affirming, "that the son should not bear the iniquity of the father." But Christ Jesus, in correcting their error, giveth to you a profitable lesson, if you can receive it, affirming, "that neither he, neither yet his parents, had sinned that so he should be born, but that the glory of God should be manifested in him." If God's glory be declared, and made manifest, even by the miseries which some creatures sustain, dare you therefore accuse God of cruelty? Consider your bold foolishness, and repent your blasphemies before that vengeance strike.

After that you have concluded, as you think, our opinion to be naughty, by arguments drawn from Nature, you make a bold promise to prove the same by plain Scriptures, and yet your first entrance is but by a reason not well-grounded upon these Scriptures which you allege. Thus you write, "if God hath ordained the most part of the world to perdition, then were his wrath greater than his mercy, but the Scripture witnesseth that his mercy is over all his creatures," therefore, will you conclude, "He hath not created the most part of the world to perdition." To prove that God's mercy is greater than his wrath, you bring forth the words of David, Psalms 30 and 145, Isaiah 54, and of God himself proclaiming his own name unto Moses; for these words are not the words of Moses, {as you allege,} but were spoken by God himself in the ears of Moses.

To the major I have answered before, that falsely you burden us, that we affirm that God hath ordained the most part of the world to perdition; for we presume not to define what number God shall save, and how many he shall justly condemn; but with reverence we do refer judgment to Him who is the universal Creator; whose goodness and wisdom is such that he can do nothing but wisely; and whose justice is so perfect, that his works are exempted from the judgment of all creatures. But the second part, affirming, that if God condemn more than he shall save, that then his wrath is greater than his mercy, is so irreverent, so bold, and

blasphemous, that scarcely could I have thought that the devil himself could have imagined a more manifest blasphemy. Who hath given the balance into thy hands, {I speak to the most blasphemous writer,} to ponder and weigh God's mercy and wrath, after thy corrupt judgment? If thou dost claim the help of these former Scriptures, they prove no more that which thou dost pretend, then if thou shouldest affirm, that God shall save the Devil because his mercy is above all his creatures. We do not deny but that the most wicked men are participant of God's mercy in temporal felicity, {yea, and that far above his chosen children;} that he maketh his sun to shine upon the good and bad; that with long-suffering he calleth them to repentance, and delays their most just condemnation. But what wilt thou hereof conclude? That God hath ordained more to salvation than to perdition, or else is his wrath greater than his mercy? Blasphemous mouth! Who hath taught thee to appoint a law to God? The day shall come, if speedily thou repent not, that thou shalt feel what punishment is due to such as go about to bring the eternal God and his incomprehensible judgments under the thralldom of their corrupt reason.

But leaving thee, I return to those whom gladly I would instruct, and to them I say, that the words of David and of Isaiah do speak of that rich and inestimable mercy which God layeth up in store for his chosen children, to whom although God sometimes show himself severe and angry, yet endureth that but for a short space; but his mercy is everlasting, and his goodness infinite, by the which he marries his chosen children to himself forever; and whether that these words be only spoken to the elect, or else that they be generally spoken to all, let the Holy Ghost decide the controversy. After that David had affirmed that God is liberal, merciful, patient, and of great gentleness; and also, that he is good to all, and that his mercy is over all his works; that the eyes of all creatures look upon him, and that he is just in all his works, by which sentences he praiseth the goodness, the mercy, and the providence of God in the regiment and government of

his universal creation; which goodness and mercy do so abound, that the innumerable iniquities of mankind and his detestable ingratitude cannot utterly hinder the same from the creatures. After these common mercies, I say, whereof the reprobate are often partakers, he openeth the treasure of his rich mercies, which are kept in Christ Jesus for his elect, saying, "the Lord is nigh to all that call upon him, to all that call upon him in verity; he doth the will of those that fear him, and he heareth their cry and saves them. The Lord keepeth all those that love him, but he destroys all the wicked." Psalm 145:18-20. Such as willingly delight not in blindness may clearly see that the Holy Ghost maketh a plain difference betwixt the graces and mercies which be common to all, and that sovereign mercy which is immutably reserved to the chosen children; and further, that the Lord himself shall destroy the wicked, albeit his mercy be over all his works. And so that mercy by the which God pronounceth to gather his Church is everlasting, and is not common to the reprobate, but is only proper to the flock of Christ Jesus. The words of God spoken unto Moses do no more serve your purpose than do the other. For God in his law expressly doth witness to whom it is that he will show mercy, to thousands; to wit, "to those that love him and keep his commandments," and upon whom will he prosecute the iniquity, "unto the third and fourth generation, but upon those {saith he} that hate me." Exodus 20:5-6.

If hereof you conclude, that his mercy towards all is greater than his wrath, you conclude amiss. For you confound those whom God hath separated and divided; he promiseth mercy to the thousands generation of those that love him, and threatens to punish the iniquity of the fathers, to the third and fourth generation, upon those that hate him. Hereof justly you can no further conclude, but that the mercies of God are greater towards those that love him, than his wrath against those that hate him. And so far will we confess with you; but if you abide in your error, concluding, as you plainly do in this your book, that the wrath of God must be greater than his mercy, except that he save more than

shall be condemned, {as some of your sects hath lately affirmed,} we fear not to affirm that your blasphemy is intolerable. Or if you think {as some allege upon Origen} that because God's mercy is infinite, and extendeth unto all his works, that therefore the reprobate cannot but once obtain mercy, the plain Scripture convinceth you. For it affirmeth, that the wrath of God abideth upon the unfaithful; that their fire shall not be quenched, and that their worm shall not die. If you shall understand, that the Elect hath nothing which they receive not of mercy, and that the punishment of the reprobate is most justly deserved, you shall not measure God's mercy and his wrath by the multitude nor by the number; but you ought to consider, that where none is worthy of God's mercies by their own merits, yet hath it continued from the beginning, and shall continue unto the end, ever extending itself to God's children being in misery; and so this mercy must far surmount all wrath and judgment. For where the wrath of God, once kindled against sin, ought to have consumed and devoured all, mercy prevaieth, and delivereth those that justly might have been condemned. And in this sense say we that God's mercy far surmounted his judgments; which interpretation if you admit not, we will send you to reason with God, and to impugn the same, if you be able, by manifest Scriptures. Now to the rest.

THE ADVERSARY.

Of all sorts and sects of men, I have judged them to be most abhorred which are called Atheist, that is to say, such as deny that there is any God. But now me thinks that these careless men are much more to be abhorred; and my reason is, because they be more injurious to God than the Atheist for he is less injurious to a man that believest that he is not, than he which calleth him a cruel man, a tyrant, and an unjust person; so are they less injurious to God which believe that he is not, than they which say he is unmerciful, cruel, and an oppressor. Now, what greater cruelty, tyranny, and

oppression can there be, than to create the most part of the world to everlasting damnation; so that by no manner of means can they escape and avoid the cruel decree and sentence against them. Seeing the Philosopher Plato judged them unworthy to live and to be suffered in any Commonwealth which spake evil of God, what ought our judgments to be of such men which have so wicked an opinion of God? Whatsoever our judgment be of them, and whatsoever their deserving be, let us labour rather to win them than to lose them. But forasmuch as he which toucheth pitch is in danger to be defiled therewith, therefore ought we to walk cautiously with such men, that we be not defiled and infected of them. Specially, seeing that now-a-days this horrible doctrine doth fret even as the disease of a canker, which can infect one member to another, until it hath occupied the whole body without it being cut away; even so this error hath already infected from one to another a great number. The Lord grant them the true meaning and understanding of his Word, whereby they may be healed and the sickness cut of, the member being saved.

ANSWER.

Because that in all this your long discourse, you more show your malice {which unjustly against us you have conceived} than that either you oppugne our belief, either yet promote your false opinion, I will not spend the time to recompence your despite. Only this I will offer in the name of all my brethren, that if you be able, in presence of a lawful judge and magistrate, evidently to convict us that either we speak evil of God, either yet that by our writings, preaching, or reasoning, it justly can be proved that our opinion is evil of his eternal majesty, power, wisdom, and goodness, that then we refuse not to suffer the same punishment which you by the authority of Plato judge us worthy of. Yea, we further offer ourselves willingly to underlie the very death which God by his law hath appointed to all blasphemers, provided that you refuse not to underlie

the same penalty if falsely you accuse us. What is your study to win us, and whether our doctrine be horrible error or not, I do not now dispute. Thus you reason.

THE ADVERSARY.

God created man a very good thing, and dare you say that God ordained a very good thing to destruction? Then God delighteth in the destruction of that which is very good. Man at his creation was a just and innocent creature; for before the transgression, there was no evil neither in Adam nor in us. And think you that God ordained his just and innocent creatures to condemnation? What greater tyranny and unrighteousness can the most wicked man in the world, yea, the Devil himself do, than to condemn the innocent and just person? Hereby may we see that these Careless Men be more abominable than the Atheist, which believe there is no God. But these affirm God to be as bad as the Devil, yea, and worse; forasmuch, as the Devil can only tempt a man to death, but he can compel none to fall unto condemnation; but God may not only tempt, but also compel by his eternal decree the most part of the world to damnation. And hath so done, {as they say,} so that of necessity, and only because it was his pleasure and will. Then must God be worse than the Devil. For the Devil only tempted men to fall, but God compelleth them to fall by his immutable decree. Oh, horrible blasphemy!

ANSWER.

Because that before, plainly and simply, I have declared our judgment of God's eternal election, and most just reprobation in all these your despiteful arguments, I will only show your malice, ignorance, and proud vanity. This is your argument, "God created man a very good thing, therefore he did not ordain him to destruction." Your reason is, "for it is contrary to his justice to ordain a good thing to destruction." I answer, if you be able to prove that man stood in the same goodness, perfection,

and innocency {he and his posterity whom so highly you praise} in the which he was first created, then will I confess your argument to be good. But if man {albeit he was created good} did yet willingly make himself evil, how can it be contrary to the justice of God to appoint punishment for transgression, which he did not only foresee by an idle speculation, or yet suffer and permit against his omnipotent will, but in his eternal counsel, for the manifestation of his own glory, had decreed the same. Against which, albeit you cry horrible blasphemy till your brains drop out, yet have we Moses, Isaiah, Solomon, and Paul, to absolve us from your cruel sentence. For they do affirm, that God hath created all things for his own glory, and the wicked to the day of destruction; that he raised up Pharaoh, that his power might be shown forth in him; that he blindeth the eyes and hardeneth the hearts of some, so that they can neither hear nor see that they may be converted; that God hath prepared both vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath. Which places, albeit some of them seem not to appertain to the creation, yet if they be justly weighed, it shall evidently appear that the hardness of men's hearts, their blindness and stubborn malice, are not only punishments of sin, but also are the effects of reprobation, like as faith, obedience, and other virtues be the free gifts of God given in Christ Jesus to those whom he hath elected in him. But yet to your argument, which thus you amplify, "do you think that God ordained his just and innocent creatures to damnation? What greater tyranny and unrighteousness can the most wicked man in the earth, yea, the Devil himself do, than to condemn a just and an innocent person?"

I answer {as before} that your argument is nought worth, for you conclude more than you be able to prove of your two former propositions, which be those, "God created man a very good thing." True this is. "And God reprobated man, and shall also condemn him whom he created good." This I grant also. "Therefore he damned the good thing which he created, or that thing which is very good." I deny the conclusion. For before damnation there cometh a change in man; so

that he of very good became extreme evil, and so God's just judgments found nothing but that which is evil to condemn. You form your reason as that God had so created man good, that he by no means after could be made evil; which last part is false, and so you are deceived. If you cannot see just causes why God should make that thing very good which after should become extreme evil, accuse your own blindness; and desire of God, to repress in you that presumption and pride which against the eternal Son of God you have conceived; and so your eyes shall be illuminated, and you shall see, first, that because the Creator is infinitely good, that therefore it behooveth the creatures in their original creation to be good. And so I doubt not was the Devil created good, but in the verity he stood not.

And secondarily, that because the just judgments of God were no less to shine in the damnation of the reprobate, than his infinite mercy was to be praised in the vessels of honour, it behooved the one and the other to be innocent and good in their creation. For if the original had been evil, God justly could not have after damned that which he had made no better; but so we must confess, that it was good that {yet willingly corrupting the self} man made a way to the most just execution of God's eternal counsel. And last, that the eternal purpose of God might in time be notified unto man, which was that God would bestow greater liberality, show greater love and mercy in the redemption of man justly damned, than that he did in his creation. Of nothing he did create him, {for his corporal substance was made of the dust,} which sometimes was not to his own image and similitude; to him he gave the dominion of all creatures; these were documents of a true love. But if they be compared with that love which in Christ Jesus we receive, and that of free grace, they are nothing. For what is the dominion of earthly creatures in respect that we shall reign with Christ Jesus forever? What were the pleasures and fruits of Paradise in comparison of those heavenly joys which Saint Paul affirmeth cannot enter in to the heart of man? If man had stood perpetually in Adam, neither had the

love of God so wondrously been notified unto us; neither yet had place been granted to his free grace and mercy which we receive in Christ Jesus; for mercy properly hath respect to misery. But the chief comfort of God's children is, that as they fell in Adam, so are they new transferred in another; that is in Christ Jesus, to whom they are given, and who {as before we have proved} hath so received them from the hand of his Father, that he shall give life everlasting to so many as the Father hath given him. If you, I say, cannot admit these reasons, why it behooved man to be created good and yet after to fall into sin and misery, accuse yourselves, storm not against God, for he will not be subject to your reason and judgments. Your horrible blasphemies against God, and your despiteful railing against us, at this time I will omit. And how impudently you leap from the purpose of God's reprobation to the execution of his judgment, shall be spoken in weighing this your reason, which thus followeth.

THE ADVERSARY.

The Scripture witnesseth that we did fall in Adam. For damnation came of one sin unto condemnation; then did we all stand before in Adam, for none falleth but he that standeth. If we did all stand, then were we all predestinated to life; for as our fall here is to damnation and death, so is our standing unto salvation and life. And to confirm this, we have many testimonies in the Word, which prove us to be elected, chosen, and predestinated to life before the fall, but none that prove any man to be objected, cast away, damned, and reprobate before sin, by which death entered into the world. Paul to the Ephesians saith, "God did choose us in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid, and ordained us before through him to be heirs unto himself, and were thereunto predestinated." I pray you, show me any testimony of the Scripture which so manifestly proveth that God hath reprobated any before the foundations of the world. God hath no respect of persons, "for he calleth the world from the rising up of

the sun unto the going down of the same." "He made both small and great, and careth for both alike, for they be all the work of his hands." And Ezra saith, "it was not God's will that man should come to nought, but he prepared life for them." The Holy Ghost saith, "that God hath not made death, neither hath he pleasure in the destruction of the living; for he created all things that they might have their being;" yea, all the people of the earth hath he made that they should have health, and there should be no destruction in them, and that the kingdom of hell should not be upon earth. What can be more plainly and more directly spoken against this error? In another place saith the Holy Ghost, "God created man to be undestroyed," and again, "God ordained man that he should order the world according to equity and righteousness, and execute judgment with a true heart." Doth God ordain man to rule the world according to righteousness whom he reprobated? "Do men gather grapes {as Christ saith} of thorns and figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit, neither can a bad tree bring forth good fruit." "Either make the tree good and the fruit good, or else the tree evil and his fruit evil." Either grant man at his creation to be righteous and good, and then I think you will abhor to say that God before the foundations of the world did reprobate his good and righteous creature, or else grant him at his creation to be an evil and unrighteous creature. Could then righteous judgment come of such an unrighteous tree? Further, if man at his creation was an evil thing, then was he not the creature of God. For God saw all that he had made, and they were very good. If man at his creation, or before, was reprobate, and ordained unto death, then was man guilty before the transgression; for God damned none but such as be guilty. If he was guilty before his transgression, then was he a sinner, being yet innocent and just before he ever consenteth or committed sin. And so consequently of this Error, I may infer many so such absurdities as should offend any faithful man's ears.

ANSWER.

As no man of whole judgment did ever deny that in Adam we did fall, so I think, you and your sect set apart, there hath been none that ever did affirm that in Adam we were predestinated to life everlasting. True it is that we stood in Adam, created in his loins, but I suppose that you will not hold that the children had greater privilege than had the father. Adam did not so stand, but that he was subject to the law, the transgression whereof made him detour to death. To speak the matter more plainly, Adam did so stand, that he might {and did} fall as the event declared; and were his children so elect in him that they could not fall? So you appear to conclude. For thus you reason, "if we did all stand, then were we all predestinated to life; for as our fall here is to damnation and death, so is our standing unto salvation and life." Assuredly these reasons appear marvelous strange to me and principally that which you bring forth of falling and standing, for it hath in the self-plain contradiction; for if we fell in Adam to death, how can we stand in him now unto life. If you had said, as that our fall was to damnation and death, so should our standing have been to salvation and life, you might have had some probability. For your error doth stand in this, that you do not consider that Adam was not created to stand forever in himself, and much less his posterity in him. But when you say, as our fall is to death, so is our standing unto life, you plainly speak whatsoever you think, that yet either in Adam, either in ourselves, we both fall and stand. But this do we utterly abhor, for we fear not plainly to confess, that we have no assurance either of standing, either yet of life, but in Christ Jesus alone, in whom we be engrafted, and without whom we can do nothing.

In few words, to repeat the answer of your former objection, in Adam did no man stand otherwise than he did; but he did stand with a condition to fall and that even to death, therefore in Adam did none stand to life. The common sense of man will approve the first

part of this my argument, for who can think that any descending of Adam by his means could have greater liberty than he himself had? And the event and that which followed declareth the verity of the second part. For not only upon Adam, saith the Apostle, came death, but even from him descended death unto all. How then could any stand in him to life, let reasonable men consider.

To prove that all were predestinated and chosen in Adam before the foundations of the world were laid, you bring forth the testimony of Paul, written in the first chapter to the Ephesians, which we before have entreated, and therefore here I only will open your falsehood. Wonder it is that shame should be so far past you, that where the Holy Ghost plainly affirmeth, that we were elected and chosen in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid, that this election you should affirm to be made in Adam. If you object that you specify not Adam, I answer that is all alike; for of your former arguments it easily may be espied whom you understand. For when thus you reason that we did all stand in Adam, ergo, we were all predestinated to life, what is he that clearly may not perceive that your meaning is, that we were all predestinated to life in Adam, for else you had said nothing to prove your own purpose? For we affirm that we were elected before the foundation of the world was laid; but the controversy standeth, in whom? We affirm and most constantly believe that in Christ Jesus, the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father, were we elected before all times. This you cannot abide, and therefore you seek all means to obscure the glory of him to whom the Father hath given all power in heaven and in earth. Sometimes you say {as now I have declared} that this election was made in Adam. But while that this will not serve you, you run to another shift, alleging that the Apostle speaketh here of a general election of the whole world, and not of any certain election which should abide forever; and so in shifting from one danger you fall into another, as after in examining of that your vain reason more evidently shall appear.

Ye instantly require that we will show any testimony of the Scripture that hath reprobated any before the foundations of the world. If it be the pleasure of God to give unto you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation by the knowledge of himself, "that the eyes of your mind may be illuminated, that you may know what is the hope to the which he hath called you, and how rich is the glory of that inheritance which he hath prepared for his saints," Ephesians 1:18, you shall require no place more plain nor more evident than the same, which most ignorantly, or else most maliciously you do abuse. For if there be any difference betwixt the saints, the faithful that be blessed with all spiritual benediction, betwixt those, I say, that were elected in Christ Jesus before all times, that in time be called, and by the power of the Holy Spirit do give obedience to the caller, and so "are made citizens with the saints and household of God, as they that are built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles." Ephesians 2:20. If any difference, I say, be betwixt these former and these in whom the prince of this world doth work all filthiness and rebellion, whom he holdeth captive at his pleasure, who cannot repent their detestable lives, and therefore are reputed strangers from the commonwealth of Israel. And further, if you will believe Christ Jesus, affirming and rejoicing "that it pleased his Father to hide the secrets of his kingdom from the prudent and wise, and to reveal the same to little ones," Luke 10:21, and that because it was his pleasure; I trust you shall confess that those Scriptures be plain enough to prove, that as some were elected before the foundation of the world was laid, so likewise were there others reprobated, as the final end of both doth witness. But how you wrestle against this argument we shall show shortly, and how plainly I have proved some to be elected and others to be reprobated, read before and judge with indifference.

If you will conclude, that God hath no certain election, neither yet that he hath reprobated any, because that he hath no respect of persons, and because he calleth the world from the rising up of the sun to the going down of the same; because he made

both small and great, and cares {as you falsely allege} for both alike, your affirmation may well be bold, but I think that your probation shall be slender. But first, I must except against you as against a false witness; for you allege more upon Elihu than in the book of Job he affirmeth. For he saith not, that God careth for all alike, but saith, that his eyes are upon the ways of man, and that he doth see all his goings. And that neither you, neither any other, shall have occasion to complain of me, that unjustly I accuse you of falsifying the plain text, I will recite both the purpose and the words. Job, in vehemency of disputation against his three friends, who constantly did affirm that God, provoked by his sins, had poured forth those sudden and strange plagues upon him; Job, I say, in retelling this their accusation, and in confuting their reasons, did enter into the secrets of God's inscrutable judgments further than it became any creature to do, and did seem to burden God with injustice in defending his own innocency. At which reasons Elihu, offended, after that the other three were put to silence, taking upon him to reprove Job, affirmeth that the wisdom, the power, the justice, and the judgments of God were incomprehensible; that God could do nothing unjustly how that ever it appeared to man's judgment; and amongst other things, he saith, "wilt thou say unto a King, thou art wicked, or unto Princes, ye are ungodly? How much less to Him that accepteth not the persons of Princes, and regardeth not the rich more than the poor, for they be all the work of his hands? They shall die suddenly, and the people shall be troubled at midnight, and they shall pass forth and take away the mighty without hand, for his eyes are upon the ways of man, and he seeth all his goings." Job 34:18-21.

Thus have I noted, partly that none shall think that these words may seem to favour your error, and partly that your untruth in wresting such places may more manifestly appear. Ignorance of the tongues may be some cause in you, but in some of you I can manifestly prove that malice blindeth knowledge, and compelleth you to speak and write against your

understanding. God touch your hearts with true repentance, and give you his Holy Spirit with greater reverence to entreat his Scriptures. But now to the Scriptures that you allege, God, say you, hath no respect of persons, ergo, will you conclude, He hath no election. Your conclusion is false, and my reason is, because that God's Free election dependeth not upon the persons of men, but upon his own promise and good will.

But to make this matter more sensible, I will make an argument directly against yours. God respecteth not the persons of men, but yet amongst men is found great diversity both in virtue and in vice; therefore there must be some cause from whence this diversity proceedeth. Of the first part, I know you doubt not, and the second part is confirmed by common experience and by evident Scriptures; for how diverse be the inclinations of men, none can be ignorant except such as do not observe the same. Such as attribute the cause of such diversity to the stars and to the influence of the planets, are more than vain. Education and upbringing doth somewhat bow nature in that case, but neither or both is the cause of such diversity; for how many have been nourished in virtue together, and yet have after fallen to most horrible vices, and in the same perished? And contrary wise, how many have been wickedly brought up, and yet by grace attained to an holy conversation? If the cause of this diversity, I say, shall be inquired and sought, it shall not be found in nature, for thereby were and are we all born the sons of wrath; if in education and upbringing, we see how often that faileth. The cause thereof then must be of necessity be outside man. To make the matter yet plainer by an example, Paul preached Christ Jesus to be the only Saviour of the world, both amongst the Jews and Gentiles; to some his preaching was the savour of life, and to others it was the savour of death. II Corinthians 2:16. From whence comes this diversity? From the obedience, will, and faith of the one, say you, and from the stubborn inobedience and infidelity of the other. You say somewhat, but not all, for true it is that faith and an

obedient will is that which we call *causam propinquam*, that is, the next cause to our apprehension; but what is the cause that the will of one is obedient, and the will of the other stubborn; that the one doth believe, and the other doth blaspheme? Howsoever you do shift, the Holy Ghost in many places plainly affirmeth the cause not to be in nature, nor yet to proceed of man, nor of his free will, but to be the free grace of the caller, as Christ Jesus doth witness, "none can come unto me except my Father draw him," and that, "no man can see the kingdom of God except he be born again," and that "neither of blood, neither of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," who toucheth and openeth the hearts of so many as he hath ordained to life, to advert and believe the things that he truly preached; as those that be the sheep of Christ Jesus, who hear his voice and know the same.

These and many places more do most plainly declare what is the cause that some believe and others believe not, to wit, that some are born of God, and some are left in nature; some are sheep, and some are goats. The hearts of some are touched and opened by the finger and Spirit of God, as it was said to Peter, "flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my Father which is in the heaven," and the hearts of others are left in their own blindness and hardness. If you demand how it is then that God respecteth not the person of man? I answer, if you did understand aright what is meant by acceptation of persons, or what it is to respect persons, you should not doubt in this behalf.

Acceptation of persons is when an unworthy person is preferred to a worthy, either by corrupt affection of those that do prefer him, either yet for some quality or external beauty that appeareth in man. As if to the office of a king or of a bishop, should one be elected that neither hath godliness, knowledge, wisdom, not yet the spirit of government, because he is rich, noble of blood, fair and lustier; and the persons having gifts much more excellent should be contemned; this is called acceptation of persons. As Samuel seeing Eliab, and considering his beauty and stature, doth boldly

pronounce in his own heart, "assuredly before the Lord this is his anointed." Such acceptation of persons is not with God; for neither looketh he to blood, riches, nobility, virtue, strength, nor beauty temporal in his eternal election, but only to his own good will and eternal purpose, by the which he hath elected us in Christ Jesus. If you shall consider the same place deeply, you shall find that none within the whole Scriptures of God more confuteth your error than it doth. For as God respecteth not the person of man, so respecteth he nothing that is or can be within man as the chief cause of his election. For what can God foresee, consider, or know, to be in man that good is, which floweth not from his free mercy and goodness, as it is written, "we are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything that good is, but all our sufficiency is of God, who worketh in us both to will and perform." II Corinthians 3:5.

Then, if all virtue whatsoever be in us be the work of God, can the work following be the cause of God's eternal purpose? If the cause and the effects proceeding of the same be things diverse, then are our virtues and fruits not the cause of God's election, but are the effect and fruit which of the same proceed and spring, as the Apostle doth witness, saying, "God hath chosen us that we should be holy and without blame," and Christ Jesus saith, "you have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and have appointed you to go and to bring forth fruit."

This I am compelled oft to repeat, because in it most shamefully you err, arrogating to yourselves that which is proper to God's only mercy and free grace. If you understand this former place of Scripture, which affirmeth that God hath no respect of persons, as your book doth witness, to wit, that God careth alike for all, that he no more loveth the one than the other, except that it be for their obedience, the whole Scripture of God doth witness against you. Was the love of God no greater to Abraham and to his posterity than it was to the rest of the nations? Moses and David do witness the contrary, saying, "He hath not done so to any nation,

and his judgments he hath not showed to them; only thee hath he chosen of all nations and people that be upon the face of the earth, that thou shouldest be unto him a peculiar people." Deuteronomy 7:6. And what was the cause of this their dignity and prerogative before we have declared; to wit, no virtue, no obedience, no good quality that was in them, but only his free love, free grace, and undeserved mercy, as he himself doth plainly affirm? "I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy," and Saint Paul, "it is neither of the willer, neither yet of the runner, but of God that sheweth mercy to such as pleaseth him." And thus, I say, you cannot justly nor rightly conclude that God hath neither chosen nor reprobated any man, because He hath no respect of persons. For as before I have said, his eternal election dependeth neither upon man, neither yet upon anything that is within man, but is purposed in himself, and established in Christ Jesus, in whom we are elected, because that in ourselves there neither was, neither yet could be, any worthiness which could merit or deserve such honour and dignity. And so God respecteth not the persons of men, their virtues nor qualities in their election, but finding them all equal in creation and corruption, maketh difference betwixt them according to his eternal purpose, respecting Christ Jesus and not their merits. How that ever the proud and ungodly storm at this I nothing doubt, but the children of God do thereof receive most singular consolation, as that it is the chiefest cause why, that without all trembling and fear, they stop before his Majesty, and, giving thanks for these inestimable benefits, do crave of his mercy such a purity of life as becometh his children.

To your Scriptures, which you allege from the book of Wisdom, and from Ezra, {his fourth book,} I will shortly answer, that albeit you will ten thousand times deck and decor them with the title of the Holy Ghost, I will not the more credit them. Not that I deny but that in them there be things contained profitable to edification, but if that therefore you will, upon any place written within them, conclude a doctrine contrary to the rest of the canonical Scriptures, I will answer with the ancient

writers, that they were not written that upon them should our faith be established. Let them serve, if so please you, to exhortation, but for confirmation of any doctrine shall they never serve unto me. Neither yet this do I say, that I do think any of these places {rightly understand} to make anything for your purpose; but that I will, by God's grace, give ever that reverence unto the verity of God, that the voices of men shall not with me be comparable unto it.

It may be greatly suspected what some men now-a-days do mean to ascribe that to the Holy Ghost, which the authors themselves did only ascribe to their own diligence and travail, and were also compelled to ask pardon of the readers, that they could not attain, no not even to the propriety of the tongue in the which they did write. Use the Holy Ghost, I pray you, whose power looseth the tongues of the dumb, in that manner to be suppliant unto men, and for his imperfection to beg pardon at their hands? Consider, and impute nothing upon the Holy Ghost which becometh not the Majesty of God. But lest that you should complain that yet your Scriptures are not resolved, I will give you a general answer to all, which is this, that neither the book of Wisdom, neither yet Ecclesiasticus, neither yet Ezra, in these places that be alleged, do entreat anything of election or reprobation. But the writers, in all those places which you allege, do study to amend the corrupt manners of their ages, and to impose silence to the wicked tongues of many; of whom some accused God as author of sin, which entered in by the malice of the Devil, who did corrupt the good creature of God, created to his own image to rule in equity and justice. Who doth not see but that this writer, whosoever he was, retaineth himself within the reach of man's understanding, labouring to convict their conscience, which maliciously imputed unto God that which he did not work in them, but that they, of their own free will, did follow and obey iniquity, and that therefore they should suffer their just condemnation? And that this my interpretation of their minds is true, let their own words witness; for thus it is written.

"They have said with themselves, not righteously, judging our life is troublesome and short; neither is there any remedy against the death of man; neither hath he been known that hath returned from the grave. We were born without purpose, and we shall be as we never had been; for the spirit is but a smoke in our nostrils, &c. In process of time our name shall come to oblivion; neither yet shall any man remember our works. Therefore let us use the present prosperity; let us oppress the poor man, being just; let us not spare the widow, neither yet let us reverence the long aged and white hairs of the ancient; but let the strength of our power be the law of justice." And so far forth he accuseth their open tyranny, and then concludeth these things, "they thought and did err, for they were blinded by their own malice; neither have they known the mysteries of God," {I wonder that you marked not this place,} "neither have they hoped for the reward of holiness. For God created man to immortality," {here I note your falsehood, for you write "God created man to be undestroyed,"} "and made him to his own similitude." Now let the indifferent reader judge, whether you or I do nearer attain to the mind of the writer. You, I say, that do affirm, that he denieth that God hath either elected or reprobated any man; or I, that deny that to be any part of his mind in these writings, but say, he reproveth man's malicious blasphemy and manifest impiety.

The argument which you gather of the ninth chapter of the same book, and would seem to confirm by the words of Christ, spoken in the seventh of Matthew, hath no greater force than the former; for the writer defineth not what God had determined in his secret and eternal counsel, but what he hath expressly committed to man's charge by his law, and by his Holy Spirit speaking in his Prophets; and that himself doth plainly witness. For after that he hath asked wisdom righteously to judge the people committed to his charge, he thus speaketh, "what man is he that knoweth the counsel of God? Or that can comprehend in his mind what God would do? The cogitations of mortal men are

fearful, and our opinions deceivable, &c. Scarcely by conjecture can we attain to the things that be in earth, and with travail find we those things which be amongst our hands. But who shall search out those things that be in the heavens? And who knoweth thy counsel, except that thou shall give wisdom, and from the highest places shall send thy Holy Spirit? For so the ways of those that dwell upon earth have been directed, and they have learned those things that have pleased thee?"

Cry now as pleaseth you, that because man was made lord over creatures in earth, {for that is the verity of the text,} to rule the world in holiness, that therefore there was no man reprobated, and the writer will answer for himself, and will affirm, that he searcheth not what God hath determined in his eternal counsel, and what shall become of every man, {for that confesseth he to be incomprehensible,} but he declareth what God commandeth in his law, and what he hath expressed by his holy prophets. To the which, if man be found disobedient, resteth no excuse, {seeing that God's will is manifestly declared,} as Moses saith in these words, "the secrets appertain to the eternal our God, but those things that be revealed appertain to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deuteronomy 29:29.

Your arguments, which you think most strong, gathered of these words in the seventh and twelfth of Matthew, are most weak and vain. For as we do not deny that man was created just, so do we constantly affirm that in justice he stood not, but became altogether unjust; and therefore God did not condemn man before he was guilty, as you falsely gather of our doctrine. Wonder it is, that you see not degrees and just causes which come betwixt the purpose of reprobation and the just condemnation of man. This is your argument, God purposed to reject man before he was created, ergo, He did damn him before he was criminal or guilty. Your consequent is false, for no part of God's judgments was put in execution before man did sin; for grace was offered to Adam after his fall. Cain was admonished and rebuked for his cruelty; his posterity

and seed had raged in their fury; and finally, all flesh had corrupted their ways, before that God's vengeance and most just judgments were poured forth and put in execution against the rebellious and unthankful world. If you be able to prove that the sentence of death was executed upon Adam before he offended, or that Cain was accursed by God's mouth before he had murdered, then hath your argument some appearance; but if the just causes of condemnation be found in man, and so found in man that God in nowise can thereof be accused, then ought you to be ashamed to burden us with that which you yourselves most foolishly collect.

And further you shall understand that as the Apostle putteth certain degrees and causes which are sensible unto us, betwixt the eternal election of God's children and their glorification, even so put we the contrary degrees and causes betwixt the reprobation and the just condemnation of the wicked. For as those whom God hath chosen before all times, in time he calleth, and that of purpose, to Christ Jesus his Son; and whom thus he calleth he justifieth, and that more and more until that flesh and the corrupt affections thereof being mortified, they attain to their glory; so by the contrary, be the reprobate, either left all together in blindness, never called to the light and knowledge of God's free mercy, or if they be called, they either do condemn it, or else suddenly fall from the same, and so, abiding in their corruption, do still heap sin upon sin, till at the last their measure being full, God executeth his most just judgments against their continual rebellion. Infer now as many absurdities as please you upon our doctrine. You proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

You say, that God reprobated and ordained man to damnation, the most part of the world, before the foundations of the world were laid; and yet in the creation God made all men after his own image good and righteous, as the Scripture witnesseth. For as we were all created in one man, that is Adam, so were we

all created in one estate, that is, after the image of God to life. Then if your opinion be true, the ordinance of God in his election before the world, is not conformed to his ordinance in the creation. And the Holy Ghost saith, "if I build up again that which I have cast down before, I declare myself to be a transgressor." If God created man to his own image unto life, whom before the creation he had reprobated and cast away, declareth he not thereby himself to be inconstant and a transgressor. Ye cannot escape here with your bare solution, where you say, "before the world God hath not ordained all, but some, unto damnation, for in our creation all were ordained unto life; for so much as we were all created after the image of God, of the ordinance of God in our election before the world." The Apostle writes thus, "we be blessed {saith he} with all manner of spiritual blessings in heavenly things by Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundations of the world were laid, that we should walk in them." Here do we learn that God's ordinance in his election before the world, and also his ordinance in the creation, is always one. For as we are chosen in Christ Jesus, so we are created in Christ Jesus; and as we are chosen to be holy and without blame, so are we created unto good works. Wherefore God's ordinance in his holy election, and his mighty creation, is one and of like strength and certainty. Further, seeing we be {as the Apostle saith} both elect and created in Christ Jesus, and forasmuch as there is no damnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, then is there no damnation either in the election or creation.

ANSWER.

Because that as well your forged lies, as the vanity of your reasons have been declared, I will not trouble the reader with repetition of the same; and will also touch the rest of these your arguments as briefly as I can.

Where you reason, that we were all created in one man, that is in Adam, so were we all created in one estate, &c. If you understand that we were all created in

one estate, that is, in that estate which shortly was to change, because that God had so determined in his eternal counsel, that by the fall of one, his infinite mercy towards his chosen, and severe judgment towards the vessels of wrath, should evidently appear in the time appointed by his wisdom; if this, I say, you understand that we were all created in one estate, I will not contend with you, albeit in very deed in that self-same mass there were at once vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath. But because you open your mind in the contrary part, saying, that we were created in Adam after the image of God to life, I am compelled utterly to dissent from you, and fear not to affirm, that because none did stand to the end in that image, but all fell even to death in Adam, that therefore, neither in Adam, neither yet in that image as Adam had it, was any created unto life; but in Christ Jesus were all the chosen predestinated to life everlasting, even before that ever Adam was created; as the Apostle plainly doth witness.

Where you go about to prove by our opinion, the ordinance of God in his election before the world, not to be conformed to his ordinance in the creation, and so consequently God to be a transgressor and inconstant, you declare yourself not only ignorant, vain and foolish, but also irreverent and blasphemous against God's Majesty. For you {so far as in you lieth} spoil him of his Godhead, making him to change his counsel, purpose and ordinance, even so oft as the creatures do change; where we, by the contrary, labour to explain, and not to escape any violence of your dates by a bare solution {as you allege} but by the plain Scriptures openly we do affirm, that as our God is eternal, incomprehensible and immutable, so are his counsels constant, subject to no mutability nor change; constant, I say, in God himself, howsoever things change to our apprehension. And therefore, we say, that neither in his election before the world, neither in his creation of man to his own image and similitude, was it his eternal counsel, purpose, nor ordinance that all the posterity of Adam should be saved. And so can you not prove that God destroyed anything which he had built. Albeit to note one thing by

the way, Paul would not have been so bold as to have made himself check-mate with God; he did not, I say, accuse God of inconstancy, neither did he appoint him to be a transgressor, although he built the ceremonies under the Law and destroyed them again. But to our purpose, God, I say, destroyed nothing which he had built. True it is that man destroyed that image which God had built, but that building of God was but temporal, and for a time only; but the perfect building of his Church was in Christ Jesus, built before the foundations of the world were laid, which building God never destroyed nor shall destroy, but shall consummate the work to the praise of his holy name. To him be glory.

In your whole reasoning of the words of the Apostle you do err in this point, as before I have noted, that you make common to all, that which the Holy Ghost maketh peculiar to God's Elect. For you must first prove all to be saints by vocation, all to be blessed with spiritual benediction and to have obeyed, and all to be built upon the foundation of the Prophets and Apostles, before that you be able to prove that all were elected and predestinated in Christ Jesus before all times. That we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works, is not to be referred {as you think} to the common creation of all men in Adam, but to the new and spiritual regeneration which God's children have in Christ Jesus. For the which David did pray, saying, "a clean heart create in me, O God," which is no less called the creation of God than was the first creation of man. For as man, in his creation, neither wrought, neither yet could deserve to be created so honorable as he was; but did suffer the power of God to work, even as it pleased his wisdom to perform the work; so in our new creation unto good works, the grace and power of God worketh not only the beginning, but also bringeth to perfection; so that whatsoever be good, holy, or just in us, is God's creation, and not our work. God open your eyes, that you may see that neither in Adam, neither yet in ourselves, were we created to good works, but in Christ

Jesus alone. And then, I think, you will not so much boast of your free will.

Your last, as after you do reason, is a plain falsehood, that is a sophistical and false argument, for it standeth on four terms, against the use of all good and solid reasoning. For thus you proceed, saying, "we be elect and created in Christ Jesus; and seeing there is no condemnation to them that be in Christ Jesus, then is there no damnation neither in the election nor creation." Here be plainly four terms, for in your major, that is in the first part of your argument, you say not, we were elected and created in our election and in our creation, but we were elected and created in Christ Jesus. The second proposition is most true, to wit, that there is no condemnation to them that be in Christ Jesus, too such as walk not after the flesh. But what can you conclude hereof? That no damnation, say you, is in election nor in creation. I say your conclusion is false and vain, for you change your terms, putting in the last part these two words, "election and creation," where you ought to have rehearsed these words, "Christ Jesus," for thus you may well proceed, "we be elected and created to good works in Christ Jesus," but to them, saith the Apostle, "that be in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation," ergo, to such as be elected and newly created in Christ Jesus there is no damnation. This argument is formal and true; but omitting your foolishness, which oftener I am compelled to show than gladly I would, I go forward with your words.

THE ADVERSARY.

If God reprobated man before the foundation of the world, then God reprobated man before he offended. And if God reprobated and damned man before he offended, then is death the reward of God's ordinance before the world, and not the reward of sin. But the Apostle teacheth us, that by sin death entered into the world, and also that death is the reward of sin. I pray you, doth either God's Law or Man's Law condemn any man before he hath offended? I am certain you are not

able to prove it to be so, then ought you to be ashamed to burden God with such unrighteous judgment. Doeth not God rather forgive the offence already committed? Let him be your God which condemneth the innocent before he offend; but he shall be my God which pardoneth and forgiveth the offence already committed, which in his very wrath doth think upon mercy. And so with Job will I conclude, "the great God casteth away no man."

ANSWER.

How ignorantly and how impudently you confound the eternal purpose of God's reprobation with the just execution of his judgments I have before declared; and therefore here only resteth to admonish the reader that most unjustly you accuse us, in that you say, that we hold and teach that God damned man before he offended. This you be never able to show in any of our works; for constantly, in word and writing, we affirm that man willingly fell from God, and made himself slave to Satan before that death was inflicted upon him; and so neither make we death the reward of God's ordinance, neither do we burden him with unrighteous judgment, but say with the Apostle, that death is the reward of sin, and that our God is righteous in all his works; and therefore be ashamed and repent your manifest lie.

That God forgiveth the sin committed, and doth remember mercy even when he appeareth in his hot displeasure to punish his Church, with thanksgiving and joy we acknowledge. But that thereof you conclude, {as you say with Job,} that the great God casteth away no man, we cannot cease to admonish both you and the readers, that either ignorantly, or else maliciously, you corrupt and deprave the mind of the speaker in that place. Elihu saith not, as you allege, "the great God casteth away no man," but saith, "behold the mighty God casteth away none that is mighty and valiant of courage. He maintains not the wicked, but he giveth judgment to the afflicted."

And in this behalf your master Castellio, who notwithstanding that he useth to take large liberty in translation, where anything may seem to serve his purpose, is more circumspect and more faithful than you be, for thus he translates that place, "although that God be excellent, yea, excellent and strong of courage, yet is he not so dissolute, that either he will keep the wicked, or deny judgment to the poor." Although I say, that here is a greater liberty than I would wish a faithful translator to use, yet hath he not so corrupted the sense as you have done. Elihu, reasoning against Job, affirmeth, "that albeit the power of God be infinite, yet cannot his works be unjust, but that they are wrought in all perfection of justice." Howbeit that often {as we be dull and blind} we do not understand nor see at the first the causes of the same, yet God giveth daily declaration of his justice, in that he preserveth and sometime exalteth the virtuous, that before were afflicted, and dejected from honours the wicked and the cruel oppressors. Be judge yourself what this serveth for your purpose.

THE ADVERSARY.

Some other be that grant, that sin was a cause why man is reprobate, and therewith they hold, that God's absolute ordinance is also the cause, this saying contains a contradiction in itself; for if it be God's absolute ordinance, then is it not in respect of any other thing, but, as they say, because it hath so pleased him. If they meant that God's ordinance is the cause why sinners suffer death, or that God ordained that sinners for their sin should suffer death, I could agree with them; but that were contrary to that which they have said, that God absolutely ordained any man before he was, yea, before the world, to death, because so it pleased him; for if death be the reward of sin, and for offence and sin we do die, then cometh not death by God's absolute ordinance. And if I do grant that both God's absolute ordinance and also sin are the causes of damnation after your meaning, mark well what inconvenience followeth thereof. First, you must grant

me that God's ordinance is the principal and chiefest cause, {for it cannot be inferior to any other cause.} Secondly, you will grant that the first or principal cause, called causa cause, is the cause of the second and inferior cause, called causa causata. So to conclude, God's ordinance, which is causa cause, shall be the cause of sin, which is causa causata. As for a familiar example, the heat of the sun and the dew cause the ground to be fruitful; and God also is the cause thereof, for he maketh the barren ground fruitful. But forasmuch as God is the principal and first cause, he must be also the cause of the same, which is but the second cause. Thus it is clearly proved, that if God's ordinance were the cause of reprobation, then God's ordinance should also be the cause of sin; and God should be the author of evil, contrary to the whole Scripture, contrary to the opinion of all godly men, and contrary to our faith. But forasmuch as, God willing, I intend to answer at length to this wicked opinion in the confutation of the third error, I will speak no more hereof in this place.

ANSWER.

No further answer needeth to be given to these your most unjust accusations than those which we before have given. For neither do we so irreverently speak nor write, neither yet do we understand nor affirm, that God's absolute ordinance is the principal cause of reprobation, of sin, and of damnation; but simply we do teach, that God in his eternal counsel, for the manifestation of his own glory, hath of one mass chosen vessels of honour whom before all times he hath given unto Christ Jesus, that they in him should receive life; and of the same mass he hath left others in that corruption in the which they were to fall, and so were they prepared to destruction. The cause why the one were elected, we confess and acknowledge not to be in man, but to be the free grace and the free mercy, showed and freely given to us in Christ Jesus, who only is appointed Head to give life to the body. Why the others were rejected, we affirm the cause to be most

just, but yet secret and hid from us, reserved in his eternal wisdom, to be revealed at the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus.

This one thing do we {compelled by your blasphemous accusations} repeat oftener than we would, to the end that indifferent men may see what doctrine it is which you so maliciously impugn.

Howsoever you join God's absolute ordinance and sin together, we make so far division betwixt the purpose and eternal counsel of God {for absolute ordinance we use not in that matter} and the sin of man, that we plainly affirm, that man, when he sinned, did neither look to God's will, God's counsel, nor eternal purpose; but did altogether consent to the will of the devil, which did manifestly gainsay God's revealed will. And therefore do we affirm, that neither was the purpose nor counsel of God any cause of sin; but we say with the Apostle, "that by one man did sin enter into the world." The cause whereof was the malice of the Devil, and that free consent of man to rebellion, whose will was neither enforced, neither yet by any violence of God's purpose compelled to consent, but he, of free will and ready mind, left God and joined with the Devil. Convict us now, {if you can,} that we make God's absolute Ordinance, {which manner of speaking, I say, we abhor,} to be the principal cause of sin.

Albeit that you would be seen subtle, in adding your logical terms *causa cause* and *causa causata*, yet doth your similitude which you bring forth for demonstration of your purpose, declare that either you have not learned, or else that you have forgotten the chief and principal point of right reasoning, which all reasonable men confess to be rightly to divide. For if you cannot divide betwixt the will of God working all things for his own glory, and the operation of creatures, be they sun, moon, stars, rain, or dew, who can work nothing but as God hath appointed, I will not follow you as a god.

We say not that God's ordinance is the cause of reprobation, but we affirm that the just causes of reprobation are hid in the eternal counsel of God, and

known to his godly wisdom alone. But the causes of sin, of death, and damnation, are evident, and manifestly declared to us in the Scriptures; to wit, man's free will consenting to the deceivable persuasion of the devil, willful sin, and voluntary rebellion, by which entered death into this world, the contempt of graces and God's mercies offered, with the heaping up of sin upon sin, till damnation justly came. These causes, I say, of sin, death, and damnation, are plainly noted unto us in God's Holy Scriptures. But why it pleased God to show mercy to some, and deny the same to others, because the judgments of God are a devouring depth, we enter not in reasoning with him, but with all humility render thanks to his Majesty for the grace and mercy, which we doubt not but of his free grace we have received, in Christ Jesus our only Head.

When you shall further charge us that we make God the author of evil, we have good hope plainly to convict your venomous tongues of a most malicious lie. Now to your words.

THE ADVERSARY.

The Lord reasoneth with the disobedient Israelites which did forsake him, saying, "O, my people, what have I done unto thee, or wherein have I hurt thee, give me answer?" If the Israelites had been so well learned as you, they might have answered, "Lord, thou hast preordained us by thy immutable decree to fall away from thee, so that of necessity we must perish; in this hast thou hurt us with an incurable wound."

ANSWER.

Howsoever we be learned, if you betimes repent not of your irreverent scoffing and jesting at God's Eternal Predestination, you shall learn in experience, that the immutable decree of God is most just, by the which the fire which never shall be quenched is prepared for the devil and his angels, and for all such as with trembling

do not fear his godly Majesty, and with sobriety do not contemplate his judgments incomprehensible. And thus I leave your blasphemous boldness to be repressed by the power of Him whose judgments you mock.

THE ADVERSARY.

Now I intend, with the help of God, to answer to the arguments which they that be entangled with this error use to allege for the proof thereof; leaving such as be but vain, and engender rather contention than edifying; answering to such as seem most weighty, collected of certain places of the Scriptures whereby it may be thought that they may be deceived; beseeching the gentle reader to weigh the matter with an indifferent balance, and first hear before thou refuse, and, God willing, thou shalt not repent thee of thy labour. But forasmuch as the author and maintainers of this error do often make mention of election, whereby they would cloke their absurdities, I will first declare how election is taken in the Scriptures three manner of ways; that is, generally, specially, and most specially of all. First, we be all chosen and created in Christ Jesus, as Paul witnesseth to the Ephesians, in the first and second chapter; and conform to this election, he lightened all them that came into the world, and calleth all men to repentance, both great and small, rich and poor, Jew and Gentile, male and female, of all estates, without respect of any person, and all that be thirsty he calleth to come to the water of life. Secondly, he commandeth them which come at the first calling, to renounce father and mother, wife and child, with all other earthly things, yea, and themselves also. This is the second election, where there departed an innumerable multitude, which will not forsake such things but for their own lusts. Here departed Cain, with the monstrous giants, cruel tyrants, and bloody hypocrites, and all persecutors which shed innocent blood. Here departed Epicurus, with all his belly gods, among which was the rich glutton which despised Lazarus. There departed Sardanapalus, accompanied with Venus, and all that be drowned in the lusts of the

flesh, among which was Herodias. There departed Croesus, with many rich wealthy persons, among which was the rich young man of whom we read in the Gospel, that with a sorry countenance he departed from Christ. There departed Tarquinius the Proud, with such as be puffed up with the pomp and glory of this world, among which was Herodes, of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles, that for his pride he was stricken of God and eaten of lice. There departed Demetrius the silversmith, with such as will not forsake their filthy lucre; amongst which were the master and mistress of the damsel possessed with a spirit that prophesied. There departed a whole band of Stoics, with their destiny playing fast or loose, and that of necessity, which passeth the conning of all jugglers, among them are all such as defend that of mere necessity a few number must be saved, and of mere necessity all the rest of the world must be condemned. Whoso abideth this second election and Calling, Christ commandeth them to take up their cross and follow him, and thus to continue to the end. This is the third and last election, of which saith the Lord, "I have chosen thee in the fire of tribulation." Here the seventy Disciples departed, for they cannot abide this hard saying. Here doth Judas trudge. They which remain suffer great assaults, insomuch that sometime they turn their backs to their enemies, {as the Apostles did when Christ was taken,} and there do worthy soldiers stagger, stumble, and fall, as Peter when he denied his Master, and swore that he knew him not. And Thomas could in no wise believe that Christ was risen and had obtained victory. Yet they which at the voice of their captain rise up and turn again, and fight lawfully, even unto the end, they are chiefly above all others called elect and chosen, because they, continuing unto the end, obtain that whereunto they are chosen, and they follow the Lamb whether so ever he goeth. It is a hard thing that any such be deceived and fall away, forasmuch as they first are illuminated from above, and have forsaken all, yea, themselves, and have altogether submitted themselves to the governance of their Lord and Captain Christ. They daily obtain such victory of their enemies, that their

warfare is now become easy. And in hope they have to subdue, by the aid and counsel of their Lord, all their enemies, their joy and comfort is so great, that they esteem all earthly pleasure, which should draw them back, but vain, foolish, unpleasant, and beast-like. Happy is he which understandeth this to be true, not only by speculation, but also by experience. These three kinds of election are plainly set forth in the history of Gideon, which being well understand, confer to the world.

ANSWER.

Before you enter to confute our arguments, as you boldly promise, you affirm that election is taken in the Scriptures three manner of ways, that is {as you say} generally, specially, and most especially of all; which division, with the probation of the same, is so foolish, so false, and so far from the purpose, that unless you should have occasion to calumniate that so much of your book I passed over without answer, I would not spend the moment of an hour in answering the same. For how little do the words of Paul serve for your General election, in the confirmation of your eight reason, and after also, I have declared. And I leave to be proved of your part, by the evident testimony of any Scripture that God so oft electeth to life everlasting as he commandeth man to refuse himself; or else as he giveth his further grace to such as he hath called to the knowledge of himself, and of his only beloved Son Christ Jesus. That there is a General vocation, by the which the world by some manner of means is called to the knowledge of God, and a vocation of purpose, which appertaineth to God's children only, I do find in Scriptures. But that there is any election to life everlasting, except that which is and was in Christ Jesus, in the eternal counsel of God before the foundation of the world, I am assured that neither Scripture affirmeth, neither justly can it be gathered upon any sentence of the same. That the true light {which is Christ Jesus} illuminated all men coming into this world we confess. But what will you thereof

conclude? Ergo, say you, all are elected in him to life everlasting. I deny your consequence, and say, that albeit man be endowed with the light of reason and understanding, which no doubt proceedeth from Christ, and is not of nature only, yet doth it not therefore consequently follow, that every man that hath reason is elected in Christ to life everlasting. If you ask, for what purpose then doth their lightning and illumination serve them? The Apostle doth answer you, that they may be inexcusable; which reason, if it satisfy not your curiosity, quarrel with the Holy Ghost.

If you be able to prove, that all that be called do earnestly repent, and that all be thirsty to whom the waters of life are offered, you have said somewhat to prove a General election. But and if it be evident, that a great number do rather repine against the truth, nor repent of their iniquity which it reproveth; and that more do either seem to have no thirst to righteousness, or else do drink of the stinking puddles of man's doctrine, than that they will receive those wholesome waters of life which Christ Jesus giveth to his Church, then have you proved no part of your purpose. And wonder it is, that in the words of the Prophet, and in the words of our Master Christ Jesus also, you see not a plain difference made; for the Prophet calleth not all indifferently to drink of these waters, but such as do thirst. And Christ restraineth his generality to such as did travail and were burdened with sin; such, I say, he confesseth himself to call to repentance; but to such as were just and whole, he affirmeth that he was not sent. And so yet once again I affirm that the Scriptures of God make but mention of one election to life everlasting. I am not ignorant that Saul was elected to be King over Israel, and Judas also to the office of an Apostle; but whether thereof you be able to convince that they were both elected to life everlasting in Christ Jesus before that they did offend, {for so you affirm,} I remit you to your proof. I fear not to prove, that by the verity himself, Judas is called the devil, long before that the Holy Ghost maketh any mention that it entered into his heart to betray his Master.

It may appear to some, that in heaping of your examples and histories, which you adduce for your Especial election, {as you term it,} you rather delight to renew your memory than substantially to prove your purpose. For if a man should thus reason against you, the sheep of Christ, which by the eternal purpose of God be especially elected to life, hear his voice, and with reverence do know and obey the same; but these whom you rehearse did hear the voice, {as you allege,} but neither did they know nor obey it, ergo, they were not the sheep elected and especially chosen; if thus, I say, any man should reason, prepare for your answer. And further, how are you able to prove that Sardanapalus, Croesus, and Tarquinius the proud, can be placed in this rank of your especially elected, I can see no good reason; for except that calamity and God's just vengeance did follow their insolence, filthy life, and pride, I find in histories no special message sent unto them from God. But this you may understand by some secret revelation, which you have received of late in your perfection?

That you place us with the whole band of the Stoics, who with their destiny play fast or loose, and that of necessity, which, as you say, passeth the conning of all jugglers, although we do not greatly fear the force of your sentence, yet must we appeal to a more righteous and indifferent judge, that is to the Lord Jesus, to whom all judgment is given. And in the meantime, we further must require such as be indifferent in this matter to judge betwixt you and us, whether that we or you be those that play fast or loose in that which you scoffingly call Destiny and Stoical Necessity, and we call God's Eternal election and Purpose Immutable. We affirm that God's election in Christ Jesus is so certain, and his eternal purpose to save his Church is so constant, that against the faith of God's Elect "shall not the ports and gates of hell prevail in the end;" that "neither can life nor death, things present nor to come, separate and dis sever us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus." That this foundation is stable, "the Lord knoweth his own, and

therefore shall everyone that calleth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity; for we are not called to uncleanness, but unto sanctification and holiness," by the power of that Spirit who raised from the death Jesus the great pastor of our souls. Which Holy Spirit freely by faith {which also is the gift of God} doth so rule and reign in our hearts, that albeit the flesh lusteth against the spirit, yet are we assured of victory, by the only power of Him who hath overcome the world. This is our doctrine, faith, and profession. But you affirm, as after plainly you write, that none is so elected in Christ to life everlasting, but that he may fall, become a reprobate, and finally be condemned; and contrary ways, that none is so reprobate in God's eternal purpose, but that he may become elect and so be saved. That in God there is neither election nor reprobation, but according to man's disposition; so that when men have good motions, and be godly disposed, God doth elect them, and write their names in the Book of Life, but when they change and turn to iniquity, he doth reprobate them, and blotteth out their names out of the Book of Life.

Let now all creatures judge betwixt us and you, whether of the two play fast and loose, and surmount jugglers in cunning. From the third kind of election, which you call most especial, how you be able to prove that the seventy Disciples did so depart from Christ, that there was no difference betwixt them and the trudging of Judas, {as you term his horrible treason,} be judges yourself. In the sixth of John, we read "that many of his Disciples left him, and falling from him, did go with him no more." But whether these were the whole seventy whom he sent to preach, or others who for a time did follow him, it is not expressed; neither yet doth the text say, that all his Disciples fell from him, but many departed. Further, it appeareth to me very rash judgment, to pronounce that none that departed from Christ at any time in his life, before his death upon the cross, did at any time after return unto him, but that all such did remain in damnation with Judas. For I find that all his Apostles did fly and leave him, and yet we know they were called again. And so also do we find were two

of the Disciples, to whom Christ appearing betwixt Jerusalem and Emmaus, did first instruct them, and after revealed himself unto them. This I note, to give you occasion to be more circumspect in so weighty matters.

Towards the end of this part, thus you write, {of those whom you say have subjected themselves altogether to the government of their Lord and Captain,} that, "they daily obtain such victory of their enemies, that their warfare is now become easy. And in the hope they have to subdue, by the aid and counsel of their Lord, all their enemies, their joy and comfort is so great, that they esteem all earthly pleasure, which should draw them back, but vain."

These words augment in me that suspicion which before I noted; to wit, that you have a further fetch in this matter than your rude scholars understand at the first; to wit, that every one of you shall become Christ's so perfect and clean, that in you even in this life shall rest no enemy to be overcome, except death only; and that this is the opinion of your greatest prophets, I am able to prove by sufficient testimony, I mean by their own hand-writings. But how far St Paul was from that perfection, yea, even when he was ready to be offered in sacrifice for the testimony of Christ Jesus, he ashamed not to confess, thus writing to the Philippians, after that he had affirmed, "that all justice which before he looked for in the Law, was become to him as damage and dung, to the end that he might win Christ, and be found in him, not having his own justice which was of the Law, but that which was by the faith of Christ Jesus." He addeth, "not as though I had already attained to the mark, {understanding to that justice which he hoped for,} either that I am already perfect, but I follow, if I may comprehend that for whose sake I am comprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I think not with myself to have attained to the mark, but one thing I do, forgetting that that is behind, I endeavour myself to that which is before." Philippians 3:12-14. Here the Apostle, who had fought somewhat longer than some who now can brag of an easy battle, confessed he was not yet

perfect, neither yet that he had attained to that estate, that is, to the resurrection of the dead, to the which he daily did contend.

The other poison which in these your former words I espy, and therefore of conscience must admonish my brethren, is, that you be proud condemners of the free graces of God offered to man in Christ Jesus. For with the Pelagians and Papists, you are become teachers of free will, and defenders of your own justice. For how coldly you speak of Christ Jesus and his power, these your words may witness, "they are in hope {say you} to subdue their enemies by the aid and counsel of their Lord." Are you become so strong, and your warfare so easy, that the counsel of your Captain is sufficient for you to conquer your enemies? You suddenly did repent, that you had confessed that the aid of your Lord was necessary for you; and therefore, to mitigate and extenuate that, immediately you add, by the counsel of their Lord. Is this, I pray you, unfeignedly to confess, that without Christ you may do nothing, that of yourselves you be not able to think one good thought? That it is he that beginneth, and to the end performed the work of our salvation? God of his great mercy, and for Christ Jesus his Son sake, preserve his Church from your pestilent venom.

What you mean by the history of Gideon, in the which, say you, well and duly understand, be your three kinds of election plainly set forth, because you yourself do not express, I will not divine. The copy which came to my hands was in that place imperfect, for after the former words, it had only written, "confer to the world." And because I will not take upon me to alter anything in your words, I leave them to be corrected by yourselves, and your mind further to be explained in that point, if so it shall seem good to you. Ye proceed, saying.

THE ADVERSARY.

The first argument of them which abuse God's holy Predestination is easily soluted, their argument is this, "wheresoever there is election, there is also reprobation

of the same sort." But God elected some men before the foundations of the world, ergo, he reprobated some other men before the world. The first part of this argument is false, "that wheresoever there is election, there is also reprobation of the same sort." For God's election before the world hath no respect unto his contrary reprobation before the world; yea, there is no such word nor phrase in the whole Scripture, but God's election before the world is general to all men, as his calling is general without respect of persons. This is already sufficiently proved, yet some of you do grant God's calling to be general, but not his election. And in this you accuse God of hypocrisy; you would make him a dissembler like unto yourselves, which often times with your mouth do offer and promise that which you mind never to perform. But God is faithful, which is willing to perform all that he promiseth, even to them that refuse him. And though they attain not the promise, because of their unbelief, yet all the time of their calling be they in the General election, as those whom the King called to the marriage; notwithstanding they came not, yet were they chosen to be partakers of the marriage; and the servant to whom the master forgave all his debts was chosen, notwithstanding he attained not that whereunto he was chosen; but became a reprobate, abusing the goodness of his master. God is no hypocrite, which calleth men outwardly, and forgiveth debts only with the mouth, but even from the heart, willing to give salvation to all them to whom he offereth it. And the cause why such do perish is their obstinateness to God's grace; and as the Lord saith, "their stiff-neck which hath an iron vain, and their browes of brass," which despise the goodness of God; they became castaways, "because {as Saint John saith} they love darkness better than light." And as Ezra saith, "they kept not that which was sown in them," whereof we may gather, "that they become reprobates, because they rather refuse the grace offered and grafted in them, than that they are refused." Notwithstanding, both may be conveniently spoken, "because they have forsaken me, I will also forsake them," saith the Lord. And again saith the Holy Ghost,

"cometh not this unto thee, because thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God." Further that this is untrue, "whosoever there is election, there is also reprobation of the same kind," it may be easily proved by the inconvenience which cometh thereof. Christ is the Elect and Chosen of God, as then, "behold this my servant upon whom I lean, my Elect in whom my soul is pacified." And in another place, "thou art my witness, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." And will you say therefore, that there be no Christ's which be reprobate? For either this saying, "whosoever there is election, there is also reprobation of the same kind," is false, or else there must be more Christ's. That were much like to the saying of a Jew, which when he had talked with a faithful man very much concerning the temporal and worldly dominion and honour of Messiah, the Christian proved by the prophecy of Daniel, and also by the prophecy of Isaiah, that Messiah should be evil entreated even of the Jews, and put to death as an offender. Here the Jew being driven to a narrow shift, rather than he would apply and confess the truth, he rather confessed that there should come two Messiahs, of whom the one should be disposed and the other magnified. And if you be so minded, that rather than you will depart from your error, you had better confess more Christ's, of which some be chosen and others reprobate. Surely then, I think, it is no faithful man's duty to reason with you.

ANSWER.

Easy it is indeed to solute those arguments which in our names you falsely forge, either by adding such patches as in our writings can never be found, or else by so perverting our minds, yea, and the mind of the Holy Ghost, that if possible it were, you would obscure the brightness of the sun, and take from creatures the benefit of the same, to the end that in your darkness you might still remain. And therefore I cannot but complain of your devilish malice, which causeth you to

pervert and wrest words well spoken, and reasons godly and substantially made.

Show, if you can, in any of our writings that we affirm, that wheresoever there is election there is also reprobation of the same sort. Show that clause, I say, of the same sort, and I will confess that you have read more than I have done of that matter, which, nevertheless, I hardly can believe. But to the end that the simple reader may understand how we do reason of election and reprobation by the contrary effects, I will adduce not our reasons lately invented, but twenty years ago committed unto writing by that notable instrument of God, John Calvin, who thus speaketh, "wonder it is, saith he, that Chrysostom did not call to mind, that it is the election of God which maketh difference betwixt men. We fear not to grant that which Saint Paul in great constancy doth affirm, to wit, that all together are wicked and given to malice, but with him we add, that, by the mercy of God, it cometh to pass that we abide not in wickedness. Therefore seeing that naturally we all labour with a like sickness, these only receive health and amend, to whom it hath pleased the Lord to put to his curing hand; others, whom by his just judgment he passeth by, do languish in their corruption till they be consumed. Neither yet from anywhere else doth it come, that some continue to the end, and others fall into the curse which was begun. For because that perseverance itself is the gift of God, which is not commonly given to all, but he freely giveth it to whom it pleaseth him. If the cause of the difference be sought, why some constantly continue, and why others fall away by instability; none other cause may be assigned, but that the eternal God sustaineth and strengtheneth the one sort by his own power that they perish not, and unto the others he giveth not the strength, that they may be documents and witness of man's inconstancy," &c.

Thus use we to reason by the diversity which we see in men, that one sort are elect and others are reprobate, and not as you imagine us to do. We say, that Nature hath made us equal as concerning

corruption, and yet we see great diversity amongst men. We ask what is the cause of this? If you answer, Education, which some philosophers do; that will be proven false, as before I have declared. If you say, man's free will; we proceed, demanding who giveth the good will? If you allege, man himself, the Scriptures proveth you liars, saying, "it is God that worketh the will and the performance." If God be granted {as he cannot be denied} to be the only author of all goodness, then ask we, why giveth he the good will to the one, and not to the other? If you answer, because the one receiveth grace and the other doth refuse it, you have said nothing to the purpose. For we still demand, if God may not {if so it pleased his eternal wisdom} frame and form the will of the one to as great obedience as the will of the other, fret and fume as you list, this you cannot deny, except that you will be blasphemous deniers of his omnipotent power.

Now, of this manifest diversity which we see in mankind, we conclude, that God hath as well his Elect, whom of mercy he calleth, by faith justifieth, and by his Holy Spirit sanctifieth, and in knowledge of himself and of his Son Jesus preserveth to the end, and so in the end shall he glorify them; as also, that he hath his Reprobate, whom for just causes he leaveth to themselves to languish in their corruption, to pass from iniquity to iniquity, till that they come to perdition, as they that are prepared vessels of wrath. If this you be not able to convince, I send you to fight with your own shadow, for our reasons do stand, as I have shortly rehearsed, which you be never able to move. True it is that John Calvin thus writes, "betwixt the Elect and the Reprobate {saith he} there is a mutual relation; that is, the one hath a contrary respect to the other, so that the election of the which the Apostle speaketh, cannot stand except we should grant that God hath set apart one sort of men whom it pleased him, from another sort." You hear no mention in these words of your patch. There is reprobation of the same sort, which I know either you, or else your Master Castellio forged; because you would not forget your merry tale of your Jew, you boldly deny

that God's election hath respect to his contrary reprobation. But when you should come to the plain demonstration thereof, you are compelled to fly to this shift, "there is no such word or phrase in the Scripture." If such a reason should be made before a reasonable man, I think it justly might be rejected. For if this be a good reason, election hath no respect to his contrary reprobation, because the words nor phrase are not in the Scripture, then is this reason good also, Lot sinned not, committing incest with his daughters, for in the whole Scriptures there is neither such word nor phrase, that in plain words affirmeth that Lot sinned, committing incest with his daughters. Consider the vanity of your reasons and be ashamed.

Ye cannot deny but this word election is read in the Scriptures; and so oft, I say, can you not deny, except that willingly you will corrupt the mind of the Holy Ghost, but that it hath respect to his contrary reprobation, as by the phrases, which you impudently deny to be in the Scriptures, is most evident. As when Paul saith, "hath God then rejected or refused his people? God forbid. God hath not refused his people whom he knew before." And so alleging the like to have been in the days of Elias, he saith, "even so in this time there is a residue, or a few number left according to the election of Grace, that is, according to the free election, and not according unto works." And after, he saith, "that which Israel seeketh it hath not attained unto, but the election hath attained unto it; but the rest were blinded." Whether that this phrase doth not plainly prove that election, in this place, hath respect to his contrary reprobation, let the indifferent reader judge. The election {saith Saint Paul} hath attained, {understanding the illumination which God did promise,} but the rest were blinded. If you will not suffer that this blinded rest, whom God justly had rejected, shall be called reprobate, study you for a more gentle word, for we must use such as the Holy Ghost hath taught us. But yet one phrase or two more, "I shall have mercy {saith God to Moses} upon whom I will have mercy." And Paul feareth not to add his contrary

saying, "and whom he will he maketh hard-hearted." And again, "what if God, willing to show his wrath and to make his power known, hath suffered with long patience the vessels of wrath made ready to damnation, and that he might declare the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy which he had prepared unto glory." If mercy, life, the vessels of mercy and glory, have contrary respect to severity, to destruction, to the vessels of wrath, and of dishonour, then can it not be denied but that election {from the which all these former graces flow to the elect themselves} hath contrary respect to reprobation. I omit the rest of the phrases which be common in Scripture, and make plain difference betwixt the elect and reprobate, because before I have noted diverse, and after must be compelled to repeat the same. How sufficiently you have proved your general, special, and most especial election, let the readers judge by that which is answered to your eight unreasonable reasons, and to your thirteenth vanity.

That impudent blasphemy which maliciously you lay to our charge, shall God, without speedy repentance, suddenly revenge upon your own heads, blasphemous mouth! I write to thee, whose corrupt manners friendly and secretly I have rebuked, but whose malice I now know. Canst thou not be unthankful unto man, except that also thou pour forth thy venom against God's Majesty? Impudent liar! Which of us hath promised unto thee, or unto any of thy pestilent sect, that which he hath not performed? Examine thy conscience, and deny if thou canst, but more hath been performed unto thee than ever was promised, yea, even when thou didst deserve to have been abhorred of all honest men; and yet, without fear or shame, doest thou accuse us, that we should accuse God of hypocrisy, and that we would make him a dissembler like unto ourselves. The Lord, for his great name's sake, either purge thy heart, or suddenly repress that venom in thee, and in that pestilent sect, to his own glory, and to the comfort of his Church! Repent, repent, I say, or else shortly shalt thou feel what it is to contrastive and make sorrowful the

Spirit of God, be the instruments in whom he worketh never so weak.

If of every parable and similitude you will conclude as largely as you do here, to wit, that because in a parable it is said, that a king called many to the marriage, ergo, God elected all by his General election; then it shall follow, that all lords and masters shall allow and praise their stewardess and servants that deceive them; for so is affirmed in a parable, that one lord did to his steward. If we shall rather believe Christ Jesus than you, then we shall conclude, "many are called, but few chosen." Wonder it is that you cannot see the difference betwixt these words, "the King called many, and God chose all." I am ashamed of your ignorance. Of God's constant fidelity, of his promises, of the causes why the reprobate are more and more blinded, we have before somewhat spoken, and after will have occasion to repeat the same.

When you would be seen most crafty and subtle, then appeareth most your ignorance and vanity. To prove an absurdity in our doctrine, thus you reason, "if wheresoever election be, there is also reprobation of the same kind," {this last patch, I say, is your malicious addition, but let it stand for a testimony of your untruth,} "if then," say you, "Christ be the elect and chosen of God, {as the Scriptures affirm him to be,} then must it needs follow, that there be more than one Christ, of whom some must be Reprobate," and thereupon you bring in your foolish tale of your Jew.

First, I answer you, according to your merry disposition, which I perceive did tickle you in writing this part, that if you can make no difference betwixt election and Elect, then I would you were committed again to some quick and sharp pedagogue, who with sharp rods would let you feel what difference there is betwixt *agentem* and *patientem*. Assuredly your unreverent jesting in these secret mysteries of our Redemption, and these scoffing taunts in malice cast out against the Eternal Son of God, and his undoubted verity, deserve none other answer. But yet, partly to let your ignorance appear, and partly for the instruction of the simple, I will

prepare myself to answer with greater modesty than your malice deserveth. I have said before, that this patch, upon the which you gather your absurdity, is none of our doctrine. For we have neither written nor yet taught, that wheresoever is election, there must also reprobation be of the same kind; but simply we say, that election hath respect to his contrary reprobation.

But to grant you somewhat, and not to hold you so strait, let it be that so we had written, what should rightly thereof follow? "That there must be more than one Christ, of whom some must be reprobate," say you, because that Christ is called the elect of God. I answer, in this your argument you use two fallacies; that is, false and deceitful appearances of a truth, which are but manifest lies. The former, you change the terms, putting elect and reprobate in the minor and in the conclusion, where we put election and reprobation in the major, which is not lawful in a good argument. For where we say, {as you affirm,} wheresoever is election there must also reprobation be, you infer that Christ is the elect of God; ergo, there must be more than one Christ, of whom some must be reprobate. Who seeth not here the changing of the terms? Let your argument proceed in order, and conclude what you list. Wheresoever is election there must also be reprobation; and add if you list, of the same kind, but Christ is election, for thus must you proceed if that you keep the form of a good argument. Prove your minor, and conclude what you please. Thus doth your vain and foolish sophistry compel me to trouble the simple with the terms of the arts, which most unwillingly I do.

The second fallax and deceit, lieth in the ambiguity and doubtful understanding of this patch {which you craftily forge} of the same kind, for if we had so spoken or written, yet is our understanding far other than you imagine; that is, we apply not these words of the same kind to the particularity of persons, and of every especial man that is elect, but to the whole mass, as by Saint Paul we are taught. To make the matter more sensible, I will lay myself for example, for I will not, nor dare not, so irreverently jest with the

majesty of my God, and of his dear Son Christ Jesus, as you do. You reason against us, as that we did understand your addition of the same kind, of every particular person apart, as thus; I, JOHN KNOX, do constantly believe that, as of mercy and free grace, it hath pleased the goodness of my God in time to call me to his knowledge, and so to remove my blindness and unbelief, that in a part I see his fatherly love towards me in Christ Jesus his Son, so do I most certainly believe, that in the same Christ Jesus; of free grace he did elect and choose me to life everlasting before the foundation of the world was laid; ergo, by your understanding I must also believe, that there is another John Knox of the same kind, having the same substance, with the same qualities, proprieties, and conditions that I have, that was reprobated, and so must be damned.

Who seeth not here your vanity, yea, your most malicious cavillation, who labour to impute upon us that which did never enter into our hearts? We, with all reverence and fear, believe and teach, that God of one mass, that is of Adam, hath prepared some vessels of mercy, honour, and glory, and some he hath prepared to wrath and destruction. To the vessels of his mercy, in his eternal counsel before all times, he did appoint a Head to rule, and give life to his elect, that is, Christ Jesus our Lord, whom he would in time to be made like unto his brethren in all things, sin except; who in respect of his human nature is called his servant, the just seed of David, and the Elect in whom his soul is well pleased, because, as I have said, he is appointed the only Head to give life to the body, without whom there is neither election, salvation, nor life, to man nor to angel. And so in respect of his humanity, from the which he in no wise can be separated, he is called the Elect. Conclude now, if you can, there must be more than one Christ, of whom some must be reprobate, I will make a more sure and more true conclusion than you do, which is this, that God of one mass hath elected some men to life in Christ Jesus; ergo, there was left of the same mass another sort, under another head, the Devil, who

is the father of lies, and of all such as continue in blasphemy against God. Gather now what absurdities you can.

THE ADVERSARY.

Another argument gather they forth of God's prescience, but I will first borrow an argument of them concerning the prescience of God; and then, God willing, I shall answer to theirs. Paul saith, "those which God knew before, he also ordained them before, that they should be like fashioned unto the shape of his Son, that he might be the first-begotten Son among many brethren," but God knew all men before, ergo, he ordained all men before that they should be Christ's brethren, like fashioned unto him. The first part of my argument is Paul's saying, the second you cannot deny, and the conclusion is formally inferred of both the parts. Labour either to solute my argument without any ambiguity, whereby you may satisfy others, or else forsake the error which it improveth.

ANSWER.

Because you desire your argument to be saluted, at your own request I will take some pain, and God grant it may profit! Your argument containeth in itself the fallax which is called of equivocation; for this word "knowledge," or this sentence, "whom God did foreknow," in the words of Paul, which be in your major or first proposition, do not signify the self-same thing that these words, "but God knew all men before," which you put in your minor or second proposition. And so because that there be four terms, which in the schools be called *scopæ dissolutæ*, the argument is deceitful and false, although the form appear good. Thus, I trust in your own conscience, you think your argument fully and rightly saluted; but yet that neither you shall have occasion to bark again, neither yet that the simple reader shall take pain to read these vain arguments without all fruit, I will add somewhat more, and will

plainly prove my solution to be good. In the first proposition, I say, where Saint Paul saith, "whom God foreknew, the same he before ordained," that the Holy Ghost meaneth of that foreknowledge of God which is joined with his eternal love, which before all times he did bear to his elect, as of the words of Christ Jesus, and of the words of the same Apostle in divers places before is declared. And with this foreknowledge which is joined with his love, by the which his elect were appointed to be made like fashioned to their Head Christ Jesus, did never God foreknow nor foresee Cain, Judas, nor none other reprobate to appertain to him. I do not deny, but that as all things ever were present before the eyes of his Majesty, so did he both foreknow, foresee, and before ordain the end of all creatures; but otherwise, I say, doth God foreknow his elect, of whom Paul only speaketh. If it doth offend you that I affirm that God did never foreknow the reprobate as he did his elect, I have my assurance of Christ Jesus, of his own plain words, saying to the false prophets, "I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of iniquity." Note well, that Christ affirmeth that he never knew the false prophets, no not even when they did prophesy, cast out devils, and did many wondrous things in the name of Christ. If he had said, "I know you not," you might have shifted with this your accustomed cavillation, "that was by reason of their sins which after they committed," but he leaving no doubt, saith, "I never knew you," and therefore I fear not to affirm, that God did never foreknow Judas as that he knew Peter. Consider and be sober. Ye go forward to your argument and say.

THE ADVERSARY.

Their argument concerning God's Prescience is this, that God knoweth all things before they be done, that God's prescience or foreknowledge is infallible; ergo, of necessity all things must come to pass as they do; which being granted, they which perish, of necessity they do perish. If of necessity, then is it by God's ordinance, because so he willeth and so he hath ordained. This

argument seemeth probable at the first blush. But I pray the reader to mark first how these men put no difference betwixt the foreknowledge of God and his will. For they suppose, that whatsoever God foreseeth he also willeth; but their supposition is untrue, for God foreseeth the death of the sinner, and yet he will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he repent and live. Christ did foresee the destruction of Jerusalem, and yet did he not will it, for he wept and he wailed it. God did foresee the fall and final destruction of the Israelites, and yet would he not it. As he witnesseth himself, saying, "wherefore will you die, O you house of Israel, seeing I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth?"

ANSWER.

What we do teach of God's Prescience, of his Providence, and Predestination, and how that his omnipotent will, which we fear not to affirm to be the necessity of all things, doth differ from stoical necessity, with the which you burden us, we have before declared; and therefore, remitting the reader to the same place, I say to you, that if you imagine in God a prescience and foreknowledge which is idle and separated from his will, that then you fall into the blasphemy of Epicurus; and if that you say {as plainly you do} that he foreseeth things to come which he will not, that then you deny the omnipotency of his power. Choose which you will, the verity will convince you. To prove that he foreseeth and knoweth many things to come which he will not, you adduce the place of Ezekiel, where God affirmeth that God wills not the death of a sinner, the weeping of Christ upon Jerusalem, and the complaint of God against the house of Israel. To which I shortly answer, at this time, because that after we must have to do with the same matter, that simply {that is, having no further respect but to punishment only} God will neither the death of the sinner, neither yet the destruction of Jerusalem, nor of the house of Israel; but in respect of his glory to be showed in their just punishment, and of

his verity and sentence to be approved, always stable and constant, why that God shall not will both the death and destruction to come upon the stubborn disobedient, I see neither absurdity to follow, neither Scripture repugning. But after, in answering to your distinction which you make betwixt God's will and his permission, I purpose to entreat this matter more largely. You proceed, saying.

THE ADVERSARY.

Secondly, these men think that God's foreknowledge causeth all things to come to pass of necessity, which is also untrue. Foreknowledge of things past, of things present, and of things to come, dependeth of the thing that is known and not the thing of knowledge. As I know that Paul before he was called, he was a persecutor of Christ's Church; but Paul was not a persecutor because I knew it, but I knew it because he was a persecutor. I know that in the month of July shall be harvest, yet shall not harvest be because I know so; but I know it because it shall be. Likewise, God did know that I should write this day, but yet did he not compel me to write, for I had liberty either to write or not to write; not because he knew that I should write therefore did I write, but because I was to write therefore knew he that I should write. Thus you may see how they do err which affirm that God's foreknowledge causeth all things to come to pass of necessity. For as God doth foresee that men will do evil, so doth he also foresee that they may leave the evil undone; and as God foreseeth that men will not do well, so he foreseeth that they be not compelled thereto, but might do well if they list. As for example, Christ could and might have obtained more than twelve legions of angels, and yet God did know that he should not obtain them; also God did know that Christ should not pray for twelve legions of angels, and yet he might have prayed, as he saith himself. Of this it is manifest, that notwithstanding the foreknowledge of God, things may come to pass otherwise than they do. Wherefore it followeth, that God's foreknowledge causeth no

necessity. Pilate had power to crucify Christ, or to let him go; which Christ denied not, but rather affirmed it, saying, he had that power from above, and although Pilate did not deliver Christ, notwithstanding he might have done it. Ananias sold his possession, and yet he might have not sold it; he brought a part of the price thereof to the Apostles, which he might have retained to him, as Peter witnesseth that the price thereof was in his own power. Many such examples may I bring forth, whereby it should appear manifest that, notwithstanding the foreknowledge of God, things be done which might not be done, and things be not done which might be done.

ANSWER.

Albeit that you be so blinded that you can put no difference betwixt the foreknowledge, will, and power of God, which all are perfect in himself, as is his eternal Godhead, and the foreknowledge, will, and power of man or creatures, which be imperfect and weak by reason of man's corruption; yet I doubt not but that all reasonable men shall essentially espy your vanity, who dare be so bold as to affirm, that because your knowledge was not the cause that Paul was a persecutor, that therefore the foreknowledge of God, his eternal purpose, counsel, and will, which we never separate, did no more in that matter then did your bare knowledge. By the same reason you may conclude, that God wrought no more with Paul in preaching to the Gentiles, than did your knowledge, for the reason is alike strong. But he himself will not be so unthankful, but will confess, "that from his mother's womb he set him apart, and called him by his grace, to the end that he might reveal his Son Christ Jesus by him," for the which he unfeignedly "thanked the goodness of God, who made him strong in Christ Jesus, to be faithful in that office and ministry." I am not ignorant, that otherwise doth God work in the hearts of his elect the work of their salvation, and otherwise in the reprobate; for in the hearts of his elect, effectually and by the

power of his Spirit, doth he so work in them the motions that be aggregable to his holy commandments, that they strive and contend against their natural corruption. But justly leaving the reprobate to themselves, and to Satan their father, they willingly follow, without all violence or compulsion of God's part, iniquity and sin, and so finally the way of perdition, to the which they naturally are inclined.

But yet if any will affirm, that therefore God's foreknowledge doth but idly behold what they will do, and that in his eternal purpose, counsel, and will, he will one thing and they will another, so that their will prevail against his, he shall not escape the crime of horrible blasphemy, as before I have said, and hereafter also must more largely entreat. Of your knowledge what shall come in July, and of your liberty to write, I only answer this, that albeit God did not compel you to write, for thereto your wicked will was bent; yet because he foreknew, and also hath forespoken, that of necessity it was that heresies should come, that the elect might be tried, it was not altogether against His will that you should manifest yourself, and that we should patiently suffer your unjust accusations.

Your wrestling and wrangling with the words of our Master Christ Jesus to Peter, is so far from the purpose of the Holy Ghost, that I am partly ashamed in your behalf. Doeth Christ in that place absolutely affirm, that either he might pray for twelve legions of angels, either yet that his Father would or might give them to him then, to deliver him; or doth he not rather by this interrogation, "believest thou not that I may pray my Father," rebuke the bold and foolish enterprise of Peter, who rashly pretended to defend by his sword Him whom the Father had given into the hands of his enemies, of determined purpose to die for our sins? And so did he conclude contrary to your mind, to wit, that impossible it was that either he should pray for any angels to deliver him at that time, either yet that his Father should send any for that purpose; for because it was other ways determined in His eternal and immutable counsel, as in plain words he witnesseth, saying, "but how then shall

the Scriptures be fulfilled, in which it is forespoken that so it behooveth to be?"

In the words of Pilate, and in Christ's answer, you show the like ignorance as before. For thereupon you conclude what Pilate might have done, and yet did not the same; whereas the purpose of Christ Jesus was to reprove the proud arrogancy of the vain man, who did usurp to himself authority, rendering unto God neither honour nor glory; but boasting himself of his power, he thought all things lawful which it pleased him to do. Against which pride and unjust unthankfulness, Christ absolutely denieth that he should have had any power over him, except it had been given to him from above. By which words and sentence, he did put him in mind that he should make accounts what judgment he pronounced, not to the Emperor only, but to the Sovereign God, who as he hath appointed and established authorities, so shall he severely require of their hands an account, if under his name they use tyranny, or pronounce false judgment. This, I doubt not, is the true and simple meaning of the text, and not as you ignorantly, or else maliciously collect, that Christ affirmed that Pilate had power not to adjudge him to be crucified, but to deliver him. The Holy Ghost affirmeth the direct contrary, saying, "of a truth, in this city have convened against thy holy Son, whom thou hast anointed, Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, to do whatsoever thy hand and counsel have before decreed to be done." Now, let the indifferent reader judge which of our collections and conclusions is most strongly proved. Ye affirm that Pilate had power not to crucify Christ; and I say that he was appointed in the immutable counsel of God, to be one of the wicked instruments by whom the Son of God should innocently suffer the death of the Cross. But how little doth this relieve the willful sin of Pilate, shall after be declared.

Even such liberty and power as you had to write these former and subsequent blasphemies, had Ananias of his land, and money received for the same. For as you being infected with heresy, malice, and envy, did

willingly write and utter your venom, so he being avaricious and a dissembling hypocrite, did of a free, consenting heart, reserve a portion to himself, offering a part to the Church of God, with protestation that it was the whole sum, thinking thereby to have obtained the commendation and praise which hypocrites deserve not. But what was God's purpose, counsel, and will in that behalf is evident; to wit, that we shall abhor and avoid hypocrisy; that we shall not abuse the simplicity of our brethren; neither yet make protestation of that thing before men, affirming that to be true which our own conscience knoweth to be false. But now to the rest.

THE ADVERSARY.

Here I think it is good to answer to their objections which they collect of Peter's denying of his Master. If these things which God foreseeth to come to pass, say they, may be left undone, then, notwithstanding that Christ did foresee that Peter should deny him, Peter might yet have not denied him. I answer, that notwithstanding Christ did foresee that Peter should deny him, yet was not Peter compelled thereto, but might have not denied Christ. Well {say they} then should Christ have been a liar, for he said that Peter should deny him. I answer, that notwithstanding that Christ so said, yet might Peter have not denied him, and Christ notwithstanding should have been no liar. The like example have we in the first book of Samuel. David asked counsel of the Lord, if Saul would come to Keilah? And the Lord said, he will come down. Then said David, will the men of Keilah deliver me, and the men that are with me, into the hands of Saul? And the Lord said, they will betray you. Then David with his men departed from Keilah, which when Saul heard, he left of from his enterprise, and came not to Keilah. I Samuel 23:1-13. Here we see that neither God's foreknowledge, which is also conformed to his saying, neither yet his prophesying, did take liberty from Saul, from the men of Keilah, neither from David and his men; neither did Saul come to Keilah, neither the men of Keilah betrayed

David, as the Lord had spoken. And David had liberty with his men to avoid the danger, notwithstanding God had spoken it should come to pass; so all they had liberty, yea, even after God had pronounced what should be done. Insomuch, that their doings were plain contrary to the prophecy of God; and yet was God true, for he did foresee, that if David did not depart from Keilah, using such liberty as God had given him, he with his men should be betrayed into the hands of Saul. And I pray you, might not Peter, likewise using his liberty, avoid the bishop's house, and so never been tempted to deny Christ? Yes, I am sure, as well as David avoided Keilah.

ANSWER.

If you be able to prove that David stood in all so hot a contention against God, as Peter did against his Master Christ Jesus; that David affirmed the expressed contrary to that which God had pronounced; and that God had appointed the certain time as well when Saul should come, as when the men of Keilah should betray him; then might you have had some color to have compared and matched the denial of Peter with the fleeing of David. But if Peter's denial was with a double affirmation pronounced by the mouth of Christ Jesus; and if the sentence of God, both touching the coming of Saul, and touching the unthankfulness of the men of Keilah, was conditional, you be more than bold that take upon you to join together things so diverse. Christ's words to Peter were neither spoken nor meant under any condition, but were pronounced as followeth, "verily, verily, I say unto thee, that the cock shall not crow till thou shall deny me thrice." Which words leave neither liberty, freedom, nor power to Peter to provide for himself, that this sentence should not be true. But the words and answers spoken to David were according to his questions, which were first, if that brute of Saul's coming was true; and, if the men of Keilah, to whom he had shown such thankfulness of late before, should become so ingrate, that they should betray him into the

hands of Saul. And God did answer, that Saul should come down, and that the citizens of Keilah should betray him. But I trust you will not be so impudent as to deny but that both these affirmations were spoken conditionally, to assure David of his doubts, and to give him advertisement, that neither he should abide the hazard of Saul's coming, neither yet commit himself and his men of war to the fidelity of those that were in Keilah. Be judges now yourselves, how far different be the words spoken to Peter and the words spoken to David. Ye proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

But now to return to our purpose. If I shall grant that all things of mere necessity must come to pass, according to the prescience and foreknowledge of God, then had Adam before the transgression no free will, but of mere necessity did he offend, forasmuch as God did foresee his fall; then had Christ no free will, for God did foresee all that Christ was to do; then is God bound himself, and hath no liberty to do nor leave undone that which he doth, forasmuch as he foreseeth all his own works. This belike you will make a goodly, wise God. God save us from such dangerous and horrible errors, and give us steadfast and perfect faith to believe, not only that he is, but also that he is an omnipotent God, which freely after his own good pleasure doth, and may do, or leave undone whatsoever pleaseth him.

ANSWER.

Before I answer to the absurdities which of our doctrine you collect, I must, in few words, put you in mind, that very foolishly you join the free will of Adam with the free will of Christ Jesus, and with the liberty of God. For Adam's will was never so free but that it might {as that it did} come to thralldom; which weakness you be never able to prove at any time to have been in Christ's will. Further, the will of Adam was always under the empire

and threatening of a law; to which subjection I think you will not bring God. But now to your absurdities.

"If {say you} I shall grant that all things of mere necessity must come to pass, according to the prescience and foreknowledge of God, then had Adam before his transgression no free will." Your illation or consequence is false, for the foreknowledge and prescience of God did neither take away free will from Adam, neither yet did compel it by any violence, but did use it as an ordinary means, by the which His eternal counsel and purpose should take effect. But for the better understanding hereof, we must advert and note that which before we have touched, and promised after more largely to entreat the same; to wit, that God's prescience and foreknowledge is not to be separated from his will and decree. For none otherwise doth God foresee things to come to pass, but according as He himself hath in his eternal counsel decreed the same. For as it appertaineth to His wisdom to foreknow and foresee all things that are to come, so doth it appertain to his power to moderate and rule all things according to his own will. Neither yet therefore doth it follow that His foreknowledge, prescience, will, or power, doth take away the free will of his creatures, but in all wisdom and justice, {however the contrary appear to our corrupted judgments,} he useth them as best it pleaseth his wisdom to bring to pass in time that which before all time he had decreed. To the which purpose and end, they, {I mean the creatures and their wills,} whatsoever they purpose to the contrary, or how ignorantly that ever they work it, nevertheless do voluntarily, and as it were of a natural motion, incline and bow to that end to the which they are created.

To make the matter more plain, let us take the creation and fall of Adam, with the creatures that served in the same, for example. For what chief end did God create all things, {of Solomon and Paul we have before declared,} to wit, for his own glory to be showed; the glory, I say, of the riches of his mercy towards the vessels of mercy, and the glory of his justice and most just judgments towards the vessels of wrath. And that

this eternal counsel of God should take effect, as he had purposed, man was created righteous, wise, just, and good, having free will; neither subject to the thralldom of sin nor of Satan, at the first creation. But suddenly cometh Satan, enemy to God and to man his good creature, and first poured in venom into the heart of the woman, which afterward she poured into the heart of Adam; to the which both the one and the other, without all violence used on God's part, do the willingly consent; and so conspiring with the serpent, do accuse God of a lie; do fully consent to arrogate or challenge to themselves the power of the Godhead, of mind and purpose {so far as in them lay} to thrust down and depose Him from his eternal throne. Here we see how the creatures and their wills, without compulsion, do serve God's purpose and counsel. For Satan was neither sent nor commanded of God to tempt man, but of malice and hatred did most willingly and greedily run to the same. The will of man being free before, was not by God violently compelled to obey Satan; but man of free will did consent to Satan, and conspire against God. And yet was the fall of man not only foreseen and foreknown of God, but also before decreed, for the manifestation of his glory.

Let us yet take another example, that the matter may be more evident. The death of Christ Jesus for man's redemption was decreed in the eternal counsel of God before the foundations of the world were laid, as we were elected in him, and as he was the Lamb killed from the beginning; which death also was decreed in the same counsel of God to be in a certain time appointed; and that so certainly, that neither could the malice of any creature prevent the hour appointed of God thereto, neither yet could any policy or chance impede or transfer the same to any other time. For how oft Christ was before assaulted, the Evangelists do witness; but always his answer was, "my hour is not yet come." And what impediments did occur immediately before his death is also evident. The feast of Passover was at that time, the fame of Christ was great, the favour of the people with public voices was declared, and the counsels

of the High Priests and Elders had decreed, that, to avoid sedition, his death should be delayed till after that feast. But all these were shortly overthrown, and Christ did suffer in the very time appointed, as he before had forespoken.

But now to the instruments which serve in this matter, and whether they were compelled by God or not. Judas, we know, was not one of the least; and what moved him the Holy Ghost doth witness, to wit, his avariciousness. The Scribes, Pharisees, Priests and Elders, and people, led, some of malice and envy, some to gratify their rulers, and altogether of set purpose to crucify Christ, do consent with Judas. Pilate, albeit he long refused, and by divers means studied to deliver Christ, yet in the end, for fear of displeasure, as well of the priests and people, as of the Emperor, he willingly, without all compulsion on God's part, pronounced an unjust sentence of death against Christ Jesus; which his soldiers also most willingly did execute. Thus, I say, we see that the creatures and their wills, without all compulsion, do serve God's counsel and purpose.

Here I know, that you think that either I write against myself, or else that I conclude a great absurdity; for, if I say that God did nothing but foresee these things, and so permitted them {as after you speak} to follow their own train; that he worketh no more but as a simple beholder of a tragedy; then do I agree with you. And if I do say, {as in very deed I do understand and affirm,} that the eternal counsel and purpose of God did so rule in all these things, that rather they did serve to God's purpose and most just will, then fulfill their most wicked wills; then will you cry, blasphemy, and say that I deliver the Devil, Adam, and all the wicked, from sin, of the which I make God to be author. To the first I have answered before, that as I separate not God's foreknowledge from his counsel, so do I affirm that He worketh all in all things, according to the purpose of the same his good will; and yet that he useth no violence, neither in compelling his creatures, neither constraining their wills by any external force, neither yet taking their wills from them, but in all wisdom and justice using

them as he knoweth most expedient for the manifestation of his glory, without any violence, I say, done to their wills. For violence is done to the will of a creature, when it willeth one thing, and yet by force, by tyranny, or by a greater power, it is compelled to do the things which it would not; as if a modest, chaste and honest matron, or chaste virgin, should be assaulted alone by a wicked and filthy man, who with violence and force {though the will of the woman did plainly resist} did deflower and corrupt her. This is violence done to the will, and she of necessity was compelled to suffer that ignominy and shame, which nevertheless she most abhorred.

Do we say that God did {or doth} any such violence to his creatures? Did he compel Satan to tempt the woman, when his will was contrary thereto? Did the will of Adam resist the temptation of the woman, and did he so hate and abhor to eat of that fruit, that it behoved God to compel his will repugning thereto to eat of it, and so to break his commandments? Or, did he not rather willingly hear and obey the voice of his wife? Consider, I beseech you, how plainly we put a difference betwixt violence, which you call mere necessity, and God's secret counsel and eternal purpose. But yet you cry, "wherein then did man offend? Who can resist the will of God? Why doth he complain, seeing that his counsel and purpose, by such means, is brought to pass?" Do you not understand that these were the furious cries of those to whom Saint Paul imposes silence, with this sentence, "O man, what art thou that dost dare reason against God?" &c.

But lest that you complain {as your common custom is} of our obscurity and dark speaking, I will even in one or two words declare, why the creatures offend even when they serve most effectually to God's purpose; to wit, because that they neither have the glory of God in their actions before their eyes, neither yet mind they to serve nor obey God's purpose and will. Satan, in tempting man, studied nothing to promote God's glory; man, in obeying the temptation, looked not to the counsel of God; Judas, Ananias, Pilate, the

soldiers, and the rest, had nothing less in mind then man's redemption to be performed by their counsels and wicked works. And therefore, of God's justice, were they everyone reputed sinners; yea, and some of them reprobated forever. If these reasons do not satisfy you, yet shall they be a testimony as to what is our doctrine; and, as I trust, shall also be a reasonable contestation to the godly and simple reader. More would I have spoken in the same matter, and so to have put end unto it at once; but because that after, by the reason of your most unjust accusations, I will be compelled to have to do with you again, I abide opportunity.

Now to your reasons. Man's will, I say, in the self-remained free, notwithstanding that God in his eternal counsel had decreed his fall; and that because no violence, as before is declared, was done unto it. The will of our Master and Saviour Christ Jesus, notwithstanding the immutable decree of his death, appointed to be at a certain time, was so free, that albeit the power of nature might have given unto him more years of life; and also that the human nature did abhor the cruel and ignominious death; yet did he subject both his will and the power of nature unto the will of his heavenly Father; as he doth witness, saying, "not that I will, Father, but let that be done which thou willest."

No wonder it is, that you cannot see how God's will can remain in liberty, except that he abide in suspense or dote, and so daily and hourly change his purpose and counsel, as occasion is offered unto him by men and by their actions. If this be to make God bound, and to take from him liberty, to affirm that he is infinite in wisdom, infinite in goodness, infinite in justice, and infinite in power, so doth he most constantly, most freely, most justly, and most wisely, bring that to pass which in his eternal counsel he hath determined; if this, I say, be to take from God freedom, wisdom, and liberty, as you do rail, I must confess myself a transgressor. But if your cogitations and foolish conclusions of his eternal Godhead, be, as, alas, too manifestly you declare yourselves, so profane, so carnal,

and so wicked, that long, you abiding in the same, cannot escape God's just vengeance; repent, before that in his anger he arrest, and declare that your justice, whereof so much you brag, is manifest blasphemy against his dear Son Christ Jesus! God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve his small flock from your venom and most dangerous heresies, and stop your blasphemous mouths, that thus dare jest upon God, as if he were one of your companions, saying, "then is he a goodly wise God; then is God bound himself," &c.

THE ADVERSARY.

The third argument gather they upon that which is written to the Romans, the ninth chapter, "afore the children were born, that the purpose of God by election might stand, it was said, the elder shall serve the younger; as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." For the true understanding of this Scripture, we must know first that these words, "the elder shall serve the younger," are not spoken of Jacob and Esau, {for as concerning the flesh, Esau did never serve Jacob,} but they are spoken of two nations which were to come of them; as the Lord said to Rebecca, not two men, but "two nations are in thy belly." And these words, "afore the children were born," are not to be referred to the sentence which followeth, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." For there was no such thing spoken before their birth, {as thou may plainly see in Genesis,} but that was spoken many years after by the Prophet Malachi; not of Jacob and Esau, but of two nations, of the Israelites and Edomites, as the Prophet Malachi expounded; which we may well understand of the True Church and of the Malignant Church. If that had been spoken before their birth, then had the Lord not said, "Jacob I have loved, and Esau I have hated," in the preterit tense, but "Jacob shall I love, and Esau shall I hate," in the future tense. As in the other sentence he saith, "the elder shall serve the younger," and not "the elder hath served the younger." Now the Lord loved Jacob of his own bountiful goodness and free grace.

Esau he hated because of his wickedness; for the Lord abhorred all wicked doers. As Moses saith, "it is not for thy righteousness sake, or for thy right heart, that thou goest to possess their land, but for the wickedness of these nations, the Lord thy God doth cast them out before thee, even to perform the word which the Lord thy God swore unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." Here we see how that the Israelites receive the land of promise, not for their own righteousness sake, but only by the bountiful goodness of God. Again, the Canaanites are cast out of the same land, not because it was God's pleasure, or that he delighted in their fall, but for their abominations which they committed against God. So that Jacob is beloved, it cometh of the free grace and goodness of God; and that Esau is hated, it cometh of his own evil deserving; conform to the saying of the Lord, "thy destruction, O Israel, is of thyself, and thy health cometh of me."

ANSWER.

Your cold and unsavory exposition which you {following the profane subtilty of Castellio} make upon the words of the Apostle, written in the ninth chapter to the Romans, is neither able to justify your error, neither yet to improve the doctrine which upon the same we collect and gather, which is this, that as God by his free benediction separated the people of Israel from all nations of the earth, so did his free election make difference betwixt the men of the same people, of whom he did freely choose some to salvation, and did appoint others to eternal condemnation. Secondly, that of this his free election, there is none other cause nor foundation but his mere goodness, as also his mercy; which after the fall of Adam doth, without all respect had to their works, receive and embrace whom it pleaseth him. Thirdly, that God in this his free election is bound to no necessity to offer the same to all indifferently, but contrary wise he passed by such as it pleaseth him, and whom it pleaseth him he receiveth. These propositions, I say, are so evident in Paul's words, that they never can

be moved by your malicious and ignorant wresting of the text, for in every one of Paul's sentences, he strivest directly against your error. For where he saith, "Rebecca conceived of one, that is of our father Isaac," he secluded all cause that might have been by accidents, which come in time, either in the father or in the mother; and in these words, "when the children were not yet born, and had neither done good nor evil," he secluded all respect that can be alleged to have been in the children. But where he saith, "that the purpose of God might abide according to election, not of works, but of the caller," &c., is plainly denied merits, dignity, or works to come, to be any cause of God's free election. For if he would have persuaded men to have believed that God had elected some in respect of their good works to come, and had rejected others for their evil works only, which he foresaw that they should do, Paul had not so vehemently urged these terms and sentences, "that the purpose of God might abide according to election, not of works," &c., but he should simply have said, God hath chosen some in respect of their good works, which he foresaw they should do, which therefore he would reward, first with his election, and after with his kingdom. But the plain contrary way to this we see the Apostle useth, pulling man altogether from contemplation of himself to God, to his free mercy, to his free grace and eternal purpose, and also to his most deep and profound judgments. Imagine what shift so ever you can, you shall never be able to avoid this plain simplicity of the Apostle.

With what face can you deny that these words, "the elder shall serve the younger," are not spoken of Jacob and Esau, seeing that the Apostle in plain words doth affirm that they were spoken and meant of the two children before they were born? He saith not, before the two nations were born, but "before the children were born." Your reason is, because, as concerning the flesh, Esau did never serve Jacob. I answer, neither yet did God say, the elder shall serve the younger in the flesh, but simply did pronounce, "the elder shall serve the younger." But well do you declare what is your

understanding of dominion and servitude, be it in flesh or be it in spirit.

Was it no kind of servitude, I pray you, yea, even in the flesh, that Esau was compelled to beg potage at Jacob, and for the same to sell all title of his birthright? Was it no thralldom, that with crying, howling, and furious roars, he was compelled to beg the benediction which Jacob had gotten, and yet could not obtain it? Did not his heart feel subjection when he seeth his father so constant in preferring Jacob to him, that by no means he would retreat or call back one word. We do not deny but the diversity was also established betwixt the two nations, but that the heads should be secluded, that are you never able to prove. But rather the battle which did begin in the mother's womb was established and confirmed by the oracle of God, to continue betwixt the posterity of those two heads. Did Rebecca and Isaac after see God's providence and will to be contrary to that which he had purposed, {which was to give the benediction to Esau,} did they, I say, understand that Jacob had no part in that promise touching his own person? The words of Isaac do witness the contrary, for he saith, "I have established him lord over thee," &c.

By the same reason which you make, I may prove that these words were not spoken of their posterities, for during longer time than either did Jacob or Esau live, the Edomites did not serve the Israelites in the flesh, which did only begin in the latter days of David, and did continue to the days of Joram, {son of Jehoshaphat,} when they departed from that obedience; neither yet were they ever after that brought into subjection again. But be, therefore, the oracles and promises of God vain? Yea, had they not their effect, both in the one people and in the other, even when the one was in most miserable bondage, first in Egypt, and after in Babylon, and when the other was in greatest felicity, to man's appearance? Yet before God was that sentence true, "the elder shall serve the younger," for he had further respect than the present estate, as the Apostle doth declare that all the faithful Patriarchs had. Jacob would not have interchanged the comfort which he

received in his first journey from his father's house for all the worldly joy that Esau possessed. For in seeing that scale or ladder, God sitting upon the head of it, the foot of it touching the earth, upon the which did angels ascend and come down, and in hearing that most joyful and comfortable voice, "I am the God of Abraham thy father, and of Isaac; the land whereupon thou steapest, I will give to thee, and to thy seed, &c., and lo, I am with thee, and will keep thee whether soever thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land," in seeing and hearing these things, I say, did Jacob understand that the benediction of God extended further than to temporal things, yea, that rather it did extend to that union and conjunction which was betwixt God and man in that blessed Seed promised, than to the possession of the land of Canaan. For the one did neither Abraham, Isaac, nor Jacob possess in their lives, neither yet their posterity many years after; but the joy of the other did all the elect feel and see, and did rejoice, as Christ Jesus doth witness of our father Abraham.

That these words, "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," are not written in Genesis, neither yet are spoken of God unto Rebecca, none of us denieth; but that which you thereof infer, to wit, that therefore they are not to be referred to that sentence, which Paul alledgeth, "before the children were born, {or} yet they did either good or bad," proceedeth either of your blind ignorance, or else of your malicious despite, which against the free grace of God you have conceived for establishing of your own justice.

True it is, these words were spoken by Malachi the Prophet, after the reduction of the people from the captivity of Babylon. But when we have a little considered the scope and purpose of the Prophet, then shall we first consider, whether he did understand the love of God and his hatred to appertain to the two peoples only, and not also to the two original heads; and after, we shall see, whether the mind and plain words of Paul will suffer and bear your interpretation or not.

Shortly after that the people of Israel, I mean the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi, were, by the

miraculous work of God, after the bondage of seventy years, set at liberty and brought again to Jerusalem; in which they did re-edify the temple, repair the walls, and begin to multiply, and so to grow to some strength within the city and land; they fall to their old nature, I mean to be ingrate and unthankful unto God. The people were slothful; and the priests, who should have provoked the people to the remembrance of those great benefits, were become even like to the rest. The Lord therefore did raise up his Prophet Malachi, {who was the last before Christ,} sharply to rebuke, and plainly to convict this horrible ingratitude of that unthankful nation, who so shamefully had forgotten those so great benefits recently bestowed upon them. And thus beginneth he his prophecy, "I have loved you, saith the Lord," in which words he speaketh not of a common love, which in preserving and feeding all creatures is common to the reprobate, but of that love by the which he had sanctified and separated them from the rest of nations, to have his glory manifested. But because they {as all ingrate persons do} did not consider wherein this his love towards them more than towards others did stand, he bringeth them to the fountain, demanding this question, "was not Esau brother to Jacob, saith the Lord, and nevertheless Jacob have I loved, and Esau I have hated." And this he proveth, not only by the diversity of the two countries which were given to their posterities, but also by that, that God continually showed himself loving to Jacob and to his posterity, reducing them again after long captivity; declaring himself, as it were, enemy to Edom, whose desolation he would never restore, but would destroy that which they should go about to build.

Let now the godly reader judge, whether that the mind of the Prophet was to seclude Jacob in his person from the love of God, and Esau from his hatred; or that it was not rather to rebuke the unthankfulness of the people, who did not consider that undeserved love which God did show to their first father while he was yet in his mother's bosom. For where he saith, "was not Esau brother to Jacob," he would put them in mind that Jacob had no prerogative above Esau, yea, that he was inferior

to him as concerning the law of nature, and therefore that he ought to have been subject unto him; but God of free grace did prefer the younger to the elder, which love and preferment he constantly did keep to his seed after him.

This I am assured can no godly man deny to be the very meaning of the Prophet. True it is that he doth include both the peoples, the one loved and the other hated. But what reason is it that the heads shall be secluded, seeing that the beginning of the diversities did first appear in them; and the Prophet plainly saith, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated?" Now, to the mind of the Apostle, you say, that these words, "afore the children were born," are not to be referred to the sentence which followeth, "Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated," and the cause you add, as we before have declared. I answer, that the most just judgments of God are fearful, and your blindness ought to admonish all men to examine themselves with what conscience they go to entreat God's secret mysteries. If that sentence, "before the children were born," ought not to be referred to these words, "Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated," I pray you to what words ought they to be referred? Did the Apostle speak them at all adventure, without respect to anything following? I trust you will grant as much as God spake, to wit, that before the children were born, God said, "the elder shall serve the younger." And then I pray you answer, whether you think that the preferment of Jacob to Esau proceeded from love or from hatred? Or if the subjection of Esau to his brother was not a declaration of God's hatred? If you deny, yet will the Prophet condemn you, as before we have proved; you cannot escape with the solution, which a writer defending free will giveth, which is this, "that there mention is made only of temporal and carnal benediction, meant under the name of love; and of poverty, with barrenness of ground, understand by the name of hatred," which solution is so cold that it perisheth in the self. For I think no man to be so blind, but that he seeth the mind of the Apostle to be bent

upon the spiritual benediction, as in his whole disputation is evident.

But let it be that the corporal benediction {which we utterly exclude not} be there understand and meant, yet that neither helpeth him nor you. For wheresoever God's established love is, there is life; wheresoever his established hatred is, there is death, but upon Jacob and upon his seed {spiritual I mean} was established the love of God, as the Prophet affirmeth, and our Apostle most profoundly alledgeth; and upon Esau and upon his posterity was established and confirmed the hatred; ergo, upon him and them remained death. Consider now how that the Apostle, after these words, "the elder shall serve the younger," joinest this sentence, "as it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau I have hated." In which words the Holy Ghost agreeth together the words of the Prophet and the words of God spoken to Rebecca, and maketh the one to interpret the other. For where God saith, "the elder shall serve," that expounded the Prophet, "God hated Esau," and where he pronounceth dominion to the younger, that the Prophet exclaimed, saying, "Jacob have I loved." And when did God thus love the one and hate the other, pronouncing the one to be lord and the other to be servant? "While they were yet {saith he} in their mother's womb, and before they had either done good or bad." Deny now if you can, that the former words ought not to be referred to the subsequences. Your malicious minds compel me often to repeat one thing.

Your reasoning of the preterit and future tense is so foolish that it needeth no confutation. For we confess that God spake not those words to Rebecca, but that the Prophet, as is declared, spake them after; by the which he sendeth them to the ancient love of God, which began before that ever their father could know or serve God. In which is to be noted, that he maketh neither mention of Abraham nor of Isaac, but of Jacob, and of Jacob in his mother's womb, to pull down this pride, which you, with the Pelagians and Papists, have conceived of your works going before, and foreseen by God to follow in you. But the Prophet of God did so

daunt the stout hearts of that his people, {were they in other things never so wicked,} that they did not allege that any cause was either in their father or in them, why that they or he should be preferred to other nations, and specially to the Edomites, who descended from Esau, in all things like to Jacob, God's only grace excepted.

I praise God, that so far you will confess of God's eternal truth, that it was not for their righteousness that Israel received the inheritance, but only because God freely loved their fathers. But why so suddenly you slide from the principal purpose, leaving Esau and his posterity, and do enter to speak why the Canaanites were cast forth, I see no just cause. For neither doth Moses, in the first oracle of God; neither the Prophet Malachi, in explaining the same; neither yet our Apostle, in applying both those places to the spiritual benediction, lay the seed of Jacob against the Canaanites; but Jacob is set against Esau, and the people descending from the one against the people that descended from the other. The question there might justly have been demanded, what prerogative hath Jacob above Esau? Moses, the Prophet, and the Apostle, do answer, assuredly none, except only grace, which made difference betwixt them, whom nature in all things had made equal. For both were come of Abraham, both of one father, both of one mother, both conceived at once, both fostered under one climate, region, influence of stars, and yet it was said, "the elder shall serve the younger."

We know that the Canaanites came of a cursed father; whom, if Paul should have compared with the Israelites, they should have complained of injury done unto them. And his reasons had been easily dissolved; for if he had said, the election of God is free, and hath respect to no works, and had brought in the seed of Abraham elected, and the seed of Cain rejected and accursed, for probation of the same, they suddenly should, and justly might have replied, Cain mocked his father, and therefore was he and his posterity accursed, and so had God respect to works. But the Apostle

looketh more circumspectly to so grave a matter, and therefore did choose such an example as wherein the wit nor reason of man can find no cause of inequality. Of this I thought good to put you and the readers in mind, lest perchance you should imagine, that as great cause of reprobation was found in Esau before he was born, as Moses lays to the charge of the Canaanites; and so I perceive in a part you do. For in the end, and after you have affirmed that the Canaanites were cast out of the land by reason of their wickedness, you return to Esau, {repenting yourselves, I trust, that so imprudently you had slipped from one lineage to another,} and these words you affirm, "that Esau is hated, cometh of his own evil deserving, conformed to the saying of the Lord, thy destruction, O Israel, is of thyself, and thy health cometh of me."

In which affirmation and pretended probation of the same, I find no less negligence in you than before I have shown and proven. For as most impudently before you confounded the seed of Abraham, who by God's own mouth was blessed, with the seed of Cain, who in expressed words was accursed; so here you confound Israel, elected of God to be his people in Jacob, with Edom, rejected from that honour in their father Esau, before that either the one did good or the other did evil. The words of the Prophet, which you bring to prove that Esau was hated for his evil deserving, was neither spoken to him nor to his posterity, but they were spoken to that people whom God had preferred to all nations of the earth, to whom he had shown his manifold graces, and to whom he had been salvation and help, even in their most desperate calamity; but then, for their defection from him, and for their idolatry committed, were become most afflicted and miserable, daily tending to further destruction. To these, I say, and not to Esau, nor yet to his posterity, did God say, "O, Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself," or, "O, Israel, it hath destroyed thee," for so is the Hebrew text, "for in me is thy health." In which words he repressed the grudging and the murmuring of the people, who in their misery did rather accuse God of cruelty than repent or acknowledge

their sins and idolatry to be the cause of their ruin, as in Ezekiel well may be seen. To such God saith, "Israel, thou art in most extreme misery, thy honour is decayed, and the glory of thy former age is now turned to ignominy and shame. What is the cause? It lieth not in me; for as I am eternal and immutable, so is not my hand shortened this day, neither yet my power diminished more than when I did deliver thee from the bondage of Egypt. In me is thy health now, as it was then, if that thy sins did not make separation betwixt thee and me." Plain it is, first, that here no mention is made of Esau nor Edom, but of Israel only; and secondarily, that God speaketh nothing in this place why he did first elect Jacob and reject Esau, but why it was that Israel, which sometimes was honorable, and feared of all nations, was then become most miserable and afflicted on all sides. Except that you be able to prove that Esau committed as manifest idolatry before he was born, and before that Jacob was preferred unto him, as Israel did before they came to destruction, you have proved nothing of your affirmation. Further, I say, that if Esau was hated for his evil deserving, then must it needs follow that Jacob was loved for his well deserving, by the argument following of the nature of the contraries.

But that directly repugnant to the words of Moses, to the interpretation of all the Prophets, and to the mind and strong reasons of the Apostle, who plainly deny works by past or to come to be any cause of God's free election. True it is, we be elected in Christ Jesus to be holy, and to walk in good works which God hath prepared. But every reasonable man knoweth what difference there is betwixt the cause and the effect. Election {in which I include the free grace and favour of God} is the fountain from which springeth faith, and faith is the mother of all good works. But what foolishness were it therefore to reason, "my works are the cause of my faith, and my faith is the cause of my election." Thus gently I put you in mind with greater reverence and circumspection to interpret and apply the sacred Word of God. Thus you proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

Their fourth argument, "hath not the potter power over the clay, even of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour." Of this they infer, that God hath ordained and made some to salvation, and some to destruction and damnation. But for the more perfect understanding of this place, before thou go any further, read the eighteenth chapter of Jeremiah, and thou shalt perceive this to be the meaning. As the potter hath the clay in his hand, so hath God all men in his power; and as the potter breaketh the vessel wherein is found an incurable fault, so God destroys the man in whom there is found obstinate wickedness which cannot be amended. It is not the meaning of this place, that God, without any just cause, doth make any man to destruction. For as the potter maketh no vessel to break, yet notwithstanding he may, but he will not lose both his clay and his labour, but only breaketh such as will not frame to be good, notwithstanding he made them to be good; as every good artificer would his work were good; so God created no man to lose him, but only looseth them which will not be good whom he created to be good. As the Lord saith, "I planted thee a noble vine and a good root, whose seed is all faithful, how art thou then turned into bitter, unfruitful, and strange grapes?" God would all men were good, and that all men should be saved; forasmuch as He is good himself, and all that he maketh is good. But as the potter maketh of the same clay, some vessels to serve at the table, some in the kitchen or in the privy; so God hath some men to be in the body of Christ, as eyes, ears, and hands, as Princes, Prophets, Apostles; some to be as feet and other secret parts, as labourers, and other of the inferior sort, for whom he hath not bestowed so many and so excellent gifts; yet must thou understand, that it is not all one thing to be made to be broken, and to be made to dishonest uses; every vessel which is evil is broken, whether it be made to honest or dishonest uses; yea, though it were made of gold; and

as it appeareth plainly in Jeremiah, where the Lord saith so, "though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, were the signet of my right hand, yet will I pluck him of," and thereafter, "this man Coniah shall be like an image robbed, and torn in pieces." Hath a man anything appointed for a more honest use than his signet? Yet seest thou, that if it become nought it shall be broken and destroyed. Again, every good vessel, whether it be made to honest or dishonest uses, it is kept, and not broken. Ask the potter, and he shall answer thee, that he will be loath to break any vessel; but if any chance to be naught, he sheweth his power in breaking of it. Ask the husbandman and he shall answer thee, that he planted no fruit tree to be barren; but if it chance to be barren, he cuts it down, and plants another in place of it. Ask the magistrate, and he shall answer thee, that it is not his will to kill any of his subjects, for he would that they were all good; but if any become a thief and murderer, he sheweth his power even over him in killing him. Even so saith God, "I will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he convert and live." I will not that any man be evil, and therefore I forbid all evil; but if any man, contrary to my commandment and will, of his own free choice and mind, refuse the good which he might have accepted, and doth the evil which he might have left undone, then do I show my power over him, in that I cast him away like the shards of a naughty pot, which serveth to no good use.

ANSWER.

Why, for the more perfect understanding of Paul's mind, any man should rather read the words of Jeremiah, written in the eighteenth chapter of his Prophecy, than the words written in forty-eight chapter of the Prophet Isaiah, I see no just cause. For plain it is that the Prophet Jeremiah in that place hath no respect to God's eternal election. He disputeth not why God hath appointed in his eternal counsel some to life and some to death, but retaineth himself within the limits and bounds of the matter which then he entreated, which

was to assure the Jews, that God would reject them from that same land which to Abraham he had promised, and had given to his posterity, and yet would he preserve them to be a people such as he thought good. This doctrine was strange, and to many incredible. For it appeareth to be contrary to God's promise, who had pronounced, that to Abraham and his seed he would give that land forever. Much trouble and contradiction {as may be seen} did the Prophet suffer for the teaching and affirming this former doctrine. And therefore it pleased the mercy and wisdom of God, by divers means, to strengthen and confirm him in the same. Amongst which this was one, that commanding him to go down to a potter's house, he promised to speak with him there; that is, to give unto him further knowledge and revelation of his will; who when he came, found the potter, as is written, making a clay pot upon his turning wheel; which pot in his presence did break, but the potter immediately gathering up the pot shards, did fashion and form it anew, and made it another vessel, even as best pleased him. And then came the word of the Lord upon the Prophet, saying, "may I not do unto you, O house of Israel, even as this potter doth? Behold, you are in my hand, O house of Israel, even as the clay is in the hand of the potter." By which fact seen, and words after heard, was the Prophet more confirmed in that which before he had taught, to wit, that God, for just causes, would destroy and break down the estate and policy of that commonwealth, and yet, nevertheless, would repair and build it up again, to such an estate as best pleased his wisdom; as the sequel did declare. For that great multitude, corrupt with sin, he break down, dispersing and scattering them amongst diverse nations; and yet after, he did collect and gather them together, and so made them a people, of whom the head of all justice, Christ Jesus, did spring.

But what hath this to do with the eternal election of God, by the which he hath elected some to life everlasting, whom our Apostle calleth "vessels of mercy," and hath left others in their own corruption and perpetual condemnation? And so, I say, because that

Jeremiah entreateth one thing, that is, a temporal punishment and the mutation which shortly should follow in Jerusalem, and the Apostle entreateth another, as before is said; the one can be no exposition to the other, but rather the Apostle hath respect, or at least alludes to the saying of Isaiah, which thus speaketh, "woe to be to him that strivest with his Maker, the vessel of clay with the potter of clay. Shall the clay say to his potter, what makest thou?" In which words {as before we have more largely spoken} the Prophet, and the Apostle following his phrase, represses the pride of man, who, compared to God, is much more inferior to his Majesty than clay compared to the potter. For God hath created and made man when he was not, which thing the potter did not to the clay of which he maketh the diversity of pots; and therefore of right hath God more power over man than hath the potter over clay. This I doubt not to be the mind of the Holy Ghost in both the places. In which similitude is further to be considered, that as the potter doth no injury to the clay, what form soever he giveth it, {for the matter and substance of it he doth not change,} so doth not God wrong the reprobate, whom he prepareth to be vessels of wrath, for that are they of nature. Where that you say, that it is not the meaning of this place, that God, without all just causes, doth make any man to destruction; none of us doth hold the contrary, for we affirm that the causes of reprobation are most just; but yet we say, that they are incomprehensible to man.

That you give to God no greater power, nor none other will, than to your "good artificer," consider with yourself, how indiscreetly you match His eternal Godhead {whose power is infinite, and whose determined will no creature can resist} with creatures that be but impotent, unwise, and often disappointed of their purpose and will. True it is, that no artificer willingly would lose his clay and labour, but is compelled to break those that be faulty. But this proceedeth partly from his ignorance, who did not before know and see the fault which was in the matter; and partly of his impotency, who cannot at his will otherwise remedy the

faulty vessel, but only by breaking the same. But dare you, or will you, impute upon God those imperfections? So you seem to do, for this you write, "so God created no man to lose him, but only looseth them that would not be good whom he created to be good; as the Lord saith, I planted thee a noble vine."

The chief end of man's creation, we have before declared to be the glory of God; which if you cannot see shine in the just condemnation of the reprobate, accuse your blindness. That God created the reprobate to the day of destruction, Solomon affirmeth, as often before is said. But that he was created to be good, that will not the words of the Prophet, which you adduce, prove; for in that place there is no mention made of creation, but of plantation, which is a thing far different from creation. The substance which was before is planted, that by manuring and travail of the planter it may be better; but creation importeth the being of the substance which before was not. And so the Prophet in this place, which you allege to prove that God created all men to be good, meaneth no such thing, but only rebuketh the Israelites, who, long after their creation, were planted by the hand of God, and were continually watered by his Prophets, and yet did they bring forth no better fruit. How that God would all men were good, and also that all men should be saved, we shall, God willing, after speak. How that God remaining good forever, and yet had his creature fall from his original goodness, I have before spoken, and will not now trouble the reader with the repetition of the same.

In the difference which you make betwixt the vessels which the potter maketh, some to serve the table, and some the kitchen, or privy, of which he breaketh none but such as be faulty, you utterly disagree from the mind and plain words of the Holy Ghost. For S. Paul calleth not the vessels of honour, Princes, or Prophets, and Apostles; and the vessels of dishonour, the laborers and inferior sort of men, but the one he calleth the vessels of mercy, and the other he calleth the vessels of wrath. The one he feareth not to affirm to be prepared and ordained to destruction, that

the severe judgment of God against sin may appear in them; the other to be prepared to glory, that the riches of his mercy may be praised forever. This plain simplicity will not the Apostle recant, neither yet thereof {God assisting us} will we be ashamed, howsoever you rage and blaspheme the verity. And this I say, that your difference betwixt honest and dishonest vessels, and betwixt those that shall be broken and not be broken, is altogether besides the purpose of the Apostle. And so of Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim you can prove no more but that God would deprive him from his kingdom, and from the seat of David, in which unworthily he did reign. If he was the reprobate, then although he was King, yet was he the vessel of dishonour; for these words, "although he were the signet in my right hand," are not spoken to declare that in very deed he was the signet in the hand of God, but are spoken against the foolish presumption of him, and of the Jews, which living most wickedly, did yet nevertheless brag, and boast that God could not leave the seat of David void, but that one of his seed must forever sit on it.

And this is evident, if the text be well marked. For where he saith, "although he were the signet," he sufficiently declareth that so he was not; and so I say that those words prove nothing of your purpose. For first must you prove, that because he was a King, therefore he was a vessel of honour, in such sense as S. Paul speaketh. And secondarily, you must prove, that he was elected to the life everlasting, because it is said, that albeit he were a signet in the right hand of God, yet should he be plucked of, which by plain Scriptures to do, will be more than hard for you, howsoever that you brag, that you will prove all your purpose by Scriptures. Where you send us to ask of the potter, of the husbandman, and of the magistrate, if any of them would willingly break his vessel, plant a tree to be barren, or kill any of his subjects; we send you, as before, to ask counsel at the plain Scriptures, whether that in God there is not a greater knowledge, greater power, and a justice more perfect, although it be

incomprehensible to our dull senses, than that there is in the potter, husbandman, or magistrate.

How that God will not the death of the sinner, but rather that he may convert and live, we shall shortly, God willing, after speak. And therefore omitting that which indigestly you heap together, I proceed to that which followeth.

THE ADVERSARY.

Where you reply with that it lieth not in man's will or running, but in the mercy of God, I answer, by the same sentence that you may both will and run; which is contrary to your whole purpose and doctrine; and yet, saith the Apostle, our salvation dependeth on the mercy of God, for it is his free gift. The Gentiles, which for their wickedness, were rejected of God, in vain should they either will or run, without God extended his mercy towards them, as he doth now presently. Like as on the other side, the Jews, which for their sins be now abject, in vain should they either will or run, without it pleasing God to extend his mercy over them, as he shall do after that the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, as witnesseth Paul. For there we must understand, that when it pleased God to offer us his mercy, yet without we both will and run, we shall not obtain the reward; notwithstanding, neither for our willing or running are we worthy to receive salvation, for it is the free gift of God, which he giveth to us only for his own mercies sake. God offered salvation to Jerusalem, not for the deserving, but of his mercy; yet obtained they not salvation, because they would neither will nor run. As Christ saith, "how often would I have gathered thy children, as the hen doth her chickens and thou wouldest not!" So the Scribes and the Pharisees made the counsel of God towards them of none effect, for they despised it; God's will was to save them, but they would neither will nor run, but keep still their old pace, and so they perished. Wherefore unto our salvation is required chiefly the mercy of God, as the only sufficient and the efficient cause thereof, whereby we being unworthy and

his enemies, be reconciled and received unto the fellowship of the saints. Secondly, is required that we both will and run, not as the cause, but rather as the effect and fruit of our reconciliation, declaring ourselves to be thankful for the benefits which we have freely without our merits received; otherwise the kingdom shall be taken from us again, and given to such as shall both will and run, bringing forth the fruits thereof.

ANSWER.

Your ancient father Pelagius, conjured enemy to the free grace of God, did brag and boast, as you do, that in man there was a will and a running. But the probation of both is one; that is to say, your affirmation must suffice for authority. You boldly write, that of those words of the Apostle, "neither it is of him that willeth, neither yet of him that runneth, but of God having mercy," it is plain that "we both will and run." But how is this proved? Your long discourse {in which it seemeth that you have forgotten yourself} proveth no part of your purpose. For the question is not, what either the Jew or the Gentile doth {I mean} after they have received the grace of God; for then we confess that they have {yet not of themselves} a will and study to walk in godliness; but the question is, whether this will and study, which now by grace they have received, was any cause of their election; the contrary whereof we have before proved. We do not imagine the faithful members of Christ's body to be stocks or stones insensible, without will or study of godliness; but we affirm that it is God that worketh in us the good will and the good thought, for of ourselves we are not sufficient to think one good thought. We further affirm, that except with all humility the free grace offered with thanksgiving be received, that they serve nothing to the salvation of the contemners. But therewith we add, that it is God only who taketh away the stony and stubborn heart, and giveth to us a fleshy heart; in which He by the power of his Holy Spirit writes his law, maketh us to walk in his ways, draweth us to his Son Christ Jesus, giveth us into his protection; I

mean, as faith assureth us in our conscience, and so we acknowledge God alone by Christ Jesus his Son to be the beginning, the middle, and the end of our sanctification, godly life, and salvation. I, for my part, do yet again praise God that his verity is of that strength, that sometimes it will compel the very enemies to bear testimony to it. And I pray God to retain you in that mind, that unfeignedly you may believe and confess, that what virtues or good motions that ever be in you, be the only effects or fruits, as you call them, of your reconciliation, and neither cause of your election nor yet of your Justification.

That Jerusalem and the Scribes refused grace, and therefore justly were condemned, we consent with you; but that ever it was the eternal counsel and will of God to give them life everlasting, that we constantly deny. Our reasons we have before alleged, and after will have occasion to repeat some again. And therefore we proceed. Thus you write.

THE ADVERSARY.

Here, with great vehemency, you allege these words of Paul, "who hath been able to resist his will," of which saying you infer that God, without any cause known to us, hath reprobated and damned many, against which will no man can resist. These words did Paul write, because he did foresee, that of his former savings some devilish disposed persons would take occasion to burden God with unrighteousness, as you do, making him the author of evil; for you say, that God hath a secret will whereby he willeth the most part of the world to be condemned; which will, because it cannot be resisted, therefore of mere necessity, by the immutable decree of God, so many do perish. Further, you affirming God to be the cause of damnation, only because it so hath pleased him, you cause many others to burst out and say, "since his will and pleasure no man is able to resist, let him lay it on himself, and not to us, if any sin be committed." And surely for my part, were it not that I abhor your horrible doctrine, wherewith you cruelly

affirm God's ordinance to be the cause of damnation, I would not meddle further in this matter, but with reverence behold the works of God; forasmuch as I see, thanks be to God, no work of God wherein his mercy doth not clearly shine. But if your saying were true, then were his works full of cruelty, misery, damnation and destruction. Now, as touching this saying, "who is able to resist his will," we must learn what is God's will. If you ask the Lord, he will answer you, "it is not my will that any man sin, neither is it my will that the sinner die, but rather that he amend and live; but if he will not amend, but continue in sin, him will I punish, and him may I also punish, having power above all men, as the potter over the clay." Wherefore, when any man suffereth justly for his trespass, he ought not to accuse God, and say, "who can resist his will," as God would absolutely the destruction of his creatures, as you teach. God will all men to repent and amend; and also that they who will not repent and amend be punished. His will is just and full of mercy, against which will is no man able to resist; for either must they repent and amend, or else they must suffer. As the potter would gladly make of his clay a good vessel, but if it will not frame he breaketh it and casteth it away; and as the King would all his subjects to be obedient unto his laws, yet the unworthiness slave in his dominion hath power to break the King's laws; notwithstanding, when he suffereth for his offence, the King's will is fulfilled; even so, though God both willeth and commandeth us to observe his law, yet have we power to offend against the former part of his will, otherwise we should all observe the will of God and be saved, and so should there be no reprobate; but when for our disobedience we be punished, the will of God is fulfilled; which will is both good and just, and therefore ought no man to accuse it and say, "who is able to resist his will," no more than clay, when it framed not to be a good vessel, doth accuse the potter of breaking it.

ANSWER.

Ye be not able to prove, that in any vehemency we allege those words of the Apostle in other sentence than he wrote them; for, all praise and glory be unto God the merciful giver, we have not so little profited in the school of Christ Jesus, that we would wrest the words of the Holy Ghost to a contrary sense. We are not ignorant that the Apostle pronounceth these words in the person of carnal men, who, hearing that God hath mercy upon those that he will, and that also he maketh hard-hearted such as he will, do storm and furiously cry, "wherefore then doth he complain? Who is able to resist his will?" These words, I say, do we not urge to prove our doctrine; for where we affirm, that the only will of God is the perfect rule of all things which be done, and are to be done, in heaven and in earth, we build our doctrine upon evident testimonies of the Scriptures, and upon the chief principles of our religion and faith. David and Isaiah do both agree, that our God, who dwelleth in heaven, doth whatsoever he will in heaven and in earth; that he forms light, and doth create darkness, that is, giveth as well prosperity as adversity. Daniel affirmeth, that the supreme God distributeth kingdoms as best seemeth to his wisdom; and Solomon doth witness, that against the Lord there is no counsel can prevail. The necessary principles of our faith do teach us, that as in God there falleth no ignorance, so in him there is no impotency. He doth not, as it were in suspense and doubt, behold the event and chance of things, running after to seek remedy; but that in wisdom hath he disposed all things; willing nothing which he may not and doth not bring to pass, in time, according to his eternal purpose; and working nothing which is not most just, howbeit the causes thereof be hidden from us. Of these and many more Scriptures and necessary principles of our faith do we ground our doctrine, and not upon that one place, spoken in the rebuke of the stubborn and rebellious disputers with God. Ye burden us, that we accuse and make God to be the author of evil and the cause of damnation; that we cause many

burst out and say, "since his will and pleasure no man is able to resist, let him lay it on himself, and not to us, if any sin be committed." And last you affirm, that if our sayings be true, that then are God's works full of cruelty, misery, damnation, and destruction. And so of two things you accuse us, and the third you affirm inevitably to follow of our doctrine, if it be true.

Hereafter, I will not greatly labour to confute thy arguments; which is a thing most easy even to any godly man, howbeit he had never seen art nor studied the same. But seeing that thou and thy most pestilent sect be not content maliciously to slander those that in such a case be most innocent, but that also with most impudent mouths you vomit forth your horrible blasphemies against God's Majesty, I will most earnestly and most unfeignedly require of all Rulers, Princes, Magistrates, and Governors, who in the fear of God do rule above their subjects, that as they will answer in the presence of the Lord Jesus for the administration of justice committed to their charge, that indifferently they judge betwixt you and us; to wit, that if we can evidently be convicted of those crimes which you most maliciously and most unjustly lay to our charge, that then judgment without mercy be executed against us. But, and if you fail in your probation, and also if you cannot prove cruelty to be in God's works, supposing that our doctrine remain, as that it is, true and stable, that then such order may be taken for repressing of your venomous tongues, that neither you be permitted thus openly to blaspheme God's Majesty, neither thus maliciously to slander innocents, and to offend the ears of all godly hearers. And to the end that men shall not think that, being at this time accused, we begin to devise new defenses or excuses of ourselves, I will faithfully and simply bring forth of the works {as somewhat I have done before} of that singular instrument of Christ Jesus in the glory of his Gospel, John Calvin, such sentences as shall make plain to all men what our opinion is of God, of the fall of man, of the wondrous work of our redemption, and of the most just rejection and damnation of the reprobate.

"Thus {saith he} dependeth the perdition of the reprobate upon the Predestination of God, that the cause and the matter is altogether found in them. The first man fell, because the Eternal judged it expedient. Why he judged it we know not, yet certain it is that he so judged it, not but that he saw the glory of his name thereby to be illustrated. When that thou doest hear the mention of God's glory, there also remember that justice to be; for of necessity it is, that just must that be which deserveth praise. Man therefore falleth, {God's providence so ordaining,} but yet he falleth by his own fault. For God of short time before had pronounced, that all which he had made were very good. From whence then came such wickedness to man, that he so traitorously declined from his God? Lest that it might have been through that, that it proceeded from the creation, God approved by his own commendation whatsoever he had made. Therefore did man corrupt by his own malice that pure and clean nature which from God he had received; and by his fall he drew his whole posterity to perdition. Therefore let us rather behold the evident cause of damnation in the corrupt nature of mankind, than that we shall pretend to search it, being hid, and utterly incomprehensible, in the Predestination of God. Neither yet let us be ashamed so far to subject the capacity of our understanding to the incomprehensible wisdom of God, that in many of his mysteries we acknowledge and confess ourselves to be ignorant. For learned and blessed is the ignorance of those things, which to understand and know is neither lawful, neither yet possible in this life. The appearance of knowledge in such things is a kind of madness."

These be the words of this most godly writer, from whose judgment none of us doth dissent in this matter. For from him we must confess, except that we would in concealing the truth declare ourselves to be unthankful, that we all have received comfort, light, and erudition, as from God's good instrument. Who yet thus further proceeds, "there be three things {saith he} in this matter to be considered. First, that the eternal Predestination of God, by the which he had decreed

what should become of all mankind, {yea, and of every man,} even before that Adam fell, was sure and appointed. Secondly, that Adam for his defection was justly adjudged to death; and last, that in the person of him that then was lost, was damned his whole posterity. And yet, nevertheless, God did freely choose of the same such as upon whom it pleased him to bestow the honour of adoption." And yet after, in the same place, he saith, "when we speak of Predestination, I have constantly taught, and this day do teach, that from thence we ought to begin, that justly are all reprobate left in death who were dead and damned in Adam; that justly they perish who by nature are the sons of wrath. And therefore, that none hath cause to complain of God's rigorous severity, seeing that all do bear the cause of damnation within themselves. For if we shall come to the first man, we shall find that willingly he fell; and so by his one fall, he brought perdition to all his posterity. And albeit that Adam fell not, but that God both knew and ordained the same, yet serveth that nothing, neither to extenuate and excuse his crime, neither yet to wrap God in society of the same; for always must we look to this, that he spoiled himself of the righteousness which he received from God; that willingly he made himself servant to sin and to Satan; that without compulsion he cast himself headlong into destruction and death. Yet resteth one excuse, to wit, that he could not avoid nor flee that which was decreed by God. But his voluntary transgression is sufficient to his condemnation; neither yet is the secret counsel of God the proper and natural cause of sin, but the free and plain will of man. And therefore, seeing that man findeth in himself the cause of his misery, what shall it profit him to seek it in the heaven? And after, albeit that men, by long compassing about, purpose to delude themselves, yet can they never make themselves so brutish and dull, but that they shall feel the sense of sin graven in their hearts. Therefore in vain is it that ungodliness goeth about to absolve man, whom his own conscience damneth. In so far as God, willing and

knowing, permitted man to fall, the cause may be secret and hid, but unjust it cannot be."

And yet he further writes, "this {saith he} is to be held without all controversy, that sin was ever hateful to God; for most rightly doth this commendation, wherewith of David he is commended, agree to him, 'that he is a God that would not iniquity,' but rather in ordaining the fall of man, his end and purpose was good and most right, from the which the name of sin abhorreth. Howbeit, I say that so he hath ordained the fall of man, that I utterly deny him to be the author of sin." Let the indifferent reader judge with equity, if justly we be accused of that blasphemy which so openly we abhor. But yet in the same book, he bringeth forth a testimony of Augustine, who thus writes, "these be the great works of God {saith Augustine} brought to pass in all his will, and so wisely brought to pass, that while the nature of angel and man had sinned, that is, had done not that which he, that is God, would, but that which the self {meaning the creature} would; yet, nonetheless, by the same will of the creature by the which that was done which the Creator would not, did he fulfill that which he would, He, being infinitely good, using well those things that were evil, to the damnation of them whom he justly had appointed to pain, and to the salvation of those whom mercifully he had predestinated to grace. In so far as to them pertained, they did the thing which God would not; but as appertaining to God's omnipotency, they might by no means have done that, for even in that that they did against the will of God, the will of God was done in them, and therefore great are the works of the Lord, {brought to pass in all his will,} that, by a wondrous and unspeakable manner, that thing should not be done without his will, that yet is done against his will; for it should not be done if he did not suffer it. And of a truth, he suffered it not unwillingly, but willingly." And a little before, Saint Augustine saith, "it is not to be doubted but that God doth well, permitting those things to be done which are evil; for he suffered not this but in his just judgment. Albeit therefore that these things which be evil, insofar as they are evil, are not good; yet,

nevertheless, it is good that not only good things but also that evil things be; for if that this were not good that evil things should be, by no means should they be permitted to be by the Omnipotent good, to whom, no doubt, it is alike easy, not to suffer the thing which he will not to be, as to do that thing which he will. Except we believe this, the beginning of our faith is endangered, by the which we profess ourselves to believe in God the Father Almighty," &c.

And in the end, to answer to these calumnies which you have taken forth of Pighius, that Papist, John Calvin concludeth, "if ever I had said that it came to pass by the instruction or motion of the Spirit of God, that the first man did alienate himself from God, and not that rather I have in all places defended, that man was tricked thereto by the instigation of the Devil, and by the motion of his own heart, then meritably might Pighius and his accomplices have railed against me. But seeing that I removing from God the very cause of the action do also remove from him all crime, so that man only is subject as well to the crime as to the punishment; wickedly and maliciously is this laid to my charge, that I should say that man's defection and fall is one of God's works." But yet lest that one thing should appear to lack of our full doctrine, I will recite his words which he writes against the Libertines, in the fourteenth chapter of that work.

"We do not deny {saith he} but that all things are done by the will of God, insomuch, that when we declare wherefore he is called Omnipotent, we give to him an effectual power in all his creatures; and we teach, that as once he created the universal world, so also that he governeth the same; and that his hand is always at the work, that he might keep all things in their estate, and dispose them after his will. And to the end that I may express the same more easily, I say, that God is to be considered three manner of ways to work in the administration of his creatures. First, there is an universal operation, by the which he directeth all creatures according to the condition and propriety which he gave to everyone when he formed them; and this

government is nothing else but that which we call the order of nature, for albeit the unfaithful know nothing in the disposition of the world but that which they see with their eyes, and therefore they make nature as she were a goddess, to have empire and dominion over all; yet is this praise to be given to the will of God, that it only doth moderate and govern all things. Wherefore when we see the sun, the moon, and the stars fulfill their course, let us understand that they obey God, that they execute his commandment; yea, and that they are guided by the hand of God. And also when we see the course of earthly things, all things are to be ascribed to God. The creatures are to be esteemed but as instruments in his hand, which he applieth to the work even as pleaseth him. The Scripture doth often make mention of this universal providence, that we may learn in all his works to give glory unto God. But chiefly in us doth God commend this his power, that we shall know it in ourselves, to the end that we may be purged of arrogancy, which doth arise in us, and thus, how soon we forget ourselves to be in his hands. Hereunto appertaineth that which Paul said to those of Athens, 'it is He in whom we live, are moved, and have our being,' by the which he would admonish us, that except God uphold us by his hand, that unable it is for us to stand the least moment of time; for even as the soul dispersing her strength through the whole body moveth the members, so are we quickened of God, from whom only we obtain whatsoever strength or power we have. But this universal operation of God impedes not, but that every creature in heaven and in earth retain their own nature and quality, and also do follow their own inclination."

"The second manner by the which God worketh in his creatures is, that he appointed them, in obedience of his goodness, justice, and judgment; sometimes to help his servants, sometimes to punish the wicked, and sometimes to examine the patience of his servants, or to correct and chasten them with a fatherly affection, as when he will give us abundance of fruits, he giveth rain in his time; he sendeth heat by the sun, and bright and

clear days; as also, he useth all other natural means as instruments of his liberality. But when he pulls back his hand, the heaven is made like brass, the earth is iron; and so it is he that sendeth thunder, frost, hail; and also it is he that is the cause of sterility and barrenness. Therefore, whatsoever the Ethnickes and ignorant did attribute to fortune, we assign to the providence of God; not only to that universal operation of the which we have before spoken, but to his especial ordinance, by the which He governeth all, as he knoweth it to be most expedient and profitable. And this he teacheth, when by his Prophets he saith, 'that he created darkness and light, that he sendeth death and life, that neither good nor evil can chance but from his hand.' Insomuch, that he saith, that he doth govern and direct the lots. Yea, if that any man by chance, and not of set purpose be slain, he avowed himself to be the cause of his death, and that so he had appointed; that we shall judge nothing to come of Fortune, but that all cometh by the determination of his counsel. And further, it displeaseth him when we esteem anything to proceed from any other source, so that we do not behold him, and know him not only the principal cause of all things, but also as the author appointing all things to the one part or the other by his counsel."

"Thus let us then conclude, that prosperity and adversity, rain, winds, hail, frost, fair weather, abundance, hunger, war, or peace, to be the works of God; and that the creatures, which be the inferior causes, are only instruments which he hath in readiness to execute his will; which he so useth at his pleasure, that he leadeth and moveth them to bring to pass whatsoever he hath appointed. Moreover, it is to be noted, that not only He thus useth his insensible creatures, that by them he worketh his will, but also men themselves, yea, and also devils, insomuch that Satan and wicked men are executors of God's will, as he used the Egyptians to punish his people, and a little after, he raised up the Assyrians and other such to revenge the sins of his people. We see that he used the Devil in tormenting Saul, and in deceiving Ahab, which

things when the Libertines do hear, rashly and without judgment, beholding no further, they conclude, that now the creatures do no more work; and so horribly do they confound all things, neither do they only mingle and mix the heavens with the earth, but also they join God with the Devil. And that chanceth unto them, because they do not observe two most necessary exceptions. The former is, that Satan and the wicked are not so the instruments of God, but that they also do their own parts. Neither must we imagine that God so worketh by wicked men, as by a stock or a stone, but as by a creature participant of reason, &c. When we say, then, that God worketh by creatures, this impedes not but that the wicked work also upon their part, which thing the Scripture most evidently declareth; for as it pronounceth that God will whistle and blow as it were the trumpet, to call and bring forth to battle the unfaithful, so ceaseth it not to make mention of their own counsel, and ascribeth to them both a will and a work, which they did execute under the decree of God."

"The other exception of the which these unhappy Libertines take no heed is, that there is a great difference betwixt the work of God and the work of the wicked, when that God useth him instead of an instrument. The wicked man is provoked to iniquity either by avarice, ambition, envy, or cruelty, neither yet looketh he to any other end or purpose; and therefore the work taketh the quality from the root from the which it springeth, that is, from the wicked affection of the mind, and the mischievous end which he looketh unto, and therefore justly is it judged evil. But God altogether hath a contrary respect, to wit, that he may exercise his justice to the conservation of the good, to use his favour and gentleness towards the faithful, and that he may punish such as have deserved. Consider how we must make difference betwixt God and man, that upon the one part we shall behold his justice, his goodness, and his judgments; and upon the other part, we shall consider in the self-same work the malice and envy of the devil and of the wicked. Let us take a bright and clear glass in the which we may behold these things.

When the message of the loss of all his goods came to Job, the sudden death of his sons, and so many calamities which all at once fell upon him, he doth acknowledge that he was visited by God, saying, 'the Lord gave all these things, and it is he that hath taken them away,' and no doubt so it was. But in the meantime, do we not know that the Devil procured all these things? And did not he understand, by narration of his servants that escaped, that the Chaldees had driven away his beasts and flocks? Did he commend those brigands and spoilers? Or ought we to excuse the Devil, because that all these calamities proceeded from God. Not so, for both we and he do and did understand that there was a great difference betwixt their purposes. And therefore he {yet damning the evil} said, 'the name of the Lord be blessed.' The same may we say of David; but at this time it sufficeth that God so worketh by his creatures, and so doth use them to his providence, that the instrument by the which he worketh ceaseth not to be evil. And albeit that he convert the malice of the Devil and of wicked men to good, yet they therefore are neither excusable, neither yet clean from sin, and their works are wicked, and to be damned; for all works take their quality of the purpose and the will of the author. Whosoever maketh no distinction betwixt these things, maketh an horrible confusion. And such be the Libertines, who, as before is said, do not only join the Devil in society with God, but also do transform him into God, judging his works worthy of praise, under this color, that he doth nothing but that which is appointed by God. But contrariwise we ought to observe, that the creatures do work their own works in this earth; which works, according as they were directed to this or that end, so are they to be judged either good or evil, and yet God governeth and doth moderate all things, and girdeth them also to a right end. He turneth the evil into good, or at least, God working by the goodness of his nature, draweth as it were by violence some good forth of that which in the self is evil. So doth he use the Devil, that he doth not mix himself with him; neither to be in fellowship with him; neither yet with his wicked acts;

neither that his justice shall put away the nature of the Devil. For as the sun sending forth his beams and heat to the carrion, and so ingendreth in it some corruption, draweth to itself neither corruption, neither yet any filthiness; neither yet doth the sun by his purity and brightness so purge the carrion, but that it remaineth stinking and corrupt, so doth God so work by the wicked, that the justice which is in him doth not justify them; neither yet is he defiled by their wickedness and corruption."

"The third kind of God's operation consisteth in the governance of the faithful, in whom he liveth and reigneth by his Spirit. In so far as we are corrupt by original sin, we be like to the dry and barren ground, which produceth no good fruit. For our judgment is corrupt, our will rebellious, ever ready to evil; and finally, our whole nature is nothing else but a lump of sin. And therefore, not only can we not apply ourselves to any good action, but we are not able nor sufficient to conceive one good thought, {as Paul doth witness,} but if we be able to anything, of necessity that must proceed from God. It is He therefore that worketh in us both to will and to perform; he doth illuminate us, and lead us to the knowledge of himself; he draweth us to himself, and by softening our hearts, he formeth new hearts in us. Further, it is He who moveth in us a desire of praying; he giveth power and strength to resist all the temptations of Satan, and maketh that we do walk in his commandments. But yet we must consider, that of nature we have both will and affection; but because they are both depraved by sin, the Lord reformeth them, and of evil maketh them good. That we therefore be apt to discern that we have a will, that we do this or that, this is a natural gift; but that we can choose, desire, or do nothing but that which is evil, that cometh of the corruption of sin. That we thirst to do good, that we have some power to execute the same, this proceedeth from the supernatural grace, by the which we are regenerate, and newly born to a better and more godly life. Behold then, what God worketh in his children; first, putting away their perverse nature, he conduceth and

guideth them by his Holy Spirit in obedience of his will. But these drunken or rather furious Libertines, crying, that all things are wrought by God, do make him the author of evil. And further, even as the nature of the evil were changed, when it is cloaked under the coverture of God's name, they affirm it to be good; in the which they do greater injury and contumely unto God, than that they should transfer his power and justice to another. For seeing there is nothing more proper unto God than is his goodness, it behooveth, first, that he should utterly deny himself before that he can work evil, which thing these blind Libertines attribute unto him. And, assuredly, the God of these men is an idol, which ought to be more execrable than all the idols of the Gentiles." And so forth to the end of that chapter, he proveth, that God committeth no sin in none of the wicked of the earth, &c.

Thus far have I recited the mind and most part of the words of that godly writer, written by him now twelve years ago, against the Libertines, by the which the indifferent reader may judge, whether that justly you accuse him and us, that we make God the author of sin. In the name of God, and of his dear Son Christ Jesus, {whose glory you study utterly to suppress,} I require, as before, of all those that be placed in authority by his word, whose hands he hath armed with the sword of justice, that earnestly, as they will answer before his fearful throne of judgment, they take trial in this matter, that if we be found either in life, either yet in doctrine, as we be accused, that God may be glorified in our just punishments; but if we cannot be convicted, {as we fear neither trial nor judgment,} that then our accusers may acknowledge their offence.

The second thing which is laid to our charge is, that we cause many others to cry out and say, "since his will and pleasure no man is able to resist, let him lay it on himself, and not upon us, if any sin be committed." If the blasphemies of the ungodly should be laid to our charge, because that we teach a doctrine most true, and most comfortable to the children of God, then cannot the Apostle Saint Paul be excused. For the same

blasphemies were vomited first against him, and the doctrine which he taught; some crying, "let us do evil, that good may come of it," and others, "let us abide in sin, that grace may abound," and some, furiously roaring, {as you do,} did despitefully cry, "wherefore doth he complain? Who can resist his will?" But was the doctrine therefore damnable? Or, was the Apostle criminal for teaching the same? I suppose you will be more favorable in this cause than to so rashly condemn him whom God hath absolved. If then our doctrine cannot be impugned by the plain Scriptures of God, why should we sustain the blame of other men's blasphemies? Howbeit, in very deed, the blasphemies of none come so plainly to our ears as yours do. For the very Papists, and the insolent of the world, are yet ashamed so impudently to lie upon us; who, although they will not follow the purity of the doctrine taught by us, yet either are they put to silence by the power of the Holy Spirit, or else they invent some colorable lies, and do abstain from such open blasphemies as you cast out against God and us.

"We lay to your charge {say you} none other thing than you yourselves do confess; for you affirm, that God worketh all things according to his will and pleasure."

We answer that maliciously and devilishly you wrest our words contrary to our mind. For always we make a most plain difference betwixt the will of God, and the will of the wicked; and betwixt the purpose, counsel, and end of God, and betwixt the purpose and end of man; as in all this whole process before entreated, the indifferent reader may well consider.

If you continue in your blindness, and furiously cry, "but you affirm, that without his will and against it nothing is done, therefore that men think, that even when they sin, they obey God's will." I answer by the words of the same writer whom before I have alleged, "touching the works which we commit, the will of God is to be considered, as he himself hath declared it; for in vain hath he not given his law, by the which he hath distinguished good from evil." As for example, when he

commandeth no man to be hurt, no man to be injured, but that equity and justice be indifferently kept to all; that no man steal, defraud his brother; that none commit adultery, fornication, or filthiness, but that every man keep his own vessel in sanctification and honour. Here is the will of God evident and plain; what further pleaseth him in these cases ought no man to inquire. For we know, that if we do these and other things that he commanded, and do abstain from all things that be forbidden, that then we obey the will of God. And if we do not that, we cannot be acceptable to him. If that any man shall steal, or commit adultery, and shall say that he hath done nothing against the will of God, he lieth most impudently; for in so far as he hath transgressed the commandments of God, by the which he was taught what was God's will, he hath done against his will. Let all men now judge, if that we give occasion to man to flatter himself in sin, and to think that when they commit iniquity against the express commandment of God, that then they obey his holy will.

If any demand, whether that anything can be done against God's will, that is, if God may not, if he would, stay and impede the sin of man. Before, I have answered by the mouth of Augustine, and now again by John Calvin, that nothing is, nor can be done, which he may not impede if so it please his wisdom; yet, utterly we must eschew, that we inquire not of his Providence, which is hid from us, when that the question is of our duty. His word declareth unto us what he approveth, and what he condemneth; with that we ought to stand content, and by the same ought we to rule our lives, leaving the secrets to God, as by Moses we are taught.

To make the matter more plain; the case supposed, that I be tempted with concupiscence, and lust another man's wife, in the which I long strive, and in the end Satan objecteth to me this cogitation, follow thy purpose, for by that means thou mayest perchance be further humbled, and after thou mayest taste more abundantly the mercy and the grace of God. Should I therefore loose the bridle to my wicked affections? Should I decline from the plain precept, and enter into

the secret providence of God? God forbid! For that, besides the violating or breaking of his commandment, were horrible temptation of his godly Majesty, and so in one fact were committed double impiety. The sins, I know, of God's dearest children are grievous and many; and wondrous is the providence of God working in his saints, but never, or seldom it is, that such perilous cogitations prevail against them; for the Spirit of God so ruleth in them, that commonly this sentence of Solomon is before their eyes, "such as irreverently search out God's Majesty, shall be oppressed by the glory of the same." And so must it needs come to pass, as John Calvin affirmeth, "that the pride of such must be punished, and that with an horrible punishment." The pride of those, I say, shall be punished, who, not content with the will of God revealed, {to the which they will not be obedient,} delight to mount and fly above the skies, there to seek the secret will of God.

With what faces can you now lay to our charges that we give occasion to men to flatter themselves in sin, or yet to think that in committing iniquity they obey God's will? Ye allege, perchance, that the common people read not our writings, and therefore they cannot understand our judgment in this case. I answer, the more impudent and blasphemous are you, who so defame us in the ears of the unlearned multitude, that to them you make both us and our doctrine odious, before that ever it be known or examined.

But yet, for further discharge of ourselves against your most unjust accusations, and for the better instruction of the simple, I will adduce another testimony from the writings of the same faithful servant of Christ Jesus, John Calvin, and so put an end to this your second calumny. In his Commentary upon the Acts of the Apostles, the second chapter, writing upon these words of Peter, affirming, "that by the determinate counsel and prescience of God was Jesus betrayed and crucified by the hands of wicked men." "Because {saith he} Peter appeareth to mean, that wicked men obeyed God; whereof of two absurdities, one must needs follow, to wit, that either God is the author of evil, or that men,

committing all kind of iniquity, do not sin, because they seem to obey God. I answer, that wicked men do not obey God, howsoever it be that they put in execution those things which God hath with himself appointed; for obedience proceedeth from a voluntary affection, which earnestly thirsteth to please God, but we know that the wicked have a far other purpose. Moreover, no man obeyeth God but such as hath his will known. Obedience then dependeth upon the knowledge of God's will; and so, as the will of God is revealed in his law, so likewise it is evident, that whosoever transgresseth against his will revealed, hath his conscience to witness against him, that neither he doth the will of God, neither yet that he obeyeth him." To the second he saith, "I constantly deny that God is the author of evil, for in this word 'evil' there is the notation and propriety of a wicked affection, which never falleth, nor can fall in God. The evil work ought to be judged by the purpose and end to the which every man tendeth in his action. When men commit theft or murder, therefore they sin, because they are thieves and murderers. In the theft and murder there is wicked counsel, which never tendeth to please God, but to satisfy their inordinate appetites. But God, who useth their malice, is to be placed in glory above them, for he looketh to another end; for the one he will punish, and the patience of the other he will exercise, and so he never declineth, nor boweth from his own nature, that is, from a most perfect righteousness. So that Christ was betrayed and crucified by the hands of the wicked, it was done by the ordinance of God. But the treason and the slaughter, which by themselves were most odious and wicked, ought not to be judged nor accompted the work of God."

Let men, whose minds the Devil hath not inflamed in hatred and malice against God, against his simple truth, and against the professors of the same, now judge whether that we affirm God to be author of sin, or if we give any just occasion that man should glory in wickedness, either yet that they shall burden God with the same. And I appeal to thy own conscience, {thou unthankful unto men, and open traitor to the

verity which once thou professed,} whether that thou oftener than once hast heard with thine ears, and that in open audience of many, that if any should take boldness to sin in hope of mercy, that the cup which they should drink should be most bitter.

Now to that which you affirm, and we most constantly deny. You affirm, "that if our sayings be true, that then are the works of God full of cruelty, misery, damnation, and destruction."

As before I have noted somewhat which maliciously you slander us, so will I plainly and simply, in short and several propositions, set forth the sum of that doctrine which we teach and profess, and that you so blasphemously oppugn, to the end, that rulers and godly magistrates, and you yourselves also, may clearly see what we believe and affirm; which being considered and compared with God's Scriptures, if your affirmation be found true, then refuse we not punishment worthy for blasphemers. But if you, of malice against God's truth, spewing forth the corruption of your stinking stomachs, infected with pride and with contempt of grace, have affirmed that which you be not able to prove, our earnest request is, as before, that your venom may be repressed betimes. These Propositions following have I translated forth of the work written by that learned and godly man, Theodore Beza, against the calumnies of your captain, Castellio.

1. The first Proposition. God effectually worketh and bringeth to pass all things, according to the counsel of his own will.

2. This counsel doth God execute in certain moments of time; nevertheless the counsel itself is eternal, and passeth before all things, not only in time, {as it is before all time,} but also in order. For otherwise the will of God should not be the principal and first rule of God's counsel, but rather the qualities of things foreseen and foreknown, and moving God to take this counsel, or that should prescribe a rule to the will of God.

3. This counsel may not be separated from the will of God, only of necessity we spoil God of his Godhead.

4. This counsel is not put in moderation and in direction of chance or fortune, but it hath an effectual and working strength in all things, as Paul speaketh.

5. This strength and efficacy is attributed to God working, but it is not said to be of God; therefore by this word efficacy, or strength, is not declared any nature and power given by God the Creator to the things that be created, that they should do this or that, but thereby is understand the power of God, which he hath in himself to do all things.

6. This universal particle 'all' in the words of Paul, can by no manner of exception be restrained, but that God in that part shall be judged idle, as Epicurus did falsely affirm. And if we shall say that anything is done which God may not impede, then shall he be spoiled of his infinite power.

7. So that the conclusion is, since hence that God himself, even as it hath pleased him to determine all things to come from eternity, even so he worketh by his own power, that the same things come to pass in their time as he willeth.

8. Of these things notwithstanding, none of those blasphemies doth follow, wherewith we be burdened; to wit, that God is the author of sin; either that he delights in or wills iniquity; either that Satan or men doing wickedly do obey God; either in so far as they do evil, that they do the thing that God will, and therefore are blameless. Let such blasphemies be far not only from our mouths, but also from our cogitations and thoughts.

9. That none of these blasphemies necessarily may be concluded of our doctrine may thus be proved.

10. God putteth in execution the counsels of his will, by second causes and mid instruments, not as bound unto them, as the Stoics did affirm, but freely and potently making, moving, and directing them, as it pleaseth his wisdom.

11. Of those instruments there are two principal kinds. The one hath life and moving, the other be

without life, which rather be moved by the force of others than move themselves. There be two sorts of those that have life, the one be endued with reason and judgment, the other be without reason, and are only carried by the blind force of nature.

12. Those that be without life, and those also that have life, but lack reason, can neither be said to do well nor evil; but those that use them as instruments may be said either to do well or evil.

13. Those that have life endued with reason, are either angels or men. The angels be of two sorts, some good, some bad; but as for men, all by nature are evil; but by grace they are so separated, that some are utterly evil, some partly good, to wit, inasmuch as the Spirit of God hath sanctified them.

14. Such as in any action are moved by their own inward motion, justly may be said to work, and therefore in that kind of instruments falleth the difference of good and of evil works; neither yet properly, in that respect, may they be called instruments, but the causes efficient.

15. An evil action I call that which hath not the revealed will of God for the assurance and end; and by the contrary, the work is good when the worker looketh to obey God's express commandment.

16. These same, although they be causes, in so far as they work by their own proper motion, yet are they in another respect called instruments, in so far as they are moved by another. As when the hangman, by the commandment of the magistrate, killeth a man; or when, by instigation of the Devil, men hurt others; or when, at the commandment of any, we do either good or evil to any man.

17. In this kind of actions, it is evident, that one work is attributed to two; to the one, as to him that worketh by an instrument, and to the other, as to the worker by motion or commandment; such workers are instruments, not simply as the hammer or axe is in the hand of the smith or hewer, but they are such instruments as also move by their own inward motion.

18. And for this double respect, a double work appeareth sometimes to be done; insomuch that the one may be laudable and the other wicked. As if the Magistrate shall commit an offender worthy of death to the executor of justice, this work is praise-worthy of all good men. But if the Lictor, inflamed rather with envy, avarice, or any other wicked affection, than looking to the commandment of the judge, shall kill the same offender, most certain it is, that before God he cannot avoid the crime of murder.

19. Now, let us apply these things to God, whose efficacy before we have proved to work in all things without exception; and so that by those things which he hath made as by instruments, he executeth in time whatsoever he hath decreed from eternity.

20. Whatsoever God worketh is good, seeing from him, who is infinitely good, no evil thing can proceed; but he worketh all things, therefore all things be good insofar as they are done by God. And that difference of good and evil hath only place in the instruments, and in those of whom we have spoken in the 14th proposition.

21. For if those instruments be good, and if their actions look to the revealed will of God, they do well, and God also doth well by them. Wherefore that work is always good; as when the good angels execute that which God commandeth, and holy men do follow, God calling them.

22. Evil instruments, evil, I say, not by creation but by corruption, in so far as they work always, they do evil, and therefore justly do they incur the wrath of God. But in so far as God worketh by them, they either by ignorance, or else against their purposes, serve to the good work of God. But God himself, by whatsoever instruments he worketh, worketh at all times well.

23. And so he worketh by those instruments, that not only he permitteth and suffereth them to work, neither doth he only moderate the event or chance, but also he raiseth them up. He moveth, he directeth, and that which is most of all, he also createth, to the end that by them he shall work that which he hath

appointed. Which things God doth righteously and without any injustice.

24. For when the wicked man sinneth, either against himself, either against any wicked person, God, without any sin, doth, and bringeth to pass, that the wicked man shall take vengeance upon himself, or that evil men shall take vengeance upon other wicked men who have deserved punishment. And this one and other work of God is most just; and by such examples of his judgment, God erecteth and comforteth his afflicted.

25. How oft that evil men hurt good men, the wicked men sin, and in the end they suffer just punishment, and yet by them, nevertheless, doth God chasten, instruct, and confirm his own; and by the manifest enemies of his Church doth God make glorious his Church.

26. Yet can it not be said that those evil instruments do obey God. For albeit that God worketh his work by them, yet they, so far as in them lieth, and as concerning their own counsel and will, do not the work of God, but their own work, for the which meritably they are punished. Albeit, whatsoever God worketh by the wicked is good, yet whatsoever the wicked men work is evil.

27. Neither is the consequent, God worketh all things, ergo, he worketh sin, for the name of sin is not but in the vicious and faulty quality, which is altogether in the instrument that worketh.

28. By reason of this corrupted quality, the work which in the self is one, some manner of way is double, and may be divided; insomuch that the one, that is, the just work of God, directly fighteth and repugneth against the unjust work of man.

29. God, nevertheless, for other ways worketh by his good instruments than he doth by his evil instruments. For besides that by his good instruments he worketh his work, the good instruments also do their work by that strength and efficacy which the Lord ministereth unto them. And God also worketh his work by them, and in them he worketh to will and to perform; but by the evil, as by Satan and wicked men, in so far as

they are not regenerate, as oft as God doth execute the just councils and decrees of his eternal will, he declareth his own strength and efficacy in his work by them, which they do either ignorantly, or else against their purpose. And yet, in so far as they work, God worketh not in them, but he looseth the bridle to Satan, to whom, by his just judgment, he giveth them over, to be moved and possessed forward to all iniquity, that they may be carried to perdition, even by the instigation of the Devil, and by their own proper will.

Thus have you briefly the sum of our doctrine in this matter, which if you be able by manifest Scriptures, or yet by good arguments from the same deduced, to improve, then can we not refuse to make satisfaction, as the Church of Christ Jesus shall require of us. But if that unjustly you have accused us, and have further imputed cruelty upon God, by reason that his judgments, most just in themselves, are to your senses incomprehensible; then can we not of conscience cease to require of you a greater modesty, and also of the lawful Magistrate, an order to be taken that your malice and venom may be repressed, assuring them, that if by times your enterprises be not impeded, that they shall shortly feel what confusion you have of long fostered in your breasts; your poison is more pestilent than that of the Papistry was in the beginning. God, for his mercies sake, preserve his Church, and purge your hearts to his glory.

Touching the secret will of God, which so oft you lay to our charge, we shall after speak; as also how God will that all repent, and that all be saved. Before, I have declared that this difference must we make betwixt God and man, be he never so potent, that God hath such power over his creatures that he ruleth them at his pleasure; and is not a simple lawgiver, which only can devise good laws, and give commandment that they may be kept, but cannot, though he would, frame the hearts of his subjects to obedience. Such imperfection {I say} can we not admit in our God, who doth and hath done whatsoever He will in heaven and in earth. And so your similitude of the king commanding, and of the

poorest slave offending, halteth and is imperfect. For God hath greater power over all creatures, yea, even over the king himself, than the king hath over his slave. For the slave, when he hath offended, by some means he may escape the king's hands, and so the punishment of his laws; but so cannot the king the hands of God. Consider the inequality betwixt God and man, I say, and then I trust your judgment shall either be reformed, or else you constrained to devise more solid reasons.

I have not learned in the Scriptures to call the corruption of our nature, by the which we rebel against God's commandment, power, but rather impotency and thralldom. But ceasing to contend or strive for terms, I wonder what you mean by your conditional, which thus you form; otherwise, that is, if we had no power to offend against God's will, we should all observe the will of God and be saved; and so do you conclude there should be no reprobation. I will not commonly scoff at you, {as your foolishness deserves,} but here I must say, that this your reason is no better than if I should affirm, that there is no difference betwixt the fowls of the air and the rest of the creatures of the earth, because that if all creatures had wings, and like agility, that then all creatures should fly as well as the fowls, and so should there in that case be no difference. Your reason hath no greater strength, for it standeth only upon conditionals, whereof you justly can conclude nothing. Prove, if you can, that it was and is the immutable counsel of God that all should be saved, and then you may prove that there shall be none reprobate. But now we follow as you proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

As for the sentence of Paul, "God willing to show his wrath, to make his power known, suffered with long patience the vessels of wrath ordained to damnation," &c., it is direct contrary to your error, notwithstanding you abuse it to maintain the same. For seeing, as Paul saith, "God suffered them with great patience," he is sorry for them; if he be sorry, then hath he no pleasure

in their destruction, and that wherein he hath no pleasure, he willeth it not; and that which he willeth not, he doth not ordain it. Wherefore seeing God suffered them with great patience to fall, he hath not ordained them to fall. "Thou despisest {saith S. Paul} the riches of God's goodness, and patience, and long sufferance; not knowing that the kindness of God leadeth thee to repentance." Behold here the cause why God suffered with long patience is, that we should repent and amend. If they had been absolutely, "ordained to damnation before the foundation of the world," then God knew they should never repent and amend. To what purpose then suffered he them with long patience? Notwithstanding this is plain enough, and conform to the Word, yet you despising whatsoever is contrary to your mind, you stick fast to the literal sense of those words, "ordained to damnation," which words be spoken after the common manner of speaking, as they be called after the common phrase of speech. "Ordained to damnation," whose end is damnation, we would say of a man that is cast to be hanged, "this man was born to be hanged," notwithstanding it was not his mother's mind to bear him to be hanged. Such phrases have we very many in the Scriptures, as Exodus 11, "Pharaoh harkened not unto you, that many wonders may be done in the land of Egypt." Forasmuch as the wonders done in Egypt were grievous to Pharaoh, he did not disobey the intent that more wonders which were plagues should come upon him; but this was the issue of his obstinate inobedience. Exodus 19, "whosoever giveth his seed unto Moloch, let him be slain, because he hath given of his seed unto Moloch to defile my sanctuary, and to pollute my holy name." The Israelites did not sacrifice their children to Moloch to defile the Lord's sanctuary and to dishonour the name of God, but to worship Moloch; notwithstanding that was the issue and end of their sacrifice unto Moloch, that the Lord's sanctuary was defiled and his name dishonored. Thereby Jeroboam made the two golden calves, whereby he made Israel sin, to anger the Lord God of Israel. The cause why Jeroboam made the two golden calves and his intention

was not to anger God; but he thought that if the people should go up and do sacrifice in the house of the Lord at Jerusalem, their hearts should return to Rehoboam, King of Judah, wherefore he made two golden calves to make the people sacrifice at Bethel, whereupon followed the wrath of God. "Of their silver and gold have they made them images to bring themselves to destruction." The Israelites made them images, thinking thereby to be saved and not destroyed; yet their destruction followed thereof. Jeremiah saith, "O my mother, alas, that ever thou diddest bear me to be a brawler, and a rebuker of the whole land." Jeremiah's mother did not bear him to that intent, but yet this was the end. And in the New Testament, "if any man hunger, let him eat at home, that you come not together to condemnation." The Corinthians came not together to the intent to purchase thereby condemnation, but of their abuses in coming together followed their condemnation.

By these places and many others, we may understand the phrase of Scriptures, "that they be ordained to damnation, whose end is condemnation, which they receive not by the will of God, which would all men to be saved, but as a just reward for their sins." As the traitor which suffereth ought not to impute his death to the sentence which the judge justly hath given against him, but to his own offence and treason; so when we for our sins be ordained to punishment, we ought not to impute it to God's foreordination, which is both good and full of mercy, but to our own offences. "And seeing {as S. Paul saith} God suffered them with great patience, their damnation cometh not by the counsel and will of God, for which he is sorry," as he saith by the Prophet Jeremiah, "I have been sorry for thee so long, that I am weary." Will you say, that God wearieth himself, suffering and sorrowing for them whom he had reprobated before the world? Surely, I think, that though you hitherto have unadvisedly said so, you will from henceforth say so no more; which God grant in time, that you weary not the Lord also with sorrowing for you.

ANSWER.

As your cogitations of God be gross and carnal, so be your judgments in this place of Scripture deceivable and most erroneous. Esteem it no injury, that I affirm your cogitations of God to be carnal and gross. For I can evidently prove, that some of you affirm and maintain, that God hath eyes, feet, hands, arms, and finally, all proportion of man, that he sleepeth, and doth again awake; that he forgetteth, and after doth remember; that he is mutable, and doth in very deed repent. If these cogitations of the Eternal God be not carnal, yea, if they be not wicked and devilish, let the godly indifferent reader judge.

In this your long gradation, which you make upon the words of Paul, you conclude contradiction to the Holy Ghost and to the plain words of the Apostle. For the Apostle meaneth and plainly speaketh, that albeit God doth long suffer and delay the judgment of the reprobate, yet cease they not to be vessels of wrath, as they that are ordained to perdition. But you conclude the contrary, affirming that he hath not ordained them to fall. And so because you conclude directly against the Holy Ghost, cannot cease to say that your collection is erroneous. But to give an answer more full and large, in examining the parts of your gradation, I will show your error and the cause thereof. First, you say, seeing God suffered them with great patience, he is sorry for them. Here, I say, in your first foundation lieth your error; and the cause thereof is, that altogether you are ignorant of God's nature, in whom neither falleth such sufferance, such patience, nor such sorrow, as you grossly imagine. God is omnipotent, and is compelled to suffer nothing which he hath not appointed in His eternal counsel; God is a Spirit, and free from all such passions as creatures be subject unto; for in his eternal Godhead there is neither passion subject to pain, neither yet sorrow annexed with anguish and grief. But when such passions be attributed unto God, it is for the weakness of our understanding that the Holy Ghost doth subject himself in language and tongue to our capacity.

Ye take liberty to yourself, in divers other phrases, to explain them as you please, yea, even against the plain Scripture. And why will you not permit that such phrases be so understood, as nothing be judged upon God's Majesty which doth not agree with his godly nature? Ye do far abuse the mind of the Apostle, for he doth not infer, as you foolishly and wickedly do, that because God did suffer with great patience, therefore he was sorry, but saith, he did suffer the vessels ordained to destruction; that upon the one sort his wrath and power, and upon the other {that is, upon the elect} the riches of his glory, might be known. This were sufficient to put silence to your folly. But yet somewhat to instruct the simple, I will somewhat travail to make these words of the Apostle sensible and plain.

He had before concluded, "that God would have mercy upon whom he would have mercy, and whom it pleased him, those did he harden." As this sentence far surmounted man's capacity, so might it engender some doubts in the hearts of the very godly. For they might have reasoned, if that God will finally destroy all the Reprobate, to what purpose are they now permitted to triumph and to trouble the Elect of God? In answering to which doubt, the Apostle assigned three reasons, why God, with great patience, suffereth the vessels of wrath; to wit, that his power, his wrath, and the riches of the glory of his mercy, more evidently may appear and be known. For if God should suddenly, from the bellies of their mothers, take away the reprobate, or if he should in the beginning of their malice so break down their pride that they could not proceed against him, neither should his power appear so great, neither yet his wrath so just and so holy. But when he doth suffer them, as he did Pharaoh, from one mischief to proceed to another, often removing his plagues, and so declaring himself easy to be entreated, even unto such time as their malice and rage do carry them, as it were openly to despise God and his power; when then, I say, in one moment God effectively doth overthrow the force and strength of his enemies, as that he did of Pharaoh, Sennacherib, Belshazzar, and of others, then is his godly

power and most just wrath more evidently known, than that he should either have repressed them in the beginning, either yet have taken them away before their malice began to bud. For hereby doth he not only admonish others of the certain destruction of all those that continue in cruelty, but also giveth to his Church most singular comfort, letting them see that his providence and power watcheth for them, even when the rage of the enemy appeareth to devour all; and so do they see what is God's mercy towards them. Further, when the elect advisedly do consider what be God's severe judgments against the disobedient, and do consider how prone and ready they themselves be of nature to rebellion against God, except they were conducted by his Spirit, they come to a more lively feeling of God's free mercy and grace, by the which only they are exempt from the rank and society of the Reprobate.

Albeit that these ends and causes of God's longsuffering of the vessels of wrath do not satisfy you, yet I doubt not but God's afflicted children will and do take comfort of the same. You thus proceed in your sophistical arguments, "if He be sorry, {say you,} then hath he no pleasure in their destruction. And that wherein he hath no pleasure, he willeth it not; and that which he willeth not, he doth not ordain it; wherefore, seeing God suffereth them to fall with great patience, He hath not ordained them to fall."

Your foundation being false, your whole building falleth by its own weight. Before you proceed any further, you must prove that God did suffer in the vessels of wrath that which he neither could nor might remedy; and therefore that he fell in grief and sorrow that his power was no greater and his wisdom no more perfect. Woe be to your blasphemies, for they compel me to write that which I gladly would not. I have before said, that God neither hath pleasure in destruction, neither yet that he will the death of the sinner absolutely; that is, having none other respect but to their torment and pain only. But, albeit, pride and malice will not suffer you to grant that God hath created

all things for his own glory, yet will not he be suppliant unto you, that you shall suffer him to use his creatures at his own good pleasure.

Whereupon these words of the Apostle, "doest thou despise the riches of God's goodness, not knowing that the kindness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" You infer, that the cause why God suffereth with long patience is, that we should repent and amend. If you understand that God suffered his elect, even in the time of their blindness, yea, and after their horrible falls and offenses, with great lenity and gentleness, to the end that afterward they may repent, I do agree with you. For so he did with David, Manassas, Paul, and many others, who, after their conversion, did not despise God's lenity, but did magnify and praise the same, as in all their confessions may be read. But if you understand Paul's words so, "that God hath none other end in that his longsuffering, but that the reprobate shall repent and amend their wickedness," because the Holy Ghost assigneth other causes, {as before we have declared,} I must prefer his judgment and sentence to yours.

To your irreverent, bold, and furious question, in which you ask, "to what purpose did God suffer them with long patience, whom before he knew should never repent nor amend?" I can answer none otherwise than I have done before, except that this I add, that if you be not content that God's just wrath and great power shall as well be manifested, both in this world and in the life to come, upon the vessels of wrath, as that his mercy and the riches of his glory shall be praised and extolled in the vessels of mercy, that experience {which the common proverb calleth master to fools} shall teach you, that it nothing profited the giants, of whom the poets do speak, to heap up mountain upon mountain, of purpose to besiege Jupiter in the heavens. To use the words of Scripture, "if be times you cease not so irreverently to question with God, you shall feel forever what torment is prepared for such as with humility cannot be subject to his judgments incomprehensible." For if you shall constrain his Majesty to give you a reason by which you may understand and apprehend,

what do you else then go about to spoil him of his Godhead?

We stick none otherwise to the literal sense of these former words of the Apostle than the rest of Scriptures permit and do teach us. But how proper be your phrase and common manner of speaking, by the which you labour to obscure the plain words of the Apostle, we briefly shall examine. "Ordained to damnation {say you} after the common manner of speech, doth signify no more, but whose end is damnation." To grant you somewhat, I would know of you, who hath ordained damnation to be the end of the reprobate? I perceive by your example, that you dare not say God; for thus you say, "we use to say of a man that is cast to be hanged, 'this man was born to be hanged,' notwithstanding that was not his mother's mind to bear him to be hanged." Besides the foolish rudeness of this example, I wonder at your madness, that you can never make difference betwixt God and earthly creatures. Dare you say that God hath no greater power nor foreknowledge in directing and appointing his creatures to their ends than the mother hath to direct, foresee, and appoint the end of her child? After that she hath born him, she knoweth not what shall be his natural inclination; although she instruct and correct him, yet can she not bow and expel his crooked nature; when he is absent from her presence, she seeth not his conversation. If he be reprehended in theft or murder, and so cast to be hanged, she cannot {although she would} deliver him from the hands of the judge. But is there any of these imperfections in God? Consider yet, and let reason at length put silence unto your foolishness.

Where of the words of Moses, of Hosea, Jeremiah, and Paul, and of the fact of Jeroboam, you go about to prove that phrase, in that sense which you adduce, to be common in Scriptures. I am in doubt whether that first I shall lament your blind ignorance, or abhor and detest your abominable lies, and horrible propagation of God's most holy word.

It is impossible that ignorance hath so blinded you all, that none of you can see the diversity betwixt those manner of speeches, "God hath suffered the vessels of wrath ordained to destruction," and these, "Pharaoh shall not hear you, that many wonders may be wrought," &c. "Give not of thy seed to be offered to Moloch," &c. "I will set my face against such a man, and I will rout him out from the midst of his people, because that he hath given of his seed to Moloch, that he might defile my sanctuary and profane my holy name." And so forth of all the rest; for only the place of the Apostle, after the English phrase and speech, may be rightly translated to condemnation. I appeal to thy conscience, thou manifest corruptor of God's Scriptures, if in all the places by thee alleged there be not this particle 'ut' which is a causal, and not the preposition 'in' which is in the words of Saint Paul. And hath malice so bereft thee of knowledge, that thou canst make no difference betwixt those two dictions or words. The Lord of his mercy preserve his Church from so bold and so deceitful teachers. If altogether thou hadst been ignorant, with sorrow of heart I could have lamented thy foolishness; but perceiving thee, of set purpose and malice, willingly to corrupt God's plain Scriptures, that thou may blind the more easily the eyes of the simple, with grief and sorrow I say, that better it had been for thee never to have been born than thus obstinately to fight against God's plain truth; and that in such fury, that where from the Scriptures thou canst have none assurance for thy error, yet so thou dost dare to wrest them, that they may seem to serve thy purpose. Wheresoever thou canst wrest any place, that it may be translated by this English, 'to,' there thou ashamed not to affirm, that it is the self-same phrase with this of Saint Paul, "vessels of wrath prepared or ordained to destruction." This is sufficient to show to the learned, yea, even to such as do but understand the first principles of their grammar, thy infidelity and crafty deceit in this matter. But because such as understand nothing in the Latin tongue cannot hastily espy thy craft, I will travail to make it so sensible as I can.

If I should say, "I am appointed to death, to feel the punishment of sin, and so to make sin to cease," will thou therefore say, that this particule 'to' in the former place, where I say, "I am appointed to death," and in the second place, where I say, "to feel the punishment of sin, and to make sin to cease," are all one phrase, and ought alike to be resolved? I suppose thou wilt not. For in the first place, it can be none otherwise resolved but thus, "I am appointed to death," that is, I must needs die; but in the second place, two causes of death be assigned, for where I say, "to feel the punishment of sin," I understand that one cause of death is, that I and all men may feel how horrible is sin before God; and in this last, I understand that death so putteth an end to sin, that after it may not trouble the elect of God. The phrase of Saint Paul is much more different from all that thou adduces, and then be these phrases before alleged, one different from another. For where he saith, "vessels of wrath ordained to destruction," he signifieth the final end of the vessels of wrath to be ordained and before determined in God's eternal counsel. And in all these places, "to provoke the Lord to anger," "to defile my sanctuary," "to kindle God's wrath against Israel," "to make Israel sin," and such like, are their actions signified to be the causes of God's anger, God's wrath, and why he reputed his sanctuary polluted. Thus thy forwardness causeth me to trouble the simple reader. The place of Jeremiah thou maliciously doest pervert, for it can be in nowise so translated. But what tongue soever thou doest follow, thou must say, "woe be to me, O my mother, that thus hast born me a man that am a brawler, and a man of contention in the whole land."

The place of Paul {I Corinthians 11} serves nothing for thy purpose, for albeit there be a preposition 'ad' which truly may be translated 'to' yet that speech is far different from the former speech of the Apostle; for where he saith, "eat at home, that you come not together to condemnation," he doth admonish them of the danger which they know not, which was, that such inordinate and riotous banqueting, joined with the contempt of the poor, without repentance, must bring

condemnation. If thou reply and allege that thou stickest not so much to the terms as to the matter; for in all these former speeches, man pretended one thing, but another thing ensued; what canst thou thereof conclude, but that God's purpose, sentence, and mind, is not subject to man's purpose and intention? True it is, that neither Pharaoh did resist Moses of purpose to be plagued, neither did Jeroboam erect the calves that Israel should be destroyed; but yet, because God had so before pronounced, inevitably plagues and destruction did follow their disobedience. If hereof you will conclude, as you seem to do, that those whose end is condemnation receive not that by the will of God; because you conclude that which neither you have proved, neither yet go about in this place to prove, I will not trouble myself with answering for this present. But when you shall go about to prove that God will all men to be saved, {as you affirm,} I hope, by God's grace, to answer sufficiently. For as we doubt not but God's judgments are holy and most just, so we know that the conscience of the wicked shall feel in themselves, and nowhere else, the causes of their condemnation. Neither yet did any of us ever hold, believe, or affirm, that any reprobate shall have that liberty to quarrel with God of the secret causes of his condemnation; for the books shall be opened, and the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed.

To the suffering, patience, and sorrowing of God, I have before answered, in the beginning of this your last confused gradation, and so I will not trouble the reader with the repetition of the same. The words of Jeremiah which you allege can have no such sentence as you do gather; for he doth not speak of any passion that was in God, as touching his eternal Godhead, but only doth appeal to the conscience of the people, how oft God had not only rebuked, but also from time to time corrected them, ever calling them to repentance, and suspending their last punishment, howbeit that they continually from evil fell backward unto worse. And so at length was God weary to repent, that is to say, at once he would pour forth his just vengeance, which before so

oft he had threatened. Let the first chapter of Isaiah be commentary to this place, and I trust the sentence shall be plain. For there he affirmeth that in that people there was no whole part, that is, all order and policy was almost confounded, Jerusalem was in a manner left desolate by the manifest plagues which had apprehended it; but yet there was no true conversion unto God. And here he saith, "thou hast left me, saith the Lord, and I have therefore lifted up mine hand upon thee, and have scattered thee; I am weary in repenting," that is, that I have spared thee so long. "I shall scatter them with the fan, even unto the gates of the earth, {that is, to the uttermost part,} I have made my people desolate, and I have destroyed them; nevertheless, they have not turned from their ways." I trust that every reasonable man will consider, that those words be rather spoken to admonish the people, how God by all means had provoked them to repentance, than to declare unto us what nature or passion God hath in himself, as you do. For so appeareth in this your question, "will you say that God wearieth himself, suffering and sorrowing for them whom he had reprobated before the world? Surely, I think, that though you hitherto have unadvisedly said so, you will from henceforth say so no more." And so you end this portion with a prayer, to the which we answer in few words, that albeit we will not take upon us to define what after this shall your cogitations be, yet will we not cease to pray to God, that your hearts being humbled with greater reverence, you may not only think, but also speak of God's Majesty, of his judgments most holy, most just, and utterly in this life incomprehensible to our dull senses. But now we go forward to that which followeth.

THE ADVERSARY.

Now must we declare the saying of Saint Luke, "so many as were ordained unto life did believe," where we must understand, that as they that will not obey the truth are called in the Scriptures, "ordained to damnation," as is

sufficiently proved before, so they which willingly receive the truth, and couple the word with faith, working by charity, are called, "ordained to life." Where you do reply so, Predestination is without any condition; I grant, Predestination to life is the very free gift of God without any condition. Notwithstanding, we cannot come to life, but by the way which leadeth unto life; as he which received the one talent of his master, received it of a free gift without his deserving, but because he did not walk in the way appointed by his master, his talent was taken from him again. As before, by the free benefit of his master, he was chosen unto life, so now, because he did not walk in the way which leadeth unto life, he is ordained to damnation. The prodigal son is received of his father, not for his deserving, but of the free goodness and benevolence of his father; yet is it required of him, that he walk hereafter as an obedient son, which if he did not, the latter fall should be worse than the first. Predestination, therefore, is the mere gift of God before the foundation of the world, at the which time nothing could be commanded unto us; yea, before we either have faith, or else by hearing of the word we may have faith, no spiritual commandment is given us; but when by hearing we may receive faith, then is the way of salvation opened unto us, in which we must walk if we will be saved. And yet followeth it not, we must walk in the way which leadeth unto salvation; ergo, for walking the way of salvation, we are chosen and accepted. For Saint Paul saith, "I am guilty to myself in nothing, but therefore I am not justified." If a learned physician seeing one in danger of death, whom he can and may help, offereth physic to the patient, able to restore him to his health, and therewith prescribed the patient a diet. Now that the physician giveth physic to the patient, it cometh only of his own goodness; but if the patient do not order himself according to the prescript of the physician, the physic shall not help him. And though he observe good diet, yet ought he not to repute the receiving of his health to himself, but to the physician; for though it lieth in the patient's power to hinder his health, yet it is not in his power to give

himself health. So Christ, our physician, offereth healthful physic to us all, and therewith prescribeth our diet, which if we do not observe, the physic shall not avail us. And though we observe it, yet ought we not to attribute our health to ourselves, but to the liberality of our physician, Christ, which, of his mere mercy, hath made us whole. Wherefore, to return to our argument, they are ordained unto life so many as will gladly walk in the way which leadeth unto life, that is, true obedience, and they do believe, as Saint Luke saith.

ANSWER.

The place of Saint Luke which you study to corrupt, is written in the thirteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, the light whereof is so clear that you be never able to obscure the same; and therefore I will not spend much time in confutation of your vanity, for the simple truth of the history shall disclose the same. Paul coming to Antioch, in Pisidia, did upon the Sabbath enter into the synagogue of the Jews, and therein preached a sermon most profound, most effectual, and most comfortable; in the which, by plain Scriptures, he proved that the same Jesus which was crucified at Jerusalem was the Messiah promised, and the only Saviour of the world. At which doctrine many of the Jews being offended, and yet some embracing the same, Paul, the next Sabbath, preached to the whole multitude of the Jews and Gentiles assembled together. But when plain contradiction was made by the Jews, who did blaspheme Christ Jesus, Paul and Barnabas taking boldness, said to the Jews, "first, it behooved to speak to you the word of God; but because you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of the life everlasting, behold we are turned unto the Gentiles, for so hath the Lord commanded us," at which words the Gentiles rejoiced and glorified the word of the Lord, and did believe {saith the text} so many as were ordained to the life everlasting. Who is he so blind that doth not see, that in these words the Holy Ghost assigneth the plain cause why some do believe, and others do blaspheme and remain unfaithful? The

cause why some believe is, because they are ordained to the life everlasting, as they that are the sheep of Christ Jesus, therefore they hear and believe his voice; the others, as they are left in the power of the Devil, {as they that are never given to Christ, to the end that they may receive life,} remain in blindness, and so by contradiction and blasphemies declare themselves whose children and generation they are. None of us do, nor yet ever did deny, but that the Elect of God do willingly receive and obey the truth, and that the Spirit of God so worketh in their hearts, that not only they believe, but that also they are made fruitful, yea, and that from justice they proceed to justice. But as the whole praise of this we give to God, arrogating no part of it to ourselves, so we constantly affirm, that neither faith, neither works, neither yet any quality that is, or that God foresaw to be in us, is the cause of our Predestination or election to life everlasting, as before we have sufficiently proved.

Ye are so inconstant, now granting Predestination to be the free and mere gift of God, without any condition of our works, and immediately after ascribing it to our obedience, and walking in the way that leadeth to life. In this your inconstancy, I say, I cannot tell how to handle you. One thing I see, to my great comfort, that the glory of Christ Jesus is so manifest, and the power of his truth so invincible, that he will reign in the midst of his enemies. The devils themselves must acknowledge and openly confess that he is Lord, and the only Son of the living Father; and the adversaries of his truth, even when they fight most outrageously against the same, are compelled to give testimony to it, as you do here in divers places; as when you say, "it followeth not, that because we must walk in the way that leadeth to life, that therefore, for walking in the way of salvation, we are chosen, and {as you write} accepted." But because, I say, that your inconstancy doth straight carry you to denial of this, I can the less credit that this be a true confession, proceeding from an unfeigned heart, but rather that it is the mighty power of the verity, which {will you, nil you} compels your mouths to

give witnessing, upon her part, against yourselves. God grant I may be deceived in this my judgment; for him I take to record, that I am no otherwise enemy to any of you, than in so far as you declare yourselves manifest enemies to the free grace of God, and to the glory of the eternal Son of the eternal Father of Christ Jesus, our Lord and only Saviour.

Because there is nothing in this, your last part, which I have not before at large declared in diverse places, I will only note those things in the which we do not agree with you.

First, we do not to call Predestination the free gift of God, but we call it the eternal and immutable counsel of God, in which he hath purposed to choose to life everlasting, such as pleased his wisdom in Christ Jesus his Son. Secondly, we say, that you are never able to prove by the parable of the talents that any reprobate was chosen in Christ to life everlasting. Thirdly, that we find neither contract, neither condition betwixt the loving Father and the Prodigal son in his admission to his former dignity; neither do we so understand the parable as that the said son, newly received to mercy, would after, of stubbornness, unthankfully depart from his father. But rather, we think, that as he had felt what misery he sustained by following his own councils, he would in times coming, with all diligence, attend the councils of his father.

Your mind is dark to us, and your writing obscure, where that you say, "before we have faith, or by hearing of the Word can have faith, no spiritual commandment is given unto us." And also, the words of Saint Paul appeared not to be well applied, for there he entreateth nothing of election, but only affirmeth, "that in the dispensation of that ministry committed to his charge, he knew himself guilty in nothing," &c. But because these be of small importance, I only put you in remembrance of them.

Last, your similitude betwixt your Physician offering medicine, and prescribing diet to the patient, who may receive and keep it at his pleasure, and so recover health, and preserve his life, or else reject and

break it, and so procure his own destruction; and betwixt Christ Jesus, who, {say you,} being our Physician, offereth healthful physic unto us all, and therewith prescribes our diet, which, if we do not observe, the physic shall not avail us, &c. This similitude in one respect doth altogether dislike us. For it taketh from our sovereign Lord his chief glory and honour, for in no wise can we abide that his mighty power and operation, by his Holy Spirit, shall be compared to the power of any creature. We say not, we teach not, nor believe not, that Christ Jesus doth only offer medicine, and prescribe a diet, as a common Physician, leaving the using and observation of it to our will and power. But we affirm that in the hearts of his elect, he worketh faith, he openeth their eyes, he cureth their leprosy, he removeth and overcometh their disobedience; yea, by violence he pulleth them forth of the bondage of Satan, and so sanctifieth them by the power of his Holy Spirit, that they abide in his verity, according as he hath prayed for them, and so continue they vessels of his glory forever. And herein we dissent from you, as afterward more plainly shall appear in discussing of this which you thus term.

THE SECOND ERROR OF THE CARELESS BY NECESSITY.

THE ADVERSARY.

The Elect, though they sin grievously, yet are they never out of the favour and election of God, neither can they by any means finally perish. So that Adam when he transgressed, and David committing adultery and homicide, were favoured even then and beloved of God, and never out of election, neither could they be. Again, the reprobate, as Saul and Judas, were never in the favour and election of God, neither could they nor none other reprobate attain unto salvation.

ANSWER.

The truth of this proposition doth nothing excuse your malice and hatred, for albeit there be no sentence in it contained, which, being rightly understand, is not aggregable to God's Word; yet of what purpose and mind you have gathered these sentences, leaving those that should explain the same, it easily may appear, by that venom which you spew forth against us, to make us odious to all the world, as here followeth.

THE ADVERSARY.

Here you see how they divide all men into two sorts, one elected or chosen, which by no means can perish, and the other rejected or reprobate before the world, so that by no means can they be saved. What can the devil wish his members to teach more for the advancement of his kingdom than this? What can be invented to provoke men to live a careless and libertine life more than if they be persuaded that neither well-doing availeth or pleaseth God, nor evil-doing doth hinder unto salvation? This is as much as if one should counsel the patient to refuse all healthful physic, and good diet, and so willfully to be the occasion of his own death. For if they be {say they} of the elect sort, though they do commit theft, fornication, adultery, murder, or any other sin, yet be they still so beloved and favoured of God, that they cannot finally perish. And if they be of the reprobate sort, {say they,} neither repentance, amendment of life, abstaining from evil, neither fasting, prayer, alms, nor other good deed can avail; for they be so hated of God before the world, that by no means they can obtain his favour, but, of mere necessity, do what they can, they must perish. Seeing it is so, saith the natural man, let us set the cock on hoop, and let the world slide, let us eat and drink, for tomorrow shall we die. So the people sit down to eat and drink, and then rise up to play. Why, masters, have you no conscience thus to cause the people of God to sin? See you not how you be led with the same spirit that Balaam was led withal, when he

counselled to give occasion of sin to the people? I know that you will answer, that I mean not so. Mean what you list, and do what you can, yet this is the issue and fruit of your doctrine, and whosoever is thus corrupt by you, without repentance, he shall die the death; but God shall require his blood of your hands. Mark well your disciples, how many of them endeavour themselves to bring forth the fruits of repentance, how many of them seek for power to crucify the flesh with the lusts and concupiscence thereof? How many of them can we perceive by their conversation, that they have cast of the old man and put on the new man, walking sincerely in their vocation and the true fear of God? But if they accustom to frequent your Congregations, as the Papists do the Mass, then be they faithful brethren. I hold my peace of that you use to have respect of persons, preferring the wealthy, which, if they be liberal, though they be drowned in many vices, you use to help up such with this saying, there is none during this life that can be known to be in the election, be he never so virtuous, nor any out of the election be he never so unrighteous. After this manner you do heal them up, so that they need not to endeavour themselves to bring forth the fruits of lively faith, for the surest token of their election they think to be, that they be of your Congregation. But Christ saith, "in that shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you do whatsoever I command you," and again, "ye shall know them by their fruits. For a good man out of the treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things." Yet you say no man can be known to be either in the election or out of the election during this life; and for proof hereof you allege the saying of Paul, the devil doth transform himself into an angel of light. To which I briefly answer, that God doth never transform himself into an angel of darkness; wherefore, so long as you walk in darkness you be not of God. But thus you take the most shameful men by the hand, flattering them, so that they cannot return from their wickedness, whereby it appeareth that you be not sent from God; for you by your doctrine give occasion to the people to sin. And the Lord saith, "if they had been in my counsel, they had

turned my people from their evil ways and wicked imaginations," but such lips, such disciples, such masters, for your chief apostles be persecutors, on whom the blood of Servetus crieth a vengeance; so doth the blood of others more, whom I could name. But forasmuch as God hath partly already revenged their blood, and served some of their persecutors with the same measure wherewith they measured to others, I will make no mention of them at this time. And to declare their wickedness not to have proceeded of ignorance and human infirmity, but of endured malice, they have, for a perpetual memory of their cruelty, set forth books, affirming it to be lawful to persecute and put to death such as dissent from them in controversies of religion, whom they call blasphemers of God. Notwithstanding they, before they came to authority, they were of another judgment, and did both say and write, that no man ought to be persecuted for his conscience sake; but now they are not only become persecutors, but also they have given, as far as lieth in them, the sword into the hands of bloody tyrants. Be these, I pray you, the sheep whom Christ sent forth in the midst of wolves? Can the sheep persecute the wolf? Doth Abel kill Cain? Doeth David {though he might} kill Saul? Shortly, doth he which is born of the Spirit kill him which is born after the flesh? Mark how you be fallen into most abominable tyranny, and yet you see it not. Thus I am constrained even of conscience to write, that if it shall please God to awake you out of your dream, that you may perceive how one error hath drowned you in more errors, and hath brought you to a sleeping security, that when you walk even after the lusts of your hearts, thirsting after blood and persecuting poor men for their conscience sake, you be blinded, and see not yourselves, but say, tush, we be predestinated whatsoever we do, we are certain we cannot fall out of God's favour. Awake, therefore, and look what danger you be in, and how by your poisoned doctrine you infect the people of God, and draw them to a secure, idle and careless life.

ANSWER.

The crimes laid to our charge in this matter be heinous. For first, we are accused that we provoke men to a careless and libertine life. So that by us the people do nothing but eat, and drink, and rise up to play. That we have no conscience, but being led with the spirit of Balaam, give occasion of sin to the people. That none other fruit doth ensue our doctrine, but liberty to sin, for our disciples are cruel murderers, subject to all iniquity, respecting persons, and flattering sinners. And last, that by our poisoned doctrine, we infect the people, and bring them to a secure, idle, and careless life.

Because I will omit no notable part of your book to slip over without some reasonable Answer, I will follow your order, although it be confused. If you be able by plain Scriptures to prove a third sort of men which neither be elect, neither yet reprobate, then shall we learn of you other wise to divide.

But if God, by his first voice pronounced in this matter made mention but of two seeds; and if Christ Jesus, when he shall come shall set one army on the right hand and another upon the left hand, without mention made of any third sort of men; we cannot repent, nor yet call back the truth of our doctrine, albeit that you in despite and fury cry, "what can the devil wish his members to teach more for the advancement of his kingdom than this? What can be invented more to provoke men to live a careless and libertine life more than if they be persuaded that neither well doing availeth or pleaseth God, nor evil doing hindreth unto salvation." And so forth you proceed in your first accusation.

Before I have required, and yet again do require, of God's faithful lieutenants in earth, I mean of lawful magistrates who rule in God's fear, whom you utterly study to abolish and deprive; of them I say, I have required justice to be ministered betwixt us and you, without respect of persons.

Let the heaven and earth, {if men will not,} yea, let God and his holy angels, in whose presence we walk,

bear record and witness how unjustly and maliciously you accuse us, that we provoke the people to a careless and libertine life. If ever it can be proved by our doctrine or writing, that we affirm that there is no difference betwixt virtue and vice, that the one neither pleaseth God, neither yet the other doth displease him, let us without mercy die the death. But and if the whole scope of our doctrine tend to the contrary; yea, if our lives and conversation {howsoever the devil doth blind your eyes} be such, as they only may convict your blasphemy; and last, if the order of that City where this doctrine is taught be such, in punishment of iniquity, and that without respect of person, that the like justice hath never been executed against open offenders since the days of the Apostles, in any Christian Commonwealth, then can we not cease to desire, that this your former blasphemy may be revenged upon your own heads.

We do not deny but this is one part of our doctrine, that as God's counsel is immutable, so is his election sure and stable; insomuch that the elect cannot finally be reprobated, neither yet that the reprobate can ever become elect, no more than the wheat can become darnel or darnel become wheat. But do we add no more than this? Do we teach men to set cock on hope, and so to let the world slide, as scoffingly you write? Or, do we not rather continually affirm, that as God of his great mercy hath called us to the dignity of his children, so hath he sanctified us, and appointed us to walk in pureness and holiness all the days of our life; that we shall continually fight against the lusts and inordinate affections that remain in this our corrupt nature; that if we find not the Spirit of Christ working in us, that then we can never be assured of our election; for the conscience of all such as without bridle follow iniquity, can never be assured of God's present favour during the time that they delight in sin? Finally, none of your Anabaptistical sort require greater obedience to be given unto God, and unto his law, than we do; except that you put your scholars in vain appearance, that by the power of their own free will, they may at length come to such perfection as no sin shall stir in them. But we, by the

contrary, attributing all to the free grace of God, do affirm, that continually in this life, we must confess that sin so remaineth in us, that except that God, for Christ Jesus' sake, did pardon the same, his wrath justly should be kindled against us. Let all our writings and the whole sum of our doctrine bear record whether thus we teach or not. And are not the lives and honest conversation of many thousands, {we praise God of his great mercy,} professing the same doctrine, able to convince your malicious impudence? How many have left their countries, possessions, and lands, and for liberty of their conscience only, do live a sober and contemptible life? How many have given, and daily do give, their lives and blood for the testimony of Christ's truth, and for that they will not defile themselves with idolatry?

And yet thou ashamest not to ask, how many of them can we perceive, by their conversation, that they have cast of the old man and put on the new man, walking sincerely in their vocation? Shall not the great multitude of Christ's dear martyrs of late in England, {thou wilt not say that they were all Anabaptists,} the long patience of our brethren in France, and that cruel persecution of late risen in Italy, Naples, and Spain, for Christ's truth only, put thy venomous tongue to silence?

If I should demand of thee, which of the two did most mortify the flesh; he that for conscience sake leaveth country, friends, riches, and honours; or he, that to gape for worldly promotions, or yet for any other purpose, doth cover himself with Esau's clothes, {I use your own terms,} and so denying what he is, will swear, if needs be, that he is not Jacob; which of these two, I say, doest thou think to have come nearest to the forsaking of himself? Or yet another, whither doth he walk most sincerely in his vocation, that, living upon his just labours, is ready to communicate according to his ability to the necessity of his poor brethren; or he who, loitering in one place, or trotting from country to country, would have all things in common, contrary to the order of nature and policy? Or yet the third, which of the two doth most crucify the lusts and concupiscence of

the flesh; he that layeth down his neck even under the axe of a cruel and unjust magistrate, and that also when he suffereth unrighteously; or he that would abolish and destroy the good ordinance of God, all lawful magistrates, and distinction in policies?

That you be the one and we be the other of these two sorts of men, it is evident enough. And upon whom the crime leaveth and justly may be laid, further examination shall declare. Now come I to the order of that City in the which this doctrine is taught, received, and maintained. What maketh the poor city of Geneva, poor, I say, in man's eyes, but rich before God, by the plentiful abundance of his heavenly graces; what maketh it, I say, so odious to the carnal men of this world? Assuredly not this doctrine wherewith you charge us. For that could well please the carnal man, to let him live at his pleasure without all punishment. Is it not the just rigor of justice, and the severity of discipline executed therein, in such sort, that no manifest offender, where so ever he hath committed his offence, doth there escape punishment? Is not this it that so doth offend, not only the licentious of the world, but even you dissembling hypocrites, cannot abide that the sword of God's vengeance shall strike the murderer, the blasphemer, and such others, as God by his word commandeth to die? Not so by your judgments; he must live, he may repent. And those Commonwealths do you highly praise, where men may live as they list, be subject to no law nor order; yea, where the drunkard and such others abominable persons are permitted to live quietly, and find favour to escape punishment and shame. But because in the streets of Geneva dare no notable malefactor more show his face {all praise and glory be unto God} then dare the owl in the bright sun, therefore is it hated; therefore it is called blood-thirsty, and thus blasphemously traduced, as after you write.

Thou sayest that amongst us there is respect of persons, that we prefer the wealthy; which, if they be liberal, although they be drowned in many vices, yet we use to heal up their sores, &c.

I am assured that thy own conscience doth convict thee of a malicious lie, in thus writing; for thou canst not be ignorant what the city of Geneva hath of late years sustained for rooting out those pestilent persons, who laboured to destroy the Lord's vineyard planted in the same. And what was the cause that so they were conjured against the liberty of Christ's Evangel? The hatred, wilt thou and they say, which they did bear against strangers? I answer, but no more strangers were then in Geneva than were before, when the chief captains of that faction were most earnest professors of the evangel, in mouth I mean. And in very deed, if they would have laboured to have expelled the strangers, they had been enemies to their own community; for by the multitude of strangers their commonwealth doth flourish, and none did receive such benefit of strangers, as those that required Christ's doctrine to be overthrown.

They were Papists, {thou wilt say,} and therefore hated the religion. I answer in their defense, that in mouth and external profession they were not, but always they protested that they would never revolt to Papistry again. But in few words I will open the cause of their conspiracy. They were corrupt in manners, filthy of life, perverters of justice, and such, finally, as by whom the blessed Word of God was slandered and evil spoken by. The preachers called for reformation of manners; they boldly and sharply rebuked even those that were in highest authority. One of the chiefest of the band was excommunicated, and so did remain more years than one. The Consistory called for justice to be executed, and for penalties to be appointed for the disobedient and open condemners. But nothing could prevail; the multitude of the wicked was so great, that in votes and voices they did prevail. And so was the iniquity of the wicked maintained for a long season. Which being considered, the godly as well that were native born, as also the strangers, consulted upon the next and surest remedy, and that after that not only the most part of strangers were determined to depart, but that also that faithful servant of Christ Jesus had in public sermon

commended his flock, with the weeping eyes of many, to the protection and providence of God, and had publically pronounced, that he would be no minister in that church where vice could not be punished according to God's word, where the wicked should triumph and make laws at their pleasure. After this consultation, it was concluded that a reasonable number of strangers, whose fidelity and honest conversation had long been tried and well known, should be made burgesses, and free to have voice in Counsel, and in making civil statutes. Which being understand, the wicked began more manifestly to utter themselves; they opened themselves to the magistrates, they plainly denied that any strangers should be free, they appealed to the greater Counsel; which being gathered, did justify the decree of the Sindiques, {so be the chief magistrates called.} Shortly after did the whole venom burst out, for after feasting and banqueting of all sorts of villains, was the conspiracy concluded and put in execution. For with one consent they invade upon the night one of the chief magistrates; they cried victory and triumph, but God repressed that fury, so assisting, without the arm of man, his servant and lieutenant for that time appointed in that City, that first he recovered the ensign of his just and lawful office again; and thereafter so put to flight that rebellious and great multitude, that some being apprehended and committed to prison, the rest were dispersed by the only power of God. For that is a thing most evident and plain, that the number of the one did in twenty degrees surmount the other.

This do I write, to let the simple reader understand, although thou be blinded, what was the original of the trouble which Geneva did after suffer. What did the strangers, I pray thee, gain by their liberty? As touching the world, I say nothing, for no kind of commodity they lacked before which after they did obtain, only this excepted, that in counsel they should have voices and places to speak, which thing also did only offend those oppressors of justice and maintainers of iniquity; for thereby did they perceive, that their enterprises should be broken, and that statutes should

be made to reform their insolvency. To proceed, justice being executed without respect of person upon those that were apprehended, the rest who did escape, to great number, were pronounced rebels. Then began skirmishes upon every side of Geneva, victuals were commanded to be cut off, great threatenings were blown in the ears of all the godly; and when these could not prevail, then were devised practice after practice, treason was conspired, and the enemies hoped for possession of the City. But this being revealed and the practices punished, Satan returneth to his own nature again. For after that no entreatment could prevail, open war was denounced against them, a day was set that they should be restored, and that with great sums of money to be delivered unto them, by reason of their former losses and injuries sustained. And this sentence was pronounced, not by the rebels only, but by a potent commonwealth and their ancient friends. Hereupon were made, by the rebels, fires of joy, defiance was sent, the day was appointed that the siege should begin, and victuals should be cut off; expectation nor comfort rested none to us, but God and the messengers of his word, which then sounded the trumpet most boldly and most clearly, promising, even in our greatest desperation, the same glorious deliverance which shortly after followed. For God by his power did mitigate that rage, and converted the hearts of our ancient alliance to remember their duties toward God and his servants, and so to enter with the city of Geneva into a new society and league.

Now to return to the malicious slanderer. If we were such as thou doest accuse us, to wit, that we put no difference betwixt vice and virtue, that we suffer the people in a dissolute life, that we respect the persons of the rich, and heal their sores with unprofitable plasters, {sic,} that we only desire that all men frequent our congregation, and that we esteem that to be the surest sign of their election; if these, I say, were true, to what purpose did all the preachers endanger their lives {and that continually by the space of three years} for obtaining of discipline? Why should many godly

strangers have rather chosen to have left that commonwealth in the which they were, with quietness, permitted to live as best seemed to them, rather than that they would abide the sight of iniquities, that daily did increase? And why did the godly within that City so hazard liberty and life, that rather they had determined to die in defense of a just cause, than that ever any manifest enemy to God and virtue should be admitted to bear rule in that commonwealth? If we had been of that opinion, which most villainously thou layest to our charge, that neither virtue pleaseth God, neither yet that vice displeaseth him, had we not been most foolish, and most miserable of all other creatures? Plain it is that our power to man's judgment, was nothing comparable to the power of our adversaries; place of refuge was none left to the godly there assembled. And yet, let the enemies themselves witness against us, if in the least one iota, their request was granted. Yea, let the place of execution witness, if, when we looked for nothing but for the extremity to be attempted, if more favour were showed to the offenders apprehended, than if no such trouble had been feared or appearing. If thou repliest, that greater offences are overseen in such as favour our doctrine; I answer, all those in mouth did favour the same evangel which we profess. The cause of the strife did only arise for the purity of life which ought inseparably to be joined with the external profession. I could recite more than one of those, that seemed to be then pillars in Geneva, as touching riches, worldly estimation, and liberality towards the poor, being also of the number of the strangers, who, for suspicion of offences were, and remain to this day, some exiled, some condemned to perpetual prison; for whose deliverance and receiving to the church again, there hath been offered greater sums than perchance might incise an Anabaptist to go the mass, {I will not say to be a Papist,} and yet have they obtained nothing.

Now briefly to recite that which I have laid against thy first accusation; if you be neither able to prove by our doctrine nor writings, neither by our own lives and conversations, neither yet by the lack of justice

in that City in which this doctrine is taught, received, and maintained, with what face canst thou affirm that we teach the people a careless and libertine life? Hath ever any man more strongly and more earnestly confuted those pestilent opinions of the Libertines than hath that man whom most you accuse for this doctrine? Let his notable work written against the Libertines, twelve years ago, be a testimony against your manifest malice.

Thus have I, in answering to your first accusation, answered somewhat to other crimes contained in all the four. Now in answering to your second, I will labour to touch, and put end to that which resteth in the others. Ye accuse us that we have no conscience, to deceive the people of God. For thus you demand, "why masters, {I know this phrase of old,} have you no conscience, thus to cause the people of God to sin? See you not that you be led with the same spirit that Balaam was led withal, how he counselled, to give occasion of sin to the people of God?" And so after that you have taken all excuse, as you think, from us, you boldly pronounce your sentence, that the blood of such as perish shall be required of our hands.

I hear the accusation very vehemently intended, but when I seek for the probation of every part, I find none, but accusation followeth accusation. For still you accuse us, that we are flatterers of sinners, that we take wicked men by the hand, that we heal them with this saying, there is none during this world that can be known to be in the election, be he never so virtuous, nor any out of the election, be he never so unrighteous. After this manner {say you} do we heal them up; so that they need not to endeavour themselves to bring forth the fruits of lively faith. These, I say, be your accusations, the probation whereof you delay so long, that after you never remember it. And so must your authority stand in force, both to accuse and be admitted for witness.

But we must except against you, for two causes most reasonable; first, because you are our accusers, and our party adversary. Secondly, because you are

venomous liars, persons defamed, and blasphemers of God. That you are venomous and malicious liars, I have in divers places before sufficiently proved, how you falsify and pervert the plain Scriptures; how you add to our words and diminish from them at your pleasure; and, finally, how that you invent and lay crimes to our charge, which you be never able to prove, as here in this place you shame not to affirm that we heal up the sores of those that be drowned in vices, with such words, as you write. We have had offenders in deed amongst us, {I mean in the congregations which you accuse,} of diverse sorts and diverse estates. Let any convict us, that either in exhorting, admonishing, or in executing judgment, we have used any such persuasion or words to the offenders. But if the offender was to be admonished or exhorted, if we have not, in God's name, exhorted them to walk as it became the sons of light; and if judgment was to be executed against them, if we have not used the rule of God's word; judging of the tree, not after the secret election of God, but according to the manifest fruits, pronouncing that member unworthy to abide in the body whose corruption was able to infect the rest of the members of this order, I say, be so straightly kept amongst us, that never since the days of the Apostles was it more uprightly kept in any congregation, with what faces can you say so, that we take wicked men by the hand? That we teach them that they need not to bring further the fruit of a lively faith? Ye allege that Christ affirmed, that a good man from the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things. And so do we; and do no less affirm than you do, although in another understanding, {as I before have declared,} that we must observe the commandment of Christ, if we will be known to appertain to him.

We think it no assured nor certain sign of election, to be joined with this or that congregation. We know that Satan was once joined with the angles, Judas with Christ Jesus, and many false brethren with the company of the best reformed churches and chiefest apostles. But wonder it is, that you burden us with that, in this one case, which is your plain doctrine, which with

tooth and nail you defend. Do you not plainly write, that no man is so elected in Christ Jesus, but that he may fall and utterly become a reprobate; and none is so reprobated, but by repentance he may be elected? The plain contrary whereof we teach and maintain. O, say you, you mean of the signs, that they are never certain. I answer, that in very deed, sometimes the elect, as touching man's judgment, is like in estate with the reprobate. And again, that sometimes the reprobate do beautifully shine in the eyes of men for a space, as examples be evident. But yet I am sure that you be never able to prove that we affirm that in this life no difference may be known betwixt the two. The end of our doctrine tendeth to this, but chiefly to prove, that from election cometh faith, from a lively faith do good works spring, in which the elect continuing and going forward, not only make their own election sure, as Saint Peter doth teach, but also give a testimony of it to others, before whom their good works do shine. And so by the contrary signs and effects, we affirm that the reprobate do manifest and utter themselves. And so I say, that wonder it is that you burden us, as that we should affirm that no man can be known either to be in the election or out of the election during this life. But more wonder it is that you affirm us to adduce these words of Saint Paul, "the devil doth transform himself into an angel of light," for probation of our purpose. For I, for my own part, do protest before the Lord Jesus, that I never did so understand that place of the apostle; neither yet think I that any of you be able to show, in any of our writings, those words adduced for probation of that purpose.

True it is that I have long understood, and to this hour do understand, that by those words would the Apostle admonish the Corinthians, and all others, that they should not receive and believe every person and doctrine that offereth itself, under the cloke of justice and of truth; but that diligently we should try the spirits from whence they are, and whether they come from God, or not. For if the devil, the great angel of darkness, enemy to mankind, and father to all false prophets, can

yet so transform himself, that for a time his purpose and intent are not seen; but that under the cloke of amity and love he seeketh our destruction, as in tempting the woman doth plainly appear; how much more can his servants and soldiers, being deceitful workers, transform them into the apostles of Christ, pretending at the first entry nothing but love and justice, nothing but God's glory, nothing but mortification of the flesh, and such like most beautiful pretenses, although that yet these things be most far from their hearts. Thus, I say, do I, and with me I am assured who so ever deeply doth weigh the purpose of the Apostle in that place, understand that sentence; and do not, as you falsely write, allege it to prove that no man can be known to be either in the election or out of the election during this life. It may be, that we have said and written, {as the truth is,} that no man could have known, by the good works of that happy thief hanged with Christ, that he had been God's elect, before that in that anguish, so instantly he began to defend Christ's innocence, so sharply to rebuke the other being a blasphemer, and humbly to submit himself and pray that Christ would remember him when that he came in to his kingdom. And contrary wise, that none could have defined by the evil works of Judas before his treasonable defection from Christ Jesus, which was but few days before his death, that he had been the reprobate. And what serveth this for your purpose? How can you hereby prove that we are the sons of darkness, that we take the most shameful men by the hand, flattering them, so that they cannot return from their wickedness, and so by our doctrine give occasion of sin to the people, declaring ourselves thereby not to be sent of God, &c.?

Are you able to prove, that we teach the people not to convert from their sins and wicked imaginations, to the last hour of their departure? Do we promise to all thieves and murderers the same grace and favour that David, Peter, and this thief found? I trust thy own conscience knoweth the contrary. Permit or suffer we {be they never so high} manifest offenders to live amongst us, after their own appetites? And yet

ashamest thou not impudently thus to write, "but such lips, such disciples, such masters, for your chief Apollos be persecutors, on whom the blood of Servetus crieth a vengeance; so doth the blood of others more whom I could name. But for as much as God hath partly already revenged their blood, and served some of their persecutors with the same measure where with they measured to others, I will make no mention of them at this time."

Blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who so revealeth the things that lie in secret, that hypocrites at length, how soever they dissemble for a time, are compelled to notify and bewray themselves. Before, to some it might have appeared that the zeal of God's glory, the love of virtue, the hatred of vice, and the salvation of the people, whom, by us, you judged to be blinded and deceived, had carried you headlong into such vehemency, {as you be men zealous and fervent,} that no kind of accusation was thought by you sufficient to make us odious unto the people; lies against us imagined were not only tolerable, but also laudable and holy; scriptures by you willingly and wittingly corrupted, did serve to defend God's justice and his glory, what we by our doctrine oppugn and improve. But these your last words do betray the matter, that in what soever faces you list transform yourselves, your grief will appear to proceed from another fountain than from any of these which you pretend, and I before have rehearsed.

Oh the death of Servetus, your dear brother, for whose deliverance your champion Castellio solemnly did pray, with whom, if once you could have spoken, that kingdom, which you hope for, had begun to be enlarged; his blood, I say, with the blood of others, I think you mean of your prophetess Joan of Kent, do cry a vengeance in your ears and hearts. That none other cause do you see of the shedding of the blood of those most constant martyrs of Christ Jesus, Thomas Cranmer, Nicholas Ridley, Hugh Latimer, John Hooper, John Rogers, John Bradford, and of others more, but that God hath partly revenged their blood, that is of your great prophet and prophetess, upon their

persecutors, and hath served them with the same measure with the which they served others, I appeal to the judgment of all those that fear God. What is thy judgment, and the judgment of thy faction, of that glorious gospel of Christ Jesus, which of late hath been suppressed in England; what is thy judgment of those most valiant soldiers and most happy martyrs of Christ Jesus, upon whom, O blasphemous mouth, thou sayest God hath taken vengeance, which is an horrible blasphemy in the ears of all the godly. I will not now so much labour to confute by thy pen, as that my full purpose is to lay the same to thy charge, if I shall apprehend thee in any commonwealth where justice against blasphemers may be ministered, as God's Word requireth. And hereof I give thee warning, lest that after thou shalt complain, that under the cloke of friendship I have deceived thee. Thy manifest defection from God, and this thy open blasphemy spoken against his eternal truth, and against such as most constantly did suffer for testimony of the same, have so broken and dissolved all familiarity which hath been betwixt us, that although thou were my natural brother, I durst not conceal thy iniquity in this case.

But now to the matter at hand. I have before proved you malicious and venomous liars, and therefore unworthy to bear testimony against us. Now resteth to be proved, that you are blasphemers of God, and persons defamed. Solomon affirmeth, "that he that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the innocent, are alike abominable before God." Which sentence is not to be understand of judges only, but is to be referred to every man; for of every one doth God require, that he hate, and in his heart and mouth condemn, that which God himself hath condemned; and also, that he allow and justify that which God pronounceth just, lawful, and holy. And if the contrary be found even in a multitude, God doth not only punish the chief offenders, but also upon their favourers, maintainers, and justifiers, doth he commonly pour the same plagues and vengeance. And hereof is that rare and fearful punishment taken upon Dathan and Abiram

sufficient proof; for they joined with Korah were the authors of the conspiracy raised against Moses and Aaron. But did they alone sustain the vengeance? No; but their households, children, wives, tents, and substance in the same contained, did the earth in a moment devour and swallow up. And why? Because they did justify the cause of those wicked, and in so far in as in them lay, did maintain the same. No man, I trust, will deny, but that he who killeth an innocent man is a murderer, although it be under the cloke of justice. But that he who, having lawful authority to kill, and yet suffereth the murderer to live, is a murderer, in this perchance some men may doubt. But if the law of God be diligently searched, this doubt shall easily be resolved. For it will witness that no less ought the murderer, the blasphemer, and such other, to suffer the death, than that the meek and the fearer of God should be defended. And also, that such as maintain and defend the one, are no less criminal before God then those that oppress the others.

One example I will adduce for all. God gave into the hands of Ahab, Benhadad, King of Syria, who was a great enemy to Israel; whom he upon certain conditions of amity sent home to his country. But what sentence was pronounced against Ahab? "Thus saith the Eternal, because thou hast let go out of thy hands a man whom I appointed to die, thy soul {that is, thy life} shall be in the place of his life, and thy people in the place of his people." Now to you justifiers of Servetus, Servetus was an abominable blasphemer against God; and you are justifiers of Servetus; therefore you are blasphemers before God, like abominable as he was. The major I intend shortly to prove, so far as shall be sufficient at this time. The minor you do not deny; for some by apologies, some by books, and all by your tongues, do justify his cause. And the conclusion is infallibly gathered of the former words of the Holy Ghost.

Ye will not easily admit that Servetus be convicted of blasphemy; for if so be, you must be compelled to confess {except that you will refuse God} that the sentence of death executed against him was not

cruelty; neither yet that the judges who justly pronounced that sentence were murderers nor persecutors; but that this death was the execution of God's judgment, and they the true and faithful servants of God, who, when no other remedy was found, did take away iniquity from amongst them. That God hath appointed death by his law, without mercy, to be executed upon the blasphemers, is evident by that which is written, Leviticus 24. But what blasphemy is, may some perchance doubt. If righteously we shall consider and weigh the Scriptures, we shall find that to speak blasphemy, or to blaspheme God, is not only to deny that there is a God, but that also it is lightly to esteem the power of the eternal God; to have, or to sparse abroad, of his Majesty, such opinions as may make his Godhead to be doubted of; to depart from the true honouring and religion of God to the imagination of man's inventions; obstinately to maintain and defend doctrine and diabolical opinions plainly repugnant to God's truth; to judge those things which God judgeth necessary for our salvation, not to be necessary; and finally, to persecute the truth of God, and the members of Christ's body.

Of the first and second sort both was Sennacherib and proud Rabshakeh; who, comparing God with the idols of the Gentiles, did not only lightly esteem his godly power, but also, so far as in them was, studied to take out of the hearts of the Israelites all right and perfect opinion of God. At whom the prophet, in the person of God, demandeth this question, "whom hast thou blasphemed?"

Of the third sort were both Israel and Judah, declining to idolatry against God's express commandment, whom the prophets so often do affirm to blaspheme the Holy One of Israel. "Because {saith Isaiah} they have repudiated the law of the Lord of Hosts, and the word of the Holy One of Israel, contumeliously have they blasphemed." And Ezekiel, after that he hath most sharply rebuked the Israelites for their idolatry, he addeth, "yet in this your fathers have blasphemed me, though they had before

grievously transgressed against me; for when I had brought them into the land, for the which I lifted up my hand to give it them, they saw every high hill, and all the thick trees, and they offered there their sacrifices, and there they presented their offering," &c. Ezek.20:28.

Of the fourth sort were Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom Paul gave to the Devil that they should learn not to blaspheme. I Timothy 1:20.

Of the fifth sort were the multitude of the Jews, who judged, and to this day do judge, the death of Christ Jesus, his blessed ordinance, the public preaching of his Evangel, and the administration of his Sacraments, to be nothing necessary to our salvation.

And of the last, doth not Paul deny himself to have been a blasphemer, and a persecutor, before his conversion.

Now, if I shall plainly prove the most part, yea, all these, {except, you will say, he shed no man's blood,} to have been in your great prophet Servetus, yea, yet to be in you all of the Anabaptistical sort, have I not sufficiently proved both him and you blasphemers? Albeit I be more near of his and your counsel than any of you doth know or suspect, yet will I not utter, at this present, all that I can, but will abide till such opportunity as God shall offer unto me, to notify his and your poison to the Church of God, that of the same the godly may beware. For this present, I say, first, that Servetus, whom you justify, did maintain, and, by word and writing, dispersed abroad, wicked and most devilish opinions of God, which might not only make his Godhead to be despised, but also called in doubt and question. He judged those things nothing necessary to salvation which Christ hath commanded and ordained. And last, that impugning the true religion, he did most obstinately maintain his diabolical errors, and did resist the plain truth to the death. His erroneous opinions of God and of his eternal Godhead were these.

1. Whosoever believest any Trinity in the essence of God, hath not the perfect God, but gods imagined, and illusion of devils. 2. That Christ is the Son of God,

only in so far as he is begotten of God in the womb of the Virgin, and that not only by the power of the Holy Spirit, but because that God begat him of his own substance. 3. That the Word of God descending from the heavens is now the flesh of Christ, so that the flesh of Christ is from heaven. Further, that the body of Christ is the body of the Godhead, the flesh of God, godly and heavenly, as it is begotten of the substance of God. 4. That the soul of Christ is God, and that the flesh of Christ is God, and that as well the flesh as the soul were in the very substance of the Godhead from all eternity. 5. That God is the Father of the Holy Ghost. 6. That Christ having the participation of the Godhead or of God, and participation of man, may not be called a creature, but one that doth participate with creatures. 7. As the Word descended into the flesh of Christ, so did the Holy Ghost descend into the souls of the Apostles. 8. That Christ, so long as he was conversant in the flesh, received not the new Spirit which he was to receive after his resurrection. 9. That in all men, from the beginning, is engrafted the Spirit of the Godhead, even by the breath of God, and yet may the Spirit, by the which we be illuminated, be extinguished. 10. That the substantial Godhead is in all creatures. That the soul of man, although it be not God, it is made God by the Spirit, which is God himself. 11. That the soul is made mortal by sin, even as the flesh is mortal; not that the soul returneth to nothing, as neither doth the flesh, but that it dieth when that it is deprived of lively action. 12. And that it is holden in hell languishing, as that it should never after live; but these that be regenerated have another soul than that they had before, because of the substance which is renewed, and for the Godhead which is joined. 13. That alike it is to baptize an infant, as to baptize an ass or a stone. 14. That there is no mortal sin committed before the age of twenty years.

These I have thought sufficient to produce at this present, to let the reader understand that it is not without cause that I say, that Servetus, whom you justify, is a blasphemer. I have omitted things more horrible and grievous, to avoid the offence of godly

readers, which I am not minded to manifest, except that I shall understand that your venomous tongues be not stayed by these. I appeal to the conscience of Castellio himself, if in every one of these former propositions which concern the Godhead, there be not contained horrible blasphemy. For what is more blasphemous, than to affirm that such as believe in the Godhead three distinct Persons, have no true God, but the illusion of the Devil; that Christ Jesus is not the Eternal Son of the Eternal Father; that there is no distinction betwixt the Father and the Son, but in imagination only; that Christ hath no participation of man's nature, but that his flesh is from heaven; yea, that it is the flesh of the Godhead; that in stocks, stones, and all creatures, is the substantial Godhead? If these, I say, be not blasphemies worthy of ten thousand deaths, especially being obstinately maintained against all wholesome admonition, let all those that fear God judge; yea, even you yourselves, how furious that ever you be, judge in the matter, even as you will answer before the throne of the Lord Jesus. That contemptuously he spake of baptizing of the children, of the public preaching of the Evangel, and of the administration of the Lord's Supper, that have you common with him. For this is your glory and persuasion to all your scholars, that these things be nothing necessary to salvation; yea, most straightly you inhibit all of your sect to frequent any congregation but your own. And whether this be blasphemy of your part, or not, to affirm those things nothing necessary which Christ Jesus hath established, and commanded to be used in remembrance of him to his again coming, I am content that judgment be referred even to those that be most indifferent betwixt us and you.

To supersede the rest of your blasphemies, I return to your book, because, that after I purpose to speak of your holy conversation, and of the great perfection that is found in you. Ye accuse us, that we have written books, in a perpetual memory of our cruelty, affirming it to be lawful to put to death such as dissent from us in religion, notwithstanding that some of us were of another mind before they came to authority;

and further, that we have given the sword into the hands of bloody tyranny.

True it is, that books are written both by you and by us. For your Master Bellius affirmeth that it is not lawful for the civil magistrate to use the sword against heretics, to whom that godly learned man, Theodore Beza, hath answered, in which, if you or your master think not yourselves fully answered, you may put pen to the paper when you list, looking to receive answer with suitable expectation. John Calvin hath besides committed to writing the examination of Servetus, and the cause of his miserable death. Which books, albeit to you they be a perpetual memory of cruelty, yet I have good hope, that to our posterity they shall be profitable, as now to us be the godly labours of those that before us have fought the same battle against the obstinate heretics. And further, seeing both you and we must abide the sentence of one Judge, we cannot greatly fear the prejudice of your faction.

Where you ask, if these be the sheep which Christ sent forth in the midst of wolves, and if the sheep can persecute the wolves? And I demand for answer, whether Moses was a sheep or a wolf, and whether that fearful slaughter executed upon idolaters, without respect of persons, was not as great a persecution as the burning of Servetus and Joan of Kent? To me it appeareth greater. For to them was granted no place of repentance; no admonition was given unto them, but, without further delay or question, was the brother commanded to kill the brother; yea, the father not to spare the son. I think, verily, that if judgment should be referred unto you, that then should Moses and the tribe of Levi be judged wolves, sent to devour innocent sheep. But because we know what God hath allowed, we the less fear the judgment of man. If you claim any privilege by the coming of the Lord Jesus, he himself will answer, "that he is not come to break nor destroy the law of his heavenly Father."

Where further you ask, if Abel did kill Cain, or David Saul, or he which is born of the Spirit did kill him which is born of the flesh? I answer, if your question be

of Abel, David, and Isaac, in their proper persons, that none of them did kill any of these fore named. But if thereof you infer more, is it lawful for any of God's elect to kill any man for his conscience sake? I answer, that if under the name of conscience you include whatsoever seemeth good in your own eyes, that then you affirm a great absurdity, manifestly repugnant as well to God's Law as to the examples of those whom God hath highly praised in his Holy Scriptures. But because continually you claim to your conscience, to remove from you that vain coverture, I ask, if the murderer, adulterer, or any other malefactor, should be exempted from punishment of the law, although he allege that he did all things of conscience? I trust you will confess, that he ought to be mocked that will claim this liberty of conscience, when that he doth plainly offend against God's will revealed. And why will you not grant as much in this matter which now standeth in controversy? Because {say you} external crimes have no affinity with matters of religion; for the conscience of every man is not alike persuaded in the service and honouring of God, neither yet in such controversies as God's word hath not plainly decided. But I ask, if that be a just excuse why pernicious errors shall be obstinately defended, either yet that God's established religion shall be contemptuously despised.

To make the matter more plain, Israel and Judah were not both of one mind in the honouring of God, after that the ten tribes departed from the household of David. Yea, Judah in the self was often corrupted with pestilent idolatry, insomuch that the fathers did offer their children to Moloch; which I am assured they did not without some zeal, which they thought to be good conscience. But notwithstanding those controversies, divers opinions, and forged consciences at their own appetites, Elijah did kill the priests of Baal; and was he born, I pray you, of the flesh? Or was he not rather regenerated by God's Holy Spirit? Josiah did kill all the priests of the high places, and did burn men's bones upon their altars; and was he, I beseech you, brother to Cain; or rather fellow-heir of the kingdom promised to Abel? But that he was God's most faithful king, after

David, I trust you will not deny, except that you will say, as before boldly you have affirmed of other, that God revenged blood with blood, in that he suffered him to fall in battle. But the Spirit of God, speaking in the Prophet Jeremiah, is more mild of judgment, for he absolveth him, and doth affirm that he was taken away for the sins of the people. Consider these things, and convict us if you can by Scriptures.

We say that a man is not persecuted for his conscience that, declining from God, blaspheming his Majesty, and contemning his religion, obstinately defendeth erroneous and false doctrine. This man, I say, lawfully convicted, if he suffer the death pronounced by a lawful Magistrate, is not persecuted, {as in the name of Servetus you furiously complain,} but he suffereth punishment according to God's commandment, pronounced in Deuteronomy, the thirteenth Chapter.

To put end to these your calumnies for this time, two things I would require of you. First, that thus foolishly you abuse not the name of conscience, which you say constraineth you to write, to the end that you might awake us out of our dreams. Conscience, for assurance of the self in well doing, must have a testimony of God's plain will revealed; which you shall not find to be your assurance, that so odiously you may accuse us of those crimes whereof you be never able to convict us.

The second is, that by plain Scriptures and solid reasons you study to confute our doctrine, and not by raging words spoken, as it were, by men in a frenzy. You shall never be able to prove, either that our doctrine is poisoned, either yet that we draw the people to a secure, idle, and careless life. Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who of his mere mercy hath caused our doctrine somewhat to fructify; our good hope is, that with us and his afflicted Church He will continue his fatherly favour, in such sort, that from time to time he will leave documents to the ages following, that His heavenly doctrine is not sent in vain. To Him be glory forever. Now to that that followeth in your book.

THE ADVERSARY.

Now to that which you say, that Adam and David, even in committing of idolatry, homicide, all kind of wickedness, they be still in God's favour. Mark, I pray you, how the saying of the Prophet Zechariah is verified in you. In this, saith he, you grieve the Lord that you say, "they that do evil are good in the sight of God, and such please him." Can there be anything more manifestly spoken against your error? And truly it seemeth to me, that you would entice the people by this doctrine to sin; for if the elect lose not the favour of God by sin; neither the Reprobate, forasmuch as you say {they} never were nor can be in his favour, so that they cannot lose that which they have not, who needeth to fear, then, to lose the favour of God by sin? It is no matter then what we do. But contrary to your doctrine, we be taught by the Holy Ghost in the word, "that God hateth all works of iniquity, and he that committeth sin is of the Devil." And doth God favour them that be members of the Devil? Paul saith, "no unclean person hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God." Then was Adam, when he transgressed, not of the kingdom of God, for he was an unclean person, defiled with sin. If he was not of the kingdom of God, then was he of the kingdom of the Devil, and so was he out of the election. "Even as Adam did, saith the Lord, so have they broken my covenant, and set me at naught." If Adam, in breaking the Lord's covenant, setting God at naught, was still beloved of God, then may we say with the wicked as it is written, "it is but lost labour to serve the Lord, what profit have we for keeping his commandments?" Therefore may we say that the proud are happy, and that they which deal with ungodliness are set up. Such a spirit have you careless Libertines, as your doctrine well declareth. Did not God threaten Adam, that in what day so ever he should eat of the fruit he should die the death, not only corporal but also eternal? They which forsake the commandments of God, forsake God himself, as the prophet saith, "they are not the Lord's, for they have unfaithfully forsaken him."

Wherefore Adam, when he forsook God, was not the Lord's, but the servant of death and sin. "To whomsoever you commit yourselves as servants to obey, {saith Paul,} his servants you are to whom you obey, whether it be of sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness." And again, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his." And neither Adam nor David were led by the Spirit of Christ when they sinned, for the Spirit of Christ dwelleth not in such as forsake him and obey the Devil. And "except Christ {saith the Apostle} dwell in you, you are cast away." Then Adam and David were castaways, that is, reprobates, when they sinned; for neither were they in Christ, nor Christ in them; in whom the election of God was and is. But to what purpose should I thus contend with you that Adam did fall out of the election, seeing in this you agree not yourselves; for your congregation which is at Geneva, in the Confession of their Faith, say, "that of the lost sons of Adam, God elected some to life, and the rest he refused." Either improve their belief, or else confess with them that all the children of Adam were lost by transgression. If they were lost, then were they out of the election with their father Adam, from the transgression unto the promise that was made. "Therefore {saith Paul} damnation came of one sin unto condemnation," and in another place, "like as by Adam all die, even so by Christ shall all be made alive." Here doth the Apostle witness plainly, that we all by Adam do die. Saint John saith, "he that believes not is already condemned; the wrath of God abideth on him." Then were Adam and David, and all such workers of iniquity, for that time that they sinned, already condemned, being void of faith. And could they be in the state of condemnation and election both together? Hearken what followeth, "and the wrath of God abideth on him," as Adam from the transgression unto the promise felt the force of the wrath of God. Thus we see, that Adam and David, and all others, when they sinned, they be out of the love, and favour, and election of God, until they repent and be born anew; for otherwise can they never enter into the kingdom of heaven. Again, Saint John

saith, "ye know that no manslayer hath eternal life abiding in him." David was a man killer, wherefore he had not eternal life abiding in him. But during the time of his wickedness he was the child of death, as the Prophet Nathan showed him, David giving judgment against himself. Without faith it cannot be that any man should please God. Adam and David, when they sinned, they were without faith; then pleased they not God. If they pleased him not, they displeased him; so that they were fallen from the love and favour of God.

ANSWER.

Albeit that I perceive that either ignorance doth so impede you, or else that malice doth so blind you, that neither you will nor can understand that which in the self is most sensible and plain; I will nevertheless, yet once again, repeat that which before I have said, to the end that we may give testimony as well to those that now live as unto the posterity to come what doctrine it is which you so furiously impugn. If ignorance be the cause why thus you rage against us, you may be taught, if you wish to bestow your ears to hear, your eyes to read, and hearts to understand. For our doctrine is not, as some of you do complain, dark nor obscure, except that it be to those to whom the Apostle affirmed that his evangel was hid. But if that malice which you have conceived against the eternal truth of God, doth so blind you that you will not see the bright sun in the mid-day, there resteth no more to us but to desire of God, either to remove this your devilish malice, {I write, as knoweth God, even from the grief of heart,} or else so to stay and bridle it that it trouble not his afflicted Church.

Ye accuse us, as that we made no difference betwixt vice and virtue, sin and justice; neither yet betwixt Adam and David as they were elected in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid, and betwixt Adam transgressing, and David committing adultery and murder. Ye further seem to charge us as we should affirm that God hated not sin, neither yet that he respected vice. If our short, plain, and unfeigned

confession be able to satisfy you in these three particulars, I have good hope that after this you shall have no occasion to suspect us in such causes.

First, before God, before his holy angels in heaven, and before his congregation in earth, we protest and acknowledge that sin, vice, and all kind of iniquity, is, and ever hath been, so odious in the presence of God, that he never suffered the same unpunished in any of his elect children. That for the same, not only death but also common calamities hath apprehended all mankind even since the first transgression. That virtue, justice, and civil honesty, {besides the justice of the regenerate children,} hath so pleased God, that for love of the same, he hath maintained, and to this day doth maintain Commonwealths, albeit that many grievous crimes be committed in the same. As God {we say and affirm} loveth equity, justice, chastity, truth, mercy, and temperance, so doth he in some sort highly reward the same; and hateth unrighteousness, filthy life, deceit, excess, cruelty, and riotous living, which often he punisheth even in man's eyes. And this difference, we say, God maketh even amongst those that be not regenerate, neither were ever called to the true knowledge of salvation. And this much briefly, for the first, second, and third.

This difference we make betwixt Adam and David elected in Christ Jesus, and Adam and David transgressing God's holy commandment and will revealed. Adam and David elected in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid, were so loved in the same Lord Jesus their Head, that when they had most horribly fallen and offended, yet did God seek Adam, call upon him, gently reason with him, and at length, convicting his conscience of his offence, did make unto him that most joyful promise of reconciliation. Of the same love we say it proceeded, that God did send the prophet Nathan to David, the offender; that by the diction of another person he letteth him see the horror of his sin; that he did first terrify and beat down his conscience, and after most tenderly did erect and lift it up from the pit of desperation. All these

graces {say we} proceeded from God's immutable love, which did remain constant, both towards the one and towards the other, even in the time of their greatest unthankfulness; and that because they neither were beloved nor elected in themselves, but in Christ Jesus their Head, who neither did transgress nor offend in any iota, against the will of his heavenly Father.

But Adam and David transgressing and horribly falling from God, were so hated in themselves, and for their sins, that, first, it behooved the innocent Son of God, by his death, to make a satisfaction for their sins, as also for the sins of all God's children. And, secondarily, we say, preach, write, and maintain, that the sin was so odious before God, that his justice could do none other but inflict upon Adam and his posterity the penalty of death corporal, the punishments and plagues which daily we do see apprehend God's children. That upon David he did execute his just judgment, which in these words he pronounced, "now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife. Thus saith the Lord, behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house; and I shall take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun. For thou didst it secretly, but I shall do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun." II Samuel 12:11-12. This sentence, I say, most justly pronounced, was afterward most sharply, and yet most justly {for sin committed} put in execution. And so do we affirm, that none of God's children, be they never so dear, shall escape punishment, if contemptuously they transgress.

I suppose that this our confession nothing doth offend you, except in this one thing, that we affirm that God still loved Adam and David after their sin, before that his Holy Spirit wrought in their hearts any true repentance. And yet I wonder why this should offend you, seeing that we assign the cause, not to be themselves, neither any virtue within themselves, but Christ Jesus, in whom they were elected and chosen.

The signs of God's love we have evidently proved, and the end and issue did witness that God's love was not mutable. If you require Scriptures for the probation of the same, behold they are ready. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, much more we, being reconciled, shall be saved by his life." And a little before in the same chapter, "when we were sinners Christ died for us," &c., and the Apostle John, "herein appeareth the love of God towards us, that his only begotten Son hath he sent into the world, that we may live by him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us; and hath sent his Son in the mercy seat for our sins."

These are very plain, and we think that no reasonable man will deny to Adam and to David that which the Holy Ghost maketh common to all God's elect children, to wit, to be beloved of God even when they were enemies, dead in sin, drowned in idolatry, and polluted with all filthiness, as witnesseth the Apostle in these words, "and you, when you were dead by sin, in the which you sometimes walked, according to this world, according to the prince to whom power is of the air, which is the spirit now working in the rebellious children; amongst whom we all had sometimes conversation, in the lusts of our flesh, doing those things which pleased the flesh and the mind, and were of nature the sons of wrath, like as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his own great love, by the which he loved us, even when we were dead by sins," {mark, and if you be offended, complain upon the Holy Ghost,} "hath quickened us together with Christ, {by grace you are saved,} and hath raised us up together with him, and together with him hath caused us to sit amongst the heavenly, by Christ Jesus; to show in the ages to come his most rich grace, in his liberality, by Christ Jesus." Ephesians 2:1-7. God open your eyes, that you may see the light, and mollify your hearts, that you may magnify with God's children his superabundant love and mercy, bestowed even upon the most unworthy.

If you think that this love hath only place before that men offend, you see the Holy Ghost plainly

repugnant to your sentence, for he speaketh to them that had been polluted and defiled with all sins. If yet you reply, but that was during the time of their ignorance, and not after they were illuminated by grace; you have said nothing against our Confession. For we affirm, that God loveth sinners, being wrapped in death and damnation by sin; and that we have plainly proved. But yet, for your satisfaction and instruction, {for I take to record the Lord Jesus, that I would bestow my own life to join you fully to Christ Jesus,} I will proceed a little further with you. Do you think that the sin of David, touching the nature and quality of the sin itself, was more horrible and odious before God, than were all the sins committed in Ephesus by those to whom the Apostle writes, yea, than the sins which were done amongst the whole Gentiles? I trust you will not think it. And we clearly see that God loved the elect in Ephesus and amongst the Gentiles when they were drowned in all kind of iniquity. If still you reply, David was unthankful, who, after so many benefits received, so traitorously declined from God, following his own appetites, and of purposed counsel, murdering his innocent servant, and that with great ignominy of God. This neither do, neither yet ever did we deny; but yet as the question is other, so is not our confession proved false, albeit David was unthankful, {yea, and after Adam, most unthankful of any of God's children to his days.} For herein standeth the doubt, whether that the unthankfulness of God's children, after they have once received mercy, grace, and large benefits from God's hands, doth so alienate the mind of God from them, that he beareth to them no manner of love, till they turn to him by repentance. The contrary hereof we hold and affirm, not fearing to avow, that repentance, as it is joined with faith, which is the free gift of God, so is it the effect of God's constant love toward them, and no cause of the same.

And for the more ample declaration hereof, let us compare the denial of Peter and the defection of all the Apostles, with the sin of David. Albeit Peter was not called to be a worldly prince, as David was, yet I think you will not deny but that he was called to the office of

an Apostle, to be Christ's scholar the space of three years, to be so familiar with Christ, that he alone with other two did see Christ their Master transfigured, did hear that joyful voice from heaven, did see Moses and Elias speak with him; my trust is, I say, that you will not deny but that those were graces nothing inferior to David's kingdom temporal, and yet how horribly that Peter did deny Christ Jesus, you are not ignorant. Yea, but, say you, Peter wept, and sought grace with repentance. But I ask when? The Holy Ghost doth answer that it was after the cock had crowed, and that Christ Jesus had looked unto him. Proceeded that look, I beseech you, from love or hatred? It should seem in deed, by the effect that it came from love. For then it is said, that Peter remembered the words of his Master, and so went forth and wept bitterly. By all likelihood then, were his Master's words before quite blotted out of his memory. But God be praised, we need not to depend upon uncertain conjectures. The fall and denial of Peter {as in another place we have declared} came not by chance, as a thing whereof Christ Jesus was ignorant. He did foresee it, and before speaketh it. And what comfort gave Christ Jesus unto him before he pronounced that sharp sentence, "before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice?" This comfort, I say, which ought of all faithful most to be extolled, "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and thou being converted, confirm thy brethren." Did Christ pray for Peter, knowing that he should deny him? So he affirmeth. Doth the prayer of Christ Jesus and the effect thereof vanish in a moment? God forbid that such impiety take place in our hearts. The Apostle doth witness, that as his sacrifice is ever recent before God, so is his prayer effectual ever for his elect. Doth God utterly hate, detest, and abhor such as for whom Christ Jesus prayeth, yea, commendeth to his mercy, before they fall into danger? My hope is that the godly will not so judge.

The same I might prove by the stout denial of Thomas, {besides the defection of all the rest,} who

after that the glad tidings of Christ's resurrection was confirmed by the testimony of many, did obstinately say, "except that I put my fingers in the holes," &c., "I will not believe." Here you see was no repentance of his former infidelity, but rather an augmentation and increase of the same. And did it proceed from love, or from hatred, that Christ cometh unto him, and doth offer to satisfy his curiosity in all things, willing him to be faithful and not to remain an infidel? Consider now how simply and plainly we have opened our minds unto you. God grant you his Holy Spirit rightly to understand, and charitably to interpret the things that be spoken, &c.

Now will I briefly go through these Scriptures which you abuse and violently wrest against us, not making so long discourses to amend your judgment as I have done before. For if things already spoken shall not profit, I must confess myself destitute of counsel for this time. The words of the Prophet {where negligently you name Zechariah for Malachi} neither serve your purpose, neither yet are verified in us. For we be not as the priests, who in those days permitted plain iniquity, and contempt of God and of his statutes, universally to be done by the people, and yet they did not oppose themselves to the same. Read the Prophet, and convict us of those things if you can.

We are sorry that you have no better opinion of us, than that our whole study should be to entice the people to sin. Not that we do much fear that by your words you can persuade any, except your own faction {and hardly those} to credit you in that behalf. For, all praise be to God, our lives, doctrine, and correction of vice, do witness the contrary. But our greatest sorrow is for your condemnation, which doubtless must ensue such wicked judgment, if hastily you repent not.

As the sun is not to be blamed, albeit the carrion by the heat thereof be more and more corrupted, so is not our doctrine, although that carnal men thereof take carnal liberty. For that, you know, did ensue the doctrine of Saint Paul.

We do no less affirm both in word and writing, than here you do affirm, to wit, that he who committeth sin is of the Devil. But herein I suppose standeth the difference that you and we understand not that phrase alike. We understand that the man committeth sin, whose whole study, mind, and purpose, from time to time, is bent upon iniquity; and such do we affirm to be of the Devil, who sinneth from the beginning. If you understand, that every action committed against the law of God maketh a man the son of the Devil, we must liberally speak that so we do not understand the mind of the Apostle. For plain it is that he meaneth not of actions particular, be they never so grievous, whereof a man after repenteth, and from the same desisteth, but of a continual exercise, delight, and study which man hath in sin. And this is plain, I say, by the words which immediately proceed and go before, "he that exercises justice, {saith he,} is just, even as He is just, he that committeth sin, is of the Devil; for from the beginning the Devil sinneth." Here is the exercise of justice put in contrariety to the committing of sin; an exercise we know requireth a continual study and practice. I think you will not say that one just work maketh a man just, and so consequently the son of God, except he proceed from justice to justice.

The same, say we, must be understand of the committing of sin, for neither Adam nor David did any longer commit their former sins, when by grace they began to repent; and so did they not remain unclean persons, nor in bondage of the Devil. Neither yet can it be proved, that ever they were members of the Devil, nor of his kingdom, albeit willingly they made themselves slaves to him; whom Christ Jesus, notwithstanding, did vindicate to himself, and deliver from that thralldom; because, of the free gift of God his Father, they did appertain to his kingdom. Neither ever be you able to prove, by any of these sentences, that ever they were out of the election, as before is declared.

The place of the Prophet Hosea is of you evil understood; the lack of the Hebrew tongue may be the cause of your error. And albeit your great and perfect

angel Castellio pretends great knowledge in that tongue, yet in that, as in many other places, a child may espy his negligence. True it is, that in the Hebrew this word Adam is in that place; but if we shall understand that word wheresoever it is found in the Scripture for the person of Adam our first father, we shall make a mad translation, and a sense more mad. Such as have but mean understanding in that tongue do know that that word is often common for any man, as in the Prophets is most evident.

The verity of the text is this, "they have transgressed the covenant; as the covenant of a man, they have rebelled against me," &c. God complaineth upon Ephraim and Judah, that they had no further respect, reverence, nor regard to that most excellent covenant and league which God had made with them, to wit, "that he would be their God, and they should be his people." For God had preferred them to all nations of the earth, and had set them apart from others to serve and honour him in holiness of life, and to offer unto him rather spiritual than carnal sacrifice. But they served him at their pleasure; yea, and in that land which they had received of God's most liberal benediction, they did decline to idolatry. For that he meaneth, where that he saith, "there have they rebelled," that is, where that they most ought to be obedient. This, I doubt not, shall every man who diligently marketh the scope of the Prophet perceive to be his very meaning.

Otherwise and more sharply I might have answered your ignorance, who can see no difference betwixt Adam once sinning, and yet shortly after, by grace, called to a new and more sure league with God, {which with all gladness and thankfulness he did receive,} and the manifest condemners of God, which do nothing else but delight in sin; from the which albeit that ten thousand times they be called, yet contemning all society with God, their pleasure is to remain in vanity, and so finally in death. This difference, I say, you ought to have observed, and then I doubt not but that you would have exempted Adam from the rank of such as contemptuously cry, it is but labour lost to serve God. If

diligently you shall consider what is written in Job, and in Malachi, the third chapter, you shall easily understand that the Prophet there divides the whole multitude in these two sorts of men, to wit, in those that be proud, obstinate, condemners, and in them that feared the Lord, whom he calleth his "peculiar people," whom he promised to "spare, as a man spareth his son that serveth him." And one of this last sort understand we Adam to have been all his days, after his fall and reconciliation by grace. The Lord purge your hearts {if his good pleasure be} from that venom which so oft moveth you to spew forth your own shame, sometimes crying, that we be led with the spirit of Balaam, and now affirming, that we be careless Libertines. To which blasphemies, because I can neither answer without the sorrow and grief of heart, neither without some offence of godly ears, I will remit judgment to him, to whom as he hath from the beginning opened things that for a time lay hid in darkness, so I doubt not but that he will, yea, and that shortly, reveal unto the world with what spirits both you and we be led. When more occasion shall be offered, I purpose, if so it please the mercy of my God to assist me, to notify with what spirits you and your sect have been led heretofore. Whatsoever you gather of the words of the Apostle, it is altogether out of the purpose, for in none of all those places doth he define and determine what Adam and David were when they had sinned; but plainly he declareth what trial ought every man to take of himself when Christ Jesus is preached unto him, affirming that if any have not the Spirit of Christ Jesus that he is not of his. But the Spirit of Christ remaineth not in unclean and profane persons, say you; but yet I affirm, that Adam and David ought not to be numbered in that band; for although they sinned, and that most horribly, yet did they not abide in that estate. And albeit they were not led with the Spirit of Christ when they sinned, yet they were both led, drawn, and governed by his omnipotent Spirit, when they repented. And so can you never be able to prove them to be reprobates, no, not even when they sinned, except that you be able to prove that they finally

perished in sin. For this principal do I still hold, that true faith and true repentance {which the reprobates never have} be the fruits of election. The place of the Apostle, written in the 13th chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, is neither well marked, nor rightly applied by you; neither yet will it suffer any such conclusion as you gather of it. The mind of the Apostle is this, after the departing of Paul from Corinth, where, after many storms sustained, he had established the form of a church, did enter in false prophets, whose chief study was to emulate the authority of Paul, and so to deface his whole labour, affirming that he was not worthy to be called an Apostle, for he was never in the company of Christ; others were of greater estimation and favour than he was.

And as a multitude is ever more ready to receive poison than wholesome medicine, a great number began to give ear unto them, and so began little to esteem whatsoever Paul had laboured amongst them. Against which unthankfulness, the Apostle very sharply writes, as in both his Epistles doth appear. And amongst other his arguments, which he useth to prove that he was an Apostle, nothing inferior to the greatest, he adduces themselves for a testimony, saying, "try yourselves if you be in the faith; prove yourselves. Know you not yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you, except that you be reprobates?" By these words, most sharp and most vehement, he laboreth to convict their conscience that he was an Apostle, and that the proof of his apostleship {as in another place he doth affirm} was declared in them. As if he should say, your false Apostles affirm that I am not worthy of the name of an Apostle, but if the office of an Apostle be to preach Christ Jesus; and if the true sign that discerneth the true Apostle from the false be, that Christ so potently worketh by his ministry, that Christ Jesus taketh possession in the hearts of the hearers by the true preaching of his word; then be judges yourselves whether I be an Apostle or not. Call your conscience to examination in what estate I did find you. Were you not drowned in all sorts of iniquity? Did you not walk in darkness, without any true light of God?

And in what estate did I leave you? Try and examine yourselves in what estate you do yet stand; you cannot be insensible, you cannot be so ignorant, but you must know whether that Christ dwelleth in you or no. If you will acknowledge and confess that Christ dwelleth in you, then must you needs confess that I am an Apostle. For by my labours and preaching did you receive Christ Jesus; and if to deface my labours, and to defraud me of that honour which God of his mercy hath given unto me, you deny that either you received Christ Jesus, either yet that he remaineth in you, then do you confess yourselves reprobates.

Paul doth not absolutely define that they were reprobates, but putteth into their choice, whether they would confess that Christ Jesus did remain in them by faith, which they had received by the preaching of Paul, and so would admit him to be an Apostle; or to grant that they had nothing to do with Christ, and so to confess themselves reprobates. Now, let the indifferent reader judge, whether that either faithfully you cite the text, either that righteously you conclude upon the same. The Apostle saith not, except that Christ dwell in you, you are reprobates; but saith, as before I have alleged, "do you not know yourselves, that Christ Jesus is in you, except that in somewhat you be reprobates?" And albeit that the words were such as you recite, how can you thereof conclude David and Adam were reprobates when they sinned, seeing that Paul in that place maketh mention of no other sin, except of the denial of Christ, to remain in them; of their ingratitude towards him, whom God had appointed preacher unto them; and of giving ear and credit to false apostles, slanderers of Christ's true messengers? How justly I might turn Paul's words upon your heads, you easily may espy; but all such reasoning I do from my heart abhor. If you can be able to prove that Adam refused the grace offered, or that David did storm against Nathan, either affirming or suspecting him to be a false prophet, then had your argument some probability; for only of such, and to such, speaketh the Apostle in that place. Thus doth either your ignorance or malice,

wresting the Scriptures against their native sense, compel me to trouble the reader much more than I would, if any sincerity were found in you.

We do constantly affirm that by the sin of one man did death enter into the world. For Adam did not only lose himself, but also did with himself wrap all his posterity in sin, death, and damnation, so that Adam and all his sons were in him lost. But thereof it doth not follow {as you affirm} that therefore they were out of the election from the transgression unto the promise; for, as before we have plainly proved, they were elected in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid; in whom they did stand elected and beloved even when they fell in Adam; at which time the election, which from all eternity was kept in the counsel of God, began to be notified and manifested to man's knowledge. The fall and sin of man was the way and means by the which God's election did appear, but was not the cause why that it was destroyed. And so, if with reverence you could consider the mystery of our redemption in Christ Jesus, you should plainly see that it behoved all to die in Adam, that the Elect might receive life in Christ Jesus alone.

The words of Christ Jesus our Master, rehearsed by the Evangelist Saint John, you do shamefully abuse, for in that place he entreateth not, whether a sinner, during the time of his blindness and sin, is appointed to damnation or not; neither yet whether such as before have had knowledge, as Adam and David had, be altogether void of faith by reason of sin after committed; none of these two points, I say, doth our Master in that place entreat. But unto Nicodemus he plainly declareth, that the result of life is faith, and the result of condemnation is incredulity and unbelief. Not that Christ Jesus affirmeth that every man that is unfaithful at any time is or shall be condemned. For God hath wrapped all under unbelief, that he may have mercy upon all; as Saint Paul confesseth himself to have been a persecutor and unfaithful. But the true meaning of Christ is, that such as despise the light offered, and remain in unbelief to the end, have their condemnation already appointed;

as, contrarywise, whosoever with full obedience do steadfastly believe the same, shall have the life everlasting, notwithstanding the manifest transgressions of the law.

The rest of this part is before answered, and therefore I will not with repetition trouble the reader, for you be never able to prove that Adam and David were so out of the love of God, that he did not love them in Christ his Son, in whom they were elected. David was no such man killer as was Cain, of whom Saint John speaketh, who delighted in blood to the end. Neither did Nathan show, nor David pronounce any such judgment against himself as you imagine; but being convicted in his own conscience how horribly he had offended, he did hear notwithstanding that joyful sentence, "the Lord hath taken away thy sin, thou shalt not die," &c. Which sentence, no doubt, proceeded from that immutable love which was reserved to him in Christ Jesus, even when he was furthest declined from God. It will be hard for you to prove by evident scriptures, that David was altogether void of faith; but granting that he, as concerning his own sense and feeling, was utterly dead, yet doth it not thereof follow that so he displeased God that he fell from the love and favour of God as touching his election. For the Apostle {upon whose words you seem to ground your reason} meaneth not that the lack of faith in all persons, at all times, and in all respects, doth so displease God, that he hateth them, and rejecteth them to death everlasting. For children for a time lack faith, and yet Christ pronounceth that their angels do see the face of his Father, and that the kingdom of heaven appertaineth to such. Thomas was unfaithful even after Christ's resurrection, and yet did he not so displease his Master, as before we have touched, but that he did seek him, and did remove his incredulity. And Christ Jesus did rebuke the unbelief of his Disciples, and the hardness of their hearts, but yet did he not utterly despise them. But now to the rest.

THE ADVERSARY.

But if the Scriptures will not satisfy you, then must you be beaten with your own rod. For if I grant you that all men did not fall out of God's holy election unto condemnation by Adam's transgression, it followeth thereupon that the coming of Christ, his precious death and passion, is superfluous, vain, and of none effect. So by your perverse doctrine you will infect Christians with the chief error wherewith the Jews be deluded. That is, they esteem it a great madness to say that Christ should suffer death for the offence committed by Adam; even so may I collect of your error. For what needeth Christ to die for them, whom neither Adam's transgression, neither their own, could make them fall from God's election? But now I will more largely dilate this argument. Election was before the world, when there was no sin; and the promise of Christ was made since the world was created, because of sin; for had not sin been, we needed no new promise, being already just and holy images of God. Now, if the Elect did not fall out of the election by Adam's transgression, then need they no Redeemer, being already safe by reason of the election, in which they were before sin, and remain still in the same, because, as you say, the elect neither did nor can fall out of the election. Then seeing the elect be safe and whole, they need no physician; neither came Christ to call the righteous, but sinners; wherefore the death of Christ, as concerning them, is in vain, they being safe already by election. The like argument useth Paul to the Galatians, "if righteousness cometh by the law, then Christ died in vain;" if the elect be still in the favour of God, what need they of Christ to reconcile them to the Father, in whose favour they are already. Now, as touching the other sort whom you call Reprobates, you say they can by no manner of means be saved, yea, and that Christ died not for them, then was Christ's death altogether in vain, for his death, you say, belongeth not to the Reprobate, and the Elect have no need of it. In this the godly agree.

ANSWER.

In dilating your argument, by the which you go about to prove that Christ's precious death was superfluous and vain, if the Elect did not fall from their election, this reason you use, "election was before the world, when there was no sin, and the promise of Christ was made since the world was created, because of sin; for had not sin been, we needed no new promise, being already just and holy images of God. Now, if the Elect {say you} did not fall out of the election by Adam's transgression, then need they no Redeemer, being already saved by reason of the election, in the which they were before sin, and remain still in the same," &c.

In this argument you commit two fowl faults. The first, you take that for a thing true and confessed which is false, and therefore by us always denied. For thus you reason, man was elected before the world was created; but man sinned after the world was created, ergo, man fell from his election. We still deny the conclusion, and do affirm, that as we were elected in Christ Jesus before all times, so did the Elect ever remain in Christ; and therefore after that they had sinned, it behooved that the promise should be declared, that by the same the Elect might receive comfort, and be assured of their election.

Your second fault more declareth your gross ignorance in the mystery of our Redemption. For from election you straight ways leap to glorification and salvation, observing neither middles nor means which God's wisdom hath appointed and determined to go betwixt. True it is, God hath elected in Christ to life everlasting his chosen children. But how? Saint Paul, yea, the whole Scriptures, wheresoever mention is made of our election, joined therewith the death and blood of Christ. For none otherwise were we elected in him, but that he should sustain the punishment for our transgression; and that we should receive life, which we had lost in Adam and in ourselves, by the means of his death and resurrection. Therefore where you reason, "if the Elect did not fall out of the election by Adam's

transgression, then need they no Redeemer, being already saved by reason of their election;" the conclusion is false, and the reason vain. For the Elect have need of a Redeemer, not because that they did fall out of election, but by reason that they did fall from justice to sin, and from obedience to disobedience, and therefore need they a Redeemer, a physician, and one to give them life; because that they being Elect in God's eternal counsel, are yet fallen into bondage, into mortal sickness and death by their own transgression. If you can prove that the Elect did not sin, and that they are not sick, then might you have concluded that they needed no Redeemer nor physician; and so you might have proceeded in your argument upon the words of the Apostle, saying, "that if righteousness cometh by the law, then Christ died in vain." But seeing that all God's children are fallen into sin, the bondage and misery whereof they in this life continually feel, how justly you may conclude, that because they remained in God's election, and so consequently in his favour by Christ, that therefore they needed no Redeemer, let the indifferent reader judge.

If it seem strange to you that God loved sinners in Christ, besides the places that are before alleged for probation of that part, hear what the truth itself pronounceth, "so God loved the world, {saith our Master,} that his only begotten Son hath he given." Whomsoever you shall understand under the name of "the world," you cannot seclude sinners from it. Where you most irreverently ask, "what then need they of Christ to reconcile them?" I answer, {with greater fear and reverence, than, alas! you declare,} even such need they have of Christ, as the body hath of the soul, or yet the living man of wholesome nurture; yea, much more. For albeit the body have life by the means of meat and drink, yet have the Elect neither life nor reconciliation but by Christ Jesus; yea, and that by the means of his death and passion, by the which just payment and satisfaction is made to God's justice for their sins; and so are they reconciled, who by nature are the enemies to God.

We do not deny but that Christ's death is sufficient for to redeem the sins of the whole world; but because all do not receive it with faith, which is the free gift of God, given to the chosen children, therefore abide the unfaithful in just condemnation. God remit unto you {if his good pleasure be} as well your irreverent conclusion as your most unjust accusation, in which you burden us that we will infect Christianity with the chief error with the which the Jews are infected; who esteem it a great madness to say that Christ should suffer death for the sins and offences committed by Adam. Assuredly, I do more than wonder that such impiety shall be found in any creature endowed with reason; but I remit judgment to God. Thus you proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

The Apostle saith, "God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctifying of the Spirit, and through believing the truth." Here we do learn that they which be chosen to salvation, they be sanctified by the Spirit, and believe the truth; and that such may fall, it appeareth by that which is written in the Epistle to the Hebrews, "how much more suppose you shall he be punished which treadeth under feet the Son of God, and accounteth the blood of the testament, wherewith he was sanctified, as an unholy thing, and doth dishonour the Spirit of grace!" Also, he exhorteth them not to cast away their confidence, and not to withdraw themselves unto damnation. He which withdraweth himself unto damnation, was before in the state of salvation; as he that withdraweth himself unto salvation, was before in the state of damnation. Of this change speaketh Paul to the Ephesians, "remember that you being in times past without Christ, being aliens and strangers from the testament of promise, having no hope, and being without God in this world; but now by the means of Christ Jesus, you which sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." And again, "now therefore you are no strangers and foreigners, but citizens with the saints of the household of God." Here doth Paul

write to the elect, whom he affirmeth in times past to have been without Christ; and we are sure that without Christ there is no election. He saith also, that they were without the testament of promise; and all they which be elect pertain to the promise, "but now {saith he} you be citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." This is a change from death unto life; from the bondage of the Devil to liberty in Christ Jesus; from the wrath of God to the favour and exceeding love of God; from the infernal prison to the heavenly Jerusalem. Of the contrary exchange and mutation it is written to the Hebrews, where it is declared, how they which "were once lightened, and had tasted of the heavenly gift, and were become partakers of the Holy Ghost, and had tasted of the good will of God, and of the power of the world to come, that they may fall away, and crucify the Son of God afresh, and make a mock of him." I cannot tell what can be more plainly spoken contrary to you, which affirm that they which be once elect can never fall out of the same election unto condemnation. For if these words were not written in the Scriptures, or if I or any other should speak them, you would say they were false, and we liars. And yet I am sure, rather than you will submit yourselves to the truth, you had rather seek a narrow bore to creep out at. What will you say, if you deny such one as received all these chief benefits that any man can receive in this world; yea, no man can be participant of no greater gifts during this life; if you deny such one, I say, to be elect, surely you are of a perverse, reprobate mind, forasmuch as you plainly resist the Holy Ghost. Think you that God giveth these, his chief talents, which be such as no creature can receive any greater in this world; think you, I say, that God did bestow them meaning to receive no fruit of them, but to bestow them in vain? And if God did bestow them upon him whom he reprobated before the foundation of the world, whom he knew that of necessity should perish, then did he intend to bestow them in vain; which is false, forasmuch as the Holy Ghost willet and exhorteth us not to receive the grace of God in vain; we may, abusing his grace, receive it in vain, otherwise

in vain did Paul exhort us not to receive the grace of God in vain. Of such doth also Peter speak, "that after they were clean escaped from the filthiness of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, are yet tangled again therein and overcome; whose latter end is worse than the beginning." And such one is compared to a dog which returneth to his own vomit again, and to a sow which was washed and now returneth and walloweth in the mire. I pray you, whether were these elect or reprobate of whom Peter speaketh? If you say reprobate, yet were they "clean escaped from the filthiness of the world" through the knowledge of the truth, and had vomited their poison, and were washed clean. If you say they were elect, then mark how they be tangled again, returned to their vomit, and to the filthy mire. But you will say, they cannot yet finally perish. Peter knew what you would say, and therefore maketh your answer aforehand, saying, "their latter end is worse than the beginning." "Brethren, {saith S. James,} if any of you do err from the truth, and another convert him, let the same know that he which converteth the sinner from going astray out of his way, shall save a soul from death." What be they whom James saith they do "err from the truth?" If you say reprobate, consider how they be converted to the truth, and saved from death. If you say they be elect, you see how that they {being in error} were ordained to death, otherwise how can they be saved from death which neither be dead nor yet can die? Paul willeth Timothy to inform with all meekness them which resist the truth, if God at any time will give them repentance for to know the truth, and that they may come to themselves again out of the snare which are held captive of him at his will. If thou say, that these be elect to whom Paul writes, see you not how they be snared of the Devil, yea, and are held captive of the Devil at his will. If you say, they be reprobates, then mark well how they by repentance may escape the snare of the Devil. But what should I speak of repentance? If your opinion be true, then the preaching of repentance is vain. Forasmuch as the elect cannot

finally perish, neither fall out of the election and favour of God, what need have they then of repentance? And the reprobate can by no means attain unto salvation; for what purpose should they repent? Then this is no sound doctrine which you teach. "The Lord planted his vineyard, hedged it and walled it, and planted it with goodly grapes." If they were goodly grapes, and of a good root, as we read in Jeremiah, then were they no reprobates. For there the Lord witnesseth that there could no more be done for his vineyard than he had done; then had he not pre-ordained them to destruction. "But {as he saith} I made thee, O Israel, that thou might serve me." Yet became they reprobates and perished. By this we see that the elect and chosen become reprobates through their naughtiness and wickedness. "The Lord will be merciful unto Jacob, and will yet chose Israel again, and set them in their own land." Seeing the Lord doth choose them again, then were they fallen out of their former election. "When Israel was young I loved him, and called my son out of the land of Egypt." Forasmuch as Israel was the son of God, and that also beloved, insomuch that the Lord led them with cords of friendship and bonds of love, they must needs be the elect of God; yet because they provoked the Lord through their abominations, they are cast away, and the Lord regardeth them according to their deserts.

ANSWER.

If I should labour to the end of this your most confused work, to reduce every scripture by you wrested and abused to the true meaning and understanding of the Holy Ghost, as hitherto I have done in the most part of them which you have alleged, my travail should be great, and the work should exceed a just measure. Therefore, seeing that sufficiently, by the plain Scriptures of God, I have confirmed the doctrine which we teach, believe, and maintain; and by the same truth of God's Word I have confuted your error; from henceforth I intend only to touch the proposition which

you maintain, and by confuting the same, briefly, either by Scripture or else by Example, to show in what sort you wrongfully apply the Scriptures to maintain your error; offering yet to satisfy, to my power, such as charitably shall ask of me, by word or writing, further explanation of any scripture by you alleged, and by me at this time not fully resolved.

The chief proposition which you maintain to the end of this your book is, that the elect may fall from their election. To the which I answer, that if you understand that those whom God the Father hath elected in his eternal counsel to life everlasting in Christ Jesus, may so fall from their election that finally they perish; if this {I say} be your understanding, then I fear not to affirm that proposition to be utterly false, erroneous, and damnable, as it is expressly repugnant to God's plain Scriptures; for Christ Jesus doth affirm that so many as his Father hath given to him shall come unto him. And to such as do come, he promiseth life everlasting; which he hath in himself for the salvation of his flock, whereof none shall perish, for out of his hands can none be pulled away. But because this before is largely entreated, I come shortly to the scriptures which you abuse.

First, you attempt to prove that those which be elected be sanctified by the Spirit, and through believing of the truth; which we confess to be most true. Thereafter you allege that such as be sanctified may after dishonour the Spirit of grace, tread down the blood of the testament, and so draw back to damnation. I answer, the cause of your error is, that you make no difference betwixt the sanctification and lively faith which is proper only to the sons of God, which once begun is perpetual, and that sanctification and faith which is common to the reprobate, and therefore is but temporal.

If this distinction displeaseth you, quarrel with the Holy Ghost and not with us, for of his plain works and words evident have we received it. For all Israel were sanctified to be the kingly priesthood, all were circumcised, yea, and did drink of the spiritual drink,

and yet were they not all inwardly sanctified unto salvation and life everlasting. The whole tribe of Levi were sanctified to the service of the Lord in his tabernacle, but how many of them did still remain profane persons the Scripture concealeth not. Even so all that great multitude whom Christ fed in the wilderness, yea, all those that adhered for a time to his doctrine, were after some manner sanctified, that is, separated and divided from the rest of the world; but that sanctification was but temporal, like as also was their faith. We do not deny but that the reprobate have some manner of faith, and some sort of sanctification for a time; that is, that they are compelled even by the empire of the Spirit of God, to confess and acknowledge that all things spoken in God's Scriptures are true; and that therefore their conscience, in a fear and terror, do seek some means to please God, for the avoiding of his vengeance. For as this is neither the true faith justifying, neither yet the perfect sanctification of the Spirit of God which reneweth the elect in the inward man, so doth neither of both long continue, for they returning to their natural propagation and darkness, do leave the way of light and life, and draw themselves to death and damnation. But hereof, without the contumely of the Son of God, and without abnegation of his plain truth, you cannot conclude that the elect members of his body can be wrested out of his hands; that those for whom he hath prayed that they should be sanctified in the truth, and that they should be one with him as he is one with his Father, may come to final apostasy, and so to perdition. We fear not to affirm that to be a thing no less impossible than that it is that Christ Jesus shall cease to be Head of his Church, and the Saviour of his body.

In the words of the Apostle, written in the second chapter to the Ephesians, you seem not to understand his meaning, where he saith, "ye were sometimes without Christ," for, {say you,} "we are sure that without Christ there is no election." In which words, thou that writest playiest with the simple ignorant reader the vile Sophister, confounding, by the English word "without," that which in Latin is most evidently

distinct. Doth Paul say, *eratis aliquando extra Christum*, or saith he not, *eratis sine Christo*? To make the matter sensible to you, {my dear brethren,} be you never so simple, where he saith, "without Christ there is no election," that proposition is true, if it be understand that man was never elected to life everlasting but in Christ Jesus only. But if he will affirm that none are elected in Christ Jesus without Christ, that is to say, before that they come to the true and perfect knowledge of God's mercies in Christ, that proposition is most false, and doth oppose {as plainly you may see} to the mind and words of the Apostle, for he affirmeth, that we were elected in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world was laid, yea, when we were dead by sin, ignorant of him, strangers from the testament of his promise, which Saint Paul calleth, to be "without Christ, without God in this world, and without the league of the testament." And by these words doth the Apostle magnify the superabundant mercies of God showed to the world in Christ Jesus, by the which he received not only the Jews, who long had continued in league with God, but also the Gentiles, to the participation of his glory, albeit that from the days of Abraham they had lived as despised and rejected of God. Let the reader now judge how strongly you conclude.

To the place of the Apostle touching the illumination of such as after utterly fall back, I have before answered. Ye unjustly accuse us, that we seek shifts and narrow bores, to the end that we shall not be subject to the truth. For this is our plain confession, which we simply and boldly do affirm, that this is a stable and immutable foundation, "the Lord knoweth his own, that no creature is able to separate his elect from his love, which in Christ Jesus he beareth to them."

Where boldly you affirm us to be of a perverse and reprobate mind, if we deny them to be elect who have received from God such graces, as man in this life can receive no greater; it may seem, that because you delight to speak what you please, you take liberty to lay to our charge whatsoever seemeth good to you.

I trust you be never able to prove, that any of us hath affirmed that he who had received of the free gift of God a true unfeigned and lively faith, is not the elect of God; and that faith, we know, do God's children, which come to age and discretion, receive in this life, as Peter did; against the which did Christ pronounce, "that the gates and ports of hell should not prevail." But it appeareth to me, that your doubt is either, to wit, whether God bestoweth his great and rich talents upon the reprobate? For if so He should do, you affirm that he bestoweth them in vain, meaning to receive no fruit of them. That God bestoweth great talents upon the very reprobate, the Scriptures manifestly do witness; to speak nothing of life, reason, corporal health, riches, and honours, which the reprobate in greatest abundance do possess. Doth not Christ witness, that many shall cry, "Lord, in thy name we have prophesied, we have cast out devils, and in thy name have we done many wondrous works," and yet shall Christ answer, "I never knew you." Doth not Paul affirm, that "albeit he knew all mysteries, had all prophecy, and knowledge, and all faith, {such he meaneth as by which miracles are wrought,} yet, without charity, he were nothing."

But yet, I pray you, do prophecy, knowledge, the gift of tongues, and of miracles, cease to be the good and rich talents of God? Ye cry, yet are they bestowed without hope of fruit to be received, and in vain, if they be bestowed upon the reprobate. That of you is boldly and most blasphemously affirmed, for God knoweth the fruit which his Church shall receive, not only of those spiritual talents, {how wicked that ever they be to whose dispensation they are committed,} but also of the corporal and temporal benefit; yea, of very tyranny doth his wisdom and goodness cause a fruit and commodity come, and spring out to his Church. By the tyranny of Nebuchadnezzar, he punished the proud condemners, and tried and partly purged his children, who before were slothful and negligent. By that great conquest and victory which he gave to Cyrus, he procured the deliverance of his people from bondage.

By the great abundance of victuals, given in the days of Pharaoh, were Jacob and his children sustained. And think you, that without fruit, and altogether in vain, were these and the like benefits bestowed, although that the most part of these were idolaters, cruel murderers, and reprobate, to whose custody these talents were committed! Ye are too bold thus to control God, for his wisdom will not in all things be subject to your foolishness.

The diversity of creatures here beneath in earth may teach you more sobriety. How many creatures, I pray you, appear to our judgment to be superfluous and vainly created, not only because they profit not man, but because they are unprofitable to themselves? But shall we therefore accuse God's wisdom by whom they are created? God forbid. For besides the omnipotency of his power and wisdom manifested in their creation, he alone knoweth their use, profit, and commodity, which every creature receives of another, how dull so ever our senses be. And the same ought you to consider in all talents and gifts committed to man, how wicked so ever they be to whom they are committed. For not only therein is God's goodness to be praised, which extendeth itself in some cases even to his enemies, but also some profit doth ever arise to his Church by his graces, howsoever they be abused by the reprobate. The pregnant wit and subtle engine of Julian the Apostate, served the Church in steed of a spur in his time, and caused the godly learned more diligently to search the Scriptures of God than before they had done. And the same doth your perverse iniquity this day toward us, where you say, "that it is false that God did intend to bestow his talents in vain, forasmuch as the Holy Ghost willeth and exhorteth us not to receive the grace of God in vain; yet notwithstanding God willeth not us to receive his grace in vain, we may abusing his grace receive it in vain, otherwise in vain did Paul exhort us not to receive his grace in vain." These be your words, and this is your reason, which I leave to be judged upon by the godly reader; for we do not say that God bestoweth his gifts in vain, {albeit the reprobate be

participant thereof,} but it is you that affirm, that in vain, and without fruit, they are bestowed, except that all be elect to life everlasting that receive them; which doctrine is so strange to us, that we doubt not to affirm, with the hazard of our lives, that by God's Scriptures it cannot be maintained.

The words of the Apostle in the place by you alleged, neither affirmeth what man may do, neither yet what he may not do; but he declareth how diligently and carefully, not only by preaching, but also by exhortation and prayer, he travailed, that his labours might be fruitful amongst them, and so that they should not receive the grace of God in vain. But admitting that he had said, "I commend you not to receive the grace of God in vain," could you thereof conclude any more than you may do of these words, "be you holy, for I am holy, saith the Lord?" There is a precept given, but in whom standeth power to perform the same? If it stand not in man, say you, in vain is the precept given. How you be able to prove that I remit to your better advise; to me is nothing vain that God speaketh or commandeth; for I am assured, that either by God's will revealed are the elect instructed how they ought to walk, or else are the reprobate in their consciences convicted, that knowing God's holy will, obstinately they rebel against the same, and so are they witnesses to their own just damnation.

The place of Peter doth manifestly fight against you; for howsoever the dog hath vomited the corruption of his stinking stomach, and howsoever the sow hath appeared to have been cleansed, yet neither of both changes their own nature. But the dog remaineth the dog, and therefore can do none other thing but to return to his vomit; and the sow remaining the sow, must needs return to wallow in the mire. But {say you} Peter affirmeth that they were verily escaped. I answer, as touching the truth and nature of the doctrine which they professed, so they were, for it was the very true knowledge of God which was offered unto them, and which apparently they had received; in which if they had continued, they should verily have been free from all bondage, according to Christ's promise. But because

they were none of his chosen sheep nor peculiar flock, they did decline from the holy commandment, and so were their last worse than their first, because that the servant knowing the will of the Master and not doing the same, is worthy many stripes. All this I know doth please you, except that I affirm that they were never of Christ's chosen number, no not even when they professed most boldly, when they lived most straightly, and when most they appeared to have been purged. I will not bind you to believe mine affirmation, except that I bring the witnessing of the Holy Ghost. Saint John saith, "they have passed out from us, {he speaketh of antichrists,} but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, of a truth they should have remained with us," &c. These words need no commentary, for saith he, "they have passed out from us." And why? "Because they were not of us," no not even when they professed most earnestly, &c. Shut up your own eyes as you list, this light shall you never be able to obscure, much less to extinguish.

The place of Saint James, and of the Apostle Paul to Timothy, do teach not only the ministers of the word, but also every faithful man, how carefully one should procure the salvation of another. And to make all men more diligent in doing their duty, he declareth, in what extreme danger stand such as do err from the truth, or that remain in bondage of Satan; as also, what acceptable service unto God do such as by whom God calleth others from the way of damnation.

That this is the simple meaning of both the Apostles, I trust every godly man that diligently will read the text shall confess with me. Your foolish questions, demanding, whether they were elect or reprobate of whom the Apostle speaketh, and your academical reasons, grounded upon your own fantasies, I omit as unworthy to be answered. For the Apostle speaketh to no one particular sort, but proposeth a common and general doctrine, for the ends which I have rehearsed before. And albeit you fear not now to affirm, that the preaching of repentance is in vain, if our opinion be true, the day shall come, when you shall know, that neither

was the sharp preaching of John, neither yet the glad tidings and amiable voice of Christ Jesus, blown to the world in vain; albeit that the Scribes and Pharisees remained still the generation of vipers, and that they could neither fear nor believe the promise of salvation, because they were not of God, but of the Devil, whose children they were.

The places of Isaiah and Jeremiah I have before declared, and therefore in few words I will touch the purpose of the Holy Ghost, which was, not to instruct that people whom, when, or how many, God had elected to life everlasting in Christ Jesus his Son, or whom for just causes he had reprobated. But to convict them of their manifest and most unthankful defection, and to take from them all excuses. Both the prophets do declare how gently God had entreated them, yea, how beneficial he had been to their fathers, whom he called from ignorance, whom he nourished in his own knowledge, and at length planted and hedged them about with all munition and necessary defense, so that now the children declining to idolatry could have no excuse. For their fathers, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and David, whom he calleth the faithful seed, gave unto them no such example. "But how {saith he} art thou now changed, to be unto me a degenerate vineyard?" What maketh this, I pray you, for your purpose, or for to prove that these that be elected in Christ Jesus to life everlasting may become reprobates? If I should answer, that the stock which was planted faithful remained faithful, but that it produced many rotten and unfruitful branches, which therefore must needs be cut of, none of your sect were able to confute me, for I should have the Apostle for my warrant; but I delight in nothing so much as in the simple and native meaning of the Scriptures, as they be alleged in their own places by the Holy Ghost.

The places of the Prophets Isaiah and Hosea have not both one end. For Isaiah, in the 14th chapter, doth promise in the person of God, that he would show mercy to Jacob, and that he would choose Israel again; yea, that he would destroy Babylon for their sake, and so would choose his people to himself again, whom for a

time he appeared to have rejected, so that other lords than he did bear rule over them. But Hosea in the contrary sense affirmeth that because they had abused the long patience of God, and had not righteously considered how tenderly he had entreated them, that therefore should the sword rush into the city, that it should destroy and devour, so that none should be found to relive them. This, I doubt not, is the meaning of both the Prophets. O! But you cry, here is mention made, "that God will choose his people again," therefore he had once rejected whom before he had chosen. I trust you will not, that God's Majesty shall be subject to perjury for the establishment of your error. He had before solemnly sworn, not only to Abraham but also to David, "that he would forever be the God of that people, and that of the fruit of his loins should one sit upon his seat, and that forever." If he had so rejected his people that no election had remained, neither yet that he had made any difference betwixt them and the profane nations before the coming of Christ Jesus, where was the stability of this former promise? We know that the gifts and vocation of God are without repentance in himself, that he casteth not away such as he before knew to be his own, but that in the greatest extremity his promise abideth stable, as in this people he most evidently declared. For he did not so disperse them, so as to reject them, and as it were in his anger cast them off, and give them over to the appetites of their enemies, but that still he did know and avow them to be his people, yea, even in their greatest calamity. As in these words he doth witness, saying, "when they shall be in the land of their enemies I will not refuse them, neither yet will I despise them, so that I will utterly destroy them, or make my covenant with them to be of none effect, for I am the Lord their God; for then I shall remember mine old covenant which I made with them when I led them forth of the land of Egypt, in the presence of the Gentiles, that I might be their God, I, the eternal." Leviticus 26:44-45.

And in the same Prophet, in many places more, the same is most evident. For thus he writes, foreseeing

their captivity, "yet now hear, O Jacob my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen, thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, he will help thee, Fear not, O Jacob my servant, {advert that yet he doth acknowledge Jacob to be his servant, even in his greatest misery,} and thou righteous whom I have chosen, for I shall pour out waters upon the thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground; I shall pour forth my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." Isaiah 44:1-3. And in the same chapter, after that he hath reproved the vanity of idolaters, he saith, "remember these, O Jacob and Israel; for thou art my servant; I have formed thee to this purpose that thou shouldest be my servant; O Israel, forget me not," &c., "for my name's sake will I differ my wrath, and for my praise will I refrain it from thee, that I cut thee not of," &c., "lift up your eyes to the heavens, and behold the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell therein shall perish in like manner, but my salvation shall be forever, {he meaneth the deliverance which he had promised to that people,} and my righteousness shall not be abolished," &c., "for a little while have I forsaken thee, but with great compassion shall I gather thee," &c., "and the sons of strangers shall build up thy walls, and their kings shall serve thee; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my mercy I had compassion on thee," &c., "for Zion's sake I will not hold my tongue, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof break forth as the light, and the salvation thereof as a burning lamp," &c., "and their seed shall be known amongst the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; all that see them shall know them, that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed."

These and many places more, do manifestly witness that God did never, before the coming of Christ Jesus in the flesh, utterly reject and refuse that people, {as that they did not appertain unto him,} but that he did avow them to be his chosen, his peculiar people, and his inheritance, even when they were in their greatest

misery. Yea, further, God had continually of the seed of Abraham, during the time of the Law and the Prophets, some number openly to glorify his name in the eyes of the world. And therefore consider with yourself, how justly you gather upon these words of the Prophet, "God shall yet again choose Israel," that therefore God had utterly rejected all Israel, yea, even from the life everlasting. For except that so you conclude, you have proved nothing of your purpose, for the controversy standeth not betwixt us and you, whether that God doth sometimes choose and promote a man or a people to honour and dignity in this life, and thereafter justly deprive him of them from the same, for this did we never deny.

But the whole controversy consisteth in this point, whether that such as God, in his eternal counsel, hath elected in Christ Jesus to life everlasting, can after be reprobated, and so finally perish; and that shall you never be able to prove. That the simple reader may the better understand the meaning of the Prophet, this I add, that the people in the captivity of Babylon were so oppressed, and so destitute of all hope ever to be restored to any dignity or liberty again, that to them it appeared alike possible to raise the dead carcasses of such as were buried in their graves, as to deliver them from the hands of the proud and puissant Babylonians. And therefore doth not only Isaiah, who long before saw their bondage, and the redemption from the same, but also Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who did see it with their eyes, with great boldness and constancy affirm, that they should be delivered from that bondage; that they should be married unto the Lord; and so should be chosen again, as our Prophet here speaketh, which is not to be referred to the part of God, but to the apprehension of the people, who thought themselves utterly forsaken and rejected of God. Against this temptation the Prophet saith, "God shall choose Israel again," that is, shall restore them to the former dignity, yea, to a greater dignity in Christ. And that should He do in such sort, that they should know that he was God, merciful, constant, and immutable of his promise. And

so the renovation of the league, in such sort that the world might see that God favoured Israel, is called the new election and new marriage, not that God had ever in himself decreed and purposed that the Messiah and blessed seed should descend of any other nation, but of the seed of Abraham and house of David; but that the people, in the time of their affliction, had received such a wound, by reason of their grievous plagues and former offences, that they thought that God had utterly rejected them. Let the Prophets be read with indifferent judgment, and this, I doubt not, shall appear most true. Now to the rest of your Scriptures.

THE ADVERSARY.

Christ commandeth John to preach unto the seven Congregations, among whom were both elect and reprobate; to whom he useth no such manner of doctrine as you teach, that the elect could not fall from their election; but warneth them to take heed that they lose not that which they had gotten, but labour to increase, threatening them with destruction if they forsake the grace whereof they were made partakers; neither discouraged he the most wicked of them, as you do, saying, that by the preordinance of God, they of necessity must perish, but willeth them to repent and amend, and they should live; yet knew he both who were elect and who were reprobate. To the congregation of Ephesus he saith, that she was fallen from her first love, and without she remembered from whence she was fallen, repented, and did her first works, the Lord would shortly come and remove her candlestick out of her place. The congregation of Smyrna he commandeth to be faithful unto the death, and so should she receive the crown of life. If Christ had been of your opinion, he had not used such manner of doctrine. In vain should he exhort the reprobate to be faithful, whom he had cast-away. And superfluous were it to exhort the elect, whom he knew to be predestinated so that they could not fall. In the congregation of Pergamus were two most detestable sects, that is, Balaamites and Nicolaitans,

whom the Lord did hate; then were they not beloved, and so consequently were they not elect after your opinion, yet willeth he them to be converted, and to receive a new name written in white stone. In the congregation of Thyatira was the false prophetess Jezebel to whom he gave space to repent, and, {as Peter saith,} "the long-suffering of the Lord is salvation," then might she have repented; notwithstanding she did not repent, then was she reprobate; likewise unto them which committed fornication with her, that is idolatry, is repentance granted. The congregation of Sardis, though in name she did live, yet in deed she was dead; and that of her which was yet alive was in danger of death. Wherefore he willeth her to call to remembrance what she had heard, and what grace she had received, and to repent her of her imperfect works, and watch, lest the Lord should like a thief come upon her unawares. If the congregation of Sardis was elect, then in vain doth the Lord threaten her after your opinion; and if she was reprobate, what availeth it to watch and repent? The congregation of Philadelphia he commandeth to hold fast that which she hath, that no man take away her crown, {as Peter saith, "beware lest you, with other men, be also plucked away through the error of the wicked, and fall from your own steadfastness,"} what should they fear the loss of that which {as you say} they cannot lose? The congregation of Laodicea, which was neither hot nor cold, but wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked; if you say it was elect, yet the Lord threatened it that he would spew it out of his mouth. If you say that they were reprobate, yet might they been saved, grow fervent, and repent. And where they were poor, they might have bought of Christ tried gold in the fire to make them rich; and where they were naked, they might be clothed with white raiment of righteousness, to cover their filthy nakedness; moreover they might have gotten the salve of true knowledge, by the Spirit of God, to anoint their blind eyes. Here we see, how that there is none of these congregations so elect but they might fall, and therefore have need of

exhortations to be constant unto the end, lest perchance, as Paul, the elect vessel of God, feareth himself, they should become cast-aways and reprobates; and again, there be none so reprobate but they be here comforted, space of repentance granted them to turn from their wickedness and live. So would I exhort you to repent and turn from your errors, and to seek for this salve of true knowledge to anoint your blind ignorant eyes, that you might perceive how you be partakers of all the salves which were found among the seven Congregations, by that you are infected with this poisoned error of mere necessity and stoical destiny, more than they. God grant that you may be also partakers of the mercy and grace offered to the said Congregations! First, you participate with the congregation of Ephesus, in that there is of you which call themselves Apostles, and are liars. With the congregation of Smyrna, in that there be among you which call themselves Jews, that is, spiritual Israelites, and are of the congregation of Satan. With the congregation of Pergamus, in that Satan dwelleth among you, and you are become persecutors of Antipas, that is, of the faithful; and in that you maintain the doctrine of Balaam, giving the people occasion of sin. With the congregation of Thyatira, in that you have the spirit of the prophetess Jezebel, teaching a careless and libertine life. With the congregation of Sardis, in that you have a name that you live, and yet are dead; and in that your works are not perfect, for you teach that by no means can they be perfect in this world. With the congregation of Philadelphia, in that, as is aforesaid, you are become the congregation of Satan, whereas you would be esteemed faithful Jews of Christ's congregation. With the congregation of Laodicea, in that you are wretched, miserable, blind, naked, and neither hot nor cold; for you, though you exhort your disciples to do well, yet to pull all earnest ferventness from them, you say you can never attain to any perfection during this world. Take heed, therefore, that Christ spew you not out of his mouth. "Behold I stand, saith the Lord, at the door, and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I

will come into him, and will sup with him, and he with me." Open the door in time, refuse him not which calleth by his voice. And so you shall be certain of your election, but if you shut your door and refuse him which calleth, and if you do not obey his voice, then are you castaways, except you repent in time. Thus it becometh us all to talk reverently of God's election, so far only as we feel by experience the Spirit of God work in us, so that when we feel the Spirit of God increase in us, we may be assured that we are in his favour, but when we be led away from one vice to another, as David was in abusing Beersheba and killing Uriah, let us not presume then to be beloved of Him which hated all works of iniquity.

ANSWER.

When I did first read this your blasphemous raging, I did wonder to what purpose you would rehearse the advertisements, admonitions, and exhortations given to the seven Churches in Asia, and unto all other churches in their names and conditions, seeing that nothing in the same can serve your purpose; yea, altogether the Holy Ghost through that whole work doth manifestly fight against your pestilent errors; and therefore, I say, at the first sight I did wonder to what purpose you would travail where you were assured to lose your labour. But when I came to your conclusion, which you make in manner of exhortation to us, I did perceive, that easy it is to find a staff {as the proverb saith} to beat the dog which man would have killed.

But to the matter. Ye boldly affirm {howsoever you be able to prove} that the Apostle useth no such manner of doctrine as we teach, &c. If you understand that because he teacheth not in those seven Epistles, or Letters, in express and plain words, that from the beginning some be elected to life everlasting, and others be reprobate, that therefore he teacheth it in no place; you are not ignorant of the answer, and therefore I omit it. But I ask, if you do not think that the Apostle doth not dedicate this his whole work to those seven

Congregations, so doth himself witness, {as in the first chapter is evident,} than whatsoever is contained in this whole vision appertaineth to the instruction, exhortation, admonition, comfort, and before advertisement of those Congregations, no less than that which is contained in these words by you rehearsed. Then let us hear what is written and spoken by him in this matter, "I saw {saith he} four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the winds should not blow upon the earth," &c., "and I saw another angel ascending from the uprising of the sun," &c., "and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom power was given to hurt the earth and the sea, saying, hurt not the earth, neither the sea, neither yet the trees, until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads." I pray you, why were these, who were to be marked in the foreheads, more called the servants of God by the voice of the angel than others? I know you will answer, because of their good works and godly intentions. But from whence, I pray you, did it proceed, that the works and intention of the one sort were good, and of the other wicked? If you say, from their own free will and power, the Holy Ghost doth prove you liars, as before I have declared, and our Apostle assigneth also another cause, saying, "and power was given to the beast upon all tribes, tongues, and nations, and all those that dwelt upon the earth did worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb who was killed from the beginning of the world." Revelation 13:8.

Here it is plain truth that our Apostle, against your affirmation, teacheth that some do worship the beast, and so do finally perish; and others do not worship him, and attain to life; and that because the names of the one are written in the book of life, and the names of the others are not written, and that more plainly he speaketh in these words, "then I looked, and lo, a Lamb standing on the Mount Zion, and with him a hundredth forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads," &c., "and they sang as it were a new song before the throne, and before the

four beasts, and the elders, and none could learn the song except those hundredth forty and four thousand, which were bought from the earth," &c. And after in the 17th chapter is mentioned of these inhabitants of the earth, who shall "wonder upon the beast, whose names are not written in the book of life from the creation of the world." If in these places, I say, the Apostle maketh no difference betwixt one sort of men and another, let the reader judge; if there be difference betwixt bought and not bought, written in the book of life and not written, to learn the new song and not to learn the same, then no doubt our Apostle putteth as plain a difference as we do; yea, the whole scope of his revelation is to declare, that there is a number of the elect called the spouse of the Lamb, whom it behooveth to be complete before the consummation of all things come, and before that the innocent blood that hath been shed be revenged upon those that dwell upon the earth; and therefore advise with yourselves how you be able to prove that Saint John taught no such doctrine as we teach. But admitting that he had never spoken neither yet of any number chosen, that cannot fall utterly from their election, neither yet of any number reprobate, who must needs be apprehended with the beast, and with him be cast into the lake of fire; is it therefore a good argument, that all those that teach such manner of doctrine be false teachers? Or that no such doctrine is contained in the Holy Scriptures? I will make the like reason, for neither Moses, neither John the Baptist in any expressed words, have left to us written, that Christ Jesus should be born of a virgin, that he should suffer in Jerusalem, that his disciples should all be slandered and flee from him, that he should rise again, and ascending into the heaven, should send the Holy Ghost visibly upon his Apostles; neither Moses, I say, neither yet John, who were excellent teachers, have taught in expressed words any such doctrine; ergo, the teachers of it be false teachers, and it is not written in God's Scriptures. Your argument is no better, admitting that the Apostle had never made mention of any sort elected.

But now, shortly to answer to all which without purpose you heap together in this place; I say, first, that ye ought to have made a difference betwixt those seven congregations where Christ Jesus had been preached and received, and the rest of the world, which then remained, or after was to remain, in blindness and error; for to those that have by public profession received Christ Jesus, be they elect, or be they reprobate, do appertain exhortations, threatening, the doctrine of repentance, consolation, prophesying, and revelation of things to come; but to those that yet remain manifest enemies of the truth, appertain only the common calling to embrace the truth, with the threatening of destruction if they continue unfaithful. And therefore because these former Congregations {as said is} had professed themselves to be of God's household, they were entreated as his domestical servants.

If any ask the cause, why are some so amiably, and others so strangely entreated? I answer, no other cause can be assigned, but that it pleased God's infinite wisdom and goodness to make that plain and evident difference betwixt those that once be received in his household {be it external profession only} and those that remain in blindness; that the one he commonly doth visit, but the other he doth as it were neglect and destroy. For what other cause can we assign, that God so lovingly did often call to repentance the people of Israel, so often offending from the days of Moses unto the coming of Christ Jesus, that he sent unto them prophets to exhort, to rebuke, and to declare the estate of things to come; and in this mean season, the space of two thousand years, permitted the Gentiles to walk in their own ways? And now, after the rejection of the Jews, what cause can we assign, that among us Gentiles, God useth to stir up now one country, now another, to receive the truth, to detect and abhor our former superstition, idolatry, and wickedness; and of so long continuance hath left both the Jews and Turks drowned still in their blindness and damnable errors? We shall find none other cause, I suppose, than did the

Apostle see when that he said, "to God are known all his works, even from the beginning, and that he will reveal his secrets to such as please him." Ye do not hear in all this revelation of John, that Babylon is exhorted to repentance, that the blasphemous beast is rebuked either of his tyranny, either of his blasphemy, with any promise made to him, that if he will convert, he shall be received to mercy and favour. No, the sentence irrevocable is pronounced by the angel, that he shall come to destruction.

But Ephesus, Smyrna, Thyatira, and the rest of the congregations, which before had professed Christ Jesus, and yet were become not manifest enemies, but were fallen some in decay of life, some in corruption of manners, and some in heresies, were exhorted to return, to repent, and to be fervent, to continue, with sharp threatening if they did the contrary. And why this? Because that God before had planted among them his truth, which yet utterly they had not refused, and therefore doth he honour them as his domestical servants; but in vain, {say you,} for if they be of the elect, they cannot perish; if they be of the reprobate sort, they cannot be saved. This is of you irreverently reasoned; will you not suffer God to order his household as best pleaseth his wisdom? This order hath he appointed, that the trumpet of his word to exhort, to rebuke, to encourage, to offer mercy to the penitent, and to threaten death to such as do decline, shall clearly sound in his Church, so long as he doth acknowledge it to be his. Not that by the word preached, he that was reprobate in God's eternal counsel may be the elect, and so changed; but that the word preached, and often repeated, maketh a difference betwixt the elect and the reprobate, even before man.

Albeit to you it appear superfluous that God shall feed his children by his own Word, which because the reprobate do refuse, therefore do they bear a testimony of their own just condemnation in their own conscience; albeit, I say, this appear superfluous, yet God hath commanded and established the same, as a thing most

necessary and expedient for the establishing of his children, and for the manifestation of his own glory.

I wonder that you will not affirm, that superfluous it is for a man to till and manure the ground, to prepare for victuals, to eat and drink, and to do such other things as be necessary for the conservation of the life corporal, seeing that God hath appointed the days of man which he cannot exceed, and also that our heavenly Father will provide for his children, seeing he provideth for the birds of the air. Assuredly the one you may conclude as well as the other. But herein, I say, appeareth your foolish blindness. First, that you make no difference betwixt the household servants, and those that be without; and secondarily, that you understand not the use, the profit, and the effect of God's word preached. Is not the kingdom of heaven compared to a net cast into the sea, gathering together all sorts of fishes? Whereof albeit that the separation cannot perfectly be made till the net be drawn to the dry land upon the last day, yet daily by the word, by exhortation, by rebuking and threatening, do many things come to light, which before lay hid. How many do follow Christ for a time, and fall back from him, albeit that to the end he crieth that they should continue. Saint Paul affirmeth, that he did write his sharp epistle to the Corinthians for a trial of them, if they would in all things be obedient; if they as true sheep would hear the voice of their true pastor, acknowledge, and follow it; which he witnesseth that they did, and therefore he saith, "now do I rejoyce, not that you did sorrow; but that you did sorrow to repentance." By the which was not only the Apostle comforted, as he himself doth confess, but also were they newly confirmed, that the Spirit of God was not utterly extinguished before. And so albeit, you can see no fruit nor necessity of God's word preached, except that the nature of the reprobate be changed, yet do God's children feel in experience, how comfortable it is to have their dull spirits stirred up by frequent exhortations; yea, how necessary it is, that their dullness and unthankfulness be sharply rebuked.

The third thing in which I perceive you horribly to err, in all this your long discourse of the Seven Churches, is, that wheresoever there is precept or commandment given to repent, and to continue in the faith, or to live a godly life; or wheresoever mention is made that space and time is granted to repent, there straight ways you conclude, then may men keep the commandments; then may they repent, and so be saved, although before they were reprobate. For this you affirm of Jezebel, "she might {say you} have repented and have been saved; and likewise unto them that committed fornication with her is repentance granted." But how vain is this conclusion. God commandeth that which is righteous; ergo, man may do all that is commanded. God giveth place of repentance to all men; ergo, all men do, or may repent. How vain, I say, be these conclusions, such as be not infected with the pestilent opinion of their own power, free-will, and justice, may easily espy. When you have proved that God commandeth nothing which man may not do by his own power, free-will, and strength, and that repentance so proceedeth from man, that in himself it lieth either to repent or not to repent; then may you sing this song, which so oft you repeat, God commandeth, God giveth space of repentance, God offereth mercy to all; ergo, of their own power they may repent. But, and if we be not sufficient of our own selves to think one good thought, if repentance be the free gift of God, and if to receive mercy proceedeth of his own free gift also, then harp so long as you list upon that one string, I will answer, that except you make it better agree with God's Scriptures, I must needs say, that he is worthy to be mocked that continually harpeth upon a discording string.

As we do not condemn your exhortation, if we could be persuaded that it did proceed from the spirit of lenity, so can we not acknowledge ourselves to be infected with the poisoned error of mere necessity and stoical destiny; neither yet that we teach a careless and libertine life; neither that we give occasion of sin to the people. Finally, that we cannot confess that we teach and maintain idolatry {as most unjustly you accuse us}

without any further probation; for that any such crimes reign and are permitted amongst us without punishment, you be never able to prove. We do not deny, but that among us have been men infected with all crimes which you lay to our charge. For some of you were once of our number, so far as man could judge; but as you have made yourselves manifest, so have others also. But yet, it seemeth far repugnant to equity and charity that the treason of Judas should be laid to the charge of the faithful Apostles. If I list to take my pleasure in examining your lives, and applying the offences of those churches to your faction, I doubt not to bring better testimony for my affirmations than you have brought against us. But that I omit to better opportunity, willing you, in the mean season, to remember that he which speaketh alway what he listeth, is compelled some times to hear that which he would not. At one word, to answer to your slanderous and malicious accusations, we appeal from your sentence unto Him whose truth we maintain; not that we fear but that with your confusion we could reject your venom in your own stomachs again, but that we are determined not to contend with you in despiteful railing and unjust accusations, which is your purpose in this whole book, in which you thus proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

Often times you use this saying, God's election was before the foundation of the world without any condition; wherefore, they which are elect, they be elect without any condition by the immutable decree of God's goodness, so that they can never fall out of the said election, otherwise God's election were not certain. To the which I answer, that God's holy election is, without any condition, sure and certain in Christ Jesus, without whom there is neither election nor salvation. Further, man is made sure in the election by the promise of God in Christ Jesus; of which promise, when he is made partaker, he entereth in covenant with God; but when he breaketh the covenant he forsaketh the promise, and

when he forsaketh the promise he refuseth Christ, in refusing Christ he falleth out of the election; notwithstanding the election abideth sure in Christ. Election hath no promise without faith; true faith is God's work by his grace, and is also partly man's work by consenting thereto; wherefore Paul calleth the righteous joint workers with God, because they work together with him. Now, if man, for his part, according to his nature, be inconstant in his faith, then is he out of promise, whereby he was made sure of his election; yet God's election remaineth sure and stable in Christ Jesus. Adam, and all men in him, before the transgression, might fall from God by sin, notwithstanding the election. Why may not then the most righteous of us all fall now by sin from the election? Is our election surer now, after transgression, than it was before transgression? The Holy Ghost saith, "yet Cain went away in his wrath from wisdom," but a man cannot go away from that which he neither hath nor can have. Further, God gave him warning before, which was sufficient to withdraw him from his evil intention. To Cain, said the Lord, "why art thou wroth, and why is thy countenance abated? If thou do well, shall there not be a promotion? And if thou doest not well, lieth not thy sin in the doors? Unto thee also pertaineth the lust thereof, and thou shalt have dominion over it." If Cain was a reprobate before the foundation of the world, then had he no dominion over his lusts, to choose the good and leave the bad, for then might he have lived; yet God saith, "thou shalt have dominion over it;" wherefore it is plain that Cain was no reprobate when the Lord spake these words to him. Further, if God gave not Cain dominion and power to subdue his lust, who was then the author of his sin? Whether is the sword which killeth, having no power over itself, more to be blamed, or he which hath it in his hand? If God gave not Cain power to overcome his lust, and grace whereby he might be saved, who is the cause of his damnation? "God is faithful, {saith Paul,} which shall not suffer you to be tempted above your strength, but shall in the midst of temptation make a way that you may be able to bear." Likewise did God with Cain in

his temptation, warning, "that if he did well he should be rewarded, if he did evil he should be punished." For there encouraging to do well, and that he should not faint, God showed him how he should have dominion over his lust to rule it. This, notwithstanding he went away in wrath from wisdom, and forsook the counsel of God which mercifully called him to life. After the flood, Ham was blessed of God, as his father Noah, and his brethren Shem and Japheth, and with the same blessing wherewith they were blessed; yet fell he from righteousness, rejoicing in evil; and then, lo, became he accursed, and not before. But all reprobates be under the wrath and curse of God. So Ham, when he was blessed of God, he was not reprobate, for then should he have been both blessed and cursed, loved and hated, all at once. The Israelites which were delivered from the oppression of the Egyptians, were chosen and called of God, to go and possess the land of Canaan under the conduct of Moses. Yet neither Moses for his offence, neither any of them because of their disobedience, obtained that whereunto they were ordained and chosen of God, except two persons, Joshua and Caleb. Moreover, the same Israelites were in God's holy election, and called of God from their sins, and chosen in Christ to life and health, as Paul witnesseth, saying, "our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea, and were all baptized under Moses in the cloud, and in the sea, and did all eat of one spiritual meat, and did all drink of one manner of spiritual drink; and they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, which Rock was Christ." Behold how Paul so often rehearsed this word, all to declare their choosing and calling to be general, "yet there after {saith he} in many of them had God no delight, for by sin they fell from Christ and out of their election, and so perished." And there doth also Paul teach us "how these things chanced them for examples, to put us in remembrance that we do not likewise by sin fall from that whereunto we are chosen and called of God. Let him therefore which thinkest he standeth take heed lest he fall." But you say, that he which standeth may well stumble, but he cannot fall.

Wherefore your doctrine being contrary to the saying of the Holy Ghost must be false. As for them which you say were reprobates before the world, in vain should they take heed of any fall, seeing before they were, they had so sore a fall that they could never rise again; and so deep a fall, even to damnation, that they can fall no further. Balaam was filled with the Spirit of God, the spirit of truth, the spirit of power, and the spirit of grace so largely, that whomsoever he blessed, he was blessed, and whomsoever he cursed, he was cursed; but the blessing of the ungodly reprobate is very cursing, so that whomsoever they curse, God blesseth, and whosoever they bless, God curseth. Wherefore Balaam, during the time that he himself was so blessed of God, he was no reprobate, but the chosen of God, and might have continued in the grace and favour of God. And thereto was he exhorted of God, saying, "go not thou with them, neither curse the people, for they are blessed." Where that it is to be noted that this people was blessed, and notwithstanding by idolatry and carnal lusts they fell from the favour of God; and instead of blessing, God's curse fell on them, as it appeareth in Numbers. Likewise, Balaam through covetousness, loving filthy reward and continuing in sin, he fell from righteousness and forsook the truth, and perished with the cursed ungodly. Saul and his house was elect, and chosen of God to be king and rulers over Israel, and that forever; as Samuel witnesseth, saying, "at this time would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel, but now thy kingdom shall not continue." Here you see how Saul, the elect anointed of God, doth fall from that whereunto God had chosen and ordained him. And thereafter, in the fifteenth chapter, "because thou hast cast away the word of the Lord, therefore hath the Lord cast away thee also from being king." Whereof we learn, that Saul's fall was not by the fore-ordinance of God, seeing he ordained the contrary, but through his disobedience to God's word, whereunto he might have obeyed if he would. Solomon received grace and wisdom of God above all other, which was a lively figure of Christ, of whom God saith so, "Solomon I have chosen

to be my son, and I will be his Father; I will establish his kingdom forever." Yet did he fall from this grace, and wrought wickedness in the sight of the Lord, lusting after strange flesh, and committing idolatry; and whereas God choose him to be his son, he turned his heart from God, and followed Ashtoreth, "the goddess of the Zidonians, and after Milcom the abomination of the Ammonites." He builded an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and unto Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon, and likewise for all his outlandish wives, which were a great number, that brunt incense, and offered unto their gods. Here have we a notable example of Solomon, the elect son of God, whose kingdom God had promised to establish forever. Yet he became the child of the Devil, turning his heart from God, and giving himself over to the lusts of the flesh and most vile abominable idolatry. Jeroboam was chosen of God, and anointed by the Prophet Ahijah, king over the ten tribes of Israel; to whom God made a covenant that he would be with him, and build him a sure house, that should continue even as he had promised before to his servant David, a man after God's own heart. Yet did Jeroboam, notwithstanding the election and fore-ordinance of God, fall from the favour of God; set up two golden calves, one in Bethel and the other in Dan, and made Israel sin against God, to his own and their utter subversion. Judas was elect of God to be the salt of the earth, not unsavory, for that serveth for nothing; but he became unsavory salt through his own wickedness. Christ chose him to be the light of the world, which should so shine before all men, that they might glorify by him God the Father; but because he loved darkness better than light, his candlestick was removed and his light quenched. Christ chose him to be one of the twelve, which should sit on the twelve seats judging the twelve Tribes of Israel; but because he made not his election and calling sure by good works, as Peter speaketh, his name was wiped out of the book of life. Christ looseth none of them whom the Father gave him except Judas, which by transgression {as Peter saith} did fall, and was found

unworthy of his election. Here might the terrible and grievous fall of Jonah, with divers others, be alleged, which for prolixity I pass over. All these above rehearsed, and many more, received the grace of God in vain. And therefore did God cast them away, whom before he had chosen, even as he did Jerusalem, of whom it is so written, "I will cast off this city of Jerusalem which I have chosen, and the house of which I said my name shall be there." For though God of his mere mercy has chosen us in Christ Jesus to be heirs of eternal life, yet if we refuse him, he will refuse us; and if we deny him, he will deny us. And so as the Prophet saith, "our own wickedness shall reprove us, and our turning away shall condemn us." And therefore saith the Lord by his Prophet Ezekiel, "if the righteous turn away from his righteousness and do iniquity, all the righteousness that he hath done shall not be thought upon; but in the fault that he hath offended withal, and in the sin that he hath done, he shall die."

ANSWER.

The same proposition, which before I have proved most false and deceivable, you yet labour, by multiplying of examples nothing appertaining to that purpose, to defend and maintain.

Your proposition is that albeit the election is sure, and made without all condition in Christ Jesus, yet is there none so elected in him to life everlasting but that he may fall to perdition, and become a reprobate. And for the probation hereof, before you enter to your examples, you use two reasons. The former, without Christ {say you} there is neither election nor salvation; and this we confess and most steadfastly do believe, adding, that election and salvation are so sure in him, that so many as be elected in him to life everlasting, shall by grace attain to the same. Ye proceed in your reason, "further, man is made sure in the election by the promise of God in Christ Jesus; of which promise, when he is made partaker, he entereth in covenant with God; but when he breaketh the covenant he forsaketh the

promise, and when he forsaketh the promise he refuseth Christ; in refusing Christ he falleth out of the election; notwithstanding the election abideth sure in Christ." This is your first reason. To the which I shortly and plainly answer, that because you suppose an impossibility to be possible, therefore you conclude a great absurdity. For you suppose that the members of Christ's body, elected in him to life everlasting, may so forsake the promise, so refuse Christ their Head, and so break the covenant, that to the end of their lives they contemn and despise it; which is a thing impossible, as before I have proved, and therefore your conclusion availeth nothing. When you shall prove that Christ's sheep, committed to his charge by his Heavenly Father, can become wolves or dogs to bark against their pastor, and that so they continue to the end, I will study to answer you otherwise; but unto such time as you learn to prove your purpose more substantially, I must say, that because there is no member of your reason which hath a sure ground, that therefore I will not greatly study to confute the same. For man is not made sure in the election by any promise of God; but the election which before was secret in God's eternal counsel, is by the promise and word of grace notified unto man; so that tolerably it may be spoken, man is assured of his election by the promise which he willingly embraced; but to be sure in the election by the promise, is not the phrase of the Holy Ghost.

Further of this, we shall examine in your second reason, which is this, "election hath no promise without faith; true faith is God's work by his grace, and is also man's work, partly by consenting thereto. Wherefore Paul calleth the righteous joint workers with God, because they work together with him. Now, {say you,} if man for his part, according to his nature, be inconstant in his faith, then is he out of the promise, whereby he was made sure of his election; yet God's election remaineth sure and stable in Christ Jesus." The first member of your reason is dark and obscure, and the manner of speaking so strange, that in the Scriptures I am assured it is never to be found. In one

of two senses is election taken in the Scriptures. The former, for the elect themselves, as when Paul saith, "the election did obtain it," that is, the elect of God obtained mercy. And in the same sense is Paul called the vessel of election, that is, an elect vessel; and if in this sense you affirm that election, that is to say, the elect, have no promise without faith, albeit I will not greatly contend in that behalf, yet by manifest Scriptures I may prove the contrary, for the posterity of Abraham by God's free election had this promise, "that he should be their God." And Saint Paul affirmeth, "that the children of the faithful were holy," and yet all could not have faith when the promise was made, for then had Abraham no seed at all; but of this, I say, I will not contend. Otherwise, election is taken in the Scriptures for the eternal counsel of God, by the which he hath appointed life everlasting to such as he hath given to his Son before all worlds; as Paul saith, "for yet the children were born, when they had neither done good, neither bad, that the purpose of God which is by his election, that is, not by works, but by him that calleth, might stand sure; it was said unto her, the elder shall serve the younger," &c., and after, "even so at this time is there a remnant left through the election of grace," and so forth in divers other places. And in this sense, if you understand that election hath no promise without faith, I answer, that God's free election in Christ Jesus needeth neither promise nor faith, as touching the part of God; for he, in his election respecteth neither of both, but his own good pleasure in Christ his Son; and so I would have wished greater plainness in the first part of your reason than there is; but I perceive the ground of your error by that which followeth. "True Faith {say you} is God's work by grace, and it is also partly man's work by consenting thereto," which second part of this second member is utterly false, for faith is no part of man's work, no more than the child begotten of the Father and conceived of the mother is the work of self. But faith is altogether the work of God, for as he begetteth us by the word of Truth, and by the power of his Holy Spirit maketh our hearts to conceive and retain the seed of

life; so by his power are we kept by faith to salvation, which is prepared to this end, that it shall be manifested in the last time, and, "therefore {saith the Apostle} through grace are you saved by faith, and that not of yourselves." Ye must compel the Holy Ghost to recant, which I think he will not do for your threatening, before you be able to prove that Faith is any part of man's work.

The words of the Apostle you shamefully abuse, for in that place he entreateth only how God useth the ministers of his word and blessed Evangel, to be helpers with God, in so far as they are the ambassadors of reconciliation, as in another place he calleth them; he meaneth nothing, neither what man doth in the work of his own salvation by his own faith, or by his own works. And, therefore, although you {as a blind man} go forward to your own perdition, saying, "now, if man for his part, according to his nature, be inconstant in his faith, then is he out of the promise," &c., yet must we pull you back and say, that because faith is no part of man's work, therefore doth neither his faith nor his election depend upon the inconstancy of his own nature; but God of his sovereign bounty overcoming what imperfections soever be in his chosen children, hath grounded their election in himself and in Christ Jesus his Son. Another error I see in this your reason, which because I have sufficiently confuted. I will here touch it only.

Ye make faith, the embracing of the promise, and our obedience, to be causes of God's election, when in very deed they be but the effects of our election. For neither faith nor obedience make us to be God's elect, but because we were elected in Christ Jesus, therefore are we called, made faithful, obedient, and sanctified by his free grace.

To admonish you yet of one thing, and so to put an end to your unreasonable reasons; wonder it is, that you will attribute to election that which you deny to the elect. You affirm that election is sure in Christ, but not the elect, say you. Belike you imagine election to be a certain speculation or imagination, without any certain

substance to the which it must be referred, but Saint Paul teacheth us the contrary, saying, "He hath chosen us in Christ," he saith not that election was in Christ, but that, "we were elected in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid." This gently I put you in mind to ground your reasons more substantially, if that by them you intend to prove anything. A short answer I might give you to all your examples; to wit, that we speak not of election to offices, or to possessions temporal, but of election to life everlasting; from the which you are never able to prove any to have been finally secluded, that in Christ Jesus was thereto elected before the foundation of the world was laid. But yet to gratify you somewhat, I will pass through your examples, and communicate with you my judgment. God grant you hearts to understand.

It is a thing most certain, that albeit Adam, and all men in him, might and did fall from God by sin, yet cannot the Elect of God, who be elected to life everlasting in Christ Jesus, so fall from their election, that finally they perish. The reason is, that as Christ Jesus, the brightness of the glory of his Father, and the expressed image of his substance, is greater than ever was Adam, so is his power of greater virtue to save the Elect than Adam's impotency was to bring damnation upon all.

Where you ask, if our election be surer now, after the transgression than before the transgression? I answer, the assurance and firmity of our election was always, and at all times, one. For when we stood in Adam, {as you allege,} yet were we elected in Christ; and when we fell in Adam, then did our election burst forth and appear.

Ye be never able to prove that Cain was elected to life everlasting in Christ Jesus; for God looked not to Cain, nor yet to his sacrifice, as that he did to Abel. And why? Because, as the Apostle affirmeth, the one offered in faith, and the other without faith. Remember, I pray you, your former reason, "there is none {say you} elected without faith," but Cain was without faith even before he did kill or hate his brother; therefore, by your

own reason, he was not in the election, no not even before he hated. I do not approve this argument, but yet your former reason standing true, it is invincible. Moses saith not, that God promised dominion to Cain over his lusts, but saith, "unto thee shall his appetites or lusts be, and thou shall bear dominion over him," which is not spoken of sin, but of Abel, who as he was the younger, so was he appointed to be subject to Cain, and to serve him, and therefore most unjustly did he hate him. It is the same phrase that before was spoken of the woman, concerning her subjection to man. Such as have but mean knowledge in the Hebrew text, know well, that both these articles be of the masculine gender, and the substantive, which signifieth sin in that place, is of the feminine gender; and therefore, will not the propriety of the tongue suffer that dominion promised be referred to sin. Where blasphemously you ask, if God gave Cain no power to subdue his lust, who was the author of his sin? I answer, Cain himself, for he was not like to a dead and insensible sword, as you adduce the similitude, but he was a reasonable instrument infected by the venom of Satan; from the which he not being purged, could do nothing but serve the devil and his own lusts, against God's expressed will and commandment. I have before proved, that God is the cause of no man's damnation, but sin in which they are fallen, is the very cause which all reprobates do find in themselves.

Touching the fidelity of God, who suffereth none of his to be tempted above their strength, it is only true of God's elect, to whom it is plain that Paul there speaketh; for albeit that amongst the Corinthians there were many reprobates, yet doth Paul address his style as it were to the elect church of God, calling them his beloved, willing them to fly from idolatry, and speaking to them as unto men endued with wisdom, &c., and therefore must you first prove, that Cain had as great testimony of God that he was his elect, as the Corinthians had of Paul that they were beloved and elected in Christ, before that you can make this place to serve for him; for albeit he did advertise him what was his duty to do, yet doth it not thereof follow, that he

gave him power to obey his will revealed, neither yet power to resist all temptation. To Pharaoh he did no less make manifest his will than that he did to Cain; and yet of him he did before pronounce, that he should not hear nor obey the voice of Moses. I do not deny but that he stubbornly forsook the counsel of God, which mercifully called him. But why did he, and do all reprobate forsake it, we have oft before declared, to wit, "because the seed of God abideth not in them."

What was the benediction given after the flood unto Noah and to his sons, the Holy Ghost doth not conceal; to wit, multiplication, preservation, and the restitution of all things, as touching the order of nature, like as they were before that visitation, by reason of the waters which had so long continued. In that place is no mention made of election to life everlasting in Christ Jesus, and therefore your connection, that Ham was not reprobate when he was blessed of God, is foolish; for albeit that none can be both blessed and cursed, loved and hated, all at once, in that degree of love or of hatred which God freely beareth in Christ to his elect, and most justly hateth the Reprobate, for the causes known to His wisdom; yet in another sort, it is no repugnance to say, that God both blesseth and loveth in bestowing temporal benedictions, upon such as in his eternal counsel he hath rejected, and therefore hateth. As it is no repugnance to say, that God both blesseth and loveth his elect children, even when most severely he doth chasten and punish them.

To all that which you adduce of the Israelites, my former answers may suffice; for you be never able to prove, that any of them which was chosen to life everlasting did fall into death eternal. It nothing hurt the salvation of Moses, albeit his body fell in the wilderness. That place of Paul proveth not, that all the Israelites which was called from Egypt, were within God's holy election to life everlasting in Christ Jesus; but doth prove that they were all externally called, and that they did all communicate with those external signs and sacraments, which did signify, and represent spiritual things. But he doth not affirm that all did receive the

spiritual and inward graces of the Holy Ghost. The mind of the Apostle is plain enough in that place to such as willingly are not blind themselves. For he exhorteth the Corinthians not to think it sufficient that they did communicate with the sacraments of Christ Jesus, except that a godly life and unfeigned obedience to God's will revealed should be joined with the same; for otherwise the same should happen unto them, that happened to the Israelites. And therefore he saith, "let him that standeth take heed lest he fall," which is nothing contrary to our doctrine, neither yet is our doctrine in any iota repugnant to the Holy Ghost; for we did never deny, but that many who before men had a fair glister of holiness, yea, which thought themselves sure in their own fantasy, hath taken horrible falls, both of one sort and of the other. And unto all men we cry, no less than you do, that they test themselves, and that they take heed lest by slothfulness they fall; but that any that standeth in Christ Jesus, and in the eternal counsel of God can so fall that finally he perish, that we constantly deny. Behold how smoothly God doth conduct our tossed boat through the raging waves of your furious arguments.

The fall of the reprobate we remit to God's judgment. Albeit that Balaam had been endued with greater graces than in Scriptures we read that he had, yet doth it not thereof follow, that he had received the spirit of sanctification by true faith, which is given to the elect only; for we find the power given to some to expel devils, whom Christ affirmeth that he never knew. Matthew 7:21-23. And therefore willeth he his disciples, not to rejoice in that that spirits were subject unto them, but that their names were written in the Book of life. But yet I wonder where you have found, that Balaam was so filled with the Spirit of God, the spirit of truth, the spirit of power, and the spirit of grace, {as you write,} that whomsoever he blessed, was blessed, and whom he cursed, he was cursed. I find no such thing witnessed of him by the Holy Ghost. True it is, that Balak gave unto him that praise and commendation, that he was assured that whom he blessed should be happy, and whom he

cursed should be cursed. But whether that it was the purpose of the Holy Ghost to teach and assure us thereby that in very deed such graces were in him, I greatly doubt; yea, I doubt nothing to affirm the contrary, to wit, that he neither had power, spirit, nor grace of God, to bless those whom God hath cursed, neither yet to curse those whom God hath blessed; for so doth he himself confess.

And for that end is the history written. If you understand that the benediction remained upon Jacob because that Balaam did so pronounce and speak, you are more blind than Balaam was; for he assigneth another cause, saying, "how shall I curse where God hath not cursed? Or how shall I detest where the Lord hath not detested? God is not as man, that he should lie; neither as the son of man, that he should repent; hath He said, and shall he not do it? And hath He spoken, and shall he not accomplish it? Behold, I have received commandment to bless, for He hath blessed; and I cannot alter it. He seeth none iniquity in Jacob, nor seeth no transgression in Israel; the Lord his God is with him, and the joyful shout of a king is amongst them." Numbers 23:18-21.

In these words, I say, Balaam assigneth the cause why he was compelled to bless Israel, because, saith he, God hath blessed them. And why also he could not change his blessing, because in God there is no mutability, nor change, like as there is in man. And, therefore, as he had once blessed that people, by his plain word and promise spoken, and revealed to Abraham, so should he most constantly perform it. If malice did not blind you, you should clearly see, that the Holy Ghost meaneth nothing less than to teach that Balaam was blessed of God, and therefore was not at that time a reprobate, but that Israel was so elected, so sanctified, and blessed of God, that their very enemies, and such as were hired to curse them, were compelled to give testimony against themselves, that God's people was blessed. But this doth no more make Balaam to be God's Elect than did that confession which the wicked

spirits gave to Christ, {confessing him to be the Son of the living God,} change their nature.

If you be able to prove that whole Israel so fell from God's favour, that to none of Abraham's posterity did he perform the promise made to him and to his seed, then have you proved somewhat of your purpose; to wit, that God may make a promise, and that with an oath, and yet perform no part of it. But if it be manifest, that notwithstanding their grudging, their rebellion, their carnal lusts, their idolatry, and abominations, God's promise remained so sure, that the same was performed {after many temptations} in full perfection, consider what may be concluded against you, in applying examples by similitude and equality. I would wish in you greater wisdom than to compare Balaam, one particular person, a false prophet accursed of God, and so perishing amongst the ungodly, and whole Israel, God's elect and chosen people, so blessed of God, that not only they were preserved in all storms, but also of them, according to the flesh, came that blessed seed, the Messiah promised.

To Saul and to his kingdom I have before answered; to wit, that one thing it is to be appointed to a temporal office, and another to be elected in Christ Jesus to life everlasting. But yet I will add somewhat more, which this proposition is directly fighting against yours, for Saul nor his house was never chosen in God's eternal counsel to be kings and rulers over Israel forever. If you cry, then did the Holy Ghost, speaking in Samuel, lie; for he affirmed, that God had prepared the reign and kingdom of Saul upon Israel forever. I answer, Samuel speaketh not in that place what God had determined in his eternal counsel, but what he himself thought that God had determined and appointed. And therefore, you may not conclude, that the Holy Ghost doth lie, except the kingdom of Saul was once appointed to have remained over Israel forever. Nay, so can you not conclude. But you may say that except that so it was, the prophet was deceived. And so no doubt he was for a season, and did speak those words according to the apprehension and judgment which he had

conceived, by reason of his unction and lawful election to his office.

If it appears hard to you, that the Prophets be deceived in anything, consider, I pray you, what happened unto him after; did he not at the sight of Eliab pronounce with an affirmation, that before the Eternal, he was his anointed? Did the Holy Ghost lie because that Eliab was refused, and David chosen? Or was not rather Samuel ignorant and in an error? The same might I prove by Nathan, and others, who being God's true prophets, were yet for a season left in error, and did both speak and give counsel otherwise than God had determined in his eternal counsel.

But now shortly to prove my proposition, I say, that God's eternal purpose and counsel concerning the chief ruler and governor over Israel, was long before pronounced by Jacob in his last testament, who did appoint the crown and sceptre royal to another tribe than to Benjamin; for thus he saith, "thou Judah, thy brethren shall praise thee; thine hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies; thy fathers sons shall bow down unto thee," &c., "the sceptre shall not depart from Judah, neither the lawgiver from betwixt his feet, until Shiloh come; and the people shall be gathered to him," &c. Genesis 49:10. Here, I say, it is plain, that many years before the election of Saul was the kingly dignity appointed to Judah; which sentence was never afterward retracted. And therefore my proposition, affirming, that Saul was never elected in the eternal counsel of God to reign forever over Israel, standeth sure and sufficiently proved. If any ask to what purpose was Saul then elected king? I answer, because so it pleased God's wisdom to tempt {to try} his people, to tempt the tribe of Judah, yea, and all the faithful that then were alive; to tempt them, I say, whether they would still depend upon God's promise, and look for their felicity, even by the same means, that God had forespoken, howsoever things appeared to the contrary for a season. The whole people, no doubt, yea, and Samuel himself, were partly criminal in that point, that they looked for salvation and for deliverance from all

their enemies by the hands of any other, than by one of the tribe of Judah, considering that the former prophecy was so plain. But that error he did first correct in his prophet, showing unto him just causes why Saul was unworthy of that great honour; and after he did correct the same in the people, moving their hearts to elect David, whom the prophet had before anointed. And so did God retain the firmity of his counsel, and did perform the same, when all things appeared plainly to repugne to his promise, yea, when men had received another to be their king, than God by his former promise had appointed.

We neither deny the supernatural wisdom and manifold graces given to Solomon, neither yet his most horrible fall, to be a document and a memorial forever, of his abominable idolatries, and most unthankful defection from God; which only one example we affirm, ought to admonish every man most carefully to examine himself, with what simplicity he walketh before God's Majesty. But whether that Solomon so became the son of the devil, that after he did never return to God, but that finally he did perish, we dare not be bold to pronounce sentence. And that because to us it appeareth that God did make unto him a promise of mercy, his grievous offence notwithstanding; for this did God speak by Nathan of him, "when thy days shall be fulfilled, thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, and I will set up thy seed after thee which shall proceed out of thy body, and will stablish his kingdom; he shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever; I will be his father and he shall be my son. And if he sin, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the plagues of the children of men; but my mercy shall not depart away from him, as I took it from Saul, whom I have put away before thee," &c. II Samuel 7:12-16. Howsoever you list to understand this free mercy promised to abide after iniquity committed, you cannot deny, but that a plain difference is made betwixt Solomon and Saul.

And if you think that nothing spoken in that place did appertain to Solomon, who was born before that

David had finished his days, and did sleep with his fathers, but that all is performed in Christ, who many years after did spring of him, you do not rightly mark the words of God, neither yet the mind of the Holy Ghost; he saith not, that the child who should build a house to the name of God, and whose kingdom he would establish, should be born after his death; but that God should raise one who should spring of his own loins, whom he would so honour after his death, that he would become his father whom you would so entreat, that albeit he should offend, yet should he not be rejected from regiment in Israel, as Saul was, and so was the kingdom established not only to David, but also to his posterity after him. The perfection, no doubt, was reserved to Christ Jesus, but so was the verity in him, that the figure passed before in Solomon. Moreover, somewhat is spoken in this promise, which in no wise can be referred to Christ Jesus. For how shall any be able to prove that the just seed of David, in whose mouth was no deceit found, did in any sort wickedly in his own person, so that he had need of mercy, and to be corrected with the rod of the children? This I note, to give you occasion to take heed what sentence you pronounce in things so far removed from the reach of your understanding.

In the history of Jeroboam, you do not observe that whatsoever is promised unto him, except the first gift of the ten tribes, is conditional; for thus saith the prophet unto him, "and if thou hearken unto all that I command thee, and wilt walk in my ways, and do right in my sight, as did David my servant; then will I be with thee, and build thee a sure house, as I built unto David, and will give Israel unto thee," &c., I pray you, what can you hereof conclude? That Jeroboam, say you, notwithstanding God's election and free ordinance, did fall from the favour of God. But how be you able to prove that he was elected and before ordained to stand in God's favour forever? These sayings, "if thou walk before me in righteousness," "if thou keep my precepts," and such others, will not prove it. I can evidently prove that Jeroboam, and all the kings in Israel after him,

were given to the people in God's anger, and were taken away in his hot displeasure, for so doth the prophet Hosea witness. Now, if you can prove that such rulers as be given in God's wrath, and taken away in his just fury, were elected and before ordained to stand in his favour forever, advice with your counselors, and produce your witness against the next time.

That Judas was never elected to life everlasting, I have before declared, and therefore at this present, I only say, that no more did Christ mean of Judas that he should be the salt of the earth, the light of the world, neither that he should sit upon any seat to judge any tribe in Israel, than that he meant of Peter that he was the devil, that he should betray him, or that better it had been for him never to have been born; for as Christ in pronouncing the words, "you twelve have I chosen, but one of you is the devil, one of you shall betray me," in express words he did neither appoint the person of Judas to that fact, neither yet did exempt and make free any of the rest from suspicion of that crime; in express words, I say. So likewise in saying, "ye are the salt of the earth, and you shall sit upon twelve seats," &c., he neither meant of the whole number of the twelve, neither yet of them only; for as for Judas, I doubt not to affirm, but that according as it was written in the book of Psalms, "that his habitation should be desolate, and that another should receive the honour of his bishopric," that so even in the time when he stood in the ministry most sure to man's judgment, that yet in God's eternal counsel, he was appointed to that treason, and most fearful end; and I suppose that none will be so perverse of judgment as to deny, that none other was appointed to be the salt of the earth, and the light of the world, except those twelve. I verily believe that Paul is nothing inferior to any of the chiefest apostles in that case. And so yet I affirm, that neither were those words spoken of all the twelve, neither yet of them only. If this cannot satisfy your curiosity, labour you to prove that Judas was elected to life everlasting in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid. I have before proved that the elect cannot finally refuse nor deny Christ Jesus

their Head, and therefore I will not trouble the reader with the repetition.

The place of Ezekiel serveth nothing for your purpose; for there doth he only entreat of such righteous men, as in the beginning of the same chapter used this proverb, "the fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge," signifying thereby {as before we have declared} that they were just and innocent, and that yet they did suffer punishment, for the offences of their fathers. Against whom the prophet speaketh most sharply, affirming that the soul which did sin should die, in this praising God's justice, that he would suffer sin unpunished in none of his creatures, supposing that some, for a time, had a show of righteousness. The prophet doth further accuse, and convict their consciences, for they knew themselves criminal in all crimes, which the prophet there recited. And therefore to provoke them to repentance with this exhortation, "cast away from you {saith he} all your transgressions, whereby you have transgressed; and make you a new heart, and a new spirit, for why will you die, O house of Israel? For I desire not the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God. Cause therefore one another to return, and live you." Ezekiel 18:31-32.

Of this conclusion {I say} it easily may appear, of what sort of righteous men the prophet speaketh; not of such as being engrafted in Christ's body, by the true sanctification of his Spirit, do daily study to mortify their affections, but of such as having an outward appearance or show of holiness, did notwithstanding lose the bridle to all impiety. In very deed God cannot remember the justice of any such, {which is not,} but their sins must crave just vengeance, and that the rather because by them the name of God is blasphemed. Now to the rest of that which followeth in your book.

THE ADVERSARY.

This say you, with many other manifest testimonies of the Scriptures, you toss and turn upside down, seeking shifts to maintain your errors; whereby you declare

yourself to be of the number of them, of whom it is written in the same place, which do say, "tush, the way of the Lord is not indifferent." Ye will not that the Lord judge according to this way set forth in his Word, but of necessity by an immutable decree, to save a certain, and of necessity to condemn all the rest. Ye must not so read God's Word, studying rather to teach the Holy Ghost than to learn your duty of him, seeking means rather to confirm your preconceived error, than to avoid it. What truth can he learn at the Word of God, which worshippeth the idol of his own phantasy, and hath already forsaken the mind of the truth? Remember that the first lesson of wisdom is to be willing to learn wisdom. Cast away, therefore, the idols of your hearts, which made you stumble in your ways; submit yourselves to the word as humble and meek lambs; for the Lamb only was found worthy to open the seals of the book. Trust not your error to be the better because it hath many followers, specially of them which have the name of learning, for such have been always in all ages enemies to the truth, inventors of sects and errors; such like as Jannes and Jambres resisted Moses, so do they the truth; as the learned Scribes and Pharisees blasphemed the Word of God, and persecuted Christ, the Truth itself, so do they yet in his members. And even as the Pharisees said, "do any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believe in him? This common people which know not the law is cursed," so say they now, do any of our learned doctors teach so? These unlearned fellows are cursed, for they cannot understand God's Word, they understand only the English tongue; and yet will they meddle with divinity, as though the gifts of tongues and the gifts of prophesying were so bound together, that God could not minister the one without the other. But this is no new thing, for this was laid to Christ and his Apostles charge, that they were unlearned. But the Holy Ghost willeth us not to judge so. "Mark," saith Paul, "your calling, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many of high degree are called; but God hath chosen the weak things of the world, the vile things of the world, and things which are

despised, and of no reputation, to confound the mighty, and to bring to naught things of reputation." How can such great men believe, seeing they seek to be praised one of another, and to be preferred for their knowledge in the tongues, and for the multitude of their books which they have written? Such learned men are more mete to be in Herod's hall, than in Christ's stable; the door is too low, and they too stout, they may not stoop so low for the disgracing of their gravity; only poor shepherds which are accustomed to stables are found mete to have Christ revealed to them; not that I despise learning or learned men; for I know that learning is the good gift of God; yet, as Saint Paul saith, knowledge maketh a man to swell, and many in our time, as in all ages past, do abuse this good gift of God; yet not all, God forbid, for some I know, I praise God, to whom it hath pleased God to reveal the truth of this matter, which in perfect knowledge of the tongues, are to be compared with any of your Rabbis. Be not deceived, therefore, with vain titles of learning, or of worldly wisdom; if you seek Christ, seek him where he is, in the poor stable, and not in the palaces of Annas and Caiaphas, without you will see and hear Christ accused; to such a peradventure Christ may be called of the learned. If you will have Christ, you must not go to seek him in the Universities, where you may be praised for your sharp wits and eloquent tongues; but you must go forth unto him out of the tents, and suffer rebuke with him. Know you not that the learned Pharisees and Lawyers coveted to talk sometime with Christ, not to learn, but to dispute and trap him in his sayings? And so did the learned philosophers of Greece with Paul. Awake therefore in time, be no longer deceived with their authority, examine yourselves, examine yourselves I say, how much you have increased in Christ by his doctrine, what perfection it hath wrought in you, and how much Christ is fashioned in you by it. If you will forsake this error and embrace the truth, whereby you are taught that God will all men to be saved, you shall, God willing, perceive more increase in godliness, and

that shortly, than ever you could or durst look for continuing in your error.

ANSWER.

Whether that you or we pervert the meaning of the Holy Ghost speaking in his Holy Scriptures, we chiefly remit judgment to Him who shall judge the world with equity, not refusing also, in the mean season, the judgment of indifferent readers. To your unjust accusations, cavillations, and malicious reports, I will answer nothing, till the end of this work. And then I purpose to lay before your eyes such things as you cannot deny, to the end that the simple may judge which of us do worship the idol of our own fantasies, and have forsaken the mind of the truth.

Albeit that you and your captain Castellio begin now to despise learning, yet be you never able to prove that we have despised godliness in the most simple of our brethren; howbeit we cannot conceal the truth, affirming, that he who hath faithfully travelled in the tongues, and in the writings of godly men, is more able to avoid error, and also more apt to teach the truth, and to confute the adversary, than he which is altogether ignorant, except in his natural tongue; for we know that miracles, and the visible gifts of the Holy Ghost, given in the days of the Apostles, are now ceased. Therefore, I say, we are not so proud that we despise learning, neither yet so malicious that we condemn the meanest gift that God hath given to any of our brethren.

If any be that boast or brag of their knowledge in the tongues, or of the multitude of the books which they write, I will confess them worthy of most sharp rebuke. But as for such as be principal instruments of Christ Jesus, how much they have profited the Church of God, and how little praise or commendation they have sought or do seek of man, the day when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, will declare, and men, who be most familiarly acquainted with them, partly can witness.

As we do not envy the perfect knowledge in tongues of such as you praise, so do we unfeignedly desire God so to govern their hearts, if his good pleasure be, that rather they study to edify Christ's afflicted Church than to accuse, slander, and traduce such, as in the vineyard of the Lord have laboured, and daily do labour much more than they do. That you will us to turn from that which you call our error, promising us {if so we will do} more perfection shortly than ever we durst have looked for; we must be first taught, that our doctrine is erroneous, and after, for the assurance of our hope, we must have more than the promise of men. Thus you proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

To prove that they which be once elect can never fall, they allege this saying of Christ, "there shall arise false Christ's and false prophets, and shall show great miracles and wonders; insomuch, that if it were possible, the very elect should be deceived." Of this they gather, that it is not possible that the elect should be deceived, and this conditional, "if it were possible," &c., affirmeth nothing. But admitting it to be so, we must understand that the thing which is very hard and with difficulty to be done, is called impossible in the Scripture; as in that place, "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of an needle, than for the rich to enter into the kingdom of God." This is called impossible, because it is very hard and difficult to be done; yet be there rich men which inherit the kingdom of heaven. "How can you believe {saith Christ} which receive honour one of another?" This seemeth impossible by Christ's words, yet many such were converted to Christ. And the same spirit of vain glory was amongst the elect apostles of Christ, after they had continued a long time with him; for they contended who should be superior among themselves. "Can a woman forget the child of her womb, and not pity the son whom she hath born?" Which though it seem impossible, for as much as it is contrary to nature, yet do women destroy and devour

their own births. "May a man of India change his skin and the cat of the mountain her spots? No more may you that be exercised in evil do good." Such we be of ourselves, notwithstanding by the power of God we be regenerate; we leave off from our evil exercises, and do that which is good. Thus we see it is called impossible in the Scriptures which is contrary to nature, which exceedeth our strength, and therefore is difficult and hard to be done. Even so it is impossible, that is, it is a very hard thing that the elect which follow the Lamb whethersoever he goeth, should be deceived; yet notwithstanding it may come to pass. As Eve was the elect of God, and notwithstanding the Apostle witnesseth that she was beguiled and deceived by the Serpent, and therefore warned Christ the elect Apostles, saying, "take heed that no man deceive you." If Christ had been of your opinion that the elect could not be deceived, to what purpose should he bid his chosen take heed lest any man should deceive them? "Let no man deceive you," saith Paul to the Thessalonians, to whom he bare witness that they were worthy of the kingdom of heaven; yet was he careful, lest they should be deceived and moved from their good mind, either by spirit or by words, or by letter which should seem to come from him. And to the Ephesians, "let no man deceive you with vain words; for because of such things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." And likewise warneth he the Romans, to mark and avoid such as with sweet and flattering words deceived the hearts of the innocent. As the old prophet which dwelled in Bethel deceived the man of God which came from Judah, and prophesied against the alter which Jeroboam built, "I am a prophet {said he} also as well as thou, and an angel spake unto me in the name of the Lord, saying, bring him again with thee into thine own house, that he may eat bread and drink water, and he lied and deceived the man of God." Such lying prophets be now a days, which say, they be sent from God, and call the people to their congregations, without which, they say, there is no salvation; for they condemn all others which be not of their sect. And when they have allured the people with

false erroneous doctrine, they provoke them to a careless libertine life, apt to allure any man. Beware friends, that you go not with them, lest, as the man of God, for his going back, was killed of a lion, so you be slain by errors and devoured of the devil, which as a roaring lion goeth about seeking whom he may devour. Of the testimonies above recited, it appeareth that the elect may be deceived; and yet it is the phrase of the Scripture to call it impossible which is very hard and difficult to be done. There be also many elect which fall away, not because they are deceived, but willingly and purposely, as Judas was not deceived, but willfully refused the grace of God. Also Ahitophel, being a notable witty man, was not deceived by any man's persuasion, but willfully refused his master David, and played the traitor. Balaam was not deceived, for he knew well the will and the mind of God. Solomon was not deceived, in whom grace and wit abounded above all others, and yet forsook he God. So the elect, though they be not deceived, yet be they at liberty and may refuse the grace of God, if they will. And think you that Adam or any other can be saved by God's ordinance if they willfully forsake it? Can any man be saved by Christ which doth forsake him? "They which be once lightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gifts, and are become partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and of the power of the world to come," I cannot tell how they should be deceived; yet may they fall away, and crucify the Son of God afresh, and make a mock of him. Likewise they which be sanctified by the Spirit of God, and sprinkling of blood of the testament, they may tread the Son of God under foot.

ANSWER.

If it had pleased you either diligently to have read our writings, either faithfully to have recited the testimonies which we use for confirmation of our doctrine, you should have found more, and such as be somewhat more plain than any of those that you take upon you to

confute. But praised be God who giveth such majesty even to those places which you yourself appoint, that when you have said all, yet doth the verity remain invincible.

That this conditional "if" in these words, "if it were possible the elect should be drawn into error," affirmeth nothing, I am content, so that the same reason be a law against you in all other places. But that this word "impossible" shall be interpreted in all places of Scripture by this phrase, "a thing hard to be done," I cannot admit without testimonies more evident than yet you have adduced; for the most part of those plainly deny that interpretation. For as it is impossible for a camel, {or cable, that is, a great rope of a ship,} remaining in its own capacity to go through an needle's eye, {remaining in its own straightness,} so is it like impossible for a rich man, remaining in his own natural pride, covetousness, and corruption, to enter into the kingdom of God. And therefore when those which heard were offended, asking, "and who may then attain to salvation?" Christ answered, "things that be impossible before man, are possible with God." Mark well, that Christ called the humiliation of the rich man impossible unto man, but possible unto God. And the same, I say, is true of those that seek glory and praise of men, for impossible it is unto such abiding in the corruption unfeignedly to believe in Christ Jesus. For albeit the spirit of vain glory did now and then burst out and appear amongst the disciples, yet was it always repressed and corrected by the severe abjuration of their Master, and in the end, by the power of the Holy Spirit it was removed.

God doth not affirm that it is impossible to a woman to forget the child of her bosom, but laying his perfect love against her natural love corrupted, he saith, "if she may, yet cannot I forget them that trust in me;" and so he preferreth his love towards his children to the love of any creature which they can bear towards others.

The examples of the man of Ethiopia, and of the cat of the mountain, can in no wise receive your

interpretation. For the impossibility of the one and of the other, experience of long continuance hath taught us. For we see, that although the Ethiopian change the region where he was born, yet keepeth he his natural blackness; neither yet can any utterly remove the spots of that beast, which the Prophet in that place calleth the leopard. How impossible it is that they be changed none can be ignorant, except such as have not seen, or do not know the beast nor her nature. And therefore upon these two things, to nature impossible, did the Prophet conclude, that no more could the citizens of Jerusalem, being exercised in all iniquity, leave the same; and so was it impossible, impossible, I say, to themselves and to their own power. For what the Spirit of God worketh in the conversion of sinners, ought not to be attributed unto man's power.

And thus I say, that those things which the Holy Ghost pronounced to be impossible, remain impossible. And therefore it is not only a hard and a difficult thing that the elect of God, who follow the Lamb where ever he goeth, be so deceived, that finally they perish; but also it is impossible, and that because the true Pastor conduceth them, leadeth them forth to the wholesome pastures and waters of life, illuminated them by the presence of His light, and, finally, doth sanctify and confirm them in his eternal verity by the power of his Holy Spirit.

Upon those words of the Apostle, "I fear lest that your senses be corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ; even as the serpent deceived Eve," you labour to prove, that the elect shall be deceived; for she, say you, was the elect of God, and yet she was deceived. In few words I answer, that because she was the elect of God she remained not in that error. We do not deny but that the simple sheep do sometimes err, and go astray from their pastor; that they hear to their great danger the howling of wolves, and do credit and receive lies for verity; yea, and further, that sometimes with knowledge they commit iniquity. But that they are permitted in the same finally, and without redemption to perish, that we constantly deny, for impossible it is that the lively

members shall lack participation with the Head. Impossible it is that Christ's death shall lack his effect, which is the life of those that of his Father are committed to his charge, of whom impossible it is that any shall perish. For the number of our brethren must be complete; neither yet doth it hereof follow, that exhortations and admonitions be superfluous and vain, for they are the means which the wisdom of God knoweth to be most necessary to stir up our dull senses, which always be ready to lie in a certain security. And therefore the words of our Master spoken to his Disciples, and the admonition of Paul to the Churches in his days, doth much profit, comfort, and confirm us; for by the same we are so armed against offences and slanders which daily do chance, that albeit we see that from amongst ourselves arise such as bring in damnable sects, which led many to perdition, yet we do not therefore detest nor abhor Christ's simple verity; but being provoked by that fall and dejection of others, with great solicitude and care we call for the assistance of God's Holy Spirit on those most miserable and most wicked days.

That you affirm us to be lying prophets not sent of God, but such as run of ourselves, calling to our Congregation the people, whom after we provoke to a careless and libertine life, we answer not to you, but to our God. Judge us O Lord in this cause according to our innocency, and according to the purity which thy Spirit hath formed in our hearts; destroy all lying lips, and confound thou those that of malice trouble thy afflicted flock.

Let your friends, enemies to God's eternal truth, proud boasters of their own justice, and suppressers to their power of Christ's glory, give ear, if they list, to your admonition, absenting themselves from all well reformed Congregations. We will not cease to exhort all the faithful to frequent and haunt the places where Christ's Evangel is truly and openly preached, his holy Sacraments rightly ministered according to his own ordinance and institution, and also where discipline is put in practice according to that order which he himself

hath commanded. Neither yet will we cease to affirm, that your privy assemblies, and all those that in dispute of Christ's blessed ordinance do frequent the same, are accused of God.

We do not deny but that Judas, Ahitophel, Balaam, and many more, willingly and of determined purpose, did wickedly and most unthankfully offend; but what is this to your matter? It resteth always to be proved, that they were elected in Christ Jesus by the eternal counsel of God. Your foolish question, demanding, if Adam, or any other man, can be saved by Christ which doth forsake him, I have before answered, plainly proving that the elect children cannot finally forsake and condemn the ordinance of their Father. Neither yet can the members refuse the life which they receive from their Head; and that because the Spirit of God drawing them to Christ, maketh them to feel their necessity which they have of him. And therefore with all thankfulness and joy do they receive him who is made to us from God, wisdom, justice, satisfaction, redemption, and life. To me it appeareth a very foolish question, if any should demand if a man perfect in wit, memory, and reason, feeling himself so pressed with hunger or thirst, that of necessity he must perish except nature were supported, to ask {I say} if such a man willingly and obstinately would refuse wholesome meat and drink, appeareth foolish and vain, and such is your question. For the elect children do feel their own misery, hunger, thirst, and poverty, yea, they labour under the burden of their sins, which they hate, of the which they would be relieved; and therefore they cannot refuse the justice, life, and assured redemption which is offered to them in Christ Jesus. To whom be all praise, glory, and honour for ever.

The place of the Apostle I have before answered, and therefore I shortly come to that which you call.

THE THIRD ERROR OF THE CARELESS BY NECESSITY.

THE ADVERSARY.

God hath two manner of wills, one revealed will, and a secret will, which is only known to Himself. By God's revealed will, men should not come to nought; but they which perish, do perish by his secret will, in respect of God's commandment. It was not God's will that Adam should sin, but in respect of God's secret will, God would Adam to fall.

ANSWER.

How maliciously you pervert our words, and how impudently you forge upon us a form of doctrine which did never enter into our thoughts, shall appear, God willing, by answering to that which you call the Confutation of our Third Error, which thus beginneth.

THE ADVERSARY.

The authors of this wicked opinion, when they could not sufficiently confirm their errors by the authority of God's Word, they invented a new shift to approve it by God's secret will. For, say they, though God, by his revealed will, wills all men to be saved, yet, by his secret will, he willeth many to be damned. By his revealed will, he wills no wickedness, but by his secret will, he wills Pharaoh to be hard hearted, Shimei to curse David, the Patriarchs to sell their brother Joseph, &c. By his revealed will, he would not that Adam should fall, but by his secret will, he willeth Adam to fall. I marvel much where you have found out this manner of doctrine, for neither Moses nor the Prophets, neither Christ nor his Apostles, use any such manner of doctrine. Further, what profit do you to the people with this doctrine? Sure I am that you cause many to conceive an evil opinion of God hereby. But now, forasmuch as the secret will of God is known to none but to himself alone, who hath revealed it to you?

How can you say this is God's secret will? If it was God's secret will that Adam should fall, and you knew it, then it is both secret and unsecret, both revealed and unrevealed, both known and unknown. What great absurdity is this! Can a man call that which he knoweth unknown, or that which is secret revealed? So may a man say, hearing is not hearing, light is no light. By this strange doctrine you would be counted wise, but you are so much from the right way, that you are become foolish. You cannot content yourself with such things as it hath pleased God to reveal in his Word for our comfort, but will needs know God's secret will. "Search not {saith Sirach} out the ground of things as are too mighty for thee, but look what God hath commanded thee; and look upon that always, and be not curious in many of his works, for it is not needful for thee to see with thine eyes things that are secret; the meddling with such things hath beguiled many a man, and entangled their wits in vanity." And in the Proverbs, "like as it is not good to eat too much honey; even so he that will search out high things, it shall be too heavy for him." "Woe be unto them {saith the Lord} that are wise in their own sight, and think themselves to have understanding," for he that presumes to know the secret will of God, and thereby will confirm his error, he cannot be reformed by God's revealed will, which is the Word. "Be not wise {saith Paul} in your own opinions." And the Holy Ghost, "be not wise in your own conceit, but fear the Lord and depart from evil; so shall thy navel be whole, and thy bones strong." And Job, "it is not we that find out the Almighty, for in power, equity, and righteousness he is higher than can be expressed. Let men therefore fear him, for there shall no man see him that is wise in his own conceit." We must not seek out the secrets of God, for we shall not prevail, but bring ourselves to confusion. If we go about to establish our opinions by God's secret will, we must needs fall in horrible darkness and errors. For who can know what the will of God is? We must submit ourselves with all humility to the Word, and there with great reverence search out such things as are written for our comfort

and edification, which we cannot truly understand without the Spirit of God to teach us; as it is written, "Oh, Lord, who can have knowledge of thy understanding and meaning, except thou give him wisdom, and send thy Holy Ghost from above?" But if we prepare ourselves with reverence to read the Word of God, to the intent to understand it to our consolation, and with humility submit ourselves to do it, God will open to us so much as is either necessary or profitable for us.

ANSWER.

What confirmation our doctrine hath by the invincible and most evident testimonies of God's Holy Scriptures, I will not now dispute, only I must complain, that maliciously and most impudently you wrest our words and pervert our minds. And for the probation thereof, I say, that you are never able to show in any of our writings the words and sentences which in this place you affirm us to say. Ye be never able {I say} to prove that we have written or taught, that God by his revealed will, wills all men to be saved, and yet by his secret will, he willeth many to be damned. That by his revealed will, he willeth no wickedness, but by his secret will, he wills Pharaoh to be hard hearted, Shimei to curse David, the Patriarchs to sell their brother Joseph; that by his revealed will, he would not that Adam should fall, but by his secret will, he willeth Adam to fall.

These Propositions, I say, you be never able to show in our writings, neither yet to prove that our doctrine did or doth tend to that end. For we constantly affirm, that God revealed unto us his most holy and most just will in his plain and holy Scriptures, which do assure us that a separation shall be made betwixt the goats and the lambs, that the one shall receive the kingdom prepared unto them before all beginning, and that the other shall be adjudged to the fire which never shall be quenched; that God stirred and raised up Pharaoh, that his power might be declared in him; that these words God plainly spoke to Moses, "I know that

Pharaoh shall not permit the people to depart, therefore have I hardened his heart, that I may multiply my wonders upon him." That David did repress the fury of Abishai, and of his servants who would have killed Shimei, saying, "suffer him to curse, for the Lord hath commanded him. The Lord perchance shall behold my affliction, and shall reward me with good for his cursing this day." That Joseph said to his brethren, "be you not moved with sorrow that you have sold me; for the Lord hath sent me for conservation of a great multitude; it is not therefore you that have sent me hither, but God; who hath made me father to Pharaoh, and lord over his whole house." None of all these, I say, do we cast upon God's secret will, as you falsely accuse us; but we do constantly affirm, that His will is so plainly revealed in these matters, that such as shall deny any of them to have been God's will, cannot escape abnegation of his eternal verity. And further, we say, that the fall of man is plainly revealed unto us, not only by experience, but even by that same law which was imposed on him shortly after his creation; the transgression whereof made Adam and all his posterity criminal and guilty to God's justice, and that neither against God's will revealed, neither yet against his secret will; for by his will revealed can no man further conclude but this, that in what day soever Adam should eat of the fruit forbidden, that he should die the death. But Adam, against God's commandment, did eat, and therefore did he justly underlie the sentence of death. And thus do we refer to God's will manifestly revealed, whatsoever you imagine that we ascribe to his secret will. Neither yet need you to marvel, if you list to take such pains as to read our writings, where that we find the doctrine that we teach, {your surmised lie we cast upon yourselves,} seeing that Moses, the Prophets, Christ Jesus, and his Apostles, in all writings do affirm the same.

But yet, lest that you should think that we attribute nothing to God's secret will, I will in few words confess what we teach, maintain, and believe in that case. And that the rather, because you gather a great absurdity, not of our doctrine, but of that which you

falsely impute upon us, in this manner, "forasmuch {you say} as the secret will of God is known to none but to himself alone, who hath revealed it to you? How can you say this is God's secret will? If it was God's secret will that Adam should fall, and you knew it, then it is both secret and unsecret, both revealed and unrevealed, both known and unknown. What great absurdity is this?"

To the which I answer, according to your impudent foolishness, that because you fight with your own shadow, these your darts do hurt us nothing; for we do not affirm that we do know the fall of man by God's secret will, but by his will manifestly revealed unto us by his Holy Scriptures. Or more plainly to answer your reasons, which you think invincible, we say, that that will which was secret in God before all time, was revealed to man in time by his own Word, and that from time to time the same became more manifest, as Saint Paul witnesseth in these words, "to me, the least of all saints, is given this favour, {or grace,} that I should preach amongst the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; that I should bring forth to light before all men, what is the communion of the mystery which was hid from all ages in God, who hath made all things by Christ Jesus, that the manifest wisdom of God may now be notified to principalities and powers in heavenly things by the church, according to the fore appointment of the ages which he had made in Christ Jesus our Lord." Ephesians 3:8-11. So that we are now bold to say, that albeit no creature did know before all time what order God should keep in the creation and disposition of all things in time; yet may we now, I say, be bold to affirm, that the secret was hid in the eternal counsel of God. That first he would create the heaven, the earth, the mass being rude, having darkness upon the great depth, thereafter that he would make light, putting division between the light and the darkness, and so forth, as Moses hath declared the order observed in the creation. And as those things were sometime secret, but now are manifest, revealed, and known, so likewise was the fall of man, and the redemption which cometh by Christ Jesus, sometime secret in the eternal counsel of God,

but now is most manifestly preached and declared by Christ Jesus, and by his holy Apostles. For now we know that God so loved the world, that his only beloved Son hath he given, that so many as do believe in him shall have the life everlasting. Which life was even before all times in Christ Jesus, even as we were elected in him before the foundations of the world were laid. And therefore I doubt not to affirm, but that the fall of man and the remedy for the same, was not only foreseen but also before determined, and the fruit which of the same should ensue, concluded, and appointed in God's eternal counsel before that ever Adam was created.

The reason and purpose hereof we have before declared to be the issue of all things, as we are taught by God's manifest Word, yea, by most evident experience. For who needeth now to doubt, that it was God's eternal counsel that man should fall from that perfect image in which he was created, and so become subject to the death; to the end that the faithful might receive perfection, justice, and life in Christ Jesus alone, seeing that Scripture so manifestly affirmeth that "we were elected in Christ Jesus before the foundations of the world were laid." That God hath wrapped all nations in disobedience that he might have mercy upon all; upon all, I say, which refuse not the remedy from all beginning prepared, which is Christ Jesus, as the Apostle witnesseth, saying, "in him, and by him, are all things created, and he is before all things, and all things consist or abide by him. And he is the Head of the body of the Church, who is the beginning, the first-begotten of the dead; that in all things he may hold the pre-eminence. For it hath pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in him, and to reconcile by him all things to himself." This counsel, I say, was not temporal, as taken and devised after the fall of man, but it was eternal, as the same Apostle witnesseth in these words, "God hath called us by an holy vocation, not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace, which was given to us by Jesus Christ before eternal times; but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ." But mark well, that the Apostle saith that

grace was given to the faithful by Christ Jesus from the eternity of times, which thus to Titus he doth confirm, saying, "Paul, the servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the faith of God's elect, and the knowledge of the verity which is according to godliness; in the hope of eternal life, which he hath promised, which is God that cannot lie, before the world began; and hath opened his word at the time appointed through preaching," &c. And the same saith Peter, speaking of our redemption by Christ's precious blood, "who certainly was preordained {saith he} before that the world was made, but was manifested in the last times."

Having these, I say, most evident Scriptures to assure our conscience that redemption, remission of our sins, grace, and reconciliation, were appointed for us, yea, and were given unto us before all times, what need we to doubt what was the counsel of God in man's creation, or what was his secret will in giving to him the commandment of not eating the fruit? And therefore you do not only foolishly, but also injuriously, in thus railing upon us, "what strange and monstrous doctrine is this, to say things be secret and unsecret, known and unknown, revealed and unrevealed; as man should say hearing is not hearing, and light is not light." No such absurdity can justly be gathered upon our doctrine, for simply we say, that things sometimes kept secret in the counsel of God, and unknown to the sons of men, were after disclosed and made manifest to the world, insomuch, that light expelled darkness from the hearts of the sons of light, and knowledge removed ignorance from those that were appointed to life. If these things do not satisfy you, yet my good hope is that the godly reader shall perceive that most unjustly you accuse us, as if in our doctrine were plain contradiction.

And yet as touching the secret will of God, we, moreover, affirm that our eternal election in Christ Jesus, our temporal falling in Adam, our restitution to life by the promise made, are not secret, but manifestly revealed. But why that so it pleased His infinite wisdom and goodness to dispose and before ordain the mystery

of our salvation; that first we should bear the image of the earthly and carnal Adam, before that we should bear the image of the heavenly and spiritual; that first we should be all wrapped in sin, and by reason thereof in misery and death, before that we should be perfect, just, and come to felicity and life everlasting; and finally, why that it pleased his Majesty to choose some, and of this same mass to reject others; we say, is not revealed, neither yet shall be, before that Christ Jesus appear in his glory, when the books shall be opened, and all secrets shall be disclosed.

To speak the matter so simply as I can, that you have no occasion to complain of obscurity, I say, that God's will in these subsequences, and in many others his wondrous works, is secret. First, why did God create the world? Why gave he to Adam no greater strength? Why did he permit him to fall? Why did he not provide man's redemption by some other means, than by the cruel and ignominious death of his own Son? Why did he choose the seed of Abraham to be his people, refusing and rejecting, as it were, the rest of the world? And finally, why that God would that his dear Son should die in Jerusalem, called his own city by reason of the temple and sacrifices appointed? Why, I say, that God by the figures of the Law, and by his Prophets, had before spoken, that the Messiah should suffer in that city, and that the builders, who then only in earth were reputed and known to be the Church of God, should reject and refuse the chief corner stone, Christ Jesus?

In these and others, the wondrous works of God, {which so far exceed the reach of our understanding, that more able they are to quench and swallow up all light which remaineth in us, than is the great depth of the sea to devour our frail bodies,} do we hold the secret will of God for a rule of all equity, perfection, and sufficiency, teaching and affirming, that if any man, of vain curiosity, or of devilish pride, presume to define or determine upon these or others His inscrutable secrets, the causes whereof {other than his secret but most just will} is not, neither shall be revealed till the full glory of the sons of God be manifested; when the wisdom,

goodness, justice, and mercy of God shall so evidently appear, to the full contention of his elect, and to the most just convicting of the consciences of the very reprobate, to whom shall be left no place of excuse; but in their own consciences they shall receive the just sentence of their most just condemnation; and so shall they in torments glorify the most just and most severe judgment of God, and his unspeakable hatred against sin conceived. We teach and affirm, I say, that if any man in this life travail to search out other causes of these foresaid works of God than his secret will, that the same man headlongs casteth himself into horrible confusion, which he cannot escape without speedy repentance. And against such men are all the Scriptures by you alleged, spoken, and written, and not against us; who, as we affirm nothing which God's Word doth not plainly teach us, so do we cease curiously to inquire any cause of his works, other than it hath pleased his godly wisdom and mercy to reveal unto us by his Holy Spirit, plainly speaking in his holy Scriptures. And therefore to you it shall be most profitable to try and examine this matter with greater consideration than hitherto you have done; and to ponder and weigh whether it be you or we that be wise in our own conceit, sight, or opinion; or that go about to find out the Almighty, that is, to subject his majesty and wisdom to the judgment of our corrupt reason. You {I say} who upon his words plainly spoken by the Holy Ghost, and upon his works, which he neither fears nor hesitates to attribute and claim to himself, dare make these blasphemous conclusions, "then is he more cruel than a wolf; then is he a dissembler; then beareth he honey in his mouth and bitterness in his breast; then is he the author of sin; and he himself then is unjust and contrarious to himself." Or we that coming but only to the sight of God's incomprehensible judgments, with all trembling and reverence fall down before his Majesty, and with the Apostle do cry, "O the deepness of the riches, and wisdom, and knowledge of God! How inscrutable are his judgments, and unsearchable are his ways! Who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been of his

counsel? Or who hath given unto him first, that he should recompence him? For of him, and by him, and in him, are all things, to Him be glory forever. Amen." Be you yourselves judges, I say, whether you or we do search out things that be above the reach of our capacities, and by that means study to bring God as it were in bondage to our reasons. But now that which followeth in these words.

THE ADVERSARY.

"Thy word {saith David} is a lantern to my feet and a light unto my steps. When thy word goeth forth, it giveth light and understanding even unto babes, all the words of the Lord are pure and clean; it is a shield to them that put their trust in it." And the Prophet Isaiah, "if any man lack light, let him look upon the law and the testimony." We must not leave the word and seek to establish our phantasies, either by reason or God's secret will. For we are commanded that we turn not from the word, neither to the right hand nor to the left, that thou mayest, saith the Holy Ghost, "have understanding in all that thou takest in hand." This is sufficient for us, and this we ought for to do. But we know, say you, even by the word, that God hath a secret will, whereby he worketh all that pleaseth him very well. And can you prove thereby that God hath two wills? God hath revealed so much of his will as is profitable for us to us to know; the rest, which is neither necessary nor mete for us to know, he hath not revealed. Is it therefore another will, or is that which is not revealed contrary to that which is revealed? Then shall there be contrariety in God, which is false. If God, in respect of his revealed will, would not that Adam should fall, but in respect of his secret will, he would Adam should fall; then did God will two contraries, which is impossible. Was there ever any such monstrous doctrine taught? God abhorreth a double heart, which speaketh one thing and thinkest another; and yet, abhors you not to charge God with that which he cannot abide in his creatures, that is, that He should speak one

thing, as that Adam should not have fallen, and think and will the contrary that Adam should have fallen.

ANSWER.

The will of God, plainly revealed in his holy Scriptures, we do not only follow as a bright lantern shining before us, for the directing of our paths, walking in the darkness of this mortality, but also we affirm it to be of such sufficiency, that if an angel from the heaven, with wonders, signs, and miracles, would declare to us a will repugnant to that which is already revealed, persuading us upon that to ground our faith, or by that to rule the actions of our lives, we would hold him accursed, and in no wise to be heard. And therefore, yet once again, I cannot cease to exhort you, if by late revelations you {I mean some of your faction} hath received any new knowledge of God's will, by the which you persuade others, that man in this life shall be pure and clean, without sin; that God shall expel it, not only in the resurrection, but even while we walk compassed with this corruptible flesh, even as the bright sun chaseth away the dark clouds; that the children of God shall so bear dominion over the wicked in this earth, that all the proud tyrants and oppressors shall become slaves to the godly; and that shall be their hell and punishment, as the earthly reigning of the others shall be their heaven and joy promised.

Examine, I say, yourselves if that any of you be infected with these and others more gross and foolish fantasies, which by God's revealed will you be never able to prove. But as for us, we have proved, and offer to prove at all times, by the revealed will of God, whatsoever we teach, affirm, or believe of God's eternal election, or of his most just reprobation. For we confess even the self-same thing which you allege us to say, which is, that by the Word of God we know that God hath a secret will whereby he worketh all that pleaseth him in heaven and in earth; and that also he hath revealed unto us so much as is profitable for us to know, either yet necessary for our salvation. For the which we

praise His eternal goodness and infinite wisdom; and do affirm further {as before we have said} that such as stand not content with that which is revealed, but arrogantly list to mount up to search the secrets of God's counsel, shall be beaten down again by the brightness of his glory to eternal confusion, in a just recompence of their presumptuous boldness. And thus much with you we will willingly confess; but where upon certain questions you make such conclusions as pleaseth you, we cannot but accuse in you that irreverent, yea, devilish boldness and pride, which in all men we condemn. But let us hear your own words.

"Can you prove thereby that God hath two wills? Or is that which is not revealed contrary to that which is revealed? Then should there be contrariety in God, which is false. If God, in respect of his revealed will, would not that Adam should fall, but in respect of his secret will, he would Adam should fall; then did God will two contraries, which is impossible."

These be your words and several reasons most blasphemously spoken, not against us, but against God's eternal wisdom. Against us {I say} you cannot speak them, for no such doctrine have we ever taught. For we most constantly affirm, that the secret will of God, and his will revealed, is always one, which is the manifestation and declaration of his own glory, although it seem divers in the instruments, as before I have most manifestly declared. And thus most justly might I send you to debate your cause with Him, whose justice and wisdom cannot be subject to the vanity of your reason. But yet, because no small part of this controversy betwixt you and us consisteth in this, that you can admit no will in God, the reason and cause whereof you cannot see, perceive, nor understand; and we affirming the contrary, say, that of God's secret will can neither man nor angel perceive, assign, or understand any other reason or cause but his holy will only; and therefore, with all reverence do they stoop, and covering their eyes, cry, "just and righteous art thou, O Lord, in all thy works; holy, holy, holy, Lord God of armies; the universal earth is replenished with the glory of his

Majesty." Because, I say, a great part of our controversy standeth in this point, I will go through your questions, and severally answer to everyone.

First, you ask, if God has two wills, by reason that he hath a secret will and a revealed will? I answer, that as God in his Eternal Godhead is simple and one, so is his will in respect of himself from all beginning simple and one, which is the declaration of his own glory. But because the instruments {in which God's glory is and must be forever manifested and known} be divers, therefore hath God's will, which in himself is one, divers considerations, effects, and ends, in respect of the divers instruments. For example, God wills the vessels of his mercies to be extolled to the glory of the kingdom with Christ Jesus; but he wills the vessels of wrath to be adjudged to the fire unquenchable, prepared for the devil and all his angels. Who doth not see, but in respect of these divers instruments, the will of God hath divers respects and divers ends, and justly may be called two wills, or a double will? For it is one will to save, and another will to condemn, as touching the instruments and creatures saved or condemned. But in respect of God, the will is one and simple, which is, as before is said, the manifestation of his glory, which no less shineth in the just punishment of the one sort, than in the merciful deliverance of the other. And this much for the first.

Secondly, you ask, if that which is not revealed be contrary to that which is revealed? To the which I answer as before, that in respect of God, there is no contrariety betwixt the will revealed and the will unrevealed. But yet may the creatures to whom God doth notify his will by commandment, rebuke, or exhort, apprehend and understand one thing, and yet it may be that God in his eternal counsel hath determined the express contrary. If this to you, at the first sight, seem strange, yet my good hope is, that examples in the Scriptures proposed shall make the matter sensible enough to the godly and sober reader. What do we think that David did apprehend of that most sharp and vehement rebuke given unto him by Nathan the Prophet

in the name of God? No doubt that he was the son of death that God would break the league and covenant with him, as he had done to Saul his predecessor. But was it therefore the eternal purpose of God that so it should be? The end and issue declareth the contrary. Hezekiah received the very sentence of present death from the mouth of the Prophet Isaiah, who no doubt came not with that message at all adventure, but at the express commandment of God; for so he affirmeth, saying, "thus saith the Lord, put order to thy house, for thou shalt die, and shalt not live." But was not therefore the contrary {to wit, that he should afterward live fifteen years} determined in the immutable counsel of God? The same might I declare by many other exhortations and commandments, but with one I will stand contented, which shall add light to the former.

Abraham was commanded by God to take his son Isaac, whom he loved, his only son, in whom the promise stood, and to go to the mountain which God would appoint, and there to offer him in sacrifice. What will of God did Abraham apprehend in this commandment during the journey of three days? God himself beareth record that Abraham did so understand God's will that his own hand was stretched out to kill his son; yea, that in his heart he had killed him. For so saith the angel, "because thou hast done this, and hast not spared thy only son, I shall bless thee." But whether had God in his eternal counsel determined that Abraham should kill his son, as Abraham did understand by his will revealed? Whosoever dare so affirm, maketh God subject to mutability, and denieth him to be God, whose wisdom, knowledge, purpose, and councils be stable, and appointed from all eternity. If with reverence the causes hereof be searched and inquired, the Holy Ghost will answer, that good it was to David thus to be humbled; that profitable it was not only to Hezekiah, but also to the whole Church of God after him, to come to the knowledge of his infirmity; and of the agony and battle which he sustained, fighting as it were against God's judgments. That by Abraham's great obedience be we all instructed to obey God in all things which he

commandeth, and to subject not only our lusts and affections to his will revealed, but also our reason, appear it never so probable. With the which if we stand not satisfied, but quarreling with God, will or dare, in a blind fury, ask to what purpose commandeth, and speaketh he one thing and meaneth the contrary, that devilish presumption shall fall down from the clouds, and break down forever the frantic heads of such vile slaves of proud Lucifer. And therefore be you warned, for vengeance is prepared for all such irreverent reasoners in God's perfect {but yet profound} judgments, as you declare yourselves to be, in this which followeth.

"If God {say you} in respect of his revealed will, would not that Adam should fall, but in respect of his secret will he would Adam should fall, then did God will two contraries; which is impossible." Answer: Impossible we confess it to be, that contrariety should be in that will, which in itself is simple and one. But how shall you be able to prove, that God in revealing his will to Adam had none other purpose nor will, but only that Adam should not fall? Because, say you, he said, "thou shalt not eat." I answer, and so said he to Abraham, "thou shalt take and offer thy son in sacrifice." And yet we know that the contrary had he determined. "O {cry you} God abhorreth a double heart, which speaketh one thing and thinketh another; and yet you abhor not to charge God with that which he cannot abide in his creatures; that is, that he should speak one thing, as that Adam should not offend, and will the contrary, as that Adam should offend." Answer: God, if his good pleasure be, touch your hearts with such unfeigned repentance, that you may understand how horrible be these blasphemies, which thus in your furious blindness you spew forth against God's Supreme Majesty. For, before I have said, they are not spoken against us, for no such doctrine do we teach nor affirm, as that of which you gather these blasphemies; and albeit we did, yet it were as easy for us to dissolve and unloose such devilish knots, as by instruction of your father you knit to trip the souls of the simple, and as it is for the foot of the valiant and strong man to burst asunder the spider's webs which the

venomous spider maketh to catch the impotent flies and feeble gnats.

And now, lest that you should glory as though your reasons yet stood sure, let us try and examine every member apart. God abhorreth {say you} a double heart, which speaketh one thing and thinketh another. I answer, that as God is a spirit, and hath neither heart nor body like as man hath, so must not his words, cogitations, and thoughts, be compared to ours; for as we be corrupt liars and vain, so where we do speak one thing and think another, we do mean deceit, fraud, and destruction to our brother, to whom we promise truth, fidelity, and conservation to our power. But God, according to the purity and perfection of his godly nature, in speaking to his creatures, and in creating of them, must not absolutely have respect to them, but also to his own glory; for what reason is it that God of nothing shall make that creature by whom his glory shall not be manifested? And therefore in speaking to Adam, and in giving a law to him, God had respect to his eternal counsel and purpose, as before we have spoken, and hereafter shall rehearse. But still cry you, that yet we burden God with that which he cannot abide in his creatures; that is, that he should speak one thing, as that Adam should not have fallen, and that he meant the contrary. For answer, I ask of you, if you will bind God to that law which he hath imposed to his creatures? And if you will leave none other liberty to God than his sovereign majesty, than his law hath permitted to men subject to the same; and if you dare promise to yourselves that authority over God, gird your loins, and play the strong champions; prepare your seats, appoint your judges, cite, and adjourn him to appear at a fixed day, to render a reason, and take an account before you of his universal regiment; in which {no doubt} you shall find many things more repugnant to your reason than this. You think I mock you, in that I will you to cite and call God to an account; and in very deed I do, for as your blasphemy and pride is utterly to be abhorred, so is your vanity more worthy to be mocked, than your simplicity in that case to be instructed. For what was he

ever yet amongst the most ignorant, ever so foolish or so presumptuous, but that he did confess that the works and wonders of the supreme God, were exempted from all law and censure of man's judgment? But in your presence, God shall have no liberty to command, or forbid anything to any of his creatures, but that he must needs absolutely will the same; and for no cause or respect may he will the contrary, but that he shall have a double heart, he shall be a dissembler, {cursed be your blasphemy that causeth me thus to write,} and in him there shall be contrariety. This is the reverence which you bear to God's infinite wisdom in all his works, to the ground whereof you cannot attain by your corrupt reason, that you burst forth in scoffing, mocking, and blasphemy.

But yet to come more near to the matter, I deny that justly you can conclude any contrariety to be in God, albeit that to Adam he said, thou shalt not eat, and yet in his eternal counsel he had determined that Adam should eat; neither yet {I say} can you be able to prove that he spoke one thing and willed the contrary, because he pronounced this sentence, "in whatsoever day thou shalt eat of this tree, thou shalt die the death," but rather we may most assuredly conclude, that both the precept, and the penalty threatened to ensure the violation of it, was a plain and manifest declaration what before was concluded in God's eternal counsel, as also that they were the means, by the which the secret will and good purpose of God took effect amongst men and was notified unto the world; for if God had not before appointed the fall and the remedy for the same, he had not imposed upon him a law, the transgression whereof should bring death; but should have suffered him to live without such fear and bondage, as we shall do when victory shall be given over death, which is the sting of sin, and over sin also which had his power by the law. And therefore, I say, that God's commandment forbidding Adam to eat, and the punishment of death denounced, if he did eat, were nothing contrary to his secret will, but were the very ways appointed by his infinite wisdom, by the which he had determined that his

secret will concerning the mystery of man's redemption should be notified and put in execution. And albeit that such as in God's eternal election find no sweetness nor comfort, fret, fume, storm, and rage at the only mention of it; yet neither dare we nor can we conceal and suppress God's eternal truth, infinite love, and incomprehensible liberality towards us; neither are we ashamed to confess our own wretched poverty, and just condemnation, into the which our father Adam willingly wrapped himself and us. And therefore we constantly affirm that as we were elected in Christ Jesus before all times, so it behooved us in time to fall in Adam, to the end that the bright glory of God, might after shine and appear before men and angels. Prove now, if you can, contrariety betwixt God's will revealed and his secret will. How vain is the difference which you put between his will and his permission, we shall shortly examine in this which followeth.

THE ADVERSARY.

The reason wherewith you go about to persuade this to be of truth is very mean. If a man {say you} could do anything contrary to God's will, then were not God omnipotent, wherefore, whatsoever is done, it must needs be done by the will of God, whose will no man can resist. I answer, that God is goodness itself, his will is always good, yet man is apt to do and may do evil contrary to God's will, notwithstanding God remaineth omnipotent, suffering man to do evil whom he might destroy before he did the evil, if so it pleased him. Pharaoh obstinately refused to obey the will of God, yet was God omnipotent, for if God had desired to he might have destroyed Pharaoh at the first, and the arrogant tyrant was well worthy to be destroyed; yet God used towards him, by little and little, such increase of punishment as he might therewith have been amended had not his malice been an impediment. Christ, as he witnesseth himself, would have gathered the Jerusalemites together, as the hen her chickens, yet would they not. God would that the Israelites should

enter into the land of Canaan, and they would not; wherefore they were carried back again through the wilderness where they perished. Again, when God would not that they should enter, they would needs enter, and were put to flight of the Canaanites. Thus we see plainly that many things be done contrary to the will of God, which shall be more largely declared hereafter, where we shall show how God often suffered many things which he would not. Yet to maintain this untruth, you allege that which is written in Exodus the 9th, "the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh." To the which I answer that which is written almost in the end of the same chapter, "Pharaoh hardened his heart, he and his servants," and that which is written in the 6th chapter of the first book of the Kings, "wherefore should you harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts?" By these places I may prove as well that Pharaoh hardened his own heart, as you can prove that God made him hard-hearted by that other text; wherefore, to understand how these places do agree, we must note first, that all the children of Adam have a hard and wicked heart, until they be mollified by the grace of God, as Jeremiah witnesseth, saying, "amongst all things living man hath the most deceitful and stubborn heart," and the Lord saith, "that he will take the stony heart from them, and give them a heart of flesh," without they had a stony heart, he could not take it from them. If Pharaoh had a stony heart, as it doth well appear, in that he tyrannously oppressed the people, before Moses spake unto him, then could it not be hardened more than a stone, before it had been mollified; which was not done, for he refused to know the Lord, and set not his heart to God's miracles, but at the first meeting with Moses, said "I know not the Lord," therefore Pharaoh, willingly and wittingly did endure and retain his hard, stiff heart, notwithstanding he and his sorcerers were convinced to grant the miracles to be done by God, insomuch that he desired Moses and Aaron to pray for him, confessing his offence; but yet after that he was delivered from the present plague, he hardened his heart, both he and his servants; so that,

as the Apostle saith, "when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful," wherefore they were left to their own lewd minds, which is the cause of hardening; for man, being left of God, is nothing else but a hard, obstinate, wicked creature, and conformed to this meaning do the ancient Doctors interpret this place, "God hardened Pharaoh's heart," that is to say, God suffered Pharaoh's heart to be hardened, as this, "lead us not into temptation," that is, suffer us not to be led into temptation. So Job saith, "God hath taken wisdom from the Ostrich," that is, as it followeth there, God hath not given her understanding. And of his friends, Job saith, "thou hast withholden their hearts from understanding," that is, thou hast not given them understanding. And this manner of speaking is common in the Scriptures, not only of God, but also of man, as these, "now you have rid the children of Israel out of the hand of the Lord," that is, you have not caused them to fall into the hand of the Lord. The phrase of the Scripture being thus truly understood, the matter shall be the easier; for seeing that "God {as James saith} tempteth no man," that is, to sin, then did God neither harden the heart of Pharaoh, nor tempt him to do wickedly, but suffered him, and gave him over to the obstinate hard heart which he had already; and this is the greatest plague that chanced to man, to be left to his own lewd mind, as Saul, because he would not obey the Lord, he was left of God's good spirit, and taken with an evil spirit, and then from thenceforth he became worse and worse; likewise Joash king of Judah, because he would not hear the voice of Zechariah the Prophet, he was left of God, slain in his own bed with his own servants, and found unworthy to be buried in the sepulchers of the kings. And his son Amaziah, because he refused to hear the prophet of the Lord, and sought counsel of the Edomites gods, he was left of God, overcome by the king of Israel, and afterwards by treason his subjects conspired against him and killed him. Thus we see that there can be no greater plague than to be left to ourselves, and to be destitute of the grace of God. As the earth can be no more grievously

punished than to lack the sun and dew, so the Lord doth punish his vineyard, not wasting it himself, but taketh the hedge and rain from it, and suffereth it to be wasted and overrode by others. So Job was plagued of God, only by suffering him to be plagued, notwithstanding Job saith, "the Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken," which is not to be understand that the Lord did take his goods, but only suffered the Devil to take them. So the Lord punished his people, not that he touched them, "but I will hide my face from them, and will see what their end shall be, saith the Lord." After the same manner ought that place, "God hardened the heart of Pharaoh," to be understand, that is, God suffered the heart of Pharaoh to be hardened, or left him in the hardness of his heart; which appeareth to be so of that which is written in Exodus the 10th chapter, "how long refuseth thou to submit thyself unto me, to let my people go?" By this we see that the will of God was that Pharaoh should let the people go. Secondly, in that Pharaoh did not submit himself to God, that his mind was not conformed to God's mind. Thirdly, in that he refused to let the people go, it was his own deed and act, and not God's, for if I should grant that it was God's will, that he should refuse to let the people go, then did he submit himself to the will of the Lord; which is contrary to the Word; then should God and he have been both of one mind. And the will of God is always good and just, which you cannot deny; then Pharaoh refusing to let the people go, did well and justly, forasmuch as it was God's will he should so do; wherefore Pharaoh ought not to be punished for this good and just deed. These and such like inconveniences can you not escape, affirming Pharaoh's heart to have been actually endured of God.

ANSWER.

How mean that ever our reasons be, yet great cause we have to give thanks unto God, that you in labouring with all your wits to oppugn and obscure them, are yet compelled by the invincible grace of God's mercy to

justify and illustrate the same; which shall plainly appear by this your first answer, which you make concerning the omnipotency of God. Forasmuch, say you, "as God is goodness itself, his will is always good, yet man is apt to do and may do evil, contrary to God's will, notwithstanding God remaineth omnipotent, suffering man to do evil, whom he might destroy before he did evil, if it so pleased him," and so you bring forth the example of Pharaoh. I will not take in all points that advantage of you which I think you would take of us most gladly, if you had us in such a strait as you have here concluded yourselves; for if man may do evil contrary to God's will, so that God for no respect, for no end nor purpose, would that such wickedness should be done, {for thus you must apply your words, or else you say nothing against us,} and yet that it pleaseth God not to destroy the wicked doer, but to suffer him to do evil, whom he might have destroyed before the iniquity committed; what shall, I pray you, ensue, but that either there shall be in God two contrary wills, one that willet no wickedness in no wise to be done; and another that suffereth wickedness, yea, and that is pleased to suffer and not to destroy the wicked man; or else, that there is a power above God's will, which compels him to suffer that which he would not? One of these two can you not avoid.

But I will deal more favorably with you. Ye grant that God suffereth the evil, and that he might destroy the wicked man before iniquity be committed, if it so pleased His godly majesty and wisdom. Do you not consider that in this your confession is no less contained than any of us hath either written or spoken in this matter? For if God's omnipotency remaineth, as no doubt it doth, so perfect and whole that he may not impede only wicked men of their enterprises, but also that he may destroy even Satan himself, if it so pleased His eternal wisdom, what can be concluded, but that God willingly, for causes known to his wisdom alone, permitteth and suffereth things to be done, which after he will most justly punish? And thus {I say} doth your own answer and confession justify our doctrine. For we

do not teach that wickedness pleaseth God, in so far as it is wickedness; neither yet that God willeth sinful acts to be done, in so far as they are sinful, without any other further respect, but we say, that as the actions and cogitations of the godly please God in Christ Jesus, because they are wrought and inspired by the power of his Holy Spirit, so that the good works, as patience, justice, chastity, and such like, God will to be done, even because the works be good and agreeable to his own nature; so say we, that God will, yea, and hath determined the works that be most wicked to be done for the purposes and causes concluded in His eternal counsel. Which thing if we be able to prove by the evident Scriptures of God, then ought you not to be offended although we prefer God to man, and His plain truth to your sophistical evasions and cold interpretations of such places.

For the avoiding the prolixity of many, I will choose but two at the most, plain and most evident. Is it not a great and horrible sin that a false prophet shall come and deceive the people? Yea, is it not likewise sin to deceive the prophet? And yet God feareth not to attribute to himself both the one and the other; for no false prophet doth arise, whom God for one of two purposes doth not stir up, to wit, either to try and examine the constancy and fidelity of his servants, or else to execute and blind those, who delight not in the verity. For Moses witnesseth in these words, "if in the midst of thee there arise a prophet, and he shall give unto thee a sign, and yet should say, let us go and serve strange gods; hear him not, for the Lord your God tempteth you, whether that you will love your Lord your God with all your heart, and in all your soul." If it be the proper office of God to try, tempt, and examine the hearts of his people, and of his chosen children, as the Holy Ghost affirmeth it to be; then must you confess that the false prophets be God's instruments appointed for that purpose. And that God deceiveth the false prophet, Ezekiel in plain words doth witness, saying, "and if the prophet deceived speak the word, I the Lord have deceived that prophet; and I will extend my hand

against him, and I will root him out from the midst of my people Israel." Ezekiel 14:9. And the same doth yet God himself more plainly vindicate to himself in that solemn proclamation, made in the ears of the prophet Micaiah, and boldly by him pronounced in audience of two kings, Ahab and Jehoshaphat, as followeth, "who shall deceive Ahab to us? Or who shall persuade him that he may pass up and fall in Ramoth Gilead. And there passed out a certain spirit, and standing before the Lord, he said, I shall deceive or persuade him. And the Lord said, whereunto? And he said, I shall pass out, and be a lying prophet {spirit} in the mouths of all his prophets. He said therefore, thou shalt deceive him, and thou shalt bring it to pass, go forth therefore, and do even so. And lo, God hath given a lying spirit in the mouths of all these prophets, and the Lord hath spoken evil upon them." I Kings 22:20-22. If, to make a public proclamation to call for one to deceive, to send him forth, and to give him power to do the same, be only a simple permission, and a thing which God suffereth against his will, let the indifferent man judge.

I think that no man will deny the incest of Absalom openly committed, not only to be sin, but also to be so execrable and detestable a fact, that nature itself {be it never so corrupt} must needs abhor it; and yet, I pray you, what saith God that he will do in that behalf, let the prophet witness. "Thus saith the Lord God, {saith Nathan,} behold, I shall raise evil against thee forth of thine own house, and I shall take thy wives, and give them to thy neighbour, who shall sleep with them in the sun. Thou didst that fact secretly, but I shall do this thing openly before all Israel." II Samuel 12:11-12. Let the vehemency of the words which here be spoken, be noted, and be judges yourselves whether your interpretation be tolerable. He saith not, "I shall suffer evil to come upon thee," but plainly he saith, "I shall raise up evil against thee." And therewith not content, he saith, "I shall take thy wives," and to put the matter out of all controversy, he addeth, "and I shall give them to thy neighbour, yea, and that will I do openly." If, to raise up, to give, and to do, be to permit

only the thing which He will not, we must confess ourselves ignorant of the phrases of the Holy Ghost. This same might I prove by Job, by Nebuchadnezzar, by Shalmaneser, by Cyrus and divers others; which, for brevities sake I pass over. One I will recite, which I trust shall be so plain that the Devil himself by no subtilty shall be able to obscure the light of the truth. Was there ever any fact since the beginning more wicked, if the instruments shall be considered, as was the cruel and ignominious death of the Son of God? And yet what doth the Holy Ghost attribute to God in that case? "Him," saith Peter, "being crucified, did you kill, after that you had taken him by the hands of the wicked men, being given by the appointed counsel and foreknowledge of God." And after, "they have verily convened against thy holy Son Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, Herod together and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles together and the people of Israel, to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel have decreed to be done." Acts 4:28. Advise well what you will answer, the words are plain, and so plain that you cannot avoid them; for he that saith, the wicked men did whatsoever God did foresee and before determined, yea, what his hand, that is, his power, and counsel, that he had before decreed to be done, meaneth a thing of more greater importance than he that saith, they did what God permitted and suffered to be done.

Consider further that you have not to do with men, as with Augustine, Calvin, and us, whom you call careless Libertines, but with the Holy Ghost speaking in Peter, and in the whole Church of Jerusalem, yea, speaking in the whole Scriptures. For if not to spare his Son, but to give him to the death for us, to cause our sins to make war against him, to punish him for the same, in such sort that of all men he was most contemptible for a season; if, I say, to give to death, to strike, to wound, and punish, be actions, then did not God only suffer his Son to die, to be wounded, to be smitten, and to be punished, without any will that any such thing should come to pass; but He, in his eternal counsel, appointed the time, the place, and the persons,

when, where, and by whom he should suffer the same. For of love he gave him to suffer the true death, that we by him might receive life; the time could not be changed, and the cup which the Father had given him he must needs drink, as in the figures was foreshadowed, and by his own people and Gentiles, as the Prophets and David had before spoken. If in God's counsel, God's gift, God's hand, and eternal purpose, before decreeing all things to come to pass in the death of his Son, you can see nothing but a bare and simple permission, I cannot cease to affirm, that as by falsifying such plain Scriptures, you labour to take from the Church of God their most singular comfort left to us in Christ's death, so do you walk in darkness, and in the same you shall perish except speedily you repent. How one and the same work, in so far as it proceedeth from God, is most just, most profitable, and most merciful; and yet as it proceedeth from the instruments most profane, most wicked, damnable to themselves, and most cruel, I have abundantly declared, and after, as occasion shall be offered, shall touch by God's grace, so much as may instruct the sober mind, if it be ignorant; and also to put silence to your venomous mouths, be they never so impudent.

Because the Scriptures, which you heap together, be either plainly repugnant to your error, or else make nothing for probation of the same, I will so shortly as I can go through them, only noting wherein you abuse the words and mind of the Holy Ghost. The words of our Master, spoken in the 23rd chapter of Matthews Gospel, serve nothing for your purpose; for in that place our Saviour Christ Jesus speaketh as he that is the messenger of his Heavenly Father, and declareth that the Jews obstinately, even from their original, had resisted God speaking by his Patriarchs, Prophets of old, and now last by his Son. He neither speaketh nor meaneth what will God had to save his elect, neither yet that will which he had to gather and separate them from the world, but only {as Moses and Elias had before spoken} declareth what fidelity and diligence God had used in the general election and vocation of that people

from time to time; and yet what had been their obstinate rebellion and unthankful defection from him, by the which they killed the Prophets, and should kill his Son, sent of God to call them from iniquity. What hath this to do, I say, with that will, by the which God in his eternal counsel hath made division betwixt the Elect and the Reprobate? If you dare say, that Christ in that place meaneth, in that he would have gathered those murderers, and sons of murderers, as he doth witness he doth gather his chosen flock, himself will convict you of a lie. For he affirmeth the same to the Scribes and Pharisees, to whom principally he spake in that place, that they were not of his sheep, and that therefore they could not be gathered to his fold; that they were not of God, and therefore that they could not hear his voice; that he did not pray for the world, and therefore they could never be united to God. You must declare how that God would that those Israelites, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness, should enter into the land promised. If you say, by any other will than by his general precept given, that they should go and possess it, you shall lack the testimony of the Holy Ghost. I have declared causes most just and most sufficient, why God shall command that which is just, right, and laudable, albeit that man neither can perform his commandments, neither yet that it was God's eternal will and counsel that all men should so do. And further, I have declared just causes why God doth call many to repentance and felicity, and yet that he only chooses a certain to attain thereto, and enter the same. And so, I say, you must prove that God did otherwise will them to enter into the land than by his general commandment, before you be able to prove that anything is done against the eternal and immutable will of God. I can prove that God's will was so plain revealed, that none of them should enter into the land promised; that it behooved the whole army to be removed from place to place till they were all consumed; yea, further, I can prove that Moses himself could not obtain that privilege to enter in, nor the people, albeit that in prayer most earnestly he required the same. Prove, if you can, that ever God revealed his

will to any particular persons {Joshua and Caleb only exempted} that they should enter in it.

And then may you say, that either God did change his will and purpose, or else that something was done against his will, which he did permit but not will. I will answer, there is no better argument to prove that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh, than that same which you adduce to prove that Pharaoh did harden his own heart, and that God doth suffer it to be hardened, but doth not will it. This you write, "all the children of Adam have a hard and wicked heart, until they be mollified by the grace of God, as Jeremiah witnesseth, saying, amongst all things living, man hath the most deceitful and stubborn heart." Your liberty or ignorance in citing the Prophets words pass measure, "and the Lord saith, that he will take away the stony heart from them, and give them a heart of flesh." No stronger argument nor reason I require to confute your error, than the same which you allege for the establishment thereof; for if by nature all be equal, and that only grace maketh the difference, then we demand and ask, whether that grace be given to some and denied to others, and that by permission and sufferance, as you speak; or if it be the determined will of God, that his grace and mercy by Christ Jesus shall be freely communicated with some, and that the same shall most justly be denied to others, albeit the causes to us do not appear during the time of this our mortality. If you dare say, that God's will in taking away the stony heart and in giving the fleshy heart, be nothing else but only a permission and sufferance, without the operation and will of his Spirit, then may you reason, that in the hardening of Pharaoh and of the rest of the reprobate, there is nothing else but a bare permission, without any efficacy of God's Spirit. But if it be God that worketh in us the good will and performance of the same, and that he hath mercy upon whom he listeth, then is it likewise that God hardeneth whom he will. Mark and note the words of the Apostle, for he saith not he hardeneth whom he permitteth, and doth suffer to be hardened, but plainly he saith, "that he hardeneth whom he will."

The Apostle saw none other cause why mercy was showed to some, and others were left in induration, but God's will. True it is, that the reprobate of nature have, and from their mother's womb doth carry with them, the matter of their induration. But the question is, what is the cause that that pestilent matter is removed from some, and why doth it remain with others? If you answer, because some receive grace offered, and some refuse it, you have said nothing, as more plainly I have before declared; for always we ask the cause, why is the will of the one obedient to God, and why is the will of the other rebellious, considering that all by nature are equal? Although that you travel to confound the heaven and the earth, yet shall you be brought to this principal, that God hath mercy upon whom he will, and whom he will he maketh hard hearted. And therefore as of his mercy and free grace, God worketh willingly in the one, with his Spirit, softness and the feeling of mercy, so doth his just judgments and just wrath against sin, conceived by the spirit of Satan, work in the others hardness, obstinacy, and the sense of his wrath. Your reason, affirming that Pharaoh had a stony heart before that Moses spake unto him, then could not it be hardened more than a stone before that it was mollified; this your reason, I say, is more than foolish, for I suppose that you be not so brutish, that you will affirm that the heart of any tyranny, at any time in natural hardness, I mean to grope and feel, is comparable to the hardness of a stone; but that is a figurative speech, by the which is declared the unchangeable hardness of man's heart, as touching the natural power of the same. For as the stone by itself can never come to any softness of flesh, so can never man by any gift which nature hath of itself, come to that humility and obedience which is acceptable before God in Christ. But doth it thereof ensue, that one man is not, nor cannot be more cruel than another; yea, that one and the same may not proceed from evil to worse, and by contempt of grace, make himself more hard and more hard, although his heart was never fully mollified. I think you will not affirm the contrary, for the Holy Ghost giving this

exhortation, "this day, if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts," doth confirm my affirmation, which is, that men proceed from hardness to hardness, yea, from one sin to another, till their sins become inexcusable, and so finally irremissible; because that obstinately they refuse grace offered, as Christ doth witness in these words, "if I had not come and spoken unto them, they should not have sin; but now have they nothing to cloke their sin, for they have seen and hated not only me, but also my Father." John 15:24. No man will be so fond as to affirm, that the Jews, before Christ's preaching and miracles, were clean without sin; but the contempt of grace did so augment and increase their sin, that it became inexcusable. Even so say I, that Pharaoh did harden his own heart from time to time, becoming more unthankful unto God, and more cruel to his people. And the fountain of this induration and hardness I confess to have been born with him; and that to rage against God's people, he needed no impulsion of God's part, but rather a bridle to impede his fury.

But yet the question is not resolved as before I have noted, for still we ask, why was not that fountain shut up? Why was not the natural venom purged and his heart mollified? Search where you list, you shall find none other reason nor cause for the which the subsequent induration of Pharaoh did principally proceed, but that God, in his eternal counsel, for causes known to his wisdom alone, had most justly denied to communicate his graces effectually with him, but had raised him up to have his power showed forth in him. And so God did harden Pharaoh's heart, not by permission only, but willingly withdrew his Spirit from him, as before is said.

Wonder it is, that amongst the ancient Doctors you will seek defense in this matter, seeing it is a statute amongst you, that you will believe nor admit the words nor authority of no writer in any matter of controversy, but all things you will have decided by the plain Scripture. And truly I am not contrary to your mind in that case, so that you understand that you will not admit the authority of man against God's plain truth;

neither yet that you will believe man any further, than that he proveth his sentence by God's evident Scriptures. If you had produced any Doctor who had confirmed his interpretation by the plain Word of God, of reason I ought to have answered, either by the same, or by some other Doctor of equal authority, or else to have improved his interpretation by the plain Scriptures. But seeing that you produce none, you leave me at greater liberty; and yet I will show you the mind of one Doctor, comparable to any that ever wrote before him, either in the Latin or in the Greek Church, I mean of Augustine, who writing against Julian, the apostate, and against Manichees, who did affirm the self-same thing that you do, to wit, that God was a passive God, that is, he did suffer all evil, and that against his will, but he did work none; against him {I say} he thus writes, "wilt thou say {saith Augustine to Julian} that the wicked that be given over to their own desires, are to be understand only left by God's suffering, but not compelled to sins by power; as though that the Apostle had not joined the suffering and power of God together, where that he saith, 'if God, willing to show wrath and to declare his power, suffered in great patience the vessels of wrath prepared to destruction,' which of these two, sayest thou, is written? And also, if the prophet do err and shall speak, 'I, the Lord, have deceived him.' Is this suffering, or is it power?" And after adducing the same which we before have alleged of Ahab, he addeth, "did God these things ignorantly, or doth he anything, judging, or doing rashly or unjustly? God forbid it. It is not without cause that it is said, thy judgments are a great depth, it is not in vain that the Apostle crieth out, 'Oh, the height and depth of God's judgments.'" And after, in the same place, expounding these words, "and lead us not into temptation," after that he hath affirmed that God giveth over some for just causes to their own lusts and blindness, as he gave over Rehoboam to believe the false and foolish counsel of the young men, he saith, "all these things doth God work by wondrous and unspeakable means, who knoweth how to work his just judgments, not only in the bodies, but also in the hearts

of men; he who maketh not the wills evil, but yet he useth them as he will, seeing that he can will nothing unjustly."

Thus far have I alleged unto you the mind of one Doctor in this our controversy; and when you shall bring forth the mind of any so well grounded upon Scriptures as he doth this his sentence, I promise to answer, if I can. I am not ignorant that divers of the doctors, {yea, and Augustine himself,} in some places may seem to favour your opinion at the first sight. But if their words, in one place, be compared with their plain mind, and with the scope of their disputation, in other places, it shall plainly appear, that none that live this day do more plainly speak against your error than some of them have written. The places of Job, manifestly and in plain words, fight against you. For it is said in the one place, "thou hast excluded their heart from wisdom, and therefore this matter shall not be to their praise," and in the other, "God hath taken wisdom from the Ostrich, and hath not given understanding unto her." Dare you affirm that in these words there is nothing but a bare permission of God's part? Is there no difference betwixt away-taking and suffering to be taken away? If any difference be betwixt these two manner of speakings, "God giveth wisdom," and "God taketh away wisdom," then is your interpretation foolish and absurd. Neither yet is there any phrase of Scripture, understand it as you please, that can make God to call back that sentence which he hath pronounced, to wit, that he hath raised up Pharaoh to be an example to all generations following, what shall be the end of those that obstinately resist God, who albeit he tempt no man to sin by the power of his Spirit, yet, as before I have proved, he justly giveth them over to the inordinate lusts of their own corruption; yea, he giveth them over into the hands and power of Satan, to be pricked and stirred forward to all iniquity, that their damnation may be just, and also, that his vengeance, justly deserved, may the more suddenly fall upon them. The mind of Saint James is only to bring men to the right examination and trial of themselves, lest that by flattery they begin to seek the

original cause of their sin in another than in themselves. And yet doth that nothing impede, but that God in his manner {which always is just} doth harden the hearts of those whom before he had reprobated.

We confess that no greater plague can chance unto man, than that he be left to his own lewd mind, for then of him can proceed no good nor permanent fruit. But as the earth lacking rain, dew, and moisture, must needs be barren, and so at length subject to malediction; so must men destitute of God's grace, with Saul, Ahab, and others, proceed from evil to worse, till finally they come to confusion. But were it not that it is your common custom to belie the Holy Ghost, I would wonder how that you could be so impudent, as to affirm that the Lord doth punish his vineyard, not wasting it himself, but taketh the hedge and rain from it, and suffereth it to be wasted and trodden of others. And that Job was plagued of God, only in suffering him to be plagued. Assuredly this your affirmation declareth in you either a most brutal ignorance, or else an impudence more than manifest. Ye will not deny that Israel and Judah were the pleasant vineyard, sometimes planted by God's own hand, and so doth he himself affirm; and doth God no more in their destruction, but only look upon them as an idle and unwilling sufferer upon the tragedy and miserable calamity? He himself doth witness the contrary, for he saith, "I will plainly declare unto you what I will do to my vineyard; I shall take away the hedge of it, I shall break down the wall, that it may be trodden upon; I shall make it waste, and shall also so forbid the clouds that they shall neither send down rain nor moisture upon it." Isaiah 5:5-6. Note, and mark well, I beseech you, God here speaketh nothing of permission, but all together of working, to wit, of taking away and of breaking down. And how, I pray you, came that fearful destruction to pass? "The Lord God of hosts {saith the Prophet Isaiah} will take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the strength, even all the stay of bread, and all the stay of water; the strong man, and the man of war, the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the aged, the captain of

fifty, and the honorable, and the counselor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent man; and I will appoint children {note well what God speaketh} to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them," &c. Isaiah 3:1-4. And after, "the Lord shall bring upon thee, upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, the days that have not come from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, even the King of Ashur," &c. Isaiah 7:17. "In that day shall the Lord shave thee with a razor that is hired," &c. Isaiah 7:20. The Lord himself doth further confess, that the King of Ashur "is the rod of his fury, and the axe in his hand." Isaiah 10:5. He saith to an hypocritical nation will he send him, "and I give him commandment against that people which hath deserved my indignation. I will give him charge to take away, to rive and to part the spoil." Isaiah 10:6. And further, in the same place, God doth acknowledge the grievous punishment and miserable destruction of Jerusalem to be his own work. For thus speaketh the Prophet, "but when the Lord hath accomplished all his work upon Mount Zion and Jerusalem, I will visit the fruit of the proud heart of the King of Ashur, and his glorious and proud looks," &c. Isaiah 10:12.

If these words may be attributed to him, who only suffereth and doth not himself effectually work, let indifferent men judge. And yet speaking more plainly, he saith, "I am the Lord, and there is none other; I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil, {that is, punishment and plagues for sin,} I, the Eternal, do all these things." Isaiah 55:7. To whom the Prophet Amos doth agree, using these same words, "or shall there be evil in a city, {saith he,} and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos 3:6. The Lord speaking by his Prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel, saith, "I shall send and take all the nations of the north, and Nebuchadnezzar, my servant, the King of Babylon, and I shall bring them upon this land. I shall kindle the fire, augment and multiply the flame, and I shall profane {that is, I shall make common} my sanctuary." Ezekiel 24:21. If he that gathereth his warriors, that leadeth and conduceth them, yea, that giveth them strength, agility, and good

success; that putteth the sword of his vengeance into their hand, that commandeth them to strike and to spare none, doth nothing else but suffer, I must confess myself neither to know nor to understand what it is to do, or what it is to work. Your bold impudence affirming that Job was plagued of God, only by suffering him to be plagued, is intolerable. Doth not God provoke, as it were, Satan to try his servant Job, saying, "hast thou not considered my servant Job, how none is like unto him in the earth, an upright and just man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil?" And after that Satan, upon that occasion, had defaced to his uttermost the integrity and justice of Job, affirming, that easy it was to fear and serve God, seeing that all things were prosperous and fortunate in his house and family. God, first by express words, giveth to him power over all that pertained unto him, and thereafter he giveth over the body of Job to the tyranny of Satan, his life only being reserved. Was this, I pray you, only to plague Job, by suffering him to be plagued? Doth the father which commandeth his child to be beaten in his presence, and commandeth how many stripes he shall receive, nothing else but suffer his child to be beaten? Or is he not rather the chief cause, as that he is the chief commander, why his child is punished?

O, say you, "but God did not take his goods, but only suffered the Devil to take them, and so God did not punish his people. For he touched them not, but hid his face from them to see their end." Albeit your vanity trouble me a little, yet must it needs return upon your own heads, to your shame. This is a goodly reason, God by himself took not Job's goods from him, therefore he did nothing but suffer them to be taken. And God's own hand did not touch Israel nor Judah, therefore was he but only a sufferer, and no worker of their punishment. I will make the like reason and argument. God by himself gave no goods to Job, therefore did he nothing but suffer Job to be enriched. Another, no visible hand was seen to touch Elimas the sorcerer, therefore did God only suffer him to be blinded. If you will affirm the former, to wit, that God did nothing but suffer Job to be

enriched; not only shall Job himself testify against you, but even Satan, although he be a liar, and the father of lies, yet in that case shall he convince you of a most impudent lie, for he saith, "hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land; but stretch out now thy hand, and touch all that he hath to see if he will not blaspheme thee to thy face." And if you will say, that God did only suffer Elimas to be blinded; then shall the Holy Ghost, speaking in Saint Paul, convict you, for he saith, "behold the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, and shall not see the sun for a time." And thus shall you have God, man, and the devil, to rebuke your vanity. Be ashamed, repent, and give glory unto God, who feareth not to confess that all instruments in heaven, earth, or in hell, be his rods, his sword, and his hand, by the which he correcteth, he punisheth, he trieth, delivereth, and saveth, according to His eternal counsel and purpose.

To prove absurdities and inconveniences {as you term them} to follow our doctrine, thus you reason. "If I should grant that it was God's will, that he should refuse to let the people go, then did he submit himself to the will of the Lord; then should God and he have been both of one mind, and the will of God is always good and just." Then Pharaoh, "refusing to let the people go, did well and justly, forasmuch as it was God's will that he should so do; wherefore Pharaoh ought not to have been punished for this good and just deed." And thus, in conclusion, you affirm, that "these inconveniences we cannot escape." I have before sufficiently declared, how that no wicked man committing iniquity hath any respect or mind to obey God's holy will, either secret, either yet revealed, but, following their own rage and inordinate lusts, doth make as it were plain resistance to God; and therefore, howsoever they be compelled to serve God's eternal purpose, yet do they never obey him in their own hearts, but obstinately they do rebel against his blessed will revealed. And therefore, as there is no conformity nor agreement betwixt the holy will of God

and their perverse and malicious will, so are they subject to just damnation for their rebellion and disobedience. And thus, taking from you the ground and foundation whereupon you think yourselves most assuredly to stand, I might suffer your vain building to fall into confusion. But partly for the instruction of the simple reader, and partly to win some of you {if so please God} from these horrible blasphemies, I purpose in this place to declare the difference betwixt the holy will of God and the wicked will of men; and why it is that the work of God is most just, and the work of the instruments unjust and evil; reserving the rest to better opportunity.

The will of God must not be restrained to those things which externally we see done, or hear to have been done. But God's will must be extended to those ends for the which God worketh, and causeth to be wrought, all things from the beginning; to wit, for the manifestation of his own glory, for the profit and salvation of his elect children, and for the execution of his just judgments; either for a time to correct his chosen, or else for ever to punish the stubborn and disobedient of the reprobate sort. Because that I suspect no man so foolish as that he will deny the will of God working to these ends to be most just, most holy, and most perfect in itself, I will labour for no probation of that part. But because the instruments by whom God worketh be divers, we must first inquire and know, what instruments they be that obey God's will, and therefore by him are reputed just workers; and what they are that obey not his will, and so, whatsoever they do, are reputed disobedient. Only those instruments do obey God's will, who, having his will clearly revealed unto them, do study and endeavour themselves to obey, accomplish, and fulfill the same, and that of very love, free mind, and zeal to obey his godly Majesty. The fruits and works of these instruments, howsoever man doth judge of them, doth God approve, yea, even albeit they appear to repine to mercy, or to his law written. For the Israelites were delivered from theft by God's will revealed, albeit they spoiled and robbed {under the

cloke of borrowing} the Egyptians of their substance. The mariners and the shipmasters being with Jonas, in that sodden storm and tempest raised by God, were free from murder and shedding of innocent blood, by God's will plainly revealed by the mouth of the Prophet. Jehu was not only justified from all the suspicion of treason which men might have gathered of his fact, but also from cruelty in killing those idolaters who manifestly declared themselves friends to Baal; by that, that God did first reveal his will unto him, sending his Prophet to anoint him, and after approved his zeal, which he rewarded with temporal promise of the kingdom to continue in his posterity to the fourth of his seed. Thus, I say, doth God justify the works of these instruments which obey his will revealed.

And so, I say, that they only obey God, that knowing his will do study to obey the same. But, contrary wise, whosoever doth anything ignorant of God's will, not knowing the will of God revealed, repugnant or doth contrary to the same, {howsoever he serveth God's eternal purpose,} doth neither obey God, neither can he be excusable before God's justice, and that because in his work and fact, he looketh nothing to God's will, neither yet to the end and purpose which God respecteth. And hereof springeth and ariseth the difference betwixt the works of God and the works of man; yea, betwixt the works of the godly and the works of the ungodly. God worketh all his works to manifest his glory, his wisdom, his power, his mercy, goodness, and justice. The godly, moved by the Holy Spirit, work their works to give obedience unto God, to support their brethren in their necessities at his commandment, and to punish vice according to his law. But the ungodly, carried headlong by their own lusts, and by the fury of Satan, to whose power they are committed, work all their works to revenge themselves, to destroy such as they hate, and to promote their own enterprises, without any respect had to God, to his will, ordinance, or counsel.

One or two examples shall make this matter more sensible. The will, purpose, and counsel of God in

punishing Job, was to try his patience, and of the same to leave an example to all them that truly fear God to the end. And who dare deny this to be most reasonable and most just, that God, examining sharply one of his children, shall make him a schoolmaster to all the rest? But what was the will and purpose of Satan and of the Chaldeans, by whom Job was punished? The will and purpose of Satan is plainly revealed to have been, that by those afflictions he fully purposed to withdraw Job from God's fear, and to cause him curse God to his face. The will of the Chaldeans is evident enough, by the manifest malice of all such oppressors, who look to nothing but to satisfy their own covetous minds by the possessions of others, which tyrannously and unjustly they by violence spoil. And thus doth the diversity of the minds of the workers make the plain difference betwixt their works.

Another, God in expelling David from his kingdom, in giving his wives with great ignominy to be defiled by his own son Absalom, and in commanding Shimei to curse him, had respect to his own justice, which cannot suffer sin unpunished, even in his dearest children; thereby leaving example to all ages following, that such as willingly would not suffer God's grievous plagues shall avoid manifest contempt of his holy commandments. And this, I think, will all men confess to be a work {in so far as it is wrought by God} most just and most equal; for as God doth honour them who do honour him, so must they be contemned who contemn him. But what was the mind of Ahitophel, counselor of Absalom the incestuous adulterer, and of Shimei the blasphemous curser? The one studied to make such hatred betwixt the father and the son as after should never be reconciled. The unnatural and monstrous son, declaring himself mortal enemy to his father, according to the wicked counsel, thought to bind unto him the hearts of the people. And Shimei, willing to make David odious to all men and to have brought him, if possible had been, to uttermost desperation, poured forth the venom which before lurked in his hidden, corrupt, and stinking stomach.

The same might I show in the precious death of the innocent Son of God; in which the great and unsearchable love of God towards us doth shine; so that Christ's death, in so far as it was the work of God, proceeded from love, from mercy, and justice. But touching the instruments whom God used in execution of the same, as in another place I have said, they looked nothing to God's counsel, but were altogether carried to iniquity; some by avarice, some by pride and by ambition, some by malice, hatred, and envy; so that amongst them all, none was found that studied to obey God, nor his holy will revealed. And thus it is evident why the work of God in such cases is just and good, as it that is wrought in wisdom, mercy, and justice, and that for most just causes, purpose, and end; and why the works of wicked men {supposing that God in some respect will them} are yet unjust and repugnant to his will, never done to obey him; and therefore are they and their workers subject to malediction, vengeance, and damnation, pronounced by God in his law against the workers of iniquity.

Now, let us examine your reasons. "If it was God's will {say you} that Pharaoh should refuse to let the people go, then did he submit himself to the word of the Lord." I deny the consequent, for neither did Pharaoh know the holy will of God, neither did he submit himself to that which was commanded and revealed unto him. The will of God was, in that people to give an example and testimony to the world, that the only benediction of God was sufficient to give multiplication and increase to his Church, even against the determined fury of Satan and of all wicked; that he would give unto his Church, being afflicted, most joyful and most wondrous deliverance; and, finally, that no obstinate enemy of God's people {howsoever they seem to rage and triumph} shall in the end escape judgment and vengeance justly deserved. Do you think that Pharaoh either knew this will of God, either yet that he retained the people in bondage for any of these ends? I think not. Then did he not submit himself to God's will, but obstinately did resist so far of God's will as was revealed

unto him. And therefore, I say, that God and Pharaoh were of most contrary wills and most contrary minds. God willing his name, his power, and his wisdom, to be preached and praised to the end, for the deliverance of his afflicted people; but Pharaoh willing to retain in perpetual bondage the people {whom God commanded him to set at freedom and liberty} to serve him as he should command. And therefore, albeit that wicked Pharaoh was an instrument by whom those things were brought to pass, yet were his works neither well nor justly done; but tyrannously and most obstinately did he fight against God, and therefore in the end most justly was he punished. Behold your spider webs, with less labour dissolved and burst, then {I am assured} you and your great captain Castellio did spin, knit, and weave the same, to your great shame and perpetual condemnation, except that speedily you repent. Now to the rest which followeth in these words.

THE ADVERSARY.

As for the sentence which you allege, "God maketh hard-hearted whom he will, and of whom he will he hath mercy," this place hath been very unreasonably wrested of some of you, so that thereby you have burdened God to be the cause of condemnation, who at his pleasure receiveth or refuseth such as have either of pain or pleasure deserved nothing at all. God forbid that any man should conceive such a phantasy of God. But we must first learn how God lightened all men that came into this world; which light who so refuseth, him the Lord by long sufferance, with bountiful benefits and fatherly corrections, doth call to repentance. But if we, loving darkness better than light, will utterly refuse light, or after we have been by the goodness of God partakers of God's grace, do forsake the covenant of the Lord, then hath he mercy on whom he will, and that for his own sake, and others he maketh hard-hearted, that is, he giveth them over to their own hearts lusts, so that the cause of their induration is not the will and pleasure of God, which doth nothing without a just cause, but

their obstinate wickedness, which will not be reformed. These suffer justly, and the other receive grace by the mercy of God, which may, when he will, have mercy on whom he will, and that besides his covenant.

ANSWER.

Because that nothing resteth to the end of this your book {your blasphemies and railing excempted} which is not sufficiently before answered, I intend only to touch those things which you unjustly lay to our charges, and frankly confess in what points you and we do manifestly dissent in opinion and doctrine. And first, I say, that most unjustly you accuse us, laying to our charge that we burden God to be the cause of condemnation, the which we all with one consent impute to man, to sin, and to the Devil, the first solicitor to sin. And therefore, except that you can note and evidently convict someone {or more} of us that so hath written or affirmed of God, you cannot be purged from the horrible crime of unjust accusation and detestable slander.

We utterly dissent from you, that God lighteneth every man that cometh into this world in such sort as you affirm, that is, that he calleth all to repentance, and offereth light of salvation to all; so that God refuseth none except such as utterly refuse light, or such as have been partakers of God's grace, and do forsake the covenant of the Lord. For besides the evident testimonies of the Scriptures, the common experience from the beginning doth witness, that God in that manner hath not illuminated every man. For how many do perish in their mother's bellies? How many suddenly die before their reason can judge of good and evil? How many are deprived of natural reason and understanding? Yea, how many remain wild and brutish, living like beasts and hating one another? How many do continue all their life without any other knowledge of God than the visible creatures of God do teach them? Which I think you will not affirm to be sufficient illumination to provoke them to repentance, or to attain to life. I pray you, what light had Esau refused when God pronounced

this sentence, "the elder shall serve the younger," upon the which the Apostle, as before we have declared, doth conclude that ere the children had done either good or bad, the one was loved and the other was hated.

That God doth nothing without a just cause, most willingly we confess, but that there is no justice in God, to the ground whereof your blind reason doth not pierce, we constantly deny. And therefore we must needs affirm that to seek another cause of God's works than his holy will is more than impiety. For the causes be known to his wisdom alone why some he hath chosen to life everlasting in Christ Jesus his Son, and why that others are left in perdition; the cause may be secret, {as Augustine speaketh,} but unjust can it not be, because it proceedeth from God's will, which is the perfect rule of all justice and equity. If that you cry till that the mountains resound again, "the obstinate iniquity of the reprobate will not be reformed, and that is the cause of their induration," in a few and sober words we answer, that in man there is no wickedness which God may not reform, if so be his godly will and good pleasure.

Albeit of these your words, "God may have mercy when he will, on whom he will, and that besides his covenant," some suspicion may arise that greatly you do not esteem that inestimable benefit granted unto us in Christ Jesus his only Son, yet will I so favorably interpret your words as I can. If you understand, that such as this day be ignorant of God, enemies to his truth, and persecutors of his saints, may suddenly, or after this, be called to the true knowledge of that communion which is betwixt God and man by Christ Jesus, I do fully agree with you; for so was Abraham, so was Paul, and so were the Gentiles, who long did live without true knowledge of God, and without {as touching their own apprehension} the assurance of his covenant and league. But if you understand, that God can or will receive to mercy at any time such as he hath not elected to life everlasting in Christ Jesus his Son before all times, we utterly abhor that error as a pestilence most pernicious. Now to that which followeth.

THE ADVERSARY.

That place of the book of the Kings, "the Lord commandeth Shimei to curse David," I understand so; forasmuch as God is the author of all goodness, and of no evil, he gave not a wicked mind to Shimei; but, willing to exercise his servant David under the cross, and finding Shimei a naughty and evil minded man, specially towards David, he gave him the bridle, which being left of God, he, by the enticement of the Devil, which was already in his heart, did curse David. And David being governed by the Spirit of God, did patiently suffer the wicked to curse him, hoping that God would turn his cursing into blessing. For this did David know, that without the permission and suffering of God, Shimei could no more curse him than Balaam might curse the Israelites. It followeth not therefore that God did effectually mean Shimei to do the wicked deed, but only suffered him. Yet if we will seek to the literal sense of this place, and affirm that God did effectually command Shimei to curse David, then I must go that way to work with you. All that the Lord commandeth is just. If it be just to command to curse, it is just to obey to curse, for the righteousness of the deed is known by the righteousness of the commandment; as it is unjust to obey an unjust commandment, so is it just to obey a just commandment; wherefore Shimei obeying the commandment of God, which is just, did justly. You will say that Shimei did not obediently, that is to obey God, but of an evil mind cursed David. I answer you, after your own saying, that this was also the will of God that Shimei should have an evil mind, and not to please God cursed David; for you say that God gave him an evil mind to curse David, wherefore in that he of a disobedient mind cursed David, he was obedient to God; and as we have said, to obey God it is just. I pray you then, why commandeth David his son Solomon to punish Shimei for this just act? "They which fear the hoar frost {saith Job} the snow shall fall upon him," and likewise so long as you stick to your error, when you think to avoid one danger, you shall fall into a greater.

ANSWER.

You do ever decline from the principal scope, and so make you a false conclusion. For we do not deny, but God, finding in Shimei at that time a wicked mind towards David, did lose the bridle to his corrupted affections. But in two things do you and we differ; the first is that whether he found any wickedness in him which his godly power might not have removed, if so he had determined to have done from the beginning. And, secondarily, if so he gave him the bridle that he might not have impeded the same, if such had been his godly will. And therefore, where you affirm that God did effectually move Shimei to that wicked deed, if you understand that in so far as the deed was wicked, the Spirit of God, I mean the Holy Ghost, did not move him thereunto, I subscribe with you. For so outrageously to curse David in the day of his great calamity, he was moved by that venom which long had lurked in his breast, and by the instigation of the Devil. But if thereupon you conclude, as that you seem to do by your manifest words, that God did nothing else but only suffer him; because, I say, that such idle permission can neither agree with God's power nor with his justice, we must needs affirm, that when God giveth over the wicked into a lewd and reprobate mind, that then as justly he punisheth sin by sin, so doth he more than only suffer.

There is more required that a fact be just, and justly and obediently done, than a just commandment, to wit, that the doer have God's express commandment for his assurance; and, secondarily, that he look and have respect to the same ends which God hath uttered in his word; and, last, that he do it only to obey God. Now, prove any of these to have been in Shimei, and I will confess that you have once triumphed. I find that David did acknowledge God's commandment and counsel, and therefore at that time would he not arm himself nor his servants to take vengeance. But what commandment of God, I pray you, did Shimei either

acknowledge or confess. I find no mention that he excuseth himself, no not by any commandment that he had received of God, when after he submitted himself to David in the day when he returned and came over Jordan. But I find him plainly to confess his offence, saying, "let not my Lord impute wickedness unto me, nor remember the thing that thy servant did wickedly when my Lord the King departed out of Jerusalem, that the King should take it to his heart, for thy servant doth know that I have done amiss." If Shimei had either known any commandment of God, or if he had looked to the same end to the which God looked, he might have had plausible reasons to have persuaded David to have showed favour and mercy unto him. First, he might have said, "Oh, David, although thou was King, and that I did curse thee, thou ought no more to be offended against me than thou wast against the Prophet Nathan. For as he had God's commandment plainly to reveal thy sin, and sharply to rebuke the same, to the end that thou mightest be more effectually moved to repentance; so had I God's commandment bitterly to curse thee, to the end that thou mightest humble thyself before thy God, whom so highly thou hast offended."

These, I say, had been plausible reasons to have moved David to mercy. But the cankered conscience of Shimei did witness against himself, that he, to his knowledge, had neither commandment of God, neither yet that he looked to any purpose or counsel of God, but only to David's utter confusion and destruction, which he maliciously sought. And so, I say, albeit that God's commandment in the self was just, for the purpose and end which he had appointed, yet was this commandment hid to Shimei, and God's purpose also unknown to him; and therefore was his fact neither justly nor obediently done. For a just fact {as I have before said} requireth a good will to obey a just commandment, and obedience requireth knowledge of the will; which neither of both was in Shimei. Now, prove, if you can, either injustice in God, who thus doth use this wicked instrument, or yet in David his servant,

who in his testament commanded the dissembled hypocrisy to be punished.

The rest of your vain sophistry, which of Castellio you have begged, doth nothing profit you. For albeit we should confess, that it was the will of God, in some respect, that Shimei should have an evil and disobedient mind, how shall you be able to prove that therefore he did obey God? Is it not the will of God that Satan and the wicked world, of a wicked and malicious mind, trouble and tempt his children in this earth? Doeth it therefore follow that Satan and the wicked obey God? Or doth it not most justly follow, that because God will that our patience should be known, and that the wicked from time to time proceed in their impiety till the measure be full, that therefore they can never obey God. And in this our affirmation, we fear not so much the frost or snow, as that we lament your uncomely jesting in God's Scriptures. Thus you proceed.

THE ADVERSARY.

An argument you make in that place of Genesis, where Joseph saith unto his brethren, "God sent me hither for your lives' sake," and thereafter, "it was not you that sent me hither, but God, which hath made me a father unto Pharaoh." Of this do you gather, that the wicked deed which Joseph's brethren did in selling him was the Lord's deed and secret will. But for so much as the Patriarchs here committed double sin; first, grieved their father; and, secondly, they did commit the greatest kind of theft, that is, to sell a man's child from him, which by the law ought to be punished by death. Therefore may we see, that this deed was not done by God's will, for it was contrary to this commandment, "neither will he any wickedness; but according to his nature, which is ever good, he turned their wicked deed to a good end, for his servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob's sake. For he sheweth mercy to the thousand generations of them that love him." This to be so, it is plainly proved by the latter chapter, where Joseph saith unto his brethren, "you thought evil over me; but God hath turned it unto

good, to do as it is come to pass this day." Mark well what is here ascribed unto Joseph's brethren, and what unto God. They thought evil, and God turned it to good. Then their minds and God's mind were not all one; wherefore it was not God's will that they should thus do wickedly. Notwithstanding that this place of the last of Genesis is so manifest and direct against your error as can be, yet will you not agree to the truth, but fly to your shameful shift of God's secret will. For here you say, that it was God's secret will that this should so come to pass, so that the Patriarchs thoughts were moved to do this by God. Thus you attribute to God that which is proper to the Devil, by the testimony of the Word, whereby we be taught that the Devil moved men with evil thoughts. God commandeth us to resist evil thoughts, which if they come of him, then commandeth he us to resist himself. James saith, "that no man is tempted of God." But to move with evil thoughts is to tempt. All is good which cometh from the Father of light; wherefore, if evil thoughts come from him, they must be good. Then was Joseph's saying untrue, "you thought evil over me." But you grant evil thoughts to be evil, and yet you say that they came from God; then may we call God the Father of darkness, because from him came evil thoughts, which are darkness. And where you say that God doth those things for his own glory, I answer, that saying is but vain, for we glorify him when we judge him worthy to be glorified; as Nebuchadnezzar, being changed into a brutish nature, having experience of the justice and power of God, he gave glory to God, forasmuch as he did see and judged God to be just. God will be glorified of all nations; then must God's works be such as all nations may know them and praise them; yet is there no nation which at any time shall acknowledge God to be just, for because he punished a man for the offence whereunto he himself did provoke him. The Philistines, priests and soothsayers, gave glory to God, and judged him to be just, in that he plagued Pharaoh, in that he hardened his heart against God, desiring their rulers by the same example not to harden their hearts against God, but to send away the ark of the Lord, lest

he likewise plague them. But if the Philistines soothsayers had known {as you presume to do} that God did harden Pharaoh's heart, what justice could they attribute to God for punishing Pharaoh, for that thing whereof he was the author himself, moving and forcing Pharaoh thereunto. Seeing, as you have said, no man is able to resist his secret will, what injustice had it been to punish Shimei for that offence whereof God was the author, commanding him to do it. David saith, "thus the Lord is known to execute true judgment, when the ungodly is trapped in the works of his own hands," not when he is punished for the offence whereunto he moved men himself. If God should punish a man because he hath a beard, should any glory redound to God thereof, seeing he hath given us beards himself? But here you be very religious, and say, "we ought not to speak so irreverently of the works of God, for this is the secret judgment of God unknown to us." I answer, there be some secrets of God unknown to us; but the judgment of God is known, and made manifest to us in the Word; and after this word, {as Saint Paul teacheth,} not after your secret judgment, shall God judge the world; and so shall God be glorified of all, godly and ungodly, forasmuch as all shall judge it to be just; and they which have not obeyed the truth, {not your unknown truth,} but that which is known, that is the Word, shall be punished; and they which have obeyed the truth, not secret as yours, but revealed in God's Word, shall receive their reward. Moreover, if this be the secret judgment of God, who revealed it then to you? How do you know it to be secret? Is it secret which you know and teach? Indeed I think it to be so, for it is so secret that I cannot catch no hold of it. But herein I do perceive, not the secret, but the manifest judgment of God, which suffereth you to err thus, because you withhold the truth in unrighteousness, and, according to your knowledge, you have not glorified God, neither have you been thankful, but waxed full of vanities in your own imaginations. Wherefore my counsel is that you turn again from that infidelity wherein you have drowned yourselves, believe the Word, and seek no

further, for it is the power of God to salvation to everyone that believeth.

ANSWER.

As your most pestilent sect, even from the first original of it, hath with all malicious craft laboured to subvert and confound God's most perfect ordinance, so do you in this matter confound those things which we most plainly and most distinctly set apart, and divide them the one from the other. For first, you are never able to prove that any of us hath alleged, or yet doth allege, the word or fact of Joseph and his brethren for any proof of God's eternal election or most just reprobation; but to declare that such is God's providence towards his chosen children, and towards their salvation and preservation of his Church, that whatsoever Satan and wicked men imagine to the destruction of God's Elect, that same doth his infinite goodness convert to their profit, comfort, and joy. And so this is the first, that impudently you confound, to wit, his Providence, which extendeth to all his creatures, with his election, which pertaineth only to his children. The second is, no man hath ever put more plain difference betwixt the wicked will of Satan, the corrupt and malicious will of man, and the holy and most just will of God, than we do in all our doctrine and writings. And yet you accuse us that we attribute to God that which is proper to the Devil, that is, to move the thought of men to do evil.

How far that impiety is from all our cogitations, as God one day shall manifestly reveal to your eternal confusion, {except that speedily you repent,} so may all godly men, who either have heard our voices or read our writings, bear record how justly you accuse us. We constantly affirm, that God neither moved by his Holy Spirit the hearts of the Patriarchs to envy and hatred, neither yet of Pharaoh to cruelty, neither yet to iniquity, for that is naturally born with all men, and needeth the power of the potent Spirit of God to extinguish and quench it, but not to inflame and kindle it. But yet we say that God, who out of darkness produced or brought

forth light, had in that most detestable fact of the Patriarchs both his will and his counsel, far contrary to their minds and purpose, even as he had in the cruel and most unjust death {as concerning the instruments that were the executers} of his dear Son Christ Jesus. Neither yet doth it thereof follow, that evil thoughts, whereunto we are commanded to resist, are moved by him, or yet come from him. For the fountain thereof doth every wicked man so find within himself, that his own conscience shall convict him, that nowhere else is the cause of his iniquity {and of the severe punishment which for the same he shall sustain} to be sought but only within himself, and as proceeding of himself by instigation of the Devil, into whose power he is delivered {as was Saul and others} by the inscrutable and incomprehensible {but yet most just} judgment of God.

If you were either modest or discreet to judge of those things that be well and godly spoken, or yet docility to be taught in those things whereof utterly you declare yourselves ignorant, you could not thus, as in a furious rage, spue forth your venom against God's supreme Majesty; for your horrible blasphemies are not so much spoken against us as against God. As for us, they do no more obscure the manifest light of our doctrine than if in your despite you should spit against the bright sun to impede the brightness thereof. For in none of our writings be you able to show any of these sentences, which maliciously, and without shame, you lay to our charge. "Evil thoughts come from God." "God punisheth man for the offences whereof he is author, and whereunto he provoketh him." "God moved and forced Pharaoh to punish the people."

These, I say, and others your horrible blasphemies, {which we so detest that we affirm the first authors of them to be worthy of most sharp punishment,} you be never able to show in any of our writings. And this might serve for a sufficient answer to all your despiteful railing. But lest you should still glory in your iniquity and gross ignorance, I will discover the same, following your answer in the words of Saint James, saying, "God tempteth no man." If you affirm,

that God neither tempteth the obedience of his servants, neither yet sendeth false prophets to tempt his people, his plain Scriptures will rebuke your vanity. For God tempted Abraham, he tempted his people forty years in the wilderness, he tempteth also by sending false prophets, as Moses doth witness. And therefore you must be compelled to grant, that this word tempting, or to tempt, is diversely taken in the Scriptures; sometimes to try and examine, sometimes to bring to light and knowledge things that be secret in man's heart, sometimes to seek by experience a certainty of things spoken, pronounced, or affirmed, and sometimes to move or to provoke to iniquity; and in this last signification, we confess that God tempteth no man. For as the matter of all iniquity lieth within man, so is he provoked, moved, and stirred thereunto by his own lusts, and instigation of the devil only. And thus, albeit we grant that to move evil thoughts is to tempt, yet we deny the supposition, which is this, ergo, to tempt is to move evil thoughts.

But let us hear further of your profound vanity. "All is good {say you} that comes from the Father of light, {God grant that in your hearts you were assuredly so persuaded,} if evil thoughts come from him, they must be good." And so you conclude, that then was Joseph's words false, and that God may be called the Father of darkness, {oh, execrable is your blasphemy,} because from him come evil thoughts, which are darkness. Answer; if any of us have so written or spoken, let us be stoned to death as execrable blasphemers. And if that you in your blind fury do therewith unjustly burden us, although you may escape the hands of man, yet shall you not escape God's severe and solemn vengeance. It is malice that will not suffer you to understand how that these evils which men willingly commit, in so far as they come from God, are just, profitable, and good. For we most constantly affirm, that the damnation of the Devil, the induration of Pharaoh, the deceiving of Ahab, and other such, in so far as they proceeded from God, are his just and good works; because they are the punishment of sin, the

execution of his just judgments, and a declaration of his justice, which justly is armed against the obstinate rebellion of angels and men. But thereof to conclude, ergo, their evil thoughts, their malicious minds, their hatred and cruelty, came immediately from God, is more than a blasphemy. For all these be, and are found within the offenders, which God doth use, not by an idle permission, {for that is a thing most contrary to his justice,} but effectually, as his wisdom best knoweth, they shall serve to his glory, and that for utility of his chosen children. I say, it is a thing most contrarious to God's justice and power idly to suffer iniquity to be done, if he had no further respect than to the fact as it is committed. For as a man cannot be excused who may impede murder and doth it not, so cannot God's justice be excused by your idle permission, if he had no further respect but to things as they be done by man. And so is God's justice rather accused than maintained by the foolishness of your curious brains, saying, "God permitteth many things which he would not." What vanity is this? Is it not a thing confessed amongst all, that God's power is omnipotent? Who then can compel him to suffer that which he would not? And why doth he willingly suffer things which in his law he hath forbidden? I answer, for the manifestation of his own glory, which is more precious than the heaven and the earth, and all the creatures in the same contained.

And thus doth vanity cause you to fear, that God's justice shall fall into decay, except it be underset and upholden with your foolish distinction betwixt his will and his permission; but we fear not to affirm, that he permitteth nothing which in some respect he will not; for as He is omnipotent and a most loving Father, so should he suffer no calamity to come nor cruelty to be used against his children, except he did before see, yea, and before determined, their comfort and his glory to arise of the same. And will you say that God's glory, the comfort and the preservation of his church, is an evil work, because that wicked men are instruments by whom God's eternal counsel is brought to pass? Was the exaltation of Joseph to honour, the preservation of

Egypt, and of other nations from famine, yea, and the feeding of Jacob and his family, an evil work, because that Joseph's brethren of malice and envy did sell him to the Ishmaelites, and they for lucre did sell him again to Potiphar, whose wife of malice did most unjustly accuse him, and so being in prison, at length he was brought to the knowledge of Pharaoh, and so was promoted for his revelation and wisdom to honour and dignity? O! Say you, it is not this that we do lay to your charge, but you affirm "that God was author of the malice, and of the wicked thoughts of Joseph's brethren." You do belie us most maliciously, for we constantly deny that God either powered in them any malice, or did move by his Holy Spirit any wicked thought into them; for those we say they had of nature, in so far as it is corrupted. But we say, that God used their wicked thoughts and malice to his glory, and to the full comfort of him whose destruction they sought; and that he did not, idly permitting them, but effectually working by such instruments and means as his wisdom had before appointed. Rage now as you list; for albeit to you this saying is vain, that God worketh all things for his own glory; yet will not God have his glory measured by the vanity of your brain. "We glorify God {say you} when we judge him worthy to be glorified." Answer; if you understand that then only, and at none other time else, do men glorify God but when they confess him worthy of glory, you are ignorant, foolish, and manifest liars; for your argument is no better than if I should say, man sleepeth in the night season, therefore no man may or can sleep at any other time. If your master Castellio had considered that such an argument is vain and foolish, he had not heaped together so many sophistical reasons, by the which you and others are abused.

To make this matter somewhat more plain. If the glory of God consists in the manifestation of his mercy, of his truth, of his power, of his wisdom, and of his most just judgments, then do all creatures glorify God, whether they judge him worthy or unworthy of the same; for David affirmeth, "that the heavens declare the glory of God," and yet have they neither judgment nor

understanding. "The heaven and the earth, {saith Isaiah,} are replenished with his glory," and in another place, "the beasts of the field shall preach my glory, the dragons and the owls, because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen," and Achan also was commanded to give glory unto God. Joshua 7:19. "The earth shall be filled {saith Habakkuk} with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD." Zachary, also, the Prophet, saith, "for his glory hath he sent unto the nations which have spoiled you." Finally, shall not Satan and the Reprobate in their just condemnation give glory unto God, and do you think that all these creatures judge God to be worthy of glory, in such sort as they acknowledge his power, his wisdom, his justice, and from their whole heart submit themselves to his holy will? I trust you do not; for we know that Satan is a spirit confirmed in malice, and rebellious against God, and yet is he compelled even in torments to give glory unto God, in so far as in his just damnation he declareth God's power and just judgments. And therefore I say, that you restrain the glory of God within too straight and narrow limits, when that you will that it shall extend no further than to such as from their heart judge God worthy of glory; the which pertaineth to his chosen children only, and can never be given by the reprobate, for such glory must proceed from faith, which is not common unto all, but is the special gift given to God's elect; and yet nevertheless by other means God declareth his glory, even in the vessels of his wrath, as is before declared.

Of the example of Nebuchadnezzar, you can make but a particular conclusion, in this form. Nebuchadnezzar after he had felt the just punishment of his pride and arrogancy gave glory unto God; ergo, some man after punishment giveth glory unto God. If you make your conclusion extend any further, it is false; for if you say, that all men after punishment give glory unto God with the same confession that he gave, many examples may be shown to the contrary. If you say, that none other giveth glory unto God except such as so be punished, that will be proved likewise false. And if you

say, that God's glory doth shine in none except in those that acknowledge and confess God to be merciful and just, that is most vain of all. And thus I say your conclusion must be but particular.

The reasons and the conclusion which you make upon these words of David, "praise God all you nations," are so foolish on the one part, and so filthy and execrable upon the other, that amongst all nations you ought not only to be mocked, but also to be had in horror and detestation. First, you say, "if God must be praised amongst all nations, then must God's works be such as all nations may know them and praise them." I answer, even so they are, and such amongst all nations as have the eyes of their minds illuminated by God's Holy Spirit, do see just cause why that they ought to praise God's wisdom, even in all his works. But you proceed, saying, "there is no nation which at any time shall acknowledge God to be just, for that he punisheth man for that whereunto he himself did provoke him." And so, after the example of the priests of the Philistines you ask this question, "if God should punish man because he hath a beard, should any glory redound to God thereof, seeing he has given us beards himself?" And so you scoff and jest at us, saying that we be very religious, because we say that none ought to speak so irreverently of God's works. God is witness, that I write not without some grief of heart, neither yet that I affirm this which I am to speak for privy hatred which I bear against the person of any man; but in God's presence I say, that rather than such horrible blasphemies should have been fostered in my heart, devised in my brain, written by my pen, and pronounced by my mouth and tongue, that rather I would my carcass should have suffered most cruel and vile death; yea, and further, I say, that better it had been for you never to have been born, than thus blasphemously to expose God's great majesty to opprobrium and mocking; for I appeal to the judgment of the heaven and the earth, and of all creatures in the same contained, if ever that Julian the Apostate spake more disdainfully of God than here you write.

But for the instruction of the simple reader, to answer you more reasonably than your irreverent scoffing deserveth, I say, first, that the mind of David was not to teach us what every nation and every particular man amongst the Gentiles shall do, but what was the duty of every nation, every people, and every man to do, when God's mercies should be offered unto them. And therefore, if you conclude all nations to praise God, in such sort as David meaneth, because that the Holy Ghost by his mouth commandeth all nations to praise God; you make no better an argument than if you should affirm, that every man loveth God with all his heart, with all his mind, and with all his strength, because that God so commandeth. This is one portion of your ignorance. The second followeth, "God's works, say you, must be such as all nations may know them and praise them." I answer, if you understand that all that praise God unfeignedly from their hearts must have some knowledge of his mercies, goodness, just judgments, and wondrous works, we dissent not from you. But if you say {as by your process is evident that you do} that except all nations perceive and understand the very ground of God's justice, that God amongst them shall have no glory, then as we lament your foolishness, so we detest your error; for albeit that the natural man can never attain to the knowledge of those things which God purposeth, yet shall not God be defrauded of his glory, no, not in the most carnal and wretched man. Christ Jesus was sent into the world, and came to that people which was called his own, and his glory did so shine to the eyes of some, that they did acknowledge it to be the glory of the only Son of God. But did the princes and the priests and the whole nation of the Jews see the same glory, and so confess him as did the elect? Saint Paul witnesseth the contrary, saying, "if they had known, they had not crucified the King of Glory." Paul was appointed a preacher to the Gentiles, amongst whom he most faithfully and most boldly did open the treasures of God's great mercies, and of the glory of his Son Christ Jesus, but did every city, realm, nation, or man, to whom these treasures were opened,

so receive, understand, and embrace them, that for the same they glorified God? The contrary is evident. But was God therefore defrauded of his glory, even in the midst of a wicked generation? God forbid, for as the eyes of some were lightened, and so did glorify the word of the Lord, so such as remained obstinate, did {and shall} glorify God, in so far as his just judgments were and shall be executed against them. If you fear no punishment, rage as you list. To your blasphemies I have before answered; for none of us doth impute upon God that he punisheth any man for anything that he provoketh him to do; for iniquity cometh not of God's provocation, motion, nor Holy Spirit, as that before we have declared; and therefore, as God hath revealed to us a more assured knowledge in his holy Scriptures than the Philistines priests had, so are we bold to affirm that which was hid from them, and which also you cannot abide; to wit, that all creatures are compelled to serve to God's glory, in such sort as his wisdom hath appointed them; and yet that the wills of men are neither violently moved nor enforced by God to commit iniquity, to the which all men are ready bent of natural corruption.

Amongst many foolish and most disagreeing similitudes which your captain Castellio useth for probation of his purposes, {for in such doth stand the chief ground of his divinity,} none can be more foolish nor further repugnant to that which he and you would prove, than is this, "if God should punish a man because he hath a beard, should any glory redound to God thereof, seeing he hath given us beards himself?" Hereof you will infer that if God punish sin, which he hath willed or appointed to be, then can he not be just. But let us examine if your simile doth agree even in the chief points, in the which, if it prove anything, it must agree. First, we know that the beard of man was created by God, but who amongst us did yet ever affirm that sin and iniquity was made or created by God? Sin, we confess, was foreseen, yea, and ordained in the incomprehensible counsel of God, and that for the most just and the most righteous end and purpose. But that it

was made or created by God, that are you not able to prove by our doctrine. Thus doth your similitude halt in the chief member; for they must be both alike God's creatures and creation, if God shall be bound no more to punish man for having of the one than for having of the other. Moreover the beard of man so springeth, groweth, and abideth of a mere natural motion, that albeit men sleep, eat, drink, do, or what soever actions pleaseth them, {not taking care or solicitude of their beard,} it cometh nevertheless to that state and perfection that nature will suffer. But hath man sin none otherwise than thus? Doeth man sin, I say, having neither will, mind, nor appetite to sin, or doth not sin proceed from so voluntary and corrupt motion, that the will, the judgment, the understanding, and appetites, yea, the whole man, and all his cogitations, are subject to sin, and bent upon iniquity at all times? Be judges yourselves how well do the parts of your similitudes agree? Thus with greater modesty have I answered your foolishness, than your scoffing scurrility deserveth.

Where you affirm, "that albeit there be some secrets of God unknown to us, yet is the judgment of God known and made manifest to us in the word." I would ask of you, if you can, by the plain word, assign causes of all God's judgments from the beginning, and of those judgments which that day shall be put in execution, when the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed. And if you be able so to do, you should be profitably occupied, {as I think,} if by your plain and simple writing you would study to put an end to this controversy; the chief point whereof standeth in this, that we affirm, that causes able to satisfy the curiosity of man cannot be assigned from God's plain Scriptures. Why God permitted a great number of his angels to fall, of whom he hath redeemed none, but reserveth them to judgment? Why God did suffer man to fall, and yet of one mass elected some vessels of mercy to honour, and appointed others for sin to damnation? And finally, as before I have said, why God deferred the sending of his Son so long, and why, also, that his again coming is so long delayed? If you will answer that these two last are

resolved by the Scriptures, the one to be as the Apostle writes, lest that the fathers should have been made perfect without us; and the other, that the number of God's elect children might be fully complete, which we confess to be a reason most strong, and sufficient for all God's children, neither yet do we require any other; but yet the curious brain will not so be quieted, but it will still demand, may not God in one moment, if so it please him, fulfill the number of his chosen children, as well as He of nothing did create the heaven and the earth, and shortly, in the space of six natural days, set all things in perfect order?

Consider with yourselves what you do take in hand, if you will affirm that all God's judgments be so known, that a sufficient reason of every one may be assigned from the Word. And if you say, there be some things secret, then consider, I beseech you, that the Holy Ghost hath never made mention of any greater secret than that which lieth hid in God's most just judgments, which Paul affirmeth to be incomprehensible; and David saith, they are deep and so profound, that neither can the understanding of man, nor of angel, reach to the bottom of the same.

Why you should accuse us that we should affirm, that God shall judge the world, not according to Christ's Evangel plainly revealed, but according to some other secret will, I see neither cause nor reason? For no men do more constantly abide by that which is written and revealed, no men do less care to seek for new revelations or uncertain authorities, than we do. Our continual doctrine is, that God shall absolve from damnation such as by true faith embrace his dear Son Christ Jesus; and shall condemn to fire inextinguishable all infidels, and such as delight in manifest impiety and wickedness. And this judgment do we believe that God shall pronounce by his Son Christ Jesus, to whom all judgment is given. And for none other secret will in that matter do we search. But if I must, I could lay to some of your charges that which none of you can be able to deny, to wit, that some of you have written {besides your privy information} that there is a doctrine more

perfect than ever Saint Paul committed to writing; yea, and further, that some of you have called the whole Scriptures of God in doubt; and some do affirm, that none is able by the Word written to decide the controversies that this day be in Religion. And therefore, that we must have new prophets and new revelations from heaven, before that any public and general reformation shall be made. If any of you think that these things are but imagined by me, let him, under his own name, impugn them, and I shall show witnesses; which at this time for divers causes I omit. Your jesting at us, your bold judgment and condemnation by you pronounced against us, we remit to him who shortly shall declare which of the two sorts be drowned in infidelity, and leaving God's plain Scriptures, have followed the vanities of their own imaginations. Now shortly to that which followeth in these words.

THE ADVERSARY.

Another proof brings you of that which is written, "God moved David to number Israel and Judah." To which I answer, that which is written, "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number the people." I am certain that if it were not for this manifest scripture, you would attribute the wicked provocation of the Devil to God. But here we may see a great light to understand many other places of the Scriptures, which seemeth to affirm God to be the author of any evil; for by these two places we may see that God is called to be the author of the thing which he suffered; as because he suffered the obstinate resisting of Pharaoh, he is called the author thereof. So because he left Shimei to the lewdness of his own mind, and suffered him to curse David, God is called the author of his cursing; so the Patriarchs being left of God, did sell their brother; and here now David being left of God to number the people by the provocation of the Devil, whereunto he was no more moved by God than when he killed Uriah. To this you say, that we do but flatter God when we do assign any difference between his will and his permission or his

sufferance, for God permitteth nothing {say you} but that which he wills. If you meant so that God permitteth nothing but that which he will permit, I would then hold your saying true. But forasmuch as you declare your meaning to be this, that whatsoever God permitteth he willeth it absolutely, this is an erroneous saying; for God permitteth and suffereth all the wickedness which is done upon the earth, and will you say, that God willeth absolutely all such wickedness? God forbid that the people of God should be so persuaded to believe such an abomination. I say you are the prophets of the Devil, which teach such filthy doctrine; and you say, you be the prophets of God. Now of necessity one of us lieth, for if you be the prophets of God, than I lie; and if you be the prophets of the Devil, than do you lie. And if God wills us to say the truth, he wills not that we lie, for then he should will two contraries, which is impossible; yet one of us doth lie, which must be by the permission and suffering of God, and not by his will. Whereof it followeth, that there is difference betwixt the suffering and the will of God. The Lord was angry with the careless heathen, because when God was a little angry with the Israelites, they did their best to destroy them. Then suffered God the heathen thus to punish his people more grievously than he willed them to do; wherefore there must be a difference between the will of God and his suffering. Obed the prophet reproved the Israelites, because they afflicted Judah more grievously than God would they should have done. Then must the Israelites have done this by the permission of God, and not by his will. The prodigal son wasted all his goods riotously; if you say that so was his father's will, it should be a great absurdity; wherefore it must needs follow that the father suffered that which he willed not. The father willed both his sons to go and labour in his vineyard, yet not both, but only one of them did his father's will; so the father suffered the other which went not, against his will. Thus we may see a great difference between the will and the permission of God. A notable saying we have in the prophecy of Jeremiah against this error, which teacheth that sin is committed, not only by the permission of

God, but also against his will, "they have {saith he} built high places for Baal to vow their sons and daughters unto Moloch, which I never commanded them, neither came it ever in my thought to make Judah sin with such abomination." Here we see that Judah committed that which was contrary to God's revealed will, "for I never commanded them," {saith he,} and against his secret will, "for it came never in my thought," saith he. Then did they sin by the permission of God against his will. "Thy ways and thy thoughts brought thee to this, saith the Lord." If it was the Lord's secret will that the Israelites should sin, and it was also the Israelites thoughts and will to sin, then were they both of one mind. And as the Lord outwardly by the word willeth them not to do evil, so they outwardly did promise to keep God's law, and worshipped him with their lips. By this it seemed that both inwardly and outwardly they were conformed to God, after your opinion; wherefore he ought not to have been offended with them. I am ashamed to write the abominable absurdities which may be gathered of your poisoned doctrine. The Lord shall raise up the Spirit of the King of the Medes, which hath already a desire to destroy Babylon, by what means should the Lord stir him up to do anything which already is bent to do it, but by suffering him? And yet is the Lord called the doer thereof. And therefore it is written, "let one deceitful offender come against another, and one destroyer come against another," for what needed God to move the wicked to do wickedly, which, being given over of God, do imagine nothing but wickedness; and his master the devil sleepeth never, but is always with him, tempting him with evil thoughts, and provoking him to perform his wicked imaginations.

ANSWER.

The more nigh you draw to the end, the less you prove your purpose, but the more you utter your malice and venom. No just cause see we, why that the place of the books of the Kings shall be explained by that which is

written in the Chronicles, in such sort as you require, to wit, that nothing be left to God in that grievous offence of David, except an idle and only permission. For the Holy Ghost feareth not to say, "the wrath of the Lord God was yet moved against Israel, and stirred up David against them; that he said, go and number Israel and Judah." Here plain it is that the Eternal God, who was angry against Israel, did stir or move David to number them, not by an idle permission, as you allege, but by such motion as nothing repugnant to his justice. Where you say, the other place explaineth this, for it affirmeth that "the Devil stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel," I answer, as the one place is repugnant nothing to the other, so doth it not explain the other in such sense as you adduce. For it is repugnant not to say, that God, Man, and the Devil work in one fact and action, as in the histories of Job, Ahab, Shimei, and Pharaoh, is manifest. God, for just causes, giveth his commandment and power to Satan, {as to his instrument,} be he never so wicked, to do what in his eternal counsel was before decreed. Satan, of a wicked and rebellious mind, chooses such instruments, and useth such means as God likewise hath appointed. Men, in all wicked actions, of their free and voluntary motion, do follow their corrupt and wicked affections, in declaring their pride, vanity, malice, or cruelty; which wicked affections, in so far as they are wicked, we confess that God will not, for he can will no iniquity. But yet that his eternal and almighty power shall be judged so idle, that it doth nothing in such actions but only suffer, we cannot admit, for such reasons as we have before alleged, where that we did examine the difference betwixt God's will and his permission.

You retain in your old nature, {and justly I might say, the nature of the Devil,} most maliciously affirming us to say, that whatsoever God permitteth, he willeth it absolutely, and so that absolutely he willeth all wickedness. Which saying, as you be never able to prove upon us, so do we confess it not only erroneous, but also so blasphemous, that whosoever dare pronounce or affirm the same deserveth death. For we

most constantly in word and writing affirm, that absolutely God willeth no iniquity; for all his works, in so far as they proceed from his wisdom and infinite goodness, are holy and just, and therefore do we make God author of no sin, which only proceedeth from the fountains that be corrupted, that is, from the devil and from man, as in divers places most evidently we have declared.

Because I do perceive that greatly you delight in your pregnant wits, {I will not say foolish vanity,} I will recite your whole words, by the which you would seem to prove contrariety in God, except that we would grant a difference betwixt God's will and his permission. "I say," saith the author of your book to us, "that you are the prophets of the Devil, which teach such filthy doctrine; and you say, you be the prophets of God. Now, of necessity one of us lieth; for if you be the prophets of God, I lie; and if you be the prophets of the Devil, you lie. And if God wills us to say the truth, he wills not that we lie, for then he should will two contraries, which is impossible; yet one of us doth lie, which must be by the permission and suffering of God, and not by his will; whereof it followeth, that there is difference betwixt the suffering and the will of God."

It appeareth that in this description of persons in which you oppose yourselves to us, you would more declare what is your judgment and opinion of us, and what you would that we should be esteemed of others, than that you greatly do travail to prove any contrary in God's will by the same. For his eternal wisdom seeth the means how that his commandment and his will are not contrarious the one to the other, albeit that he command one thing, and yet for just causes will wicked men to do the contrary; which kind of contrariety and repugnance doth so blind your eyes, that you cannot see how God can command all men to speak truth; and yet for just causes before seen and determined in his counsel, that he will the devil and his slaves to delight in lies. Albeit, I say, that the appearance of this contrariety blind you, yet will not God's truth cease to be truth, neither will the liberty of his eternal Godhead be brought

into bondage to your corrupt judgment. His commandment and his will do neither debate, neither fight betwixt themselves, but do agree in all things, even as do his mercy, his justice, his wisdom, and his power, albeit oftener it is that his justice doth chastise such as upon whom he hath determined to have mercy. Even so he commandeth men to obey his commandments, whom he not only foresaw to be disobedient, but for most just causes willeth his glory to appear even in their unrighteousness and lies. And this he doth without all contrariety in his holy will, to the full knowledge whereof albeit you cannot attain; yet more profitable it were for you to be ignorant of such things as God reserveth to be revealed in the time appointed in his eternal counsel, than thus without all reverence and fear to trouble your foolish brains in devising such absurdities as may seem to oppugn God's eternal verity, which in the end will triumph to your destruction, shame, and confusion, if obstinately you proceed as you have begun. For albeit that he loveth truth and hateth lies, and albeit that he commandeth man to speak the truth and forbiddeth man to bear false witness, yet feareth he not to give a commandment to that wicked spirit to go forth, and to be a lying spirit in the mouths of all Ahab's false prophets. Yea, further, he gave him power to work that in the false prophets which he forbiddeth all men to do. For he commandeth that no man shall deceive another, and yet giveth he power to the Devil to be a lying spirit in the mouths of the false prophets, and to them he giveth power to deceive Ahab.

If you list to lay contrariety to the charge of God, prepare your wings, and with Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon say, "we will pass up to the heavens, and shall establish our seats above the stars of God, we shall pass up upon the height of the clouds, and we shall be like to the Most Highest." Yea, if thus you will call his secret counsels to examination and trial, you must be judges and superiors to him. Thus justly I might allude and scoff your reasons, as vanities most unworthy to be answered; but yet having respect to the simple, I will gather your argument, and form it as strongly as

yourselves can, and I will answer so much of the same as you think unable to be answered. Your argument is this. "God cannot will two contraries; but to speak the truth, and to lie, are contraries; therefore he cannot will them both. But he permitteth men to lie, and willet them to speak the truth; there is therefore a difference between the will and the permission."

God cannot will two contraries. True it is in himself, in one respect, and for one purpose, he who is author of concord cannot will contrariety; but in consideration of his creatures, for divers respects and sundry purposes, things be not contraries the one to the other, which to our judgments have appearance of contrariety. If you be so well seen in your arts as some of you pretend, you cannot but understand this answer to be sufficient to dissolve whatsoever you have irreverently collected. But yet to make it more sensible to the simple, I say, that in this proposition God cannot will two contraries; and in the conclusion which you make upon the same, you ought to have made a distinction between those things which God simply, {or, as you spake before, absolutely,} will, and between those things which he will for a certain end and purpose, which doth not appear in the external actions. For certain things there be {as in another place I have entreated} which God will, even for themselves, such as be mercy, justice, temperance, chastity, and all other virtues, which he will have to shine in his elect, and please him in Christ Jesus his Son. And yet, nevertheless, he also will cruelty, injustice, excess, filthy life, blindness, and induration, to be in others, as just punishments of their sins, and causes of their condemnation. The last {I say} will God to be in the reprobate, not for the wicked acts sake, which do ever displease his Majesty, but for such ends as his wisdom hath appointed.

Let this be explained by examples, some natural, and some taken from God's Scriptures. There is no man, {except he be of a most cruel nature,} that, considering the incommodities of war and of battle, doth will it for himself. And yet a godly prince pursued by external

enemies, doth not only will his soldiers to fight and to maintain the war, but also he provoketh, he encourageth, and exhorteth his subjects to the same. And why is it? Because that war or battle pleaseth him in the self, or for himself? No, but because without such travail, such danger, and hazard, his subjects cannot live in quietness, and the estate of his Commonwealth cannot be preserved. The same may I say of godly magistrates punishing murderers, adulterers, and blasphemers with death, and yet neither willing the death of any man, neither yet delighting in the shedding of their blood.

In these similitudes I grant somewhat to be unlike, for God's power is not subject to such incommunities unwillingly, as be the powers of men. But yet these similitudes suffice to explain the chief purpose, which is, that man may will two contraries, for divers respects, without any contrariety in himself. For peace and war are contraries; to kill and to save the life are likewise contraries; and yet one man, even at one time, may will both the one and the other, for divers respects and divers ends. He may will peace for the comfortable quietness and felicity that thereof springeth, and, at the same instant, without all contrariety in himself, he may will war, to withstand the fury of the enemy that would oppress his subjects. And may not these things which we perceive to be in creatures be in God in greater perfection, although we perceive not the causes?

Let us try the answer, both by the examples of God's servants, and last by the example of God himself. Lot, no doubt, did agree with God's will, in that he loved chastity, sobriety, and temperance, and hated filthy life, riotous cheer, and excess; for the Holy Ghost beareth him this record, that he was pure and clean both in ears and eyes. But what will had he when he did offer his two daughters to be deflowered, and abused by those villainous persons? Was it contrary to his former will? Did he now begin to delight in that execrable filthiness? Assured I am he did not. But, being oppressed with the present necessity, retaining the same love, will, and mind to chastity, and honest conversation, sought the

next remedy that to him appeared able to have staid the rage of that furious multitude. Upon God I grant falleth no such necessity! But let the chief scope be observed, and we shall understand {that for divers respects} to will two things, whereof the one is contrary to the other, is not to will contrariety. But let us come to God himself. God willeth mercy, justice, and all other virtues, as before we have said, and these he will at all times, and before all times; but is it not possible, therefore, that he can will cruelty, oppression, blood shedding, murder, and death? Who then sent Nebuchadnezzar to destroy, not only the Jews, but also the Moabites and other nations? Who pronounced this sentence, "cursed be he that doth the Lord's work negligently, and he that withdraweth his sword from blood?" Who did create the smiths with their hammers to break down the horns which had dispersed Israel? And finally, who gave his own Son to the cruel death? Who hath subjected the dear spouse of Christ Jesus to afflictions and temporal calamities? Dare you deny, but that it was and is the Eternal God, by whose good will all these things were appointed and decreed? Or were any of them done against his Almighty will? I think you will not so affirm; for the Scripture witnesseth, that God gave his Son to the world, even of determined purpose that he should die, or else who could have compelled his Majesty thereunto, if his will had been repugnant?

Peter affirmeth, "that blessed are we that suffer for the name of Christ," adding this comfortable sentence, "by them {that is, by the persecutors} is the name of God blasphemed, but by you it is glorified. And therefore, let such {saith he} as be afflicted by the will of God, lay down their souls in well doing, as in the hands of a faithful keeper." I Peter 4:19.

Paul witnesseth, that those whom God hath elected in Christ Jesus, he hath also predestinated and before appointed to be like fashioned to the image of his own Son. Of which testimonies it is plain, that the grievous destruction, the abundance of the blood shed among divers nations, the cruel death of Christ Jesus, and the most fearful afflictions of his dearly beloved

Church, did proceed from God's will, insomuch as he did not only suffer them, but also, for most just causes, respects, and ends, which often before I have recited, he did will and appoint them. And yet, in God was there no contrariety; for in the destruction of Jerusalem, and of others, he had not respect simply to the ruin and vastation of those places, but to his just judgments, which were provoked to take vengeance upon the multitude of their sins, which long he had suffered. When our Master Christ Jesus did suffer, he had no delight in the cruelty of those enraged dogs who did crucify him, which as he hated, so after he did most severely punish; but his pleasure and delight was in the Redemption of man, which by none other sacrifice could have been perfected. And this day, and from the beginning, he hath had no pleasure in the blood which is shed, neither in the tyranny which is used against his simple and small flock, but because he will have the members like that Head, he doth a strange work that he may do his own work; that is, he trieth and purgeth by fire our faith from all dross and corruption of earthly affections. But in none of all these is there any contrariety, neither in God, neither in his will, neither in his counsel. For all things be disposed in such order, such consent, and so conveniently, that his glory and the perpetual comfort of his elect doth finally and assuredly follow. And even so it is in the apparent contrariety between you and us. God, no doubt, wills the one of us to affirm lies, to rail, to blaspheme, and most unjustly to accuse the other; he wills the other to sustain the cause of the truth patiently, to bear opprobrious words and slanderous reports, referring judgment unto Him who righteously and in equity shall judge. Is there, therefore, any contrariety in God's will? None at all! For the divers respects and ends being considered, the same consent shall now be found in this apparent contrariety, which hath remained from the increase of God's church. For in all ages hath God willed his true Prophets, with all boldness and constancy, to sustain the cause of his simple verity, how odious that ever it was unto the world. And in their contrary, he

hath raised false prophets, to whom he hath given the efficacy of errors, {for contrary purposes I grant,} to wit, that his people may be tried, his faithful servants exercised and humbled, and, finally, that such as delight not in verity may be given over to believe lies. Go to now, and prove contrarieties.

In the words of Zachary, you show your ignorance, and in collecting the mind of Oded, you plainly declare your accustomed falsehood, in further stretching the mind of the Prophet than his words will bear. Which thing I will first show by reciting the plain words, and so return to the Prophet Zachary. "There was in Samaria a Prophet of the Lord, {saith the history,} whose name was Oded, and he went out before the host that came to Samaria, and said unto them, behold, because the Lord God of your fathers is wroth with Judah, he hath delivered them into your hands, and you have slain them in a rage that reacheth up to heaven. And now you purpose to keep under the children of Judah and Jerusalem as servants and handmaids unto you, but are not you such, that sins are with you, before the Lord your God?" II Chronicles 28:9-10. These be his words in that matter, by the which if you be able to prove that the Israelites did more than God in his eternal counsel had appointed that they should do against Judah and Jerusalem, we will patiently hear your probation and reasons. If you say, "the Prophet reproveth them of their cruelty, therefore they did more than God would," that doth not follow, for the just will of God must not be measured by the cruelty of their fact, but by his own word, which doth affirm, that God gave over Judah into the hands of the King of Syria, and into the hands of the King of Israel, who did strike them with a great slaughter, and that for the sins and abominable idolatry which they and Ahaz their King had committed. We hear and see affirmed by the Holy Ghost, that God gave them over into the hands of their enemies, which thing he did willingly, and not by permission, as you write.

Now, to the place of Zechariah, in which, I say, you show gross and wicked ignorance. For if your

interpretation should be received, then of necessity it should follow, that in God their lacked power to impede and stay the fury of those cruel men, who in their victory did so insolently rage. For if God would only have had the Jews gently corrected, and not to have been so severely and rigorously destroyed; and yet, that against all manner and sort of his will they were so cruelly entreated, it cannot be denied but that the cruelty and rage of the Babylonians was greater than God could impede or stay. How blasphemous and false this is, the godly doth understand. "O, {say you,} but so do the words of the text sound, for they say, I am greatly angry against the careless heathen. For I was but a little angry against Zion, but they have helped forward the affliction." Zechariah 1:15. I answer, that if you were not more malicious than ignorant, you might easily perceive that those words were spoken, not to prove that anything was done against Israel and Judah which God had not appointed and commanded, but to instruct the Prophet, that the will and counsel of God, in punishing of his people, was far other than was the will and counsel of those that did destroy them; and yet their long bondage should have another end than either they themselves or their enemies did understand.

That nothing was done against that people which the Lord had not appointed, yea and commanded, the same Prophet doth affirm; saying, "my words and my statutes {he meaneth the threatenings and punishments} which I have commanded my servants the Prophets, have they not apprehended your fathers? In so much that they have converted and said, even as the Lord of Hosts hath determined and appointed to do unto us, according to our ways, and according to our imaginations, so hath he done to us." Except that you will belie the Holy Ghost, you must confess, that God had commanded, God had appointed, and determined so to punish his people. Yea, Amos the Prophet feareth not to say, "shall there be evil in a city {that is, any punishment or plague} and the Lord hath not done it?" Amos 3:6. "Why is he then offended {say you} against the proud and careless heathen?" I answer, because

they neither had respect to God's will, counsel, nor commandment, but to their own private commodity, and to the satisfying of their cruel appetites. For they did not destroy Jerusalem, willing or minding to punish the offenses of the people committed against God. Neither yet did they carry them to Babylon of purpose that God might be glorified in their deliverance. No, they had determined the plain contrary, to wit, that Jerusalem should remain desolate forever, that Judah should be the inheritance of strange nations; and so should God's promise be false and vain. And in very deed the Jews themselves, in the extremity of their trouble, yea, and when the temple began to be re-edified, were not free from these temptations; and therefore doth God assure his Prophets that his love was great towards Zion; that he would destroy that nation which intended their destruction; that he would deliver his people; that the warfare of Jerusalem was at an end; that her iniquity was remitted; that she had received double punishment for all her sins from the hand of the Lord; and that therefore he would take the dolorous cup of anguish and sorrow out of her hand, and would give it into the hands of those that did trouble her. Isaiah 40:2. By which {and many more} promises and threatenings, God doth not mean that anything was done in Jerusalem which he had not appointed; but by the one, he did somewhat comfort the troubled hearts of his afflicted people, and by the other, he did show the cause why he would punish these cruel murderers, whose service before he did use in punishing his people. And this doth God most plainly witness in these words, "I was wroth {saith the Lord} with my people, I have polluted mine inheritance, and given them into thy hand, {he speaketh unto Babylon,} thou didst show them no mercy, but didst lay thy very heavy yoke upon the ancient. And thou saidst, I shall be a lady forever, so that thou didst not set thy mind to these things, neither didst thou remember the latter end thereof. Therefore now hear, thou that art given to pleasures and dwelleth careless, she saith in her heart, I am, and none else; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall know the loss of children." Isaiah 47:6-8. Hereof, I

say, it is plain that the punishment of God's people {as before I have proved} is his own appointment and will. But because the punishers look to another end, therefore are they criminal before God's justice.

In adducing both these examples, that is, of Israel punishing Judah, and of the Babylonians destroying Jerusalem, I find you in another most gross error besides this which I have confuted. For you seem to affirm, that if the Israelites and Babylonians had kept a measure, and had not exceeded the bounds which God had appointed and commanded, they had not sinned; for {say you} he willed the one, but permitted the other. Then in so far as they did his will they sinned not, but in so far as they exceeded his will, and did more, which he would not, but only did suffer it, they sinned. This is your profound divinity and godly meditations of God, of his justice, judgments, and works, incomprehensible to man's reason. Are you able to prove that Nebuchadnezzar came to Jerusalem, or that therein he spilt, or his captains and cruel soldiers, one drop of blood which God in his eternal counsel had not appointed and willed? The testimonies of all prophets rebuke your vanity. Ezekiel saith, "thus saith the Lord, behold, I come against thee, and will draw my sword out of his sheath, and cut off from thee both the righteous and the wicked. Seeing then that I will cut off from thee both the righteous and wicked, therefore shall my sword go out of his sheath against all flesh from the south {meaning throughout all the land} to the north, that all flesh may know that I the Lord have drawn my sword out of his sheath, and it shall not return any more." Ezekiel 21:1-5. Mark and consider how God attributeth all to himself, as after yet the Prophet more plainly speaketh, saying, "and he hath given it to be furbished, that he may handle it, this sword is sharp, and is furbished, that he may give it into the hand of the slayer," &c. Ezekiel 21:11. "And I will pour out mine indignation upon thee, in the fire of my wrath, and deliver thee into the hand of beastly men, and skillful to destroy. Thou shalt be in the fire to be devoured; thy blood shall be in the midst of the land; and thou shalt be

no more remembered, for I the Lord have spoken it." Ezekiel 21:31-32. If these be the words of him that only suffereth, and willeth not things to be done, let the indifferent reader judge.

Why they did sin, notwithstanding that God in his counsel had willed and appointed this severe punishment against his people, I have before declared, to wit, because that neither knew they God's will, counsel, nor commandment; neither yet had they any respect to obey God or to fulfill his will. That Nebuchadnezzar was ignorant of God's will and counsel, is evident by that which is written in the same Prophet, in the place above expressed. For after he was come forth of his country, and was with his army far proceeded in his journey, he was uncertain whether he should go against Rabbath, the strong city of the sons of Ammon, or against Jerusalem; and so, committing the matter to his sorcerers and divines, {the lots being cast,} he taketh his journey against Judah and Jerusalem; whereof it is plain, that he neither knew nor understood by the motion of God's Holy Spirit his holy will, neither yet commandment. And in destroying the city, and punishing the people, who will say that he or his servants hated sin, pride, cruelty, idolatry, and abominations, with the which he and his whole realms were replenished? And the same do I say of the Israelites, who did not only sin because they exceeded measure in punishing Judah, but because that against God's law and express commandment they made unjust war against their brethren. They neither looked, neither yet ought they too have looked to God's secret counsel, but to his plain law, which commanded them to love their brethren, not to murder, not to spoil, not to covet, &c. Against the which, because they did offend, even in the first motion and purpose of their war, in God's presence they were murderers, thieves, oppressors, and covetous persons, before that ever they set their foot forth of their houses. And so, even that which he in his eternal counsel willed them to do, did no less displease him as touching their wicked minds, than did that which

you affirm he suffered. For every transgression of his law, is before his justice odious and sinful.

If this cannot correct your judgment, yet I am assured that it shall declare your vanities, who dare conclude, that if the Israelites and Babylonians had kept measure in punishing Judah, that then they had not sinned. But the contrary I affirm; and say, that the first thought and purpose moving them to make war, was sin before God. Touching the permission of the father towards his prodigal son; and touching the son which promised to go and to labour in his father's vineyard, and went not; I have before answered, that similitudes ought not further to be stretched than the mind of the Holy Ghost is to teach in the same. And in these places, it is evident, that Christ teacheth, not how God is compelled to suffer many things which he will not; neither yet was it his mind in those similitudes, to teach us what difference there is between God's will and his permission; but in the one he teacheth, that in God there is mercy towards the sinner, yea, and towards such a sinner as unthankfully and disobediently hath departed from God; and that there be some proud children, who, by reason of their continuance in their father's house, become disdainful that others should be preferred or compared unto them, and therefore they grudge, they murmur, and they envy the liberality of their father, and his mercy showed to the son that before appeared lost. To whom this might be applied, besides the Jews and the Gentiles, you are not ignorant. The other similitude doth teach us, that many in mouth say, "Lord, Lord, I go, I go," whose heart did never feel what is the reverence and true obedience due to God's Majesty.

We confess no less than Jeremiah doth write; for we say, that God neither commanded such abominations as his people committed; neither yet that ever they did enter into his heart, that is, they did never delight nor please him; neither yet did he ever will them for the actions themselves. But when you shall be able to prove, that it did not appertain to his just judgments to punish those idolaters with such blindness, that they

became more cruel than brute beasts, then shall you be more able to prove that in no wise did God will that cruelty. God willed not those abominations for the murder committed and blood that was shed, for that he hated, and did punish; but he willed that a testimony should be left to the world, in what blindness man falleth when he declined from God and from his true honour; of which fearful example, you and your sect ought to take heed.

The Israelites in killing their children, no doubt, did even agree with God's will, and were of one mind with his judgments, as you declare yourselves to be in spewing forth these horrible blasphemies against his supreme Majesty. For as they, leaving the plain will of God, declared in his law, concerning their oblations and making of sacrifice, in a blind zeal to honour God, as they pretended, with sacrifices more precious and acceptable, {because their children to them were more dear than oxen or bullocks,} as they, I say, in so doing, leave to us a fearful example of God's judgments; so do you by these your horrible blasphemies, which in fury, jesting, and scoffing, you vomit forth against God, his eternal truth, and against the true professors of the same. And thus far, I confess, was God's most just will fulfilled in them, as also it is {and hereafter shall be} fulfilled in you. That because they, in the vanity of their imaginations, declined from God's will revealed, God of his justice would make them spectacles to all ages following, what were his judgments {as I have said} against idolaters; even so you, neither content that God shall use his creatures as best serveth for his glory, neither yet that any justice be in his eternal Godhead, to the which your reason can not attain, are given over by God's will unto reprobate minds, thus horribly to blaspheme his Majesty; to admonish the generation present and to come, that with greater sobriety, more fear and reverence, they speak and think of those mysteries that be incomprehensible unto man.

I have before declared, that no man leaving the will of God revealed in his Word, doth either obey him, either yet please him, and so can he never be of one

mind with God that committeth things forbidden by his Word. But why that God forbiddeth iniquity to all, {which also in all men he hateth,} and yet that betwixt his vessels of mercy and the vessels of wrath he maketh such difference, that to the one he giveth medicine and purgation against the natural venom so effectually, that it worketh their salvation in the end; and to the other, he denieth that grace; he will not make you, nor any of your faction, further of counsel than he hath expressed in these words, "he hath mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he maketh hard-hearted."

That Satan hath so enraged you, that upon that doctrine which the Holy Ghost most evidently doth teach, you dare gather this abominable absurdity, that God and wicked idolaters are both of one mind, that they both inwardly and outwardly do obey him, you have just cause not only to be ashamed, but also to quake, tremble, and fear, for that horrible blindness whereunto you are fallen, and for those just vengeance which your pride doth crave of God's justice. Just art thou, O Lord, in all thy works!

To your question, asking, by what means should the Lord stir up the mind of the King of the Medes to destroy Babylon, who had before a desire ready bent to do the same, but by suffering and permitting him? To this question {I say} doth Isaiah the Prophet answer, saying, "thus saith the Lord unto Cyrus, his anointed, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; therefore will I weaken the loins of kings, and open the doors before him, and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee and make the crooked straight, I will break the brassen doors, and burst the iron bars, and I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and the things hid in secret places," &c. Isaiah 45:1-3. If there be in you either modesty or aptness to learn, this is sufficient to instruct you how God raised up his Spirit, which before was ready bent to destroy Babylon; to wit, in giving unto him so prosperous success, that no impediment was able to resist or withstand him; which thing God did not by an idle permission or sufferance as you imagine, but by his power, which did effectually

work in all that his journey, as the Prophet here, and in many other places, doth witness. Which thing doth Cyrus himself also confess, in these words, "the Lord God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath commanded me to build him an house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah." Ezra 1:1-2. And the Holy Ghost affirmeth that the Lord did stir up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, to cause this proclamation to be made. Dare you say that to give all the kingdoms of the earth to one man is nothing else but to suffer him to raze and possess them at his appetites? Daniel affirmeth the contrary, saying, "the name of God be praised for ever and ever, for wisdom and strength are his, and he changeth the times and seasons, he taketh away kings; he setteth up kings, he giveth wisdom to the wise, and understanding to those that understand," &c. Daniel 2:21. And David also saith, "he that raiseth the needy out of the dust, and lifteth up the poor out of the dung, that he may set him with the princes, even with the princes of his people." I Samuel 2:8. And therefore, because the Holy Ghost giveth to God's prudence and working power, that which you most wickedly attribute to his permission or idle sufferance, I fear not to say, that as God stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, effectually moving it to give liberty and commandment to his people to return to Jerusalem, and to restore the Temple; so did he also stir up his spirit in enterprising his first journey against Babylon, in taking from him all fear, enduing him with an heretical and bold spirit, {as God himself saith, "I girded thee, though thou hast not known me,"} and giving to him so fortunate success, that all was subject to his empire. And therefore, albeit ten thousand times you will ask, "what needeth God to move the wicked to do wickedly, which being given over of God, imagineth nothing but wickedness, and his master the Devil sleepeth never?" Yet will I answer, that as to destroy Babylon, in so far as it was God's work, it was no wicked deed, but his most just judgment. So albeit Cyrus had never been so much enraged against Chaldea, either by his own pride, either yet by Satan, that neither of both could have brought

anything to pass, except that the Lord had decreed to perform his work in Babylon, as he himself did threaten, saying, "behold, I come unto thee, O thou destroying mountain, saith the Lord, which destroyest all the earth, I will stretch out mine hand upon thee, and roll thee down from the rocks, and will make thee a burnt mountain. They shall not take of thee a stone for a corner, nor a stone for foundations; but thou shalt be destroyed forever, saith the Lord," &c. Jeremiah 51:25. If you see nothing in these and other such threatenings of God, but a bare permission only, I cannot cease to say that you are more than blind. But now to that which followeth in these words.

THE ADVERSARY.

To that which you allege of the Prophet Isaiah, "harden the hearts of this people," &c., for the better understanding of that place, we must note, that which is written in the chapter going before, how the Lord had chosen this people, and planted them as a vineyard, and called all Israel to be judge betwixt him and his vineyard, what more could have been done for it than he had done; and yet when he looked for fruit of equity and righteousness, lo, there was wrong and misery, whereupon followed their induration. For they were hardened of the Lord, that is, as before is said, God gave them over to their own hearts lusts. Further, where he saith to the Prophet, "harden their hearts," we must always consider that their hearts were already hardened, which their wickedness did plainly declare; yet hath he commanded the prophet to do his office, not to make their hearts hard, for that belongeth only to God, who, giving them over to their hearts lusts, hath already hardened them; but the office of a Prophet was to show them the hardness of their hearts, so when he saith he, "harden their hearts," it is as much as show and declare unto them the hardness of their hearts. The like phrase of speech have we in Leviticus, "if the Priest see that the scab is grown abroad in the skin, the Priest shall make him unclean." How should the Priest make

him unclean who is already unclean, and whose flesh he durst not touch, but by declaring him to be unclean? So, how should the Prophet harden their hearts whose hearts were hardened already, and whose hearts he could not touch, but by declaring them to be hardhearted? So saith the Lord to Jeremiah, "drive this people away, that they may go out of my sight; some to death, some to the sword, some to hunger, some to captivity." This was not the office of the Prophet which the Chaldees executed, but the Prophet was here commanded to show, that for their wickedness they should be driven away, some to death, some to the sword, some to hunger, and some to captivity. So Jeremiah took the cup out of the Lord's hand, and made all people drink thereof unto whom the Lord sent him, where there be more nations reckoned than ever Jeremiah did see with his corporal eyes. This place therefore must be understood, as the others conform to the office of the Prophet, which was to show them, that for their wickedness they should drink of the cup of the Lord's wrath, which appeareth more plainly by that which followeth, where he saith, "if they will not receive the cup of thy hand and drink it," that is, if they will not take warning by thee, &c. This interpretation is conformed to the phrase of the Scripture, neither is it contrary to any part of the Word; but if any man hath a better understanding, let him use it to the glory of God. Of these things already spoken, it is sufficiently proved that God hath reprobated and cast away no man before the foundation of the world; but as he hath created man like unto his own image, so he will the death of none, but that all should be saved; neither is he the author or mover to any evil, which with long patience suffereth wickedness to draw men to repentance; neither willet he anything contrary to that which is expressed in his Word. For as God is constant and immutable, of this his holy will he hath uttered and declared unto man to know, the rest reserved he unto himself. Forasmuch as no man is able to comprehend the height and depth thereof, therefore ought no man to go about to prove or improve anything by that which is unknown to him;

wherefore they which affirm and teach that God hath ordained men before the foundation of the world to be damned, so that by no means they can be saved, for such is his secret will, notwithstanding he declareth the contrary in his Word, they must needs have an evil opinion of God, and therefore ought all men of duty to abhor their devilish doctrine. And because I have said that they have an evil opinion of God, I have added here a description of those careless Libertines, who conform God to their doctrine in all points, and a description of the true God; whereby it may appear even unto the simple how abominable their doctrine and opinion in this matter is.

ANSWER.

Whatsoever shall be read in the whole Scriptures, you shall never be able to prove that in these words of Isaiah, "go, and harden the hearts of this people," is nothing else meant, but that the Prophet was only commanded to declare unto them their blindness and hardness of heart. For wheresoever mention is made of the difference betwixt the elect and the reprobate, this virtue is attributed to the Word, that it doth illuminate the eyes and mollify the hearts of the one by the power of the Holy Ghost, and by the contrary, that it doth execrate and more harden the other by reason of their corrupt nature, to the which they are justly left. The Evangelist Saint John, making mention that the Jews did not believe in Christ Jesus, albeit that they had seen his wondrous works, addeth this cause, "therefore {saith he} they could not believe, because Isaiah had said, he hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand in their hearts, and be converted, that I may heal them." John 12:40. Here doth the Evangelist attribute to the Prophet, not only that he declared their blindness, but that God by him did in very deed justly blind their eyes and harden their hearts. But this shall more plainly appear in examining the reasons and Scriptures which you allege for proof of your interpretation.

First, say you, "their hearts were already hardened, which their wickedness did plainly declare; yet hath he commanded the Prophet to do his office, not to make their hearts hard, for that belongeth only to God, who, giving them over to their hearts lusts, hath already hardened them." And so you conclude, that the Prophet did only declare unto them the hardness of their hearts. We do not deny but that their hearts were hardened before, and that justly for their iniquities sake they were given over to their hearts lusts; but whether they were so hardened before the preaching of the Prophet, that after they could be no harder, I greatly doubt. Yea, I nothing doubt to affirm, but that even as the clay by the heat of the sun becometh more hard, and more hard, or as the branch cut of the natural stock doth more and more wither, until that no kind of sap nor moisture doth remain, even so, I say, do the reprobate, from time to time, become more obstinate, more blind, more hard, and more cruel, and that by the Word, which doth plainly rebuke their iniquity, and evidently declare whose children they are. Examples in Scripture hereof are manifest. Some lenity and gentleness appeared in Pharaoh toward the people of Israel, before that Moses, at God's commandment, required their liberty. But that will and word of God, commanding him to let his people go and serve God in the wilderness, did so quickly work in the heart of that reprobate, that the greater hardness of his heart was suddenly felt by the Israelites, to their great grief and grudging discomfort.

In the people of Israel, in their elders, priests, and counsel, appeared some face of justice when Stephen was accused, before that he pronounced these words, "ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, you have ever resisted the Holy Ghost, even as your fathers have resisted, so do you. Whom of the Prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which showed before of the coming of that Just, whom you have now betrayed and murdered." Acts 7:51-52. Before this sentence {I say} there appeared some face of justice, but what ensued, the Holy Ghost doth witness, saying, "when they heard

these things, their hearts burst for anger, and they gnashed at him with their teeth." And after, also, that he gave a more plain confession of Christ Jesus, of his exaltation, glory, power, and majesty, they cried out with a great voice, they stopped their ears, they, as wolves enraged, rushed upon him with one consent, and so, without all order of justice, did stone him to death. If you confess not that the Word of God, proceeding from the mouth of Stephen, did not more harden them, who no doubt were hardened before, you deny a truth that is more than evident.

Divers places more I might adduce for the same purpose, but {having respect to brevity} I stand content with those two, which I doubt not are sufficient to prove, that men that be already hardened, yet by the coming of the plain word, which rebuketh their iniquity, they become more hard. As the owl being blind, even when she appeareth to see best in the night season, but yet in the day time she is more blinded, because that the weakness of her eyes cannot abide the bright beams of the sun; and even so it is with the reprobate, they are always blind and hard-hearted, but when the light of God doth most plainly shine before them, or when they are called from iniquity to virtue, then becometh the word of glad tidings to them a very savor of death, by the which they are both more blinded and more hardened. And so, in your first reason, we dissent from you in that, that you seem to affirm that because the reprobate are once hardened, therefore they can be no more hardened. Your second reason is, "that because it belongeth to God only to make hard their hearts, that therefore there resteth nothing to the Prophets but to show unto them the hardness of their hearts." I am glad that once you will confess that it is nothing repugnant to God's good nature, for just causes, to harden the heart and to make blind the eyes of the reprobate. But that therefore nothing resteth to the Prophets or Apostles, but only to declare unto men their hardness, I cannot admit. For we do find, that God doth so communicate his power with his true messengers and ambassadors, that whatsoever they loose in earth, he doth loose in the

heaven; and whatsoever they bind in earth, he bindeth in heaven; whose sins they remit, they are remitted; and whose sins they retain, they are retained. Matthew 18:18.

The Lord himself saith unto Jeremiah, "behold, I have put my words in thy mouth, and I have ordained thee above nations and kingdoms, that thou mayest root out, destroy, and scatter, and that thou mayest also build up and plant." Jeremiah 1:10. And unto Paul it was said, "and now I shall deliver thee from the nations to the which I send thee, that thou mayest open the eyes of those that be blind, that they may convert from darkness unto light, and from the power of Satan unto God." Acts 26:18. These words do witness, that the effectual power of God doth work with the word which he putteth in the mouths of his true messengers, insomuch, that either it doth edify, lighten, or mollify to salvation; or else it doth destroy, darken, and harden. For the Word of God is of the nature of Christ Jesus; and he is not only come to illuminate and to raise up, but also to make blind and to beat down; as he himself doth witness, saying, "I am come to judgment into this world, that those that see not shall see, and that those that see shall be blind." John 9:39.

And Simeon saith, "behold, this is he that is set for the resurrection and the ruin of many in Israel," insomuch, "that upon whom that stone of offense falleth, it shall burst him to powder." Luke 2:34. And therefore, we cannot admit that the ministry of his blessed Word, preached or published by his faithful messengers, be nothing else but a simple declaration what men be. No, we know that it is the power of God to salvation of all those that believe; that the message of reconciliation is put in their mouths; that the word which they preach hath such efficacy and strength, that it divides asunder the joints and sinews, the bones from the marrow; that the weapons of their warfare are not carnal, but are power in God to the beating down of all strong-holds, by the which the true messengers beat down all councils, and all height which is raised up against the knowledge of God; by the which also they

lead into bondage all cogitations, to obey Christ. We know further, that they have vengeance in readiness against all disobedience; that fire passeth forth of their mouths which devoureth their enemies; that they have power to shut the heaven, that rain descend not in the days of their prophecy. That God's power, both in the one sort and in the other, is contained with his Word, even preached, pronounced, and fore-spoken by his messengers, do all examples in God's Scriptures witness.

At the prayer and prophecy of Elias was the heaven both shut and opened; fire descended from heaven, and consumed those ungodly soldiers with their captains. At the curse of Elisha did bears devour forty-two children that mocked him; the words of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, albeit {for the time that they spake} they were contemned, yet had they such force and effect, that no strength was able to oppose that which they had pronounced. At Peter's word, Ananias and Sapphira did suddenly die. Paul, by his sentence, made Elimas the sorcerer blind; and so forth, the examples be almost without number, that declare that God's power is joined with his Word, not only in saving, {which I think you will admit,} but also in punishing and destroying. If you think it fearful that God's holy Word shall have this power and effect to kill, to blind, and to harden, remember first the severe judgments of God against sin, and often call to mind that the fault, nor chief cause, is not in the Word, but in the subject and person in whom it falleth. The Word falling into the heart of the elect, doth mollify and illuminate, as before is said; but falling into the heart of the reprobate, it doth harden and more execrate the same, by reason of the quality and incurable corruption of the person.

And thus, in your second reason, we do utterly dissent from you, and fear not to affirm, that God's true prophets and messengers do not only declare what men be, but that by the Word, which is committed to their charge, effectually they work either light or darkness, life or death, yea, salvation or damnation. The text of Leviticus serveth you nothing, and the text of Jeremiah

is expressly against you. For the High Priest is not commanded to go to a man, in whom no leprosy appeared, and to pronounce what after shall become of him; but the man in whom there is apparent signs of leprosy, is commanded to be led to the Priests, who are commanded to pronounce according to the signs which they see. Consider, I beseech you, the difference between the office of the one and the office of the other, the sentence of the one and the sentence of the other. The one {that is the Priests} go not, neither are they sent, to seek those that have appearance or suspicion of leprosy. But the Prophet is sent by God to them that then was called the people of God, in whom no man could have suspected such blindness, such hardness of heart, and such rebellion as the Prophet is commanded to threaten. The Priests did not, nor might not, pronounce sentence against a man in whom manifest signs of leprosy appeared not; yea, trial must be taken whether it be leprosy or not. But the Prophet is commanded to go to that people who held themselves clean, and before all trial, to pronounce that sharp sentence, "you shall hear with your ears, and shall not understand; you shall plainly see, and yet shall not perceive; the heart of this people is hardened." Was there any such commandment or charge given to the Priests? Might any of them have said to any man that appeared to be clean and whole, thou shalt be leprous, I pronounce the sentence, which thou shalt not escape? I trust not. Then for the diversity, as well of their offices as of the sentences which they pronounced, the phrases must be divers.

Where you affirm that the Prophet could not touch their hearts but by declaring them to be hard-hearted, you seem not to understand what is the virtue and power of God's Word pronounced even by the mouth of man, which {as before we have declared} pierces to the deepest secret that lieth within the heart; yea, and worketh that thing which the Prophet pronounceth and speaketh, how unapparent that ever it be to man's reason, or how stoutly and stubbornly that ever the wicked resist. Did not the words of Elias spoken

unto Ahab, after the murdering of Naboth, touch his heart? Yes, the very hypocrite himself had some sense and feeling of God's just wrath; and both he and his posterity, for all his princely pomp, did after feel the verity of them; to wit, dogs did lick his blood; the flesh of Jezebel was eaten by dogs; his children and whole posterity were rooted out of Israel. And thus did the words of the Prophet touch his heart {in the time when they were spoken} with a certain fear, stupidity, and trembling; which words were after of such power, strength, and verity, that no male children were left alive to Ahab in Israel.

And the same is true of Jeremiah's words and sentence, spoken against divers nations; whose faces albeit he never saw, yet did he so potently touch their hearts, that howsoever they despised his threatenings, yet was no word vainly spoken, but in effect was everything complete as he pronounced. And wonder it is, that you are ignorant in this virtue of God's Word, seeing that you confess that Jeremiah took the cup from the Lord's hand, which he was commanded to give to all nations, that they might drink the cup of the Lord's wrath, saying unto them, "drink, and be drunken, and spew, and fall, and rise no more, because of the sword which I will send among you." Jeremiah 25:27. Was this, I pray you, a simple declaration; or was it not rather a sentence and decree so effectual, that albeit neither Babylon, neither any other proud and wicked nation would for that time believe it, yet came it most effectually to pass? And I say that these words of Jeremiah do manifestly repugne to your interpretation, and do sufficiently prove that those words spoken are otherwise to be understood than that he was commanded only to declare what the people were. For as the words of Jeremiah had this effect that according as he spoke, so came the destruction upon those proud nations; so likewise had the words of God spoken the same effect which he pronounced. To the one he said, thou shalt give unto them the cup of my wrath, that they may drink it. The Prophet without fear did obey his commandment, and God did faithfully perform

whatsoever his messenger had pronounced. Even so did God command Isaiah to blind and harden that stubborn and rebellious generation of the Jews, by the preaching of his law, and by rebuking of their manifest impiety; and so he did, God working all to his glory according to his eternal purpose. And this, because your interpretation is not sufficiently confirmed by any phrase of the Scripture which you have alleged, and also because it repugneth to the Scriptures which before I have adduced, we cannot admit it.

Against your conclusion or epilogue, which is nothing but a superfluous repetition of those things, which sufficiently you have not proved, {although you so brag,} we say, that as God by his eternal Word, and power infinite, hath created all things; so hath he by His wisdom incomprehensible so disposed all things, that as nothing was created for the self, so was nothing the appointer of the self to serve God as his glory required. But He, in his eternal counsel, appointed the end to every creature, to the which they shall once attain, by such means as he most justly hath appointed. And therefore, seeing his glory doth no less require his just judgments {in order} that his superabundant mercy to be known, he hath in his eternal counsel elected some and rejected others, even before the foundations of the world. And albeit he created man after his own image, yet did God never determine that mankind should stand in Adam; but his just counsel and purpose was, that all men should fall in Adam, that the elect might know the price of their salvation, Christ Jesus, in whom they were elected before that in Adam actually they did fall, or were created. And so God, willing to make his glory to shine in all, hath prepared some vessels of mercy and some of wrath, to the one he hath freely given life everlasting in Christ Jesus his Son; the other he hath, for just causes, so rejected, that albeit with long patience he suffereth their manifest rebellion, yet in the final judgment he shall command them to go to the fire that never shall be quenched. And this will and counsel of God is neither secret nor hid from his Church, but is in his Word most manifestly revealed; and therefore of it

we fear not to affirm, that even in the first promise, and ever since, hath God made a plain distinction betwixt the Elect and the Reprobate, so that the purpose and counsel which before was hidden in God, was in time manifested unto man. Which will and counsel of God, {because it is constant and immutable, like as God himself is,} must of necessity take effect. And therefore I boldly affirm, that neither can any whom God in his eternal purpose hath reprobated become the elect, and so be saved; neither yet can any of Christ's elect number to life everlasting be reprobated, and so come to final perdition. We further say, that albeit God's will in the self be one, to wit, the manifestation of his own glory; yet as touching his creatures it hath divers respects, for God will the salvation of some, and he also will the just condemnation of others. And the contrary of this doth God never declare in his Word, but rather doth most plainly reveal it. And therefore this his godly will is not called secret, as that it is not expressed in his Word; but because that in his Word there is no cause assigned {God's good will only excepted} why he hath chosen some and rejected others. And this knowledge is so necessary to a Christian, that without the same can the heart of man never be sufficiently subjected unto God; neither can he render unto him due praise and honour, except that he acknowledge and confess that God himself hath made difference betwixt him and others.

To your odious terms and despiteful railing, I briefly say at this time, THE LORD shall judge! To my knowledge, there resteth no notable scripture which you have alleged {or rather abused} for confirmation of your error, which is not sufficiently answered, two places exempted. The one is of Ezekiel, affirming that God will not the death of a sinner; the other containeth the words of Paul, saying, "God will all men to be saved," which places, because you recite them here in the description of him whom you call the true God, I thought it expedient to delay till this opportunity, to the end that having to fight {as it were face to face} with the Devil himself, I might have some comfort of my God in

entreating some place of his Holy Scriptures. Thus you proceed with a mouth most execrable and blasphemous.

THE ADVERSARY.

These be the properties of the God of the Careless by Necessity. Their God's wrath exceedeth all his works, for he hath reprobated the most part of the world before the foundation of the world. He is slow unto mercy, and ready to wrath; for he will not be entreated to save any of them whom he hath reprobated before, but of necessity, do what they can, they must be damned; neither is he omnipotent, which may do and leave undone what pleaseth him; for he is bound by his own absolute ordinance and infallible foresight to do only all things as they be done. And because it so pleased him to show his power and strength, he stirred up Pharaoh, and many more, to do wickedly; he giveth wicked commandment and evil thoughts to Shimei, and many others, and thereafter plagued them for their labour, only because they were wicked instruments to work his will; for he made them naughty vessels to commit all abomination; neither could they choose but work wickedly, being his vessels of wrath. He hath two wills, one contrary to another; for he saith one thing, and thinketh another. He is worse than the Devil, for not only tempteth he to do evil, but compelleth by immutable fore-ordinance and secret will, without which nothing can be done. He is the Prince of Darkness, for from him come evil thoughts, which are darkness.

ANSWER.

Because that now I have to do not only with a blasphemer, but even {as it were} with a devil incarnate, my first and chief defense is to say, the Lord put silence to thee, O Satan! The Lord confound thy despiteful councils, by the which thou studiest to pervert the righteous way of the eternal God!

But now of thee, O blasphemous mouth, I ask, if thou be able to forge to thee, and to thy pestilent

faction, another God than that God who most justly did drown, and destroy by water, all living creatures in earth, except so many as were preserved in the ark with Noah; who also did destroy by fire from heaven Sodom and Gomorra, with the cities adjacent, and the whole inhabitants of the same, Lot and his two daughters only reserved; who further, by the space of four thousand years, did suffer all nations to walk in their own ways, revealing only his good will, and the light of his Word, to the seed of Abraham, {to those that descended of Jacob I mean,} canst thou, I say, forge to thyself another God than this eternal Majesty of our God, whom we do reverence, in whom we trust and most steadfastly believe; whose Son Christ Jesus we preach to be the only Saviour of his Church, and whose eternal verity we maintain, not only against Jew, Turk, and Papist, but also against you enraged Anabaptists, who can admit in God no justice which is not subject to the reach of your reason? Darest thou, and thy conspiracy, stand up and accuse God of cruelty, because that in these his works, thou canst not deny but that more were punished than were preserved; more were left in darkness than were called to the true light? Shall not his mercy exceed all his works, except that he save the Devil, and those that justly be reprobated as he is? Stoop Satan under the empire of our Sovereign God, whose will is so free, that nothing is able to constrain or bind it. For that is only liberty, that is not subject to mutability, to the inconstancy or appetites of others, as most blasphemously you would imagine God to be in his election and most just reprobation. By the which, in despite of Satan, of thee his slave and son, and of all thy sect, he will declare his glory, as well in punishing with torments forever such blasphemers as you be, as in showing the riches of his glory to the members of his dear Son, who only depend upon Christ Jesus, and upon his justice.

To purge my God from that injustice, or from those absurdities which thou wouldest impute upon his Eternal Majesty, I will not labour, lest that either I should seem to doubt of our own cause, either yet to be

solicited for the defense of our Eternal God. And therefore, seeing that you declare yourselves, not men ignorant, willing to learn, but devils enraged against God, against his eternal and infinite justice, as I began so do I finish, the Lord confound thee, Satan! The Lord confound you enraged dogs, which so impudently dare bark against the most just judgments of God! And thus, leaving you to the hands of him, who suddenly shall revenge his justice from your blasphemies; for the cause of the simple, I say, first, that most maliciously you accuse us, as that we should affirm God to be slow to mercy and ready to wrath; which blasphemy we protest before God, before his holy angels in heaven, and before his Church here upon earth, did never enter into our heart; for the contrary thereof we daily see and perceive, not only in ourselves, to whom most mercifully he remitteth the multitude of our sins, but also in the most cruel enemies of his Church.

We do not define what number God hath elected to life, neither yet what number presently God hath reprobated. Only we stand content with that which the Holy Ghost hath revealed openly, to wit, that there be both elect and reprobate. That the elect cannot finally perish, neither yet that the reprobate can ever be saved, we constantly affirm. But we add the causes, to wit, that because the one sort is given to Christ Jesus, by the free gift of God his Father before all times, therefore in time they come unto him; by power of whose Spirit they are regenerate, their darkness is expelled, and from virtue they proceed to virtue, till finally they attain to the glory promised. As the other sort is left in their own corruption, so can they do nothing but obey their father the Devil, in whose bondage they justly are left. And so, where you burden us that we say, "let the reprobate do what they can, yet they must be damned," you do most shamefully belie us. For we say and teach, that whosoever declineth from evil, and constantly to the end doth good, shall most certainly be saved. But our doctrine is this, that because the reprobate have not the Spirit of regeneration, therefore they cannot do those works that be acceptable before God.

How God is almighty and omnipotent, we have before confessed, to wit, that as He in his eternal wisdom foreseeeth and appointeth all things, so doth his power put all things in execution, how and when it best pleaseth him. Neither can his wisdom, will, nor counsels be subject to any mutability, unstableness, or change, for if it so were, then his godly will and counsels did not depend upon himself, but upon his creatures; which is more than absurd.

Neither to Pharaoh, neither to Shimei, neither yet to any other reprobate, did or doth God give either wicked commandment or evil thought. But those wicked thoughts and evil motions which be in them of their evil nature, and are stirred up by the instigation of the Devil, as he doth not purge them, so doth his wisdom use them well to his own glory, to the exercise of his children, and to the comfort of his Church; insomuch, that the very tyranny of Pharaoh, the cursing of Shimei, and the incest of Absalom, in so far as they were God's works, they were just and holy, because they were just punishments of their sins, an exercise for his children, and some part also of his fatherly correction for their offenses.

To the rest of your vanity I will not answer; not because I fear your sophistical subtilty, but because I will not, {except that yet I be further provoked,} neither by tongue, neither yet by pen, once name or express your horrible blasphemies, which manifestly do witness and declare, that you, as dogs enraged, without all reverence, do bark against God, because his works do surmount your capacity. The Lord speedily call you to repentance, or else so bridle your venomous tongues, that they be not able further to infect. Now to the rest.

THE ADVERSARY.

The properties of the true God. God's mercy exceedeth all his works. He hath made man like to his own image in Christ Jesus, in whom is no damnation. He is slow unto wrath and ready to forgive; he will be entreated of all, so that he biddeth all men everywhere to repent,

and offereth faith to all men. He is omnipotent, and may do, and leave undone, whatsoever shall be his good pleasure; neither is it his pleasure and will that either Pharaoh, Shimei, or any other, do sin and come to destruction; for he willeth the death of no creature, but willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. He hath but one will, which is ever only good, revealed in his Word to them that fear him and keep his commandments; neither hath he any secret will contrary to this, but will perform whatsoever goeth out of his mouth. He tempteth no man to sin; he is the father of light, and cometh to destroy the works of the Careless Libertines God, for he abhorreth all wickedness, and all wicked doers.

ANSWER.

In this description of your God, {whom you do term the true God,} I do wonder of three things. First, that in this your description, you dissent from your great angel, Castellio. Secondly, how it is that you have forgotten yourselves? And last, why you omit these properties which the Scriptures do no less attribute to God than any that you allege? Your master and chief champion, Castellio, {now left for your comfort,} in the description of his God, thus writes, "but that God, whom both nature, and reason, and the Scriptures do teach is ready to mercy, and slow to wrath; who hath created man, of whom all men are born, to his own image, like to himself, that he should place him in Paradise, and give to him the blessed life; this God will that all men be saved, and that none perish; and therefore he hath sent his Son into the earth, that justice might superabound wheresoever sin hath abounded, the light of whose justice doth illuminate every man that cometh into this world." Wonder it is, I say, that you who so constantly have followed your master in all this your work, have dissented from him, or at least omitted his words, in these two points, which in this case be principal. For first, by his description, he will that nature and reason shall no less teach you and your faction God, than shall

the Scriptures. So that he whose works you be not able to comprehend by nature and reason, shall not be to you the true God. And secondarily, that except he will all to be saved, and that the light of his Son's justice do so illuminate all men coming into this world, that wheresoever sin hath abounded, there must justice superabound, that to you likewise he be no God. These be two chief points in this controversy.

For we constantly affirm, that the brightness of our God doth so blind nature and reason, {as now they be corrupted,} that the natural man can never attain to those things which appertain to God, to the knowledge of his will, neither yet to his true honour. For we know that the world hath not known God by wisdom, but, thinking themselves most wise, have become most vain, insomuch, that they have worshipped the creatures more than the Creator. And thus believe we, that nature and reason are not only unable to lead us to the true knowledge of God, by the which we may attain to life everlasting, but also we affirm, that they have been mistresses of all errors and idolatry. And therefore, say we, that nature and reason do lead men from the true God, but are never able to teach us, neither to express to us the eternal, the true, and ever living God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Further, we doubt not to embrace, to believe, to reverence, and to honour the majesty of our God, who hath made division betwixt one sort of men and another, as plainly before we have proved.

These being two chief points in this controversy, great wonder it is that of them you make no express mention {as Castellio doth} in this your description? Is it because you are ashamed that such darkness, and such gross ignorance, should be in your great angel of light? Just cause, no doubt, have both you and he to be ashamed of your foolish imaginations. But yet I fear another thing more, which is this, that you will not commit the great and secret mysteries of your profession to your rude scholars. For it might perchance offend them, if at the first you should affirm, {as in your writings I can show,} that Saint Paul taught a more

perfect way to his scholars in secret than that which he committed to writing; that Christ is not the eternal Son of the eternal God; that the Godhead of the Holy Ghost is but man's imaginations; that Christ's kingdom shall so flourish, that wicked men shall utterly be suppressed even in this life; that Christ's justice {righteousness} availeth nothing, except man have a personal and perfect justice {righteousness} within himself; that man may fulfill and obey God's holy law; and that Christ hath no prerogative above his brethren, except this, that he is called the first-begotten. I omit things much more absurd, because I will not offend the ears of the godly. These things, I say, you do not open to your scholars; but in the beginning, with pleasant persuasions of good life, of mortification, of the power of the Spirit, {which, rightly placed, is a doctrine most necessary,} you inflame their hearts with a vain confidence of their own power, strength, and justice. And thereafter, you dissuade them from all exercises which may put them in mind of sin and imperfection which remaineth in man. For neither will you that they frequent the public preaching of the Word, neither yet the administration of Christ's sacraments; for such things to your perfect men are nothing necessary. But to be short, in the end you bring them to the plain contempt of God's free grace offered and given to his elect in Christ Jesus. For in the end, these be your blasphemous voices openly affirmed in your privy assemblies, "what is our joy, but that we feel no sin abiding in us? What is our comfort, but that we are able to fulfil the law? And what is our rejoicing, but that we have a justice perfect in ourselves?" And thus seeking to establish your own justice, neither can you nor your scholars be subject to the justice of God.

But {omitting this} I return to your deceitful craft. Ye dare not in express words affirm the vain description of your master's God, but yet covertly you say as much, {as after shall appear,} in which thing, as you declare yourselves ingrate and unthankful, that will not support your reverend master in this his battle with your open and plain defense, so do you show yourselves most unworthy of credit amongst God's children. For

who can credit those teachers that, in the beginning, and for their foundation and principles, join together darkness and light, lies and verity; yea, that begin with a manifest untruth, {as doth your Master Castellio,} affirming that nature and reason do teach the true God unto us, which is a manifest lie, as before we have proved. If you say, he addeth also that the Scriptures do teach God unto us, I answer, that the more is his impudence, and more dangerous is his venom. For what impudence is it to prefer corrupt nature and blind reason to God's Scriptures, in such manifestation of God as our salvation requireth! Did Moses, Isaiah, or Christ Jesus, will the ignorant to search nature, or to consult with reason, who should be the Messiah promised; or did they not always send such as lacked light to the Word which was revealed, to the Law, and to the Prophets, and to the Scriptures, which did bear record of Christ Jesus, who is the only way by the which men come to the true knowledge of the Father? True it is that the Gentiles, by contemplation of the creatures, attained to that knowledge that there was a God; but how little this knowledge served for their salvation, the Apostle doth witness. And therefore, I say that your Master is more than impudent, that dare prefer nature and reason to God's Scriptures. And further, his venom {in so saying} is more dangerous than if plainly he had affirmed that nature and reason alone had been sufficient to have instructed man in all things appertaining to salvation.

For so declaring himself, the simple should have avoided that error, as a pestilence most pernicious. But now in joining together those things which God hath so manifestly divided, as he hath divided light from darkness, he doth nothing else but, as a traitorous murderer, mix and mingle poison with sweet liquor. For in joining nature and reason with God's Scriptures, in the manifestation of God to man's salvation, he doth plainly witness that the natural man may boldly pronounce that those works be none of God's, whereof reason cannot see a just cause why so they should be wrought. For the fall of Adam, say you, and the induration of Pharaoh, the deceiving of Ahab, and such

others, were none of God's works, but that they came by his permission. And why so? Because the natural man cannot see how such works can agree with God's goodness and justice. And thus you deny him to be the true God, who doth not lay before the blindness of your reason all his works, that they by her judgment may be justified or condemned. Oh, blasphemous mouths! Dare you deny him to be the true God, of whom Moses, Job, David, and Paul affirm, that his secrets do appertain to himself; that he will not make account to man of all his works; that his counsels are incomprehensible, his judgments a great depth, and his ways unsearchable? Thus much for that which you omit of your Master's words in his description, which I now admonish, lest after you should trouble the simple with these your vanities, which from time to time you foster and spread abroad.

Now to the second, which I will but only touch, to put you in mind that in doctrine you are not constant; for before you have affirmed, that we did all stand in Adam before that we did fall. "For none {say you} falleth but he that standeth. If we did all stand, then were we all predestinated to life." And after, "as we were all created in one man, that is, in Adam; so were we all created in one estate, that is, after the image of God." Of which places it is plain, that you understand that in Adam we were created to God's image, in Adam we were elected, and in Adam we were placed in Paradise, which you call the blessed life. But here you change your tune and say, "he hath made man like to his own image in Christ Jesus, in whom is no damnation." What should be the cause of this your sudden recantation and alteration of your sentence, I cannot well conjecture, except it be this, that because experience doth convict you, that by Adam we are all wounded to death, that therefore you would all should receive life by Christ Jesus. And that doth your master affirm in bold and evident words, saying, "this God will all men to be saved, and that none shall perish; and therefore hath he sent his Son into the earth, whose justice should superabound wheresoever sin hath

abounded." This doth your Master boldly affirm, {because he wrote to his practiced soldiers,} that which you do in dark words persuade. But how vain be both your persuasions, shall shortly appear, by examining the scriptures by you both alleged. He grounded his error upon the words of Paul, plainly falsified, and of John the Evangelist, whom he applies not rightly. If you think me bold that thus do accuse your master and great angel of falsifying God's Scriptures, hear my proof and then judge. He saith, "wheresoever sin hath abounded, there hath grace super-abounded." Which words the Apostle doth not speak, but saith, "where sin hath abounded, there hath grace more abounded," which proposition is most true, as it is most comfortable. For in Adam, David, Peter, and in all other God's elect children, did, and doth sin abound, as the Apostle proveth all to have sinned, and to have need of God's glory. But in them did grace more abound, by the which they were delivered from the multitude of sins.

But as your proposition is not expressed by the Apostle, so it is most false, which is most easy to be proved. For in Cain, Pharaoh, Judas, Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, Herod, and many others, did sin abound, but in them did grace never so abound, that they were absolved from that damnation which is pronounced against all unfaithful, in these words, "whosoever shall not believe shall be condemned." And therefore, I say, that your Master's universal proposition is most false, and he not only a falsifier of the plain Scriptures, but also a maintainer of all impiety, of all idolatry and wicked religion. For if it shall be admitted, that "wheresoever sin hath abounded there shall grace more abound," then shall there be no difference between the condition of those that believe in Christ, and those that be despisers of his Evangel offered. Let the indifferent reader judge, whether that you or we do now more smell of a careless and a libertine life. But more of this after.

The words of the Evangelist are plainly wrested. For he affirmeth not that every man is illuminated to salvation, neither yet that Christ is offered {as you

would shift} to every man; but speaking of the excellency of Christ Jesus, in whom was life, and by whom all things were created, he saith, "this was the true light, which doth illuminate all men that come into this world." In which words, he speaketh nothing of man's redemption, neither yet of any light which man receiveth necessary for the same, but only of that light which was given to man in his creation; a part whereof, how small soever it be, doth yet remain in man, and that not by his own power, but by the free gift of God, in whom we live, are moved, and have our being.

And that the Evangelist speaketh nothing of the light of our redemption is evident by his own words. For before and after he doth witness, that the light did shine in darkness, but darkness did not apprehend it, that is, receive and acknowledge it. "That he came amongst his own, but his own did not receive him. That such as did receive him, were neither born of blood, of the will of the flesh, neither yet of the will of man, but of God." John 1:12-13. By which words it is manifest that the Evangelist most evidently declareth that the light of salvation is not common unto all, but that it is proper to those only that are born of God. He doth further teach that all reason and natural understanding, which man hath by his first birth, is so choked, so blinded, and extinguished, that man must needs be born again, before he can see the kingdom of God; that Christ Jesus must needs illuminate those that be born blind, or else {without remedy} they shall perish in their blindness. And thus, I say, the one text your Master doth falsely, and the other most violently wrest.

But now to your words, "God is slow {say you} to wrath, and ready to forgive. He will be entreated of all, so that he biddeth all men everywhere to repent, and offereth faith unto all men." I will not question with you at this time, why in this description of your true God you make no mention of the Son, which is the eternal Word and wisdom of the eternal Father, neither of the Holy Ghost, who, proceeding from the Father, is equal with the eternal Son. But this is the one thing of which I did wonder in reading this your description that you omit

these properties which God attributeth to himself. You do continually repeat that God is slow to wrath, ready to forgive; that he willeth all men to be saved; that he will be entreated of all men; that he willeth the death of no creature. Which properties in God we confess, and which sentences we acknowledge to be most true, if they be rightly understand. But why do you not likewise teach your scholars that God is zealous; that he is a consuming fire; that he punisheth the iniquity of the fathers upon the sons, unto the third and fourth generation; and that his justice cannot suffer sin to escape punishment, no not even in his most dearest children. Ye have accused us that we deceive the people, teaching them a careless and libertine life. And therefore here again, I require the indifferent reader to consider, which of our doctrines giveth most liberty; whether you that affirm that your true God will be entreated of all, or we that constantly maintain that God heareth no sinners, or that such as delight in iniquity are so odious in his presence, that although they cry and howl in their calamities, yet will he not hear them.

But now let us examine your Scriptures apart. "God is slow to wrath," say you. True it is, but yet he recompenseth the slowness of punishment with the severity of his judgments, which hath been, and shall be executed against such as heap to themselves God's wrath, by abusing his long sufferings. "He is ready to forgive." We acknowledge this to be the voice of our God; but we fear not to affirm, that the remission of sins is the free gift of God, given to his Church by Christ Jesus; like as are faith and life everlasting, which are not common to all men in general, but particularly do appertain to God's children. "He will be entreated of all," say you, so that he biddeth all men everywhere repent, and offereth faith to all men.

Your first proposition is utterly false; neither yet is there any such sentence contained in the whole Scriptures. True it is that God is merciful, gentle, liberal, protector, refuge, and life to all. But to which all? To such as hate iniquity, love virtue, lament for their sins past, call upon his name in verity, and do unfeignedly

seek for his help in the day of their trouble. Of all these, no doubt, he will be entreated, how wicked and unthankful so ever they have been before. But by the contrary, he will destroy all that speak lies. He hateth all that work iniquity, neither will he show himself merciful to such as maliciously do offend. But all the sinners of the earth shall drink the dregs of that cup which the Eternal holdeth in his hand. For he will destroy all those that traitorously decline from him. They shall cry, but he will not hear. He shall answer unto them, "let your lovers, whom you have preferred to me, deliver you." Such as withdraw their ears from the cry of the poor, shall cry, but shall not be heard; yea, albeit the blood-thirsty will multiply prayers and stretch forth their hands, yet will not God hear them. For his countenance is bent against all that commit wickedness. And thus I say, you shall never be able to prove that God will be entreated of all, except you can confute the Holy Ghost, and make him to recant these and innumerable other places. As mercy is promised to his children, {for they only call in verity, they only hate sin, and follow virtue,} so is severe judgment pronounced against the wicked of the world. None of these sentences, "God biddeth all men everywhere to repent," and offereth faith to all men, are found in that sense and meaning that you do understand them, in the whole Scriptures. True it is that Isaiah the prophet, and Christ Jesus himself, with his Apostles, do call upon all to come to repentance, but that generality is restrained by their own words, to those that thirst, that hunger, that mourn, that are laden with sin, as before we have taught. That place of the Acts you either understand not, or else willingly you abuse it. For Paul saith not that God offereth faith to all, but saith, "that he hath performed to all that promise which he made to man, which was to send a Saviour for man's redemption, by whom also he will judge the world." Consider the text, and you shall understand the meaning of the Apostle to be such.

You proceed, "He is omnipotent, and may do, and leave undone, whatsoever shall be his good pleasure." The omnipotency of God and freedom of his will, we

most constantly maintain, but we cannot admit that our God be variable, inconstant, subject to ignorance; neither yet that his holy will depend upon the will and disposition of man. For that were not to leave God's will at freedom, but to bring it under the bondage of his creatures. Further, these words, "God may do, and leave undone, whatsoever shall be his pleasure," do smell somewhat of one of your articles offered unto us in this Church; wherein some of your sect do affirm, that God may be fully purposed this day to do one thing, and that tomorrow he may repent, and be purposed to do the contrary. Which cogitations of God are most blasphemous and wicked. For if his counsels be mutable and inconstant, then ceaseth he to be the God, who neither is, nor can be changed. If you had said, "because that God is omnipotent, therefore he may do, and leave undone, whatsoever his good pleasure is," you had said well, understanding that the purpose of God is infinite; that therefore of his good will he so mollifieth the hearts of some men, that of most cruel and enraged enemies, against his truth and poor servants, he maketh them, and that suddenly, preachers of his gospel, and protectors to his Church. But when you say, "he may do whatsoever is his good pleasure," you offer occasion to the captious to suspect that you would affirm, that God's good will and pleasure may change; and that is to deny his Godhead. But I will burden you no further than you shall plainly confess, I only put you in mind, that the Holy Ghost useth no such phrase.

You proceed, saying, "neither is it his pleasure and will that either Pharaoh, Shimei, or any other should sin, and come to destruction." Before, we have confessed that iniquity and sin is so odious before God, that in it can his goodness never delight, neither yet can he have pleasure in the destruction of any creature, having respect to the punishment only. But seeing that God's glory must needs shine in all his creatures, yea, even in the perpetual damnation of Satan, and torment of the reprobate, why shall not he will, and take pleasure, that so it come to pass. Albeit your petty

brains cannot comprehend the brightness thereof, yet will He one day declare that all his works are wrought in justice, wisdom, and equity. I think you will not deny, but that Pharaoh, Shimei, Judas, and others, came to destruction, like as in the end shall all reprobate do. Then do I ask, if God at no time, for no purpose, respect, nor end, did so well, how then came their destruction to pass? By sin, say you; that we deny not, but yet the question is not answered. For continually we demand, if in God there was not power, either to have impeded their sin, or yet after their sin to have called them to repentance, if it had so pleased his eternal wisdom and goodness? Consider your folly, and give glory to God who doth whatsoever he will in heaven and in earth.

But now to that which followeth, "for he wills the death of no creature, but will all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth." How violently you wrest the words of the Prophet, and of the Apostle, shall shortly appear, after I have reasoned a little with you, how these your propositions do agree with that which goeth before. Ye have affirmed, that God is ready to mercy, and slow to wrath, in which words you show and confess, that in the Godhead there is readiness to show mercy, and also that there is a justice, which must execute wrath upon the disobedient. And so in the nature of the Godhead you confess mercy and justice. But here you say, that God will the death of no creature, but that he will all men to be saved; which last words being understand as you do urge them, must destroy the former nature of God, and take away his justice. For if he absolutely wills the death of no creature, then will be no punishment to follow sin. And if he will no punishment, then willet he his justice to cease, and so, consequently, must one of the properties of his godly nature cease. Study for an answer, to make your former words and latter words better agree, or else you will be compelled to confess, that God, for some respect, willet both death and damnation to come upon some creatures.

Further, if God willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, and yet many do perish in ignorance, and shall be condemned as Christ Jesus doth pronounce, then must it either follow, that God's will is mutable, and so be inconstant, and not at all times like to himself, or else that he is not omnipotent. For if God, at the first creation of man, would all men to be saved, {as you allege,} then would I know when this will was changed? After that man had offended, say you, then yet have I obtained, that in God's will there was mutability. For after sin he would, and by his sentence pronounced, that Adam and his posterity should suffer the corporal death, yea, and that the seed of the serpent should have the head broken down; by the which is meant the spiritual death, which neither of both {as you affirm} did God will before. If you reply, God's will towards the salvation of all mankind did remain the same after sin which was before; for a general promise of deliverance was made, by the woman's seed that was promised.

I have before plainly proved, that a difference most manifest betwixt the two seeds was made in that promise. But admitting that the promise had been general, and so that the will of God this day remaineth the same, which you allege it to be, to wit, that he willeth the death of no sinner, but that he willeth all men to be saved; can you deny, but that a separation and division of the sheep from the goats, of the elect from the reprobate, shall be made at the glorious coming of the Lord Jesus? Shall not these most joyful words be said unto them that shall stand upon the right hand, "come you the blessed of my Father, possess the kingdom which was prepared for you from the beginning?" And shall not this most fearful sentence be pronounced and executed against the other, "depart you cursed, go to the fire prepared for the devil and for his angels?" Shall the Son of God, in pronouncing sentence, do anything that day repugnant to the will of his heavenly Father? I think you will not so affirm. Then if God's will, in the day of judgment, shall be that many shall be adjudged to torment perpetual, and his will in

the creation of man was, and this day yet remaineth, that all men shall be saved, then of necessity it doth follow that God's will shall change. If you say, that death and damnation cometh not by God's will, but by the sin and unbelief of man, you have relieved yourself of nothing; for if death be one thing, and life be another; damnation one thing, and salvation another; then if God this day will all men to be saved, and so to have life, and yet that day he shall will many to be damned to torment perpetual, {what causes so ever you allege,} I shall obtain one of two, to wit, that either God's will is, and may be mutable, or else that there is a power superior to his majesty and godly will. For if willingly he shall damn those, whom before he would, and had determined to save, then is his will and determination changed. And if he shall damn those unwillingly, whom willingly he would have saved, then is he not omnipotent. Consider now upon whom falleth the snow, and who do cast themselves in greatest absurdities.

Now it resteth to declare how violently you wrest the words of the Prophet and of the Apostle. The prophet, speaking in the person of God, saith, "I will not the death of a sinner, but rather that he convert, and live." And the Apostle affirmeth, that God will all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth. Hereupon you conclude, God wills the death of no creature. This is your first violence which you do to the text. For the Prophet saith not, "I will the death of no creature," but saith, "I will not the death of a sinner." Ye are not ignorant, I suppose, what difference there is betwixt an universal negative, and an indefinite, or particular. Where you say, God willeth the death of no creature, you speak generally and universally, excluding none. But so doth not the Prophet, for he saith not, "I will the death of no creature," neither yet "I will the death of no sinner," but simply saith, "I will not the death of a sinner." I wonder that you consider not that as there is difference betwixt creatures and creature, so that also there is difference betwixt sinners and sinner. Some creatures are appointed to death, for the use and sustentation of man. And dare you say, that this is done

against God's will? We be taught the contrary by his own mouth. If you, correcting your generality, shall say, that you mean only that God wills the death of no man. And I fear not yet to join with you, and against you to affirm, that God hath willed, doth will, and shall will the death of some men. The Holy Ghost, speaking of the sons of Eli the High Priest, saith, "but they did not hear the voice of their father, because the Lord would kill them." I Samuel 2:25. And Moses saith, "Sihon king of Hesbon would not suffer us to pass through his country, for the Lord thy God did harden his mind, and strengthen his heart, that he should give him into thy hands." Deuteronomy 20:30. How often doth Moses and Joshua declare unto the people, that God would kill, root out, and destroy, those wicked nations from before the face of his people! And were all those kings, whom Joshua did kill, killed against God's will? The Holy Ghost affirmeth the contrary. For it is written, "the Lord did trouble them before Israel, and he did strike them with a great slaughter; and while that they did flee before the Israelites, and were in the ascent of Bethhoron, the Lord cast down upon them from heaven great stones; and many more perished by the hail stones than were slain with the sword of the children of Israel." Joshua 10:10-11. If the destruction, slaughter, and death of these wicked men, and of the great host of Sennacherib, was not the will of God, I cannot tell how man shall be assured of his will. For the plain word did before promise, that the Lord should destroy them; and the fact doth witness the constancy and performance of his will. And the same thing doth God this day, and shall do to the end of the world, when he shall adjudge the reprobate {as before is said} to death perpetual; and that not against his will, but willingly, for the manifestation of his just judgments, and declaration of his own glory. And therefore, I say, that your proposition, saying, "God willeth the death of no creature," is manifestly false, as it is repugneth to God's justice and to his evident Scriptures.

The mind of the Prophet was to stir such as had declined from God, to return unto him by true

repentance. And because their iniquities were so many, and offenses so great, that justly they might have despaired of remission, mercy, and grace, therefore doth the Prophet, for the better assurance of those that should repent, affirm, "that God delighteth not, neither willeth the death of the wicked." But of which wicked? Of him, no doubt, that truly should repent, in his death did not, nor never shall God delight. But he delighteth to be known a God that sheweth mercy, grace, and favour to such as unfeignedly call for the same, how grievous so ever their former offenses have been. But such as continue obstinate in their impiety, have no portion of these promises. For them will God kill, them will he destroy, and them will he thrust, by the power of his Word, into the fire which never shall be quenched. The Apostle in these words, "God willeth all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth," speaketh not of every man, and of every particular person, but of all men in general, that is to say, of men of all estates, all conditions, all realms, and all ages. For as in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither man nor woman, free man nor servant, but all are one in him, so can no estate, no condition of man, no realm, nor no age, be proved so wicked and so corrupt, but out of the like hath God called some to the participation of his light, and to salvation and life by Christ Jesus; and that this is the very natural meaning of the Holy Ghost, the text itself doth witness. For the Apostle immediately before willeth prayers and supplications to be made for all men, for kings, and for all that were placed in authority.

And because that the Church was chiefly oppressed by such, this doubt might have risen, are we then bound to pray for those that are express and conjured enemies against God? "You are, {saith the Apostle,} for that is good and acceptable before God our Saviour, who will all men to be saved," that is, God willeth you to pray for your persecutors, that their eyes may be opened, and they converted to the living God; who, no doubt, will save some of all estates, of all conditions and vocations of men. For the nations are

given to Christ Jesus by inheritance; Kings shall be the feeders of the Church; Queens shall be nurses; and in his holy temple shall all sing praise. If this interpretation {which we doubt not to be the very meaning of the Holy Ghost} cannot satisfy you, then will I ask of you, if God will men otherwise to be saved than by Christ Jesus? Or, as the Apostle speaketh, by coming to the knowledge of the verity? Plain it is that by the words of the Apostle you can conclude none otherwise. For as he saith, "God will all men to be saved," so doth he add, "and willeth all men to come to the knowledge of the verity." Which word "willeth," albeit it be not expressly repeated in the second member, yet of necessity it must be understand as those that be but meanly seen in the Greek or Latin tongue do evidently see. Then, if I shall sufficiently prove, that God willeth not all men to come to the knowledge of the verity, in such sort as the Apostle meaneth, shall it not infallibly follow, that God will not all men to be saved, in such sense as you understand.

That God willeth not all men to come to the knowledge of that verity, by the which man is verily made free from the bondage of Satan, is evident, not only by those whom we do see walk in darkness and ignorance, but also by the manifest Scriptures of God, who called Abraham, making to him, and to his seed, the promise of salvation, saying, "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee," which promise he kept secret many ages from the rest of the world. When he did notify his law unto Israel, and when Moses did repeat the same, he said, "behold, I have laid before you this day life and death, benediction and execration; choose therefore life, that thou and thy seed may live." Deuteronomy 30:19. If God would that all men and all nations indifferently should come to the same knowledge, why were not the laws, statutes, and judgments of God made manifest to others, as they were to Israel? And if you answer that so they were, the Holy Ghost shall convict you of a lie. For he affirmeth, that God had not done so to all nations, and that his judgments he had not revealed nor made known unto them. But if that plain division made by God himself

betwixt Jew and Gentile, during the time of the law, doth not fully satisfy you, hear yet the sentence of our Master Christ Jesus, who saith to his disciples, "to you it is given to understand the secrets of the kingdom, but unto others in parables, that having eyes they should not see." Luke 8:10. And that most plainly in that his solemn thanksgiving, he saith, "I praise thee, O Father, for thou hast hidden these things from the prudent, and from the wise, but thou hast revealed them to little ones." Matthew 11:25. If God would have had the true knowledge of himself, and of his Son Christ Jesus, common to all, why should Christ himself affirm, "that to some it was given, and to others it was not given; to some it was revealed, and from others it was hidden?" And therefore, seeing it is plain that God will not give his true knowledge to all, {yea, to some he doth never offer it,} you shall never be able to prove, that God will all men to be saved. For the only means to attain to salvation and to life, is to know and embrace God to be our merciful Father in Christ Jesus, to which knowledge whosoever doth not attain, {I mean of those that come to the years and age of discretion,} can have no assurance to be saved. This were sufficient to convict you, even in your own conscience. For albeit malice will not suffer you to give place to the plain verity, yet shall the weight thereof so oppress your pride, that when you do open your mouth against it, yet shall you be witnesses even against yourselves.

But yet, for the cause of my simple brethren, I will add two things, first, how all such places, as either make a general promise of salvation to all, or yet that do pronounce God's wrath against all, must be understand. Secondly, what sinners they are whose death God will not. For the first, I say, that whosoever doth deny, that from the beginning there hath been, this day are, and to the end shall remain, two armies, bands, or companies of men, whom God in his eternal counsel hath so divided, that betwixt them there continueth a battle, which never shall be reconciled until the Lord Jesus put a final end to the miseries of his Church; who doth not understand the truth of this, {I say,} doth

neither know God, neither his Son Christ Jesus; neither yet do such believe his Word, in which both the one sort and the other are most manifestly expressed. The one of these armies is called the Church of God; the elect spouse of Christ Jesus; the sheep appointed to slaughter; the kingly priesthood; the sons of God, and the people redeemed, by ancient writers it is termed the City of God. The other is called the Synagogue of Satan; the church malignant; cruel, deceitful, and blood-thirsty wolves; progeny of vipers; sons of the devil; workers of iniquity; and such as worship the beast and his image. And according to the divers natures, conditions, and ends of these two companies, doth the Scripture pronounce general sentences and universal propositions, which, notwithstanding, must be restrained to those of whom the Holy Ghost meaneth. For neither justly may those sentences spoken of God's Elect be referred to the Reprobate; neither yet such as be spoken of the Reprobate sort be rightly applied to the Elect, except it be for terrifying of their conscience, and that only for a season. As Christ Jesus called Peter Satan, and Nathan called David the son of death, I will adduce examples of the one sort and of the other, that the matter may be more evident.

The Prophet Isaiah, {which place also our Master alledgeth,} speaking of God's elect children, saith, "they shall all be taught of God; and they shall know me from the least to the greatest." "I shall pour forth of my Spirit on all flesh." "All flesh shall see the salvation of God." "The Lord raises up all that fall." "All the inhabitants of the earth shall learn justice." "All thy people shall be just." "I shall comfort all that mourn." "You be all the sons of God, you be all the sons of light." These, and many more places which be universally spoken, must be restrained to God's children only who be elected in Christ Jesus. For those that be without his body, are neither taught of God, neither yet know they God in such sort as the Prophet there meaneth. Into them is never poured the Spirit of sanctification; they give never unto God true honour and glory. They neither learn justice, neither yet are they just. They are not the sons

of God by adoption, neither yet the sons of light, whose works shine before men to the praise of our heavenly Father; but remain ignorant, profane idolaters, filthy persons, replenished with darkness as the sons of the Devil; and therefore cannot these former sentences, which appertain to God's children only, be rightly spoken or pronounced of the reprobate. Of the other sort, it is said, "all that see me have mocked me, they put forth their tongues, they shake their heads." These words spake David in the person of Christ; and yet, God forbid, that we should think that all {without exception} did so mock and jest at Christ; no, not even in his greatest extremity. For some, we read, stood beside his cross with sorrowful hearts. Some returned, giving open confession that he was the Son of God, even when others did most despitefully rail. And therefore, where it is said, "all that saw me did mock me," that generality must be restrained to those enraged dogs, the priests, scribes, wicked soldiers, and most unthankful people, who of very malice did deny and crucify their Lord and Messiah that was promised. Isaiah and Jeremiah, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the causes of the same, say, "I shall consume you all at once, and you shall all be ashamed by a people that shall not profit you." "They have all followed their own ways; every man gapeth for bribes." "Why will you contend with me? You have all declined from me." "From the least to the most, everyone is bent upon avarice; they are all traitors," they are all {I say} traitors, every brother deceiveth another. "All men condemn me; all men hold me in execration."

If these, and other like places, shall be understood so universally as they appear to be spoken, then must we be compelled to say, that no true fearer of God remained in Jerusalem when the Prophets did preach, but that all were blood-thirsty, all avaricious, all idolaters, and all dumb dogs; the contrary whereof is evidently declared. For Isaiah had the children whom the Lord had given unto him, who albeit they were holden as monsters among men, yet did they patiently abide the Lord. Jeremiah had Baruch, his faithful scribe,

notwithstanding his weakness and infirmity. Abimelech feared the Lord, was favourable to the Prophet, and therefore saved he his soul for a prayer, and was delivered from that day of vengeance. And therefore, these universal sentences must also be restrained and kept within their own bounds, like as these, "all have left me; all seek the things that appertain unto themselves, and not those things that be of God." Which sentences, except they be restrained, we shall condemn the dearest children of God, who, in Paul's days, did valiantly fight against the prince of this world. These examples of the one sort and of the other I have adduced, to let the simple understand, that such general sentences of necessity must be so restrained, that difference may be kept betwixt the elect and the reprobate; for else we shall do nothing in explaining Scriptures but confound light with darkness. For if the words of our Master Christ Jesus, saying, "all shall be taught of God," shall be so generally understand, that no exception be admitted, then of necessity it is, that all men, and every person, shall come to the true knowledge of Christ Jesus; for of that knowledge doth he speak in that place. But the contrary thereof is most evident, even by Christ Jesus his own words, who putteth a plain difference betwixt them that be given to him by his Father, and betwixt them that be not given.

But now, let us briefly consider what sinners they are whose death God will not, but rather that they convert and live. Saint John, in his Epistle saith, "if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the verity is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to remit to us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness," &c., and after, "whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law. And you know that he is revealed to take away our sins, and in him is no sin. As many as abide in him {that is, in Christ Jesus} sin not; whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither hath known him," &c., "he that committeth sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinneth from the beginning," &c., "whosoever is born of God committeth not sin, for his

seed abideth in him; neither can he sin, because he is born of God."

Of which words it is evident, that there be two sorts of sinners, the one be they who mourn, lament, and bewail their own wretchedness and misery, unfeignedly before God, confessing not only that their whole nature is sinful and corrupt, but also that daily they so offend the Majesty of their God, that most justly they deserve the torments of hell, if Christ's justice, and Christ's mediation, {which by faith they embrace,} should not deliver them from the wrath to come. To these is not sin imputed, for the blood of Christ purgeth them from all sin, his advocacy and intercession maketh to them an entrance to the throne of their Father's grace. To them is given the Spirit of sanctification, which, from time to time, as it revealeth their sins, so doth it mortify and purge the same. Not that ever in this life God's Elect hath been, are, or shall be so clean purged from sin, that the flesh lusteth not against the spirit; as sometimes affirmed the Pelagians, and those that then were called Cathari, {note: the Cathari - or Puritans, of the third century, were a branch of the Novatians. They re-baptized their proselytes, but refused to admit apostates or persons guilty of heinous crimes, into the Church, which, they maintained, had no power to pardon them. Hence, some of those who apostatized during the heats of persecution returned, through despair, to Paganism,} that is, clean purged; and now also do the Anabaptists renew the same most pestilent error, by the which Christ Jesus, his justice, his office, and perpetual mediation, is utterly destroyed. In such sort, I say, are not God's children purged in this life, that neither they feel sin, neither yet the motions and enticements of the same. But they are so purged, that sin reigneth not in their mortal bodies. For the seed of God, which is the virtue, power, efficacy, and operation of his Holy Spirit, suffereth them not to delight in sin. But as they are first called from darkness to light, and from the bondage of Satan to the liberty of God's children, so when they sin, {as there is none that sinneth not,} they are called again by true repentance

to their former society and fellowship with Christ Jesus. The death of such sinners did God never will; neither yet can he will. For from all eternity they were his elect children, whom he gave to his dear Son to be his inheritance; whom the Son received into his protection and safeguard; to whom he hath manifested, and to the end shall manifest himself, and the loving kindness of his heavenly Father; in whose hearts he writes the law of God, and maketh them to walk in his commandments, ever thirsting to a further and more perfect righteousness than they find within themselves by reason of their corruption. The death, I say, of those sinners God will not, but he will that they repent and live. The Apostle Saint Peter saith, "the Lord that hath promised is not slow; but he is long suffering toward us, while that he will none to perish, but will receive all to repentance." The Apostle here meaneth not that all, without exception, shall be received to life by true repentance, but that the cause why God so long delays {as it were} the extreme judgment, is, that the elect number of God's children may be complete, {as answer was given to those that cried under the altar, to be revenged upon the tyrants that dwell on the earth,} of these his elect children God will none to perish, as before is said.

But there is another sort of sinners, far different from these. For neither are they displeased with themselves, neither yet hate they iniquity, but against God's express commandments furiously they run, with Cain to murder the innocent, with Pharaoh to oppress the people of God, with Judas to betray the known and professed verity; and, finally, so delight they in all filthiness and impiety, that they cannot repent. The eyes of such be blinded, their hearts are hardened, they are given over unto a reprobate mind. And for them doth not Christ Jesus pray, and therefore they can do nothing but headlong run from evil to worse, as the Devil {to whose tyranny they are committed} doth drive them, till finally they come to perdition; which end was appointed unto them, not against God's will, but by his will immutable in his eternal counsel. For no less will he that

the severity of his judgments be seen in the vessels of wrath, than that the riches of his grace be praised in the vessels of mercy. Storm and rage, spew forth your venom and blaspheme, till you provoke God's vengeance at once to be poured forth upon your own heads; this sentence will he never retract. He will have mercy upon whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he maketh hard-hearted. That God in himself hath but one will, which is holy, just, and permanent, that in him there is no contrariety; that he is faithful, and doth perform whatsoever he doth promise. What we understand by God's secret will, and how he tempteth no man, I have before sufficiently declared, and therefore I will not trouble the reader with the repetition of the same. Now, let us hear what your judgment of us is, and how you extoll yourselves.

THE ADVERSARY.

As these gods be of contrary nature, so do they beget children of a contrary nature; the false god begets unmerciful, proud, ambitious, and envious children; bloody persecutors of others for their conscience sake; evil speakers, impatient, contentious, and seditious children. And they be like unto their father, in that they speak one thing with their mouth, and think another with their heart. They can never be without filthy thoughts and wicked motions, for such poison do they receive of their father. The true God begets merciful, humble, lowly, and loving children; abhorring from blood, persecuting no man; good speakers, patient, and detesting all contentions, chiding, and brawling; and they be like unto their Father, in that whatsoever they speak with their mouth, they think with their heart; they be always moved with good thoughts and godly revelations, for such grace receive they plenteously of their Father.

ANSWER.

It may seem by the description of these your two gods, {for neither of both, as you describe them, is the true, living, and eternal God,} that you study to renew the damnable error of the Manichees, who imagined two beginners, the one of all goodness, and of all good creatures; the other of all iniquity, and of wicked creatures; affirming further, that the good and the merciful God was overcome for a time by him that was wicked and evil. And because that the plain Scriptures did confute these blasphemies, therefore did they deny the authority of Moses, and the certainty of all other Scriptures that made anything against their error. If manifestly you did take upon you the defense of those your fathers, as that you do of Pelagius, of Donatus, and of the Papists, {for of all these adulterous fathers, you be adulterous children,} then would I from Augustine, {whom God stirred up, no doubt, in the days of darkness, most learnedly and most plainly by infallible Scriptures, to confute those heresies,} from him, I say, I might take artillery already prepared, able enough to overthrow your buildings and munitions, appear they never so strong. But because {as before I have said} my purpose is not to burden you further than you do confess, I only admonish the reader to beware of such pestilences as begin to call the truth of God, revealed in his holy Word, in doubt, and do persuade men to credit dreams and revelations, howsoever they appear to repine to that which is revealed in the Word. Of such men, I say, ought Christ's flock to take heed; as also of those who make of equal authority such books as yet the Holy Ghost hath never commended to the Church of Christ, with these that are written by Moses, the Prophets, the Evangelists, and Apostles, and that by inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

That some of you be infected with this most pestilent poison, I am able to prove by more arguments than one. Being at London the Winter before the death of King Edward, {1552,} one of your faction required secret communication of me, in which after that

earnestly he had required of me closeness and fidelity, because that the matters that he had to communicate with me were so weighty, and of such importance, as since the days of the Apostles the like was never opened unto man. In the end, after many words, {which I neither gladly heard, neither yet will now write,} he gave me a book, written {as he said} by God, even as well as was any of the Evangelists. This book he adjured me {as it were} to read, and required to have my judgment of it. My answer was, that at his request I would read it, so that he would be content to reason with me of the chief points in the same contained; but to pronounce sentence or judgment, that could I not usurp, being but one man, far inferior to many of my brethren, the preachers of God's Word in that realm. Notwithstanding, he urged me to read his book, and I wondering what mysteries it should contain, called to me a faithful brother, who then {as pleased God} was present with me, named Henry Farroure, merchant, to whom I opened the matter, by whose counsel, and in whose presence I began to read his book. The first proposition whereof was, "God made not the world, neither yet the wicked creatures in the same contained, but they had their beginning from another, that is, from the Devil, who is called the Prince of the World," which proposition, plainly repugnant to God's Word, I did impugn, and began to declare unto him for what cause Satan had that title, to be called the Prince of the World. But he utterly denying either to reason and dispute, either yet to be reformed in any point that there was written, commanded me to read forward, and to believe, howbeit I did not understand. To whom, when I had gently said, "can any reasonable man will me to believe things directly fighting against God's verity and plain Word revealed?" "Tush," said he, "for your written Word, we have as good and as sure a word and verity that teacheth us this doctrine, as you have for you and your opinion." And then I did more sharply answer, saying, "ye deserve the death as a blasphemous person and denier of God, if you prefer any word to that which the Holy Ghost hath uttered in his plain Scriptures." At

which words he took pepper in the nose, and snatching his book forth of my hand, departed after he had thus spoken, "I will go to the end of the world; but I will have my book confirmed and subscribed with better learned men than you be." In me, I confess, there was great negligence, that neither did I retain his book, neither yet did present him to the Magistrate.

But yet this argument I have, that your faction is not altogether clean from the heresy of the Manichees. I could name and point forth others who labour in the same disease; but so long as their venom doth remain secret within themselves, I am purposed to spare them. But now that you accuse us to be unmerciful, proud, ambitious, and envious children, bloody persecutors of others for their conscience' sake, evil speakers, impatient, contentious, and seditious children; that we speak one thing with our mouths, and think another in our hearts. And that you extoll yourselves, that you are merciful, humble, and loving children, abhorring from blood, persecuting no man, good speakers, patient, and detesting all contention. That you be all ways moved with good thoughts and godly revelations, for such grace receive you plenteously of your Father. To the which I briefly answer, that because we have a just judge, who shall reveal the secrets of all hearts, we will rather sustain to be of you unjustly accused, than become proud braggers of our own righteousness, as you be, which sin is so odious in God's presence, that he hath never suffered it unpunished even before men. Forty years and more hath the Evangel of Christ Jesus been preached in Germania, in Helvetia, and now of latter years in Geneva; and so long hath this doctrine been taught of some, and hath been beloved of many. But what cruelty, what murder, or what sedition, can justly be laid to the charge of those that most constantly have taught and maintained the same, let the world convict them! And how far their life abhorreth from pride, ambition, and filthiness, hath God witnessed, and to this day doth witness, howsoever Satan doth blind your eyes.

But soon after that God had sown his good seed, began the devil to sow the cockle and darnel, I mean the pestilent sect of Anabaptists, whose fruits did suddenly appear, to the great slander of Christ's Evangel, and to the grief of many godly hearts. Brag what you list of your justice, of your mercy, of your godly revelations, and other such, you are the brethren, maintainers, and children of those in whom the contrary was plainly found; your doctrine and theirs are both one, and therefore of you can we look for none other fruit {unless that God restrain your fury} than your fathers have once produced before you. And that the readers shall not be ignorant what it was, I have added this History, written by that most faithful and notable witness of things done in matters of religion, since the beginning of the empire of Charles the Fifth until the year of 1556; which History, I add, {as God I take to record,} of no private malice which I bear against any person, but only that the world may see what was your original, how unjustly you accuse us of such crimes as impudently you lay to our charge, and how justly all men ought to fear that confusion which you intend, if God be times overthrow not your enterprises. The history and your original is this.

{NOTE: What follows are 2 large excerpts from a book by Johannes Sleidanus, 1506-1556, who was a historian from Luxemburg and annalist of the Reformation. His History was originally published in Strasburg in the year 1555. A later English translation was printed in London in 1689, entitled, "A General History of the Reformation."}

Part I

"There is a town named Alster, in the borders of Thuringia, under the dominion of the Duke of Saxony Elector, to the which town came one Thomas Müntzer; who began first to teach, not only against the Pope, but also against Luther, affirming both their doctrines to be corrupted and impure; that the Pope bound men's

consciences with too strait laws and bands; again, that Luther loosed those bands, but yet sinned on the contrary part, in giving too much liberty, and in preaching those things that were not of the Spirit. He taught, also, that it was lawful to despise the Pope's decrees, because they were of no force to bring us to salvation, which to attain unto {said he} most chiefly that we should avoid all manifest iniquity, as murder, adultery, and blaspheming of the name of God; that the body should be chastised, and brought low with fasting and simple clothing; that men ought to fashion their countenance to look sadly and gravely; that they should speak but seldom; and that they ought to nourish their beards. These things, and such like, he called the cross, the mortification of the flesh, and discipline. After they are thus furnished and prepared, {said he,} they ought to haunt solitary places, out of men's company, and often to think of God, what manner a one he is, whether he have any care of us or no. If Christ suffered for us; if our religion were not to be preferred to the Turks religion; and that we should ask a sign of God to assure us that he taketh care for us, and that we stand in the true religion. If he show not some sign immediately, that we should nevertheless go forward, praying instantly, yea, and vehemently quarreling with God, as if he did us not right; that seeing it is his will, as the Scripture teacheth us, to give to those that ask, he doth injury in not giving a sign to him that desireth the true knowledge of him. This kind of chiding and anger, he said, to be very acceptable unto God, because that by it he might perceive the fervent inclination of our minds; and that he would undoubtedly {if in this manner we did solicit him} declare himself by some manifest sign, that he would quench the thirst of our minds, and deal with us as he did in times past with our fathers. This also he taught, that God revealed his will by dreams, and that he laid in them the foundation of his purpose. And if it chanced that any man's dream might be interpreted, him he highly extolled openly before the assembly. And when by this means he had gotten many on his side, by little and little, he came to the same, which he went

about a little before; and in the forenamed town he began to register their names, which {being of his confederacy} were sworn to aide him in slaying the wicked Princes and Magistrates, and in placing new ones in their stead. For he said that he had received that commandment of God, to take them away and to constitute new. So long as he spake but of dreams, and such other like things, Frederick Duke of Saxony did bear with him, especially because Luther, by letters, required him so to do; but when he began to preach seditiously, he was banished; who {after he had lurked in corners certain months} came to Noriberge; and being also thrust from thence, a little after he came to Milhusium, a town of Thuringia. For when he was at Alster, he had enticed to him some of the citizens, by whose help he obtained the office of teaching. And because the magistrates liked him not, he raised a tumult amongst the people, whereby new magistrates were created. This was the beginning of trouble. After these things, the townsmen cast out the monks and invaded their houses, whereof the chieftest and richest fell to Müntzer's lot, who now played both the preacher and the magistrate. For judgment {said he} should be given by the revelation of God, and of the Scripture; and of all other things he gave sentence as it pleased him; for whatsoever he said it seemed to them most holy. That their goods should be in common, he said, was most agreeable to humanity. That all ought to be equal in dignity, all men should be free, and that all their goods should be used indifferently, as well of one as of another. Whereby the common people began to leave of labour, and to be idle, and what thing soever any lacked, that they took by violence from others that abounded. These manners he used for a space; and when the common people and husbandmen were in armour through Swabia and Franconia, to the number of forty thousand, and had destroyed the greatest part of their nobility, and had pulled down and burned many castles and towers, then put he to his hand, also thinking that the most convenient time to bring his purpose to pass. And making engines of war in the Grey

Friars' Church, the greater part of the people he brought forth of the country, in hopes of more wealth. He had a companion of marvelous audacity, who was of all his counsel, whose name was Phifer. This man attributed much to dreams and visions of the night; and amongst other things, he chanced to boast that he saw in his sleep, in a certain stable, a marvelous great multitude of mice, and that he did drive them all away. By which dream he understood that God commanded him to take his armour, and go forth with an army to destroy all the nobility. But Müntzer, although he preached vehemently to the people, yet was he somewhat colder; neither listed he to adventure the prosperous estate that he was in already before all they that were about him were in armour. And to bring the matter more easily to pass, he sent letters to the workmen that dug for metals in the country of Mansfield, earnestly admonishing them to fall upon the princes, without doubting of the matter, for it should come to pass that they which were in a readiness in Franconia shall come nearer to Thuringia. In the meantime, Phifer, that loved not to linger long in any matter, went out with his men and destroyed the country of Isfeld adjacent unto them; he spoiled the castles and temples, destroyed many of the nobles, and took certain of them prisoners, whom he bound in chains. After he returned home with a great prayer, whose prosperous success encouraged greatly the hearts of the common people, especially because the countries also about them were up, and had invaded the country of Mansfield. So Müntzer {thinking now that all men's hearts had failed them on every side} came with three hundred men to Mulhusium, and joined himself to the Franciscans. At that same time died Frederick Duke of Saxony without issue, {for he lived a sole life,} whose successor was John, his brother. While these things were in doing, Albrecht VII. von Mansfeld, gathered {with all expedition} a company of horsemen, and violently coming upon them, he slew three hundred, wherewith they being feared, durst proceed no further, but fled to Francusium, where they tarried waiting for a greater army, whereby only their assault was deferred.

In the time of this delay, the Princes that were there about, gathered horsemen to the number of a fifteen hundred, but no great multitude of footmen. These were the Princes of Saxony, John Elector, George his cousin, Philipp Landgrave of Hesse, and Henri Duke of Brunswick. The bowres, {that is, husbandmen,} remained upon a hill not far from Francusium, who had gathered their carts, and set them so nigh together to fence them withal, that with much difficulty could they be come unto. But they were neither well furnished with harness, neither yet with ordinance, and they were all, for the most part, unskilled in the feats of war, wherewith the Princes were so moved to compassion, that they sent messengers to exhort them to deliver the authors of the sedition, to lay away their weapons, and to depart home without hurt."

"But Müntzer, considering his own danger, came forth into the assembly, and, with grave countenance, said, 'ye brethren and fellow-soldiers do see tyrants not far from you, who, although they have conspired against us to take away our lives, yet are they of so small a courage, that they dare enterprise nothing against us. They offer foolish and fond conditions to the intent to spoil you of your armour. And now, it is manifest to you all that I began this deed, but not of any private authority of my own, {neither did I ever go about such a thing,} but by the commandment of God; which thing being so, it becometh both me and you to obey, and not once to move out of this place wherein God himself hath set us; who in times past commanded Abraham to offer his son, whose precept without resistance Abraham obeyed, albeit he was ignorant what should come of it. And therefore did God both preserve his son, and also highly rewarded his faith. In like manner ought we {which are in the same state} to persevere, committing the issue unto God; for, without doubt, all things shall be even as we would have it. Ye yourselves shall behold the manifest help of God, and whosoever is our enemy, him shall we suppress on every side. Neither is it in one place of the Scripture only, where God promiseth succor to the afflicted, and to destroy the wicked. This promise

most assuredly appertaineth unto us, for we are poor and in misery; and because we desire to retain and publish the knowledge of God, there is no doubt but that we shall overcome and be conquerors. On the other side, let us consider the condition of our enemies. I confess they are called princes, but indeed they are tyrants; neither have they any care of you at all, but devour all men's goods, and spend them most wickedly. In that people which sometimes God chose peculiarly unto himself, he ordained that kings should not spend any time in waste; yea, he commanded that they should look diligently in the Book of the laws which he had given them. But what do our tyrants, or how are they occupied? They think the commonwealth is no part of their charge; they know nothing of poor men's causes; they care not for justice; they suffer the ways to be beset with thieves; they punish not robbers, neither any other vice; they help not the widow, neither yet the fatherless; they look not to the good education of youth. As for the honouring of God's name, they do not only themselves neglect it, but also they hinder it. Thus only they apply to draw all men's goods to themselves; and therefore do they every day devise new ways to get money by extortion. Neither set they their minds upon defending or maintaining of peace, but that {being enriched above measure} they may abound in all kind of riot and pride. It is too manifest how great tumults and wars they raise for very light and foolish causes, whereby all that remaineth to the poor people is lost and destroyed. Behold, these are the excellent virtues and policies of your noble princes, wherein they exercise themselves. Therefore let none think that God will suffer those things any longer, but rather persuade himself assuredly, that as God did once destroy the Canaanites, so will he now also these. For though all these things, which I have recited before, were tolerable, think you that they shall escape unpunished for defending and maintaining that most execrable impiety of the Popish preachers? Who is ignorant how great iniquity is in the buying and selling of Masses? I will say nothing of the rest. Surely as Christ drove out the buyers and sellers

out of the church, so shall he now also root out the priests with their patrons and companions. Be strong therefore, and to gratify God, slay all this unprofitable multitude. To make peace with them, I can see no way honest, safe, or sure enough; for they will neither leave of their purpose, neither restore us to liberty, neither permit the true worshipping of God; and it were better for us to die than to allow their iniquity, and to suffer ourselves to be spoiled of the doctrine of the Gospel. I promise you assuredly that God shall prosper us, and that the victory shall be ours. For he himself promised me to my face; even he, I say, that cannot deceive nor lie, commanded me to begin this work on this manner, by punishing the Magistrates; and indeed, the power of God herein appeareth most excellent, when a great multitude of enemies is slain by a small hand. To let many other things pass, you know what Gideon brought to pass with a few; what Jonathan did, accompanied with his Armour-bearer; what David did when he fought alone against that monster Goliath, of huge stature, who for his height was even terrible to look on. There is no doubt but this day, in like manner, shall be notable, and had in remembrance of all posterities for the like spectacle. For although we seem not to be well furnished with weapons, nor fenced as it appertaineth, yet shall we have the victory. And this workmanship of heaven and earth shall rather be changed than that we shall be forsaken of God. For so in time past was the nature of the sea changed, that the Israelites might escape danger when of Pharaoh they were pursued. Let not the judgment of your own reason move you, neither let any appearance or shadow of danger trouble you, but valiantly invade the wicked and ungodly enemy; never let their engines of war make you afraid, for I will receive in the lap of my garment all the gemstones. Behold, see you not how merciful God is unto us? Look up, I beseech you, and mark well the sign and testimony of his perpetual love toward us? Lift up your eyes, and see the bow of heaven, by the which image, showed us from above, God signifieth to us most manifestly, that he will assist us in this battle, forasmuch as we have the

same bow painted in our ensign, and he sheweth also by the very same death and destruction to our tyrants. Therefore fall upon your enemies with a lustier courage, having an assured hope that God will help you. For God will not that you should make peace with the wicked adversaries.'

"When he had made an end of exhorting his soldiers, who nevertheless {for the most part} trembled for the greatness of the present danger; but all things were done in a hurley burley, without any certain rule or order. Moreover, there were some of a desperate audacity, ready to put to their hands to every mischievous act; these, of their own nature inclining to work mischief, were then more set on fire by his oration; but chiefly they were moved by the rainbow which stood in the element, {as it is said before,} and that took they for a most sure sign of victory. And this also helped them, that they were a great number, about eight thousand men, and that the place was fit for to defend them. So these men that were so boldened, with a loud voice admonished all men to take their weapons, and to go forth against the enemy with a good courage; and they had also a song, wherein they asked the assistance of God's Holy Spirit."

"But before this, a certain young man, of noble birth, was sent unto them, whom Müntzer {contrary to the law of arms, and to the custom of any nation} slew; wherewith the princes were so provoked, that they blew their trumpets to battle, and set their men in arrays. At that time there was there Philippe, Prince of Hesse, who although he was the youngest of all, yet rode he to and fro, exhorting the soldiers to be strong. Which exhortation being ended, they invaded their enemies, beginning first to shoot of their ordinance. And then the miserable men, {as all amassed, or besides themselves,} neither defended themselves, nor yet fled to save their lives, but sang still that song to the Holy Ghost to help them. And the most part of them put such confidence in Müntzer's fair promises that they looked for help from heaven. When they had shot of their ordinance, and began to assault their holds, and that

many of them were on every side slain, then were they put to flight, and went to Francusium, but some of them went to the other side of the hill, where they kept out for awhile a few horsemen, and slew one or two of them. But when they were all, for the most part, fled, the horsemen {scattered and dispersed} wandered to and fro, without order, so that whither so ever they fled they were pursued. But some of their men {as I said before} being slain, the residue, all kindled with fury and desire of revenge, were more violent, and were slain to the number of five thousand. Straight way Francusium was taken by battle, and three hundred in it which were beheaded."

"Müntzer fled into the town, and hid himself in a house not far from the gate; into the which it happened that a certain gentleman entered, whose servant going up into the upper part of the house, of purpose to view the dwelling, he found a certain man lying upon a bed, of whom he demanded what he was, and whether he were one of the rebels which fled out of the tumult. That he denied, saying, 'that even then he was sick of a fever.' It happened that besides the bed there lay a purse, which the other snatched up, hoping to get something out of it. After he had opened it, he found therein a letter, wherein Albrecht VII. Von Mansfeld admonished Müntzer to leave of his enterprise, and not to stir the people to sedition. When he had read these letters, he asked if they were written to him; but when he denied it, he forced him so, that he confessed himself to be Müntzer, and entreated him. Then {being taken} he was brought to George the Duke of Saxony, and to the Landgrave; who asked him, why he had so deceived poor men. He answered, 'that he had done nothing but his duty; and that the Magistrates who would not abide the doctrine of the Gospel, ought on that manner to be handled.' But after that by the Princes he was put to silence, he cried out for very anguish. Then said George the Duke of Saxony unto him, 'now are thou vexed, Müntzer; but think also in thyself of the death of those miserable men which {being wickedly deceived by this thy craft} have this day perished.' Then he {with great

laughter} answered, 'so would they.' After he was brought to Helderung, a town of Mansfield, where he was straightly examined what he purposed to do, and who were of his conspiracy, he told them all."

"Then came the Princes of Mulhusium to Helderung, and beheaded some of the rebels, among whom Phipher {of whom I spake before} was one. Thither also shortly after was Müntzer brought, who in those troubles was exceedingly vexed and troubled in himself. Neither was he able to render an account of his faith, as the manner was then. So that {to help him with} Henry, Duke of Brunswick, said it before him. And when he was at the point to die, he acknowledged his fault and error, and that he confessed it openly. And being compassed about with soldiers, he exhorted the Princes to have more pity on poor men, and so they should not need to fear the like danger after. He exhorted them also to read diligently the books of the Kings in the Scriptures. When he had spoken these things, he was stricken with a sword; and, for an example, his head was fastened upon a spear, and set up in the field."

End of Part I

And thus did he {Müntzer} end and suffer for his offence, which {as said is} he did openly confess. But yet, alas! His error and pestilent doctrine did not end. For from him came forth a kind of men, which for their doing and doctrine are called Anabaptists, for they forbid the baptizing of children, and are themselves re-baptized; and so affirm they, that all others ought to be; and they take away all the virtue of the first baptism. They show forth a certain kind of holiness. They teach that it is not lawful for Christen men to go to law together; not to require or take an oath, although by the Magistrate it were required; not to have anything in proper, but all things to be common unto all; and these be their first principles. But furthermore, they add yet much more grievous errors, as afterward I shall declare. And when they increased through all Germany, both far

and wide, Luther and many other learned men, earnestly withstood them; the Magistrates also did so punish them, that they could hardly increase to any greater number. At the last, in the chief town of Westphalia, named Monasterium, or Münster, {which is well fenced,} they placed themselves; which happened after this manner.

Part II

"There is not far from the town of Münster a temple of Saint Maurice, in the which one named Bernhard Rothmann did preach the Gospel, in the year of our salvation 1532, to a great audience of the citizens. And when they were purposed to bring him into the town, the Prelates {purposing to let their devise} gave him a little sum of money that he might go exercise himself in some other place; and so he did. But after he had been in divers places, where he thought to do some good and profit his spirit, he returned after certain months. But they {to whom his return was grievous} determined to let his preaching; but it was in vain, the people bare him such favour."

"Shortly after, it came to pass that certain of the chief citizens received him into the town, and when the church doors were shut against him, they made him a pulpit in the church porch. And because the number of the citizens and other hearers increased daily, they desired of the Papists that one of the temples might be opened unto him, which, if they would not grant, they would make a way in by violence. Not long after {by the counsel of the chiefest of the people} he sent letters to the country of Hesse, which was joining by, and under the government of the Landgrave, desiring that certain good and learned men might be sent unto him, which might with him preach the Gospel. And when there were six of them, whereof two were sent from Marpurg, they devised among themselves how they might first overcome the clergy, by the which means the Gospel might with more fruit be taught. And to bring this to pass, this way was thought most convenient; they wrote

out the errors of the Papists in thirty articles, and delivered them to the Counsel, offering themselves to suffer any kind of punishment, if they were not able to prove, by the Holy Scriptures, that they were all contrary to the Word of God. The Magistrates sent for the Papists to come before them, and they showed unto them those chief points of their errors. And when continually they alleged for themselves their doctrine to be pure and agreeable to the Word of God, and the preachers denied the same, and that they would prove under the pain of losing their heads; it was asked of them, whether that they would, by the Word of God, confute those articles that were put forth against them? When after this manner it was asked of them, they seeing also that the rulers were earnest in the matter, in few words they answered, 'that they had nothing to defend themselves withal; and whereas until that time they had said that their ordinances and manners were good and lawful, they confessed their so saying to be but by opinion and ignorance.' Then the Senate seeing them to be convicted of false doctrine and errors, having nothing to allege for themselves, and confessing their naughtiness, they commanded them that from thenceforward they should abstain from the office of teaching, and that they should give place in all their temples to those new teachers which had disclosed their trumpery and deceit. Afterward, by the consent of the Senate and the people, there was appointed to every one of the preachers a several temple to preach in. The Papists were grieved therewith, but specially the priests of the Cathedral Church, which, for the most part, were gentlemen born; they, when they saw that they could not remedy the matter, they departed in a fume, and went to the Bishop of that city; and after that they had counseled with him, they determined to stop all the ways and passages, that there should no victuals be carted to the town. Shortly after they had thus stopped the ways, the Bishop with the Priests before named came to Telget, to counsel more fully of the matter, for that was a little town but a mile from the city. From thence they sent a messenger with letters to the

Counsel, in these words, 'that they should give over their enterprise, and restore all things to their former state; if not, that they would take them from thenceforth as enemies.' The Bishop was called Frauncis Waldeck, and his predecessor was named Frederick, brother to the Archbishop of Cologne. This Bishop {either because he could not have his health in those places, or that he smelled somewhat in the matter} departed thence a little before of his own accord; and being content with a private life, he went into his own country. The people of Münster counseling upon this matter, kept the messenger; and upon Christmas Eve, in the night, they went forth, to the number of 900, and coming upon them unawares, they took the town, and setting keepers at the gates {lest any should escape} they apprehended all. The Bishop {as it happened} was gone from thence the day before. They brought all the captives into the city, amongst whom were the chief prelates, and divers of the nobility. Of these the Magistrates asked what their intent was, and whither they were minded to hinder the preaching of the Gospel anymore? They freely answered, that they would do their diligence that the Gospel might flourish. And by the occasion of this answer, there was a pact made between them. The copy whereof the Magistrates sent to the Landgrave, desiring him that he would assist them in the maintenance of the Gospel and their commonwealth. Then sent he unto them certain of his servants; through whose coming unto them the peace was made; and being reconciled, and the grief trodden under foot, they lived in peace together; that the Gospel might be preached in six churches, and that the impieties and superstitions which were in religion might be taken away; that in the Cathedral Church nothing should be changed, and that the citizens should not think that to appertain anything at all unto them. This form of peace, in writing, was signed by the Landgrave, by the Bishop and his adherents, with the noblemen, and all the people, the 14th of February, the year of our salvation, 1533."

"After this manner things being appeased, there came unto Münster a botcher of garments, {a tailor,} named John Leiden, born in Holland, which was a vehement Anabaptist. This man, after he was entered into familiarity with the preachers, he privily asked of them, 'whether they thought that it were mete to baptize children or not?' And when they answered, 'yea,' he, as one utterly of the contrary judgment, began to laugh, and despise their judgment. Which thing when Bernhard Rothmann, of whom we spake before, perceived, he exhorted the people in his preaching to call upon God, that he would give them grace to stand and continue in the truth, and that he would keep them from being corrupt with heresies, and chiefly from the opinion of the Anabaptists, which now privily do creep in among them, and gather themselves together. 'For {said he} if their opinion get the upper hand, the state, not only of the common-wealth, but also of religion, while very miserable and poor.' At the same time came to the town one Herman Stapred, which being made companion with Rothmann, did publically inveigh against the baptism of infants. He was scholar unto one Henry of Rolle, who a little before was put to death at Utrecht for an Anabaptist. And this was, as it were, another step forward in this new kind of doctrine."

"This came to pass that the Anabaptists taught through all the city, although it were in private houses, and secretly; and none was received of them except they that were of their sect. Furthermore, there was none that made themselves known to be the authors of this opinion, nor they did not teach but by night, and when others were at their rest, which time they wrought their mysteries. But the thing being known, and divers of the citizens being grieved at it, saying, 'that it was a great shame that such new doctrine should be sown in secret, and by night,' it came to pass that, by the commandment of the rulers, the captains of them were commanded to depart the city; which going out at one gate, they came in again at another, saying, 'that they had a commandment from God, that they should remain there and apply their matters.' This thing moved the

rulers not a little, and caused no small wonder in the town. Therefore, for the avoiding of greater tumult and danger, the Magistrates gave in commandment, as well to the Anabaptists as to the preachers of the Gospel that they should appear before them in the counsel house, with certain other learned men. Then Rothmann bewrayed his judgment, which until that time he had concealed, and condemned the baptism of infants as a thing wicked and abominable. But one named Herman Bushe chiefly, so defended the contrary part, that the Anabaptists were commanded to depart out of the city, and out of hand. And when they did allege for themselves that they should not quietly pass through the Bishop's land, the Senate obtained for them a safe conduit, and gave them wherewithal to bear their charges. But they having long before determined not to depart from thence to any other place, {secretly returning to their companions,} kept themselves closely for a time. The Magistrates, in the mean season, before that they came forth of their corners again, caused all the church doors to be shut, one only excepted. For it was to be feared lest that the Anabaptists {who daily increased, accompanied with their teachers} should drive the preachers of the Gospel out of their temples."

"After this, in the month of November, the Landgrave, at the request of the rulers of the city, sent two preachers unto them, Theoderik Fabritius and John Melsinger; but Melsinger seeing the trouble, and fearing the danger, returned home again. The other with great diligence exhorted the citizens that they should beware of the doctrine of the Anabaptists. In this wise he ceased not to do his endeavour, until that the Anabaptists, getting the upper hand, did drive the other out of the city, as afterward shall be declared. And to make all sure, he wrote in a brief sum the effect of the true doctrine and ecclesiastical administration, the Counsel and people appointing the same. Then by the counsel of the Magistrates, one Peter Wirtam began again to preach; but he had not preached long ere the Anabaptists, stirred up by Rothmann, drove him away; who being more fierce than before, provoked Fabritius

and others to disputation, the Senate agreeing thereunto, but under this condition, that the disputation should be grounded upon the Word of God, and other writings agreeable unto the same, in the presence of some godly learned men, which should be as it were arbiters, who hearing and trying the sentences and arguments indifferently on both sides, might give judgment, and look what judgment they should give, that it should be agreed unto of all; by which means discord being taken away, the peace of the Church might be restored. This condition Rothmann and his companions did refuse. When they craftily avoided to be bewrayed, they began openly to be contemned of the common people."

"But to wipe away this foul blot, they find out another way much more compendious. One of them {as if he were inspired with the Holy Ghost} ran through the streets of the city, crying, 'repent you, and be baptized again, or else the wrath of God shall consume you.' By this means there was a common tumult, and as many as were re-baptized cried after the same manner as did the first. Many fearing the wrath of God, which they so threatened to fall upon them, {deceived of very simplicity, which otherwise were good men,} obeyed them; and others did the same for saving of their goods. For after that the Anabaptists had gotten the upper hand of their adversaries, they dispossessed them of their goods. This was about the end of December, and now came they again forth of their secret corners, of which we spake before. And being gathered together in the market place, they made a great shout, commanding all that were not re-baptized to be slain, as Pagans and wicked persons. After this, they took the artillery and munition of the city, and also the town house, not without doing violence unto many. The others on the other part, for saving of them and theirs from injuries, got themselves unto another certain place of the city, that ever was well fenced, and took many of the Anabaptists. This conflict against the Anabaptists, which surrounded the market place, and had fortified it round about, continued so long, while pledges being delivered

on both parties, they came to a composition, wherein was agreed, that everyone should hold his religion to himself as him liked, and return to his house in peace."

"In the mean season, Rothmann and Bernhard Knipperdolling, which was the chief author of this faction, although they seemed to have allowed this composition, yet notwithstanding they privily sent letters to villages about, willing all those that were of their sect, that, leaving their goods behind them, they should with all speed repair to the city to them, promising that whatsoever they should lose should be restored unto them tenfold again. Many, enticed through these great and plentiful promises, came unto Münster, both men and women, with an assured hope to obtain no small benefit, but chiefly they of small substance, which were not able to keep their houses. The citizens, and chiefly those that were of some reputation, when they saw that the city began to be filled with strangers, they withdrew themselves as well as they could, leaving behind them the Anabaptists with the mingled people. This was in February, about Shroftide, 1534. Thus one party growing weak by their departing, the Anabaptists chose new magistrates, such as were of their own opinion. They made counselors also, among whom was Knipperdolling. Not long after, they invaded the temple of Saint Maurice, in the suburbs, and they burnt it, with all the houses about it; they spoiled all the temples about it also, and defaced the great church within. This done, they began to run on heaps about the city, in the streets, crying, first, 'repent,' and immediately after they cried, 'hey, you hence, you wicked persons, except you list to adventure your lives.' At the same time, they ran about the city in armour and chased out of the city all such as were not of their sect, without any regard of age or kind; after such a sort, that in this turmoil and hasty flight many women were delivered before their time; and immediately they took the goods of those whom they had chased out. And although that this chanced the day before the Bishop laid siege to the city, yet notwithstanding, when certain of the company of those that fled fell into the hands of the Bishop, they

were taken as enemies; of which company some were put to death; among whom were taken one or two preachers of the Gospel. And when Peter Wirtam, of whom we spake before, was in danger of his life, he was saved through the favour of the Landgrave. Now, the residue of the towns men moved thereby, which were good men, beholding present danger to fall upon them, though they would forsake the city, full sore against their wills {and as it were constrained} they tarried still."

"At that time their chief prophet, {for that name they usurped,} named Jan Matthys, commanded that everyone which had any gold, silver, or movable goods, they should bring it forth, to be in common, under pain of heading. And to this use there was a public house ordained. The people were greatly astonished with this sharp commandment, yet notwithstanding they obeyed it. And it was not best for any to use deceit in this thing, or to keep any part back, for they had two prophesying maidens, which declared if any deceit was used. And they were not only content thus to do with their own goods, but also they used the goods of others whom they had driven out after the like manner. After this the same prophet gave in commandment that none should have or keep to himself any book, saving the Bible, and that all others should be brought forth to be razed and destroyed. This commandment, he said, was given him from above, and upon this a great number of books were brought forth, and burned."

"It chanced in that time that a handy crafts man, named Hubart Turteline, had spoken in mockage against those that called themselves prophets. This being known, they called the multitude together, and commanded them to come in harness, and straight way they accused the man, and condemned him to death. With this the people was grievously moved and stricken with fear. The chief prophet {before named} took the poor man, which being down on the ground, he stroked him with a spear, without giving him his deaths wound, although he ran upon him with a great violence. Then he commanded him to be carried into another place, and

taking a young man's half hake that stood by him, he shot him through, lying on the ground. And because that yet he died not out of hand, he said, 'that it was showed to him from heaven that the time of his death was not yet come, and that God would pardon him of his offense,' but the poor man within few days after died. When the Prophet heard of his death, he took a long spear, and ran with it about the city, crying, 'that God the Father had commanded him to drive the enemy out of the city.' And when he came near unto the camp, a certain soldier slew him. And notwithstanding that this was the second time of bewraying of their falsehood, yet the residue of his fellow prophets had so bewitched the people, and they so set out the matter unto them, that the common people took the matter very heavily, and said, 'that surely some great plague should fall upon them for the taking away of so notable a man.' But the next prophet after him, named John Leyden, willed them all to be of a good courage, 'for {said he} it was long before showed me that he should die after that manner, and that I should take his wife in marriage.' Two days before Easter, they ran into the temples, and rang all the bells at once. Within few days after, Knipperdolling prophesied that those which were set aloft should be brought down, and the other should be exalted from a vile and base estate. After that, he commanded that all the temples should be cast down, affirming with much gravity that commandment to have come from God. Immediately the thing was obeyed, and that commandment celestial {as he termed it} with all diligence put in execution. About the same time, the fore named John Leiden took the sword that served for the heading of the offenders, and gave it to Knipperdolling, and made him hangman, 'for so {said he} it was determined of God, that he which was one of the chief rulers before, and of the counsel, should now be in the lowest place, and be made hangman.' Knipperdolling was nothing offended with the matter, but took the office thankfully upon him."

"Now, when the Bishop had certain months borne all the charge of the siege himself alone, Hermannus the

Archbishop of Cologne, and John Duke of Cleve, sent him for aide money and guns, with a certain company of horsemen and footmen. The Archbishop of Cologne himself came also to the camp, to sit in counsel with them; and not long after, the city was besieged in sundry places. And when there was no hope to win it by force, they made seven bulwarks about the city, to keep it from victuals, furnishing them with footmen and horsemen which should remain there all winter. The Bishop of Münster {for the maintenance of the siege and war against the town} required aide of the Princes about the Rhine, as the next neighbour, and to whom the matter also did belong; for which cause they gathered themselves together at a city called Coblentz, the 13th of December 1534."

"After this unprofitable besieging of the city, John Leiden fell into a sleep, and dreamed the space of three days; and when he awoke, he spake never a word, but only required paper to be brought unto him, in which he wrote twelve men's names, among whom were certain of noble birth, which twelve should rule as chief heads, as it was among the Israelites; this, he said, was the will of the heavenly Father. When as by these twelve there was a way made for him to be King, he put forth certain articles unto the Preachers, and willed them that, if they could, they should confute them by God's Word, or else he would publish them unto the multitude, and so of them they should be allowed and established. The sum of them was this. That a man was not bound to one wife only, and it was lawful for any man to have as many wives as he would. But when the Preachers withstood this sentence, he called them into the counsel house, and with them the twelve rulers; and when they were all come thither, he put of his cloke, and threw it on the ground, and with it the New Testament. By those {as it were} signs, he testified and sware that that article which he had put forth was revealed to him from heaven, and therefore, with terrible words, he threatened them, as that God would not be merciful unto them unless they would allow them. At the length they agreed, and the preachers, for three days together,

preached only of matrimony. Straight way John Leiden married three wives, whereof one was she of whom we spake before, the wife of the great Prophet Jan Matthys. With this example others did follow, so that it was counted laudable to marry often. But divers of the citizens that liked not their doings, {a sign being given through the city,} they called all the lovers of the Gospel into the market place. Then took they the Prophet and Knipperdolling, with all the preachers. Which thing when the common people heard of, they armed themselves, and rescued those that were taken, killing, with great torment, to the number of fifty persons; for they tied them to trees and posts, and so shot them through. For the great prophet cried, 'that all those that would do acceptable service to God, should throw the first dart,' others were killed after another manner."

"The 24th of June, there arose a new prophet, which by his occupation was a goldsmith. This Prophet called the people into the market place, and there he said unto them, 'that it was the commandment and will of the heavenly Father, that John Leiden should be the Emperor of the whole earth, and that he going forth with a mighty army, should kill all the Princes and Kings of the earth, showing mercy only to the common people, {that is to say, all those that love righteousness,} and that he should possess the seat of his father David until the Father should require the kingdom of him. For {said he} the wicked being put down, the godly shall here reign in this life.' And when he had published these things openly, by and by John Leiden fell upon his knees, and holding up his hands unto heaven, said, 'it was many days ago {my brethren} that I did know of this, but I would not declare it; and now God hath uttered it unto another, that you might the better credit it.' This man obtaining the kingdom by this craft, immediately he put out of office the forenamed twelve. And, after the manner of kings, he chose unto him noble men, and commanded that there should be two crowns of fine gold made for him, a scepter, a scabbard, and chain of gold, with other such like ornaments. Furthermore, he appointed certain days, in the which he

would openly hear all men's matters that had anything to put forth unto him. So often as he came abroad, he was accompanied with his officers and noblemen of his court. Next unto him followed two young men on horseback, and he on the right hand bare a crown and the Bible; the other on the left hand, a drawn sword. The pomp of his chief wife {for he had more at that time} was after the same manner. In the market place there was an high throne made for him, covered with cloth of gold. The actions and complaints that were brought before him, for the most part, were of marriages and divorcements, which then were most frequent, and after such a manner, that not a few which had before lived together a long time, were then divorced."

"It came to pass that on a certain day as the people were in the market place very thick, and thronging together to hear, behold, Knipperdolling leaped up, and creeping upon the heads of the people with his hands and feet, {for they stood so thick,} he breathed in the mouth of every one of them, saying to one after another, 'the Father hath sanctified thee; receive the Holy Spirit.' Another day, he leading the dance before the King, said, 'thus was I wont to do with my harlot, but now the Father hath commanded that I should do the same before the King.' But because he did it so often and never ended, the King being offended went his way. Then hastily he went into the throne, and behaved himself like a King. But the King coming in the meanwhile, thrust him out, and caused him to be kept in prisoner three days. During the siege, they set out a book, naming it 'The Restitution,' in which book, besides other things, they say, 'the kingdom of Christ to be such before the judgment day, that the elect and godly shall reign; but the wicked, that they should be destroyed everywhere.' Also, that it is lawful for the people to put down the civil powers; and that although the Apostles had no commandment to take jurisdiction upon them, yet, notwithstanding, the ministers of the church now ought to take the sword into their hands, and by violence to set up a new commonwealth. Also, that none

ought to be suffered in the commonwealth that is not a true Christian; that none can be saved unless he put all his goods in common, without possessing anything proper unto himself; that Luther and the Pope be false prophets, and of the two, Luther to be the worse; and that the marriage of those which are not illuminated by the true faith, is polluted and impure, and ought to be taken for adultery and fornication rather than marriage. Among other men, Melanchthon, Justus Jonas, and Urbanus Rhegius, withstood their doctrine, as it appeared by their plentiful and excellent writings."

"Within few weeks after, the new prophet, of whom we spake before, blew a trumpet in all the streets, and commanded that all the people should come into the church yard of the great temple all harnessed, for the wicked were to be driven forth of the city. When they were come thither, they found a supper prepared, and by commandment they sat down at the table, to the number of 4000. After they had supped, those that kept the watch, about 1000, supped also. The King and the Queen, with their household, served. The supper being almost ended, the King gave bread to everyone, saying, 'take and eat, show forth the death of the Lord.' And the Queen giving them the cup, said, 'drink, and show forth the death of the Lord.' This being done, the new prophet {of whom we spake before} went up into the pulpit, and asked of them all, 'whether they would obey the Word of God or no?' Whereunto when they had all said, 'yea,' he said, 'the commandment of the Father is that there be sent forth twenty-eight preachers, which shall go into the four quarters of the world, and preach the doctrine that is published in this city.' And then, by order, he named them, and the places to which they should everyone go; six were sent to Osnaburgh, as many to Warendorf; eight to Soest, as many to Cosfeld. The King and the Queen supped afterward with the servitors that had served at the table, and with them that were ordained to go forth. When supper was in doing, the King rose, saying, 'that he had a business to do, commanded him of the Father,' and by chance there was a soldier taken, whom the King accused to be a traitor,

as Judas was, and with his own hand he stroke of his head. This done, he returned to supper, and told merely of his goodly act that he had done. After supper, those twenty-eight preachers were sent forth a little before night; and besides for the finding of them, there was given to each of them a piece of gold, with a charge, that wheresoever their doctrine was not received, they should leave those pieces as a witness against them of their destruction and everlasting damnation, because they had refused peace and a doctrine so wholesome. When they came to the places appointed unto them, they cried in the towns, 'that men should repent, or else they should perish out of hand.' They spread their garments upon the ground before the rulers, and cast upon them their pieces of gold which they had received, affirming, 'that they were sent of the Father to bring them peace; which if they would receive, then they willed them to put all their goods in common; and if they refused, then, by this sign and {as it were} a mark, they would witness their evil deed and unthankfulness. For, behold, 'the time {said they} spoken of before by the Prophets, in the which God will that righteousness shall reign upon the whole earth, is come. And when the King shall have fulfilled his office that justice doth rule in every place, then shall it come to pass that Christ shall give up the kingdom to the Father.' They speaking after this manner were taken, and {in the beginning by gentleness, and after with torments} they being asked of their doctrine and life, and of the strength of the city, answered, that they only had the true doctrine, which they would maintain with the peril of their lives. For {said they} from the time of the Apostles, the truth hath not been truly preached, nor any justice used; also, that there were four prophets; two just, David and John Leiden; and two unjust, the Bishop of Rome and Luther, who was the worst of both. They being asked why, contrary to their promise, they had driven the innocents out of their city, occupying their goods, wives, and children; and by what place of the Scripture they would prove that their act to be well and justly done? They answered, 'that the time was come which Christ spake

of, that the meek should possess the earth; and that in like case God did give the goods of the Egyptians to the Israelites.' Afterward they told of the munition and victuals that were in the city, and the multitude; and also, that many in it had above five wives a piece; adding this, that they looked for armies of men out of Friesland and Holland; which when they were once come, the King would set forth with all his host, to bring the whole world under his power and subjection, after that he had killed all the kings thereof for not ministering justice."

"When they had been reasoned withal after this manner, and they continued in their purpose, and would acknowledge none other Magistrate than their King, they were all put to death, saving one that escaped. The city was so hardly and so straightly besieged, that none could either go in or out. Wherefore the citizens fearing famishment, and seeing the danger that they were in, they thought to have taken the King and to deliver him to the Bishop bound; but he getting knowledge thereof, chose twelve out of all the multitude, such as he thought to be most faithful unto him, and called them Captains; and to each of them he appointed certain quarters of the city to defend, and garrisons of men to keep the people from rising. Moreover, he promised to all the multitude, that by Easter the siege should be removed, and that they should be delivered from the necessity that they were in. But unto them which he had chosen to be Captains, he promised much more largely, that they should be lords and governors over many things, naming the towers and land that he would give to each of them. Also, he said that only the Landgrave should be pardoned, because he hoped that he would take his part."

"We spake before of the Convention {appointed at Confluence} of the noble men in the province of the Rhine, in the month of December; unto which company {of his own good will} the Duke of Saxony, Elector John Frederick joined himself. In this session it was concluded, that for the present aiding of the Bishop, there should be appointed forth 300 horsemen and 3000

foot men, for six months. One from the County of Obersten, named Vlrik, was made General Captain over this army, and of the whole wars. It was also there ordained that the whole estates of the empire should be desired to aide in this matter; and, because the Emperor was in Spain, that Ferdinand the King should be desired for this matter to appoint a Convention in the month of April. And also, they sent letters unto the city besieged, willing them to give over their enterprise, being so dishonest and wicked as nothing could be more; which thing if they would not, neither submit themselves again under their lawful Magistrates, they should be sure that the Bishop, which now kept the siege, should have the whole help of the Empire against them. This was about the end of December. They gave answer the 13th of January, in the year of our Lord 1535, with many words, but nothing to the purpose; yet so, that they praised and defended their enterprise. And as touching that which was laid to their charge, for their creating of a King, they made no answer at all; but in private letters written to the Landgrave, they laboured to excuse themselves, speaking many words of the slaughter and destruction of the wicked, and of the deliverance and reign of the godly in this life. With these letters, they sent also unto him the book, whereof we spake before, called, 'The Restitution,' and advertised him to repent, and not to make war {as did the other wicked Princes} against them, which were innocent men, and the people of God. The Landgrave, when he had read their letters and their book, he noted those points that were not allowable in the same, and gave charge to certain of his learned men that they should answer them. And because they {in few words, and very darkly} affirmed their King to be more chosen of God than by them, he asked them, 'why they showed not the places of Scripture which made them think it lawfully done, and why they confirmed it not before by some miracles and signs above nature? For {said he} God showed by all the prophets long before of the coming of Christ, so that it was not only evident of what house and lineage he should come, but also in what time, and where he

should be born.' They did also desire that their cause might come in question, unto the which the Landgrave answered, 'that it was too late, seeing that they had taken the power of the sword into their hands, and had been the authors of so great calamity. For {said he} all men may plainly see what is their meaning, to wit, the ruin of all laws and commonwealths, and as their beginning is wicked and cursed, so also is the desiring of their matter to come in question nothing but feigned and dissembled. Also, that he had sent unto them faithful Ministers, by whom they were well and godly instructed; but seeing they had refused their doctrine, giving over obedience to Magistrates, possessing other men's goods, having many wives, choosing unto them a new king, denying Christ to have taken the nature of man of the Virgin Mary, affirming man to have free will, forcing men to put their goods in common, denying pardon to those that sin; all these opinions to be utterly repugnant both to the law of God and of man.' After they had received this answer, they answered again in writing, and withal they sent a book, set forth in the Dutch tongue, of the mysteries of the Scripture. In their Epistle, they published their cause again anew, and defended their doctrine to be good in their foresaid book. They divided the whole course and ages of the world into three parts; and the first age, as from Adam until Noah, to have perished with the flood; the second, in which now we be, to perish with fire; the third, they say, shall be new, in the which righteousness shall reign. But before that the last age shall be revealed, this that now is must be purged with fire. 'But that {say they} shall not come to pass before Antichrist be disclosed, and his power be utterly put down. Then shall the ruined seat of David be erected again, and Christ shall reign upon the earth, and all the writings of the prophets shall be fulfilled. And as touching this present age, it is like to the time of which Isaiah speaketh, 'for justice is put to silence in it, and the godly are afflicted.' But now the time of liberty and deliverance from so many and great calamities is come, as it came unto the Israelites being in the captivity of Babylon, and the wicked shall receive the full reward of

their wickedness, as it is prophesied in the Apocalypse; but this restitution to go before the world to come, to the end that, all the wicked being oppressed, the seat of justice might be prepared.' When the Landgrave had read over their book, he gave charge to certain Ministers of his church to answer unto it.

"In February, the famine was so great in the city that divers perished with hunger. One of the Kings wives being stricken with pity towards the people, spake by chance unto the other women, and said, 'that she thought it was not the will of God that the people should so die for lack of sustenance.' The King, which had good provision in the house, not only to serve his necessity, but also to waste superfluously, knowing of this, he brought her into the market place, with all the residue of his wives, and there commanded her to kneel down upon her knees, and then he cut of her head from her shoulders; and yet not so content, after her death he defamed her with whoredoms. This being done, his other wives began to sing, and to give praises to the heavenly Father. Then danced they, and the King led the dance; and he exhorted the people also {which had no other victuals left save only bread and salt} that they should dance and be of good cheer. Now, when the day of Easter was come, and that there appeared no sign of deliverance, the King, which had made them so many goodly and large promises, that he might find some means to excuse himself withal, he feigned himself to be sick six days together; which days being ended, he came forth unto the market place, and said unto the people, that he had ridden upon a blind ass, and that the Father had put upon him the sins of all the multitude, so that they were all made clean and purged from their sins, and that this was the deliverance promised by him, with the which they ought to be content."

"Among other things that Luther caused to be printed in that time, speaking of those that were besieged in Münster, he said thus, 'oh, what shall I say, or how shall I bewail this unhappy people? The thing itself doth declare that they be possessed with many

devils. But we ought to give praise to the merciful goodness of God, for although that Germany hath deserved, for the contemning of the Gospel, hatred of God's name, and shedding of innocent blood, to be grievously punished by the hand of God; yet, notwithstanding, he hath bridled the force and violence of Satan hitherto, not suffering him to rage at his pleasure, but hath mercifully warned us; and by this foolish tragedy of Münster, called us to amendment of life. For except that God did bridle him, and draw him back, I doubt not but that most subtle and crafty spirit would have handled this matter far otherwise. But now when as God hath thus restrained him, he is not able to do so much as he would and as he desireth; but so far as God permitteth him, he fretteth and rageth. For the Devil, which desireth to destroy the Christian faith, goeth not this way to work, to give liberty for men to have many wives at once; for he knoweth well that men do abhor it, it is so open, detestable, and filthy a thing, in all men's eyes. The politick and civil government may this way be troubled; but to invade the kingdom of Christ withal, there must be other manner of weapons and engines used. For he that will go about to flatter the people by fraud and deceit, he must not be desirous to reign, not to declare himself a tyranny, {for all the world reproveth that, and seeth to what end such enterprises do tend,} but he must come by some privy means; as by holy speakings; his garments homely, and not like unto others; a grave countenance, his head hanging toward the ground; in abstinence, not touching money, not eating flesh, refusing marriage, esteeming civil government and bearing of authority to be a profane thing; to refuse to bear rule, and to profess himself to be of a singular and lowly spirit. This {I say} is the ready way or means which may deceive even the very wise, and all by simulation and subtilty to aspire to the highest reign upon earth. But to usurp authority with unshamefast extremities, and for filthy desire to take as many wives as he list, this is not the craft of any practiced devil, but of some rude and late sprung up spirit; or at least if he be of any experience, yet God

hath now so tied him in chains that he can no more subtly deceive; which thing the Lord doth, to the end that we should reverence his Majesty, and that we should be first stirred up to repentance before he let lose the bridle of some more expert devil, which surely shall assault and besiege us much more sharply and with greater fury. For if this devil, being but a simple grammarian, hath stirred up so much trouble, what shall we then do, when Satan, of much more knowledge, being an expert lawyer, and a perfect divine, shall make towards us with full sail? Wherefore this homely devil that is of so small experience is not of us greatly to be feared. And I do also think, that all the inhabitants of Münster do not allow their toying folly, but that diverse of them do greatly sorrow, which {not without many sighs and tears} do look for deliverance at God's hand, as it hath been seen before in the seditions of the country men, and I would to God there were no devil in the world of greater craft than this devil of Münster is, provided that God take not his Word from us. For I suppose there be but very few that will give credence to this so gross and unlearned a master. But, indeed, when God is angry or displeased, there is no error so foolish, unlikely, or out of order, which Satan shall not persuade some to believe; as we see to be brought to pass in the doctrine of Mahomet. For though all their teaching is chaff, yet notwithstanding, the light of God's Word being quenched, it took strength, and hath spread forth itself so large and mighty as we see it this day. And the like had come to pass in Germany, if God had not put down the enterprise and counsel of Münster. For with the least spark that is, Satan can make a great flame, {if God do suffer him,} and a better way to quench it withal there is not than with the Word of God. For when the weapons of the enemy are all together spiritual, he cannot be overcome with a multitude of horses, or any engines of war. But our princes and bishops work otherwise; for they hinder the doctrine of the Gospel, which is the only way whereby the minds and hearts of men may be healed. And in the mean time they violently torment them, to pluck the body from the Devil, leaving to him

the principal part of man, which is his heart and soul; using the matter as the Jews did, which thought to extinguish and put down Christ by the punishment of the Cross. But now as touching the common account and writings that go of Münster, I have no doubt but that it is so as it is reported, and that which they themselves have written of late maketh me fully to believe it, in which they paint out lively their own fury and madness. First of all, they teach of the faith very foolish and absurd things, and of Christ as though he took not flesh of the Virgin Mary, and yet they confess him to be of the seed of David. But they utter not their minds fully; and without doubt Satan doth nourish some monster, which may easily be perceived by this which they say, 'the seed or the flesh of Mary cannot deliver us.' But in vain is their travail, for the Scripture witnesseth Christ to be born of the Virgin Mary. Which saying, in all languages, is referred to the fruit, which being conceived and fashioned of the flesh and blood of his mother, is born into the world. Also they show forth their ignorance, in that they condemn the first baptism as a profane thing, esteeming it not as the institution of God, but of man. But if it be so, that all manner of things ought to be condemned and put away that either the wicked have or do give, then do I marvel that they cast not away the gold and the silver with the other goods that they took from the wicked, and devise some other means to live by. For as these things be the creatures and work of God, so is Baptism also. When the wicked man sweareth, he abuseth the true name of God; and if the name of God be not true to him, then he offendeth not. He that killeth, robs, or spoils, he transgresseth the commandment of God; but if the commandment of God be not true unto him, he sinneth not. Even so, if the first baptism be nothing, then the receivers of it have not offended. Wherefore then do they so much detest the first baptism as a wicked thing, whereas, notwithstanding, they affirm it to be nothing? Also, if the marriages in times past ought to be taken as whoredom and adultery, as they say, because they were contracted of them that wanted faith, I ask you, do they

not confess themselves to be the children of harlots? Now, if they be bastards and unlawfully begotten, how cometh it to pass that they enjoy their city and the possession of their forefathers? It were meet, therefore, seeing they be such, that they should have no part with the heritages of their ancestors, but that in this new kind of marriage that they are entered into they should get unto themselves new goods and riches, which might bear a more honest title. For it is uncomely for these holy and religious men that they should live with the goods of harlots and miscreants, or that they should win them to themselves from others by violence and robbery. And as touching their kingdom, which is to be laughed at, there is so much wickedness in it, and so manifest, that we shall not need to make many words of it. And truly, for those things whereof we have spoken, as we have treated more than enough, so also more than need, considering that it hath been so plentifully and largely set forth by others.”

“Now, when they in the City were come into this case, that diverse of them daily died for hunger, and that many also departed from thence, and came out so weak and feeble that the enemies had pity upon them, the Captain sent word to the townsmen, that if they would deliver to them the King and certain others, they themselves should be pardoned. The citizens, although they had good will so to do, yet durst they not go about it, as the cruelty of the King was so great and the watch was kept so straightly. For the King was so obstinate, that as long as there remained anything for him to eat, and a few others, he was fully bent not to yield. For which cause the Captains sent word again, and commanded them, that from thenceforth they should not send any further of their city, not so much as children or women. This was in the calendar of June; the day following, they made unjust complaining that their cause might not lawfully be heard, and that they were wrongfully afflicted above measure; also, proffering themselves to submission if any could show them wherein they offended. Furthermore, they expounded a certain place of Daniel, as of the fourth beast much

more cruel than the others. The conclusion of their letters was this, 'that God aiding them, they would stand to the truth which they had confessed,' but all this was written at the King's commandment."

"Now, when all things were come to the extremities in the city, there were two that fled from thence, of which one was taken of the soldiers, the other came to the Bishop under safe-conduct. Both these showed how the city might be taken. The Bishop and the General-Captain hearing the words of these two fugitives, and weighing the matter, the 22nd of June they talked with them of the city, advertising them to yield themselves into their hands, and to save the multitude which perished with hunger. Answer was made, in the presence of the King, by Roteman, that in no wise they would give over from that which they had begun. Two days after, about the eleventh hour in the night, the army came near to the city without making any noise. By the advice of the two fugitives, certain chosen soldiers passed the ditch and came to the trench, killing the watchmen; others followed after these, which found a little gate open, through which they entered into the city, to the number of five hundred, with certain Captains and Standards. Then they of the city came running unto that place, and with great pain kept they the residue of the army out which would have entered; and shutting the gate, they fell upon them that were come in with a great rage, and killed many of them. And when the conflict between them had endured two hours, very sharp and furious, the soldiers that were enclosed did burst open the next gate, which was not kept with any great strength, and so made they an entrance in for their fellows, which straightway entered in by a great company. The citizens resisted them a little at the first brunt, but they gathered themselves together in the market place, and being in despair of any victory, {many of them being slain at the first bursting in,} they desired and entreated for mercy; which was granted unto them. The King and Knipperdolling were taken the same time. Roteman despairing of his life, ran among

the heap of the enemies, and was thus thrust through, rather than he would fall alive into their hands."

"When the city was taken, the Bishop took to himself half the spoil and the ordinance; afterward he discharged the armies, reserving only to himself two companies for defense. Then was there another convention of the Empire at Worms, the fifteenth of July, wherein King Ferdinand, by his ambassador, proposed and demanded whether anything else were to be done concerning the rooting out of the Anabaptists, seeing the town was already taken; he also advertised them that the Princes ought to ask counsel of the Bishop of Rome. Whereunto they answered, that it was already provided by certain edicts what was best to be done to the Anabaptists, and that the Emperor had asked counsel of the Bishop more often than once; neither could he do any more in the matter. In the same convention, the Bishop of Münster desired his charges and losses to be recompensed, complaining that the money promised was not paid. But when nothing else could be determined, few of the nobles being present, another convention was called in the same place, the first of November, wherein the things concerning the war and the charges thereof might be known; wherein also it might be decreed what form of commonwealth were after to be established at Münster. When the day was come, the Ambassador of King Ferdinand briefly repeated the causes of that present convention, to wit, that among other things, it might also be deliberated, how the city newly conquered might from thenceforth continue in the old religion. After these things, the Bishop Legate showed what great charges he was at all the war time, how greatly he was indebted, and how it was necessary, {the city being now taken,} for the avoiding of tumults and other dangers, to build two castles in the city, with strong holds; all which things he desired to be considered. To these things answer was made, that the Bishop had taken the greater part of the spoil, with all the ordinance and goods of the citizens, which wholly appertained to the commonwealth of the empire; therefore that it was reason that the value

should be counted and communicated with the charges, and what other things were necessary besides should also be considered. After it was determined, that the Bishopric of Münster should be under the Empire, after the ancient custom, and that all the nobility should be restored, and the citizens also which had departed to other places, as they were not Anabaptists; that the Bishop should set forth the religion according to the decree of the empire; and that in the beginning of the next spring, the Ambassadors of the Princes should go to Münster to know the state of the citizens, and to keep them in safeguard; to pull down all the fortresses which the Anabaptists had erected; and that the Bishop also should pull down the castles which he had built in the city; and that he should, without delay, put to death the King, with Knipperdolling and Crechting, the prisoners, without retaining them any longer. As for that which we said was determined of religion, the Duke of Saxony, the Landgrave, Wirtemberg, and Anhold, testified openly that they would not consent to it. The citizens also professed the same; neither would they have the old fortresses of the town destroyed; but they consented to the pulling down of the new. The King and his two fellow-captives were carried hither and thither to the Princes to be gazed and laughed at; by which occasion the preachers of the Landgrave talked and disputed with the King, chiefly of these points, of the Kingdom of Christ, of Magistrates, of Justification, of Baptism, of the Supper of the Lord, of the Incarnation of Christ, and of Marriage; and they prevailed so much by the testimony of the Scriptures, that although they did not altogether convert him, yet they so bowed and confounded him, {notwithstanding his repugnance and defending his opinions,} that at the last he granted to the most part of all; which, nevertheless, is thought that he did but to save his life. For when they came to him the second time, he promised, so he might be pardoned, to bring to pass that all the Anabaptists, which were in great number through all Holland, Denmark, England, and Friesland, should keep silence, and in all things obey the Magistrates. Those same men also disputed with the

King's fellows, both by communication and writing, of mortification, of the baptism of infants, of the communion of their goods, and of the kingdom of Christ. When they were come to Telgate, the Bishop asked the King by what authority he arrogated to himself such liberty over his city and people? Who asked him again, 'who gave him authority and power in the city?' And when the Bishop answered, 'that he obtained that jurisdiction by the consent of the congregation and people, even so {saith he} was I called thereunto of God.' Then were they carried back again to Münster, the twenty of January, where many of them were put in prison."

"The same day came the Bishop thither, with the Archbishop of Cologne, and the Ambassadors of the Duke of Cleves with him. Two days after they were exhorted by godly admonitions to convert from their errors. And, indeed, the King acknowledged his sin, and made his recourse to Christ by prayer; the other two would not confess that they had offended at all, but obstinately defended their false opinions. The next day after, the King was brought forth into a high place, and bound to a post, where were present two executioners with fiery tongues to torment them withal. The King at the three first pinches of the tongues held his peace, afterward crying to God incessantly for mercy. When he had been torn on this manner for the space of an hour and more, he was thrust through the breast with a sharp sword and died. The same punishment also had his fellows, which being all dead, they were bound in iron coffers, and hung up in the top of the tower of the city, the King in the midst higher than his fellows by the stature of a man."

End of Part II

This fearful tragedy, in which God's most just judgments are declared, doth teach unto us two things. The former, what may the innocent and the godly look for, if you may bring your enterprises to pass; and secondarily, what doth the world and the rulers now on earth, for the

most part, deserve. As touching you, howsoever for a time you cloke your cruelty, what simplicity so ever you declare in your external gesture, whatsoever you speak of charity and love, and howsoever you seem to be zealous over the truth, yet shall you in the end produce no other fruit than these yours fathers have done before you. If that I list to note particular examples, I might show in your sect, and amongst you, to have been so horrible enormities, as more horrible were never from the beginning. But lest I might seem to take any pleasure in accusing particular persons, I will not at this present write all that I know. Only {I say} that the Church of God may look for no other thing at your hand, but for confusion of all God's ordinances, and for more cruel persecution than ever yet it did sustain since the days of the Apostles. For what your fathers began in Münster in their purpose, you do perform and finish; and to that end do you write your books, some calling all the Scriptures of God in doubt, some affirming that there is a more perfect knowledge than that which is contained or expressed in the Word; some plainly denying the Godhead of Christ Jesus, and of the Holy Ghost; some claiming liberty that no man should be troubled for his conscience, cloaking under that title all blasphemy and diabolical doctrine. And you, now last in accusing us of these most odious crimes, whereof we be most innocent, you and your brethren, I say, in teaching this your pestilent doctrine, and accusing us who withstand your devilish errors, do plainly declare what you have already intended, if God by his great power bridle not your fury. And assuredly the world and the rulers of the earth {for the most part} most justly deserve so to be entreated. As for the Church of God, it must be subject to the Cross, even until the coming of the Lord Jesus from the heavens. But the world, I say, and the princes of the earth, {which is the second point which we have to mark in this former History,} most justly deserve to be punished with such confusion as you intend. For the one and the other {I mean the princes and the people} conspired to this day against God, against his Son Christ Jesus, and against his eternal truth. They maintain

impiety, superstition, and idolatry; they cruelly murder the saints of God, and so do they rejoice in all kind of tyranny, that God's just judgments cannot long delay punishment.

And therefore, leaving you Anabaptists into the hands of Him whose power you cannot escape, I am compelled in few words to admonish you, as well the People as the Princes, that speedily you return to the living God, whose verity so long you have oppugned, whose religion you resist, and true messengers you persecute, or else persuade yourselves that vengeance is prepared. He will not entreat you as he hath done his afflicted church and dear children; that is, he will not call you to repentance by a fatherly correction, the end whereof shall turn to your comfort. Not so, not so; but as you have still rebelled and dishonored him, so will he pour forth contempt upon you, in the which you shall perish both temporally and forever. And by whom doth it most appear that temporally you shall be punished? Of us, whom you banish, whom you spoil and rob, whom cruelly you persecute, and whose blood you daily shed? There is no doubt, but as the victory which overcometh the world is our faith, so it behooveth us to possess our souls in our patience. We neither privily nor openly deny the power of the Civil Magistrate; we do not claim the communality of all things in this life; the plurality of wives we do abhor; we would not destroy God's ordinances and policy, by him established in commonwealths, but we hate and detest all such confusion. Only we desire the people and the rulers to be subject unto God, and unto his holy will plainly revealed in his most sacred Word. And therefore of us, I say, you are and may be without all fear.

But what may you look for if the Anabaptists shall attain to their purpose? The confusion and tyranny used by those of whom we have spoken, is, and may be, a glass wherein you may see your judgment and end most fearful, unless that unfeignedly you repent. Flatter not yourselves that you be able at all times to prevail in battle by strength, because that in number you be many, or because those Princes of Germany prevailed

against that most miserable and most wicked sort of enraged Anabaptists. Consider, consider deeply in your hearts, that when God will punish, no multitude can resist. At that time God gave victory to the Princes, and did suppress the fury of those wicked men, not because the Princes were just, and had deserved such a benefit at God's hand; No, the most part were wicked, as their facts since have plainly declared. But God had respect to his own glory and honour. He did admonish his elect, by their examples, to beware of such poison; and did also by such confusion call you to repentance. Of late years before, was the Evangel of Christ Jesus revived in Germany, the harvest of the Lord was not come to ripeness, and therefore for his own name's sake he would not suffer that pestilence so to prevail. But now seeing that of so long continuance from wickedness you precede to open contempt of God and of his true religion, shall he suffer you to rage without punishment? No! His justice cannot. And what instruments can God {I say} find in this life more apt to punish you than those that hate and detest all lawful powers, and do thirst nothing more than such confusion as before you have heard? God will not use his saints and chosen children to punish you. For with them is always mercy, yea, even although God have pronounced a curse and malediction, as in the history of Joshua is plain. But as you have pronounced wrong and cruel judgment without mercy, so will he punish you by such as in whom there is no mercy. Tremble therefore, and convert unto God if that you think to escape vengeance, confusion, and shame, both temporal and forever.

Now to the conclusion of your book. Thus you finish.

THE ADVERSARY.

Judge now, gentle Reader, uprightly; and here I commit thee to God, beseeching him to open the eyes of thy mind, that thou mayest know the truth in this, and in all other matters necessary to thy salvation.

ANSWER.

As you will all men to read and to judge with indifference, even so do we, requiring of God not only that so the eyes of men may be lightened that clearly they may see things appertaining to salvation, but also that, by the mighty operation of God's Holy Spirit, they may be confirmed and so sanctified in his eternal Verity, that to the end they may continue in the simplicity of his Holy Word; and further, that all men may see to what confusion your doctrine tendeth, the ground whereof is your own vain imagination, and the end, {as before we have said,} not only the destruction of all God's ordinances necessary for this present life, but also the treading underfoot of the bright glory of Christ Jesus. For the more that you extoll free will and the virtues of man, the more do you obscure the justice of Faith, which only is acceptable in the presence of God, and the less do you attribute to Christ Jesus his death and passion. Yea, some of you are not ashamed, in your envenomed doctrine wherein secretly you train your scholars, to affirm that we that now live after Christ's death, have no other benefit, either by him or by his death, but only an example to suffer as he did. O! Seed of the Serpent, thy father Pelagius was never so impudent, neither yet did ever the Devil find any of his instruments {before thee} so bold, as that against the Holy Scriptures of God he durst affirm that horrible blasphemy. Darest thou deny, but that the death of Christ Jesus shall, to the consummation of all things, have the same efficacy that it hath had from the beginning? Did not Christ suffer for our sins, not for our example only, but because we were not able to satisfy the justice of God which we had all offended, that therefore the punishment of our offenses was laid upon him? Have we any more power now than had his Disciples, to whom he said, "without me you can do nothing?" Does not he remain a Sovereign Priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec? Is it not He who by one sacrifice made perfect forever such as either have been, are, or shall be sanctified of that polluted

seed of Adam? Finally, is it not He alone who giveth liberty, salvation, and life to his body, which is the Church, not in one age, but from the beginning to the end? Satan himself is compelled thus far to confess, and therefore be thou shamed, O, thou blasphemous mouth. What other monsters you nourish and feed in the stinking den of your envenomed hearts, time will reveal. And if it shall please God to assist my weakness, I will not spare labours to communicate with my brethren what pestilence lurketh in your envenomed doctrine, to the end that all the faithful may avoid the same. You fearing to forget anything of your master Castellio's scurrility do thus conclude.

THE ADVERSARY.

And as for you, Careless Men, you ought to take it in good worth whatsoever I have said. First, because it is truth; secondly, because you hold that all things be done of mere Necessity, then have I written this of Necessity.

ANSWER.

To the which I answer, that if the Devil were not a liar, and the father, not of lies only, but also of all deceitful liars, it were not possible that you, who in so many things have declared yourselves horrible liars, should vainly brag that you have written the truth. For besides those odious crimes, which most impudently and most falsely you lay to our charge, amongst all the scriptures by you alleged, there are not three which you do not abuse; yea, and in some you do so openly belie the Holy Ghost, that you conclude contrary to his expressed words. But when I consider that your master and father, Satan himself, ashamed not, in the presence of Christ Jesus, to boast and to brag that all the power and glory of the earth was given unto him, and that he gave it to such as best pleased him, when yet in very deed he had no power to give to his fellow-angels and companions of darkness license to enter into the bellies of swine, till

that he and they were fain to beg of him to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth; when this, I say, I do consider, I do more lament your miserable blindness than that I can stomach against your vanity, except in so far as to the end, I must say, that such as obstinately deny the plain truth of God, are liars, and the sons of that liar who first deceived man, and poured into his heart the same venom and error which this day you teach and maintain. For he was bold to affirm, that wisdom and life was to be found by other means than God had determined; yea, where God had pronounced death and damnation, he promised salvation and life; and so do you. For God hath appointed life to none of his elect but in Christ Jesus only, and that by such means as in his holy Word expressed, which are true faith, continual repentance, abnegation of ourselves, of our own justice and wisdom; and, finally, by receiving {of free grace} in Christ Jesus whatsoever we have lost in Adam.

But you are ashamed not to affirm, that the righteousness of Christ sufficeth us not, except that we have a personal righteousness of our own. How coldly you speak or write of his death, of his resurrection, of his mediation and perpetual intercession, is evident. Your bragging and proud boasting of your own justice, and of your great perfection, are evident tokens how you do agree with Christ Jesus, the truth and verity itself, who commandeth us to say, {not for the fashion, but from unfeigned hearts,} "we are unprofitable servants." But some of you in your jesting are ashamed not to say, that you are not two thousand paces distant from the fulness of perfection. But this your vanity {your blasphemies excepted} doth not greatly offend us. For a small price of a pin, or of a needle, shall be sufficient to declare that bladders {be they never so straightly blown} contain in themselves nothing but wind. That by necessity you have written your railing blasphemies and most impudent lies, we easily confess. For seeing that you are the seed of the Serpent, {I mean such as in your error shall continue to the end,} what thing can you else do, but of necessity spew forth venom when

the weight of God's eternal verity beginneth a little to press down your head, for so doth the serpent whensoever he is touched. But why do you not consider, {seeing you be reasonable serpents,} that like as proudly you lift yourselves against the glory of the eternal Son of God, and as you cease not maliciously to slander such instruments as in his Church be most profitable and most worthy of praise in the eyes of all godly; that likewise of necessity it is that you come to ruin, that your pride be repressed, and your blasphemous tongues be confounded forever; seeing that God, who hateth all iniquity, must needs resist the proud, destroy the lying lips, and remove from his society such as declare themselves enemies to his eternal Verity; the knowledge whereof, we confess with Job, cometh only by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and doth not proceed from flesh or blood, from study, care, or worldly wisdom, but is the free gift of God revealed to the little ones, and commonly hid from the wisest of the world. Which sentence I would to God that deeply you could weigh, for then I doubt not but that you should clearly see, that to come to Christ Jesus, is neither of the runner, neither yet of the willer, but of God, who showeth mercy to such as pleaseth him; whose counsels eternal, and judgments most profound, can no creature apprehend and compass; and therefore ought all the true servants of God, with reverence and with trembling say, "O! How incomprehensible are thy judgments, O Lord, and how unsearchable are thy ways," Romans 11:33, "for of thee, by thee, and for thee, are all things. To thee be glory for ever and ever." Romans 11:36. So be it!

"EVERY TONGUE THAT SHALL CONTEND WITH THEE IN JUDGEMENT, THE SAME SHALT THOU MOST RIGHTLY CONDEMN." ISAIAH LIV

FINIS

POSTSCRIPT

Having read numerous assessments of this work by Knox, each of them somewhat inconclusive as to what they considered were the Reformer's views on the subject of God's Reprobation, I thought that it might be of interest to here insert my own thoughts upon this important subject, which I recently gave in a letter to a friend, so that the discerning reader may perhaps compare what I've attempted to set forth as an introduction to this subject with those views of Knox himself.

REPROBATION CONSIDERED

Not sure if you have given the subject matter of reprobation more than a fleeting glimpse, so I thought that I would share a few thoughts with you. I'm currently working on another book by Vavasor Powell, entitled "Christ & Moses." It was first published in 1650, and regarding the topic of reprobation, he had this to say. "*Question: If God covenanted with Christ to give salvation to some, and not to all, did he not then leave the rest in a state of impossibility to be saved, and in a state of certainty to be damned? Answer: God is not accountable to man for his actions, and this is sufficient that the will of God is the supreme reason of all his actions, and it should satisfy us that God doth what he will, and wills himself, and his own glory chiefly, so that if man's misery tends to God's glory, it is man's duty to be silent, and subject thereunto.*" MPJ = indeed! "*Objection: But the absolute electing of some, doth argue the absolute reprobating of others. Answer: God in the act of election, and in the act of preterition, looked upon men as fallen {and not as innocent and unfallen} and thereby his grace doth more eminently appear in the one, and his justice is more apparently justifiable {as toward men} in the other. In no moment of nature did the purpose of condemnation go before the foresight of sin, as saith Dr. Twisse.*" MPJ = If this were indeed the case, then those of a free-will/conditional

persuasion {aka, Arminians} have a decisive argument, in stating the obvious parallel, that in no moment of nature did the purpose of election go before the foresight of faith and works, which is an abominable assertion, {as it conditions salvation on a conversion experience, as opposed to the finished work of Christ,} and contrary to the analogy of Gospel Truth!

Throughout the sacred Scriptures we find the doctrine of Divine Reprobation either clearly set forth, or implied in many instances, {a basic consideration of God's immutability, Malachi 3:6, alone establishes this truth,} and wheresoever its stated it plainly asserts that the Decree of Reprobation is absolute and independent as to all distinctive conditions or causes in man. Augustine affirmed, "it is a great injury to God, when men search for causes of things superior to His sovereign will; for His will is such a supreme Rule of Justice, as that whatsoever He wills is for that very reason, because He wills it, to be accounted just." Interestingly, though not surprisingly, it's rather difficult to find anything written upon this topic which even remotely parallels with the Scriptures of Truth. Even the Reformers had little to say, though I did find these two paragraphs by Calvin & Luther that I personally thought were quite good. Calvin, "what of those, then, whom He {God} created for dishonour in life and destruction in death, to become the instruments of His wrath and examples of His severity? That they may come to their end, He sometimes deprives them of the capacity to hear the word; at other times He rather blinds and stuns them by the preaching of it. – He directs His voice to them but in order that they might become even more deaf; He kindles a light but that they may be made more blind; He sets forth a doctrine but that they may grow even more stupid; He employs a remedy but so that they may not be healed. And John, applying this prophecy, states that the Jews could not believe Christ's teaching, John 12:39, for this curse of God hung over them. We cannot gainsay the fact that to those whom He pleases not to illumine, He transmits His doctrine wrapped in enigmas in order that they may not profit by

it, except to be cast into greater stupidity." {Institutes of the Christian Religion.} Luther, "what do I hear! Are we now inquiring whether or not God loves and hates, and not rather why He loves and hates? Our inquiry is, from what merit it is in us that He loves or hates. We know well enough, that God does not love or hate as we do; because, we love and hate mutably, but He loves and hates from an eternal and immutable nature; and hence it is, that accidents and passions do not pertain unto Him. And it is this very state of the truth, that of necessity proves "free-will" to be nothing at all; seeing that, the love and hatred of God towards men is immutable and eternal; existing, not only before there was any merit or work of "free-will," but before the worlds were made; and that, all things take place in us from necessity, accordingly as He loved or loved not from all eternity. So that, not the love of God only, but even the manner of His love imposes on us necessity." {Bondage of the Will.} Bradwardine, {Thomas Bradwardine 1290-1349,} whose writings are about as obscure as the Michigan sun in Winter, made this useful comment, "that albeit God punisheth no man eternally without sin committed in time; yet He doth not eternally reprobate any for sin as a cause antecedently moving His Divine Will." Overall, I personally cannot deviate from the conclusion that there can be no other cause assigned to Reprobation, {which is not merely negative, but positive and efficacious,} than the absolute sovereign good pleasure of God.

Consider the sheer fact that if reprobation depended on the sinfulness of the reprobate, or upon our own sin and unbelief, we would all be equally reprobated, for we are all equally fallen far beyond any futile attempts to remedy our own condition or to improve our state! {"Except the LORD of hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah." Isaiah 1:9.} "The wages of sin is death," Romans 6:23, and men indeed perish on account of their sin, and reprobation is carried out along the way of sin, yet sin itself is never the cause of reprobation. This is evident

by the words of our Lord, when he says to the unbelieving Jews in John 10:26, "but ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep." Their not being Christ's sheep; or, in other words, their being reprobate, had nothing to do with their not believing, but everything to do with them not belonging to Christ. In direct contrast, those believing, had nothing to do with some intrinsic worth which somehow made them of greater value than those whom the Lord will toss into the dung heap, Jeremiah 25:33, but everything to do with the fact that Christ purchased them, when he propitiated on their behalf, because the Father had given them unto him before the foundation of the world. {"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37.} These were chosen by God the Father before the foundation of the world, given and put into the hands of Christ, as his seed, his spouse, his sheep, his portion, and inheritance, and to be saved by him with an everlasting salvation. In other words, the unbelief of those who reject Christ does not produce their reprobation, but their reprobation gives rise to their unbelief. Conversely, the fruit of God's regenerating grace, {as faith, love, repentance, &c.,} in no wise causes their election, as their election is settled in Christ, and gives rise to those actions which ascribe all greatness to him alone. Psalm 29:2.

In Jude 4, we read, "for there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ." These {ungodly & unbelieving} men are said to be ordained/designed, and {as it were} before written in the book of God's Predetermination, to be ordained to this condemnation. So to me it seems evident, that God foreordained and decreed, not only their destruction, but to leave them to those sins, which should cause the same. Did the LORD not make all things; and therefore may he not assume the prerogative of ordering all things to the ends for which they were made? {"The LORD hath made all

things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil." Proverbs 16:4.} It seems like a thing altogether impossible to defend an absolute decree of election, and yet to make the decree of reprobation conditional and respective; for if the absolute good pleasure of God is the only cause why some are elected, must it not also be the only cause why others are rejected? Does not the Election of the one necessarily imply the Reprobation of the other? As the LORD gives to every man, {in fact, the entire creation,} those peculiarities which shape and form their individualities, so cannot he likewise appoint them to whatever end he so pleases, and direct them infallibly to that end? What is God's Sovereign Dominion, but an absolute right to dispose of what essentially & absolutely belongs to him? "The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein." Psalms 24:1.

In harmony with His eternal purpose, God {consistent with the perfections of his nature} carries out His decree of sovereign reprobation and unconditional election in the annals of history; and in accordance to that decree He hides from the reprobate the things of the kingdom of heaven, Matthew 11:25; hardens their hearts, Exodus 7:13; gives them over to a reprobate mind, Romans 1:28; causes them to stumble over the Word of the Gospel, I Peter 2:8; fits them for destruction, Romans 9:22; ordains them unto condemnation, Jude 1:4; confuses their understanding, makes their hearts fat and their ears heavy, shuts their eyes, Isaiah 6:10; chooses their delusions, Isaiah 66:4; and sends them a lying spirit, I Kings 22:23, so that they might believe that lie and perish. {"And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness. But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." II Thessalonians 2:11-13.} And so deep is the wisdom and knowledge of God, Romans 11:33, that in

so doing he gives them exactly what they want, giving them over to a reprobate mindset, Romans 1:28, and delivering them up into the hands of Satan, and to their own lusts, which they themselves delight in; and by giving them over to judicial blindness and hardness of heart, as a just punishment for their impieties, thus making their reprobation evident, by living a life in rejection of Jesus Christ, following the antichrist system, and eventually dying in unbelief. "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins, for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." John 8:24.

Correspondingly, those who belong to Christ, being in and of themselves destitute and impotent in every spiritual sense whatsoever, John 15:5; who can neither do or say anything which might commend them unto the Lord, and made agonizingly sensible of the same, to such God reveals the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, Matthew 13:11; the everlasting covenant of his grace, II Samuel 23:5; in essence, Christ, and all the spiritual blessings of grace in him, as spiritual life and light is given unto them to consider only him, Hebrews 12:3, his person, blood, and righteousness, in the matter of salvation. {"Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12} These heavenly things, John 3:12, are set before them; they see a glory and suitableness in them, and their desires are raised after them; their affections are set upon them; their hearts are impressed with them; and they are enabled to view their interest in them. A heavenly favour which the disciples of Christ, as a chosen people, receive from the Lord, and which is denied to all others. "And the disciples came, and said unto him, why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Matthew 13:10-11.

Let's remind ourselves that God's primary purpose and end in his meticulous formation of all things, and of mankind in particular, is the sheer manifestation and display of his own glorious attributes;

and that the end or conclusion of all things was fully in his sight from the beginning, as "in him we live, and move, and have our being," Acts 17:28, and by him all things consist; and that salvation in Christ is God's ultimate purpose in setting forth the unsearchable riches of his love, wisdom and mercy; and that reprobation, {though inseparably linked to election,} outside of Christ is God's subservient purpose in contrast to election unto life in Christ, with both purposes bringing immeasurable glory to Himself, and that both God's unconditional election to life and reprobation to death are completely and absolutely without any pre-conditions, for if either were conditional, then God would not be sovereign.

And as we consider these things, shall we not ascribe that same authority & dominion unto him whose kingdom, power, and glory, is forever and ever, Matthew 6:13, and who holds in his hands the keys of hell and of death, Revelation 1:18, which the potter has over the clay? {"Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" Romans 9:21.} Clearly contrary to this Scriptural mandate, some would seem to assert that the potter somehow has relinquished his right to do whatsoever he pleases with his own, {"is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" Matthew 20:15,} to somehow merely "allow" the clay to make itself into a vessel of honour or to "allow" the clay to make itself into a vessel of dishonour; or that the potter makes some of the clay into a vessel of honour, and allows the rest of the clay to make itself into a vessel of dishonour? This has to do with God's supreme authority, and man's adamant refusal to bow his heart in submission to that authority; in essence to enthrone himself as god, II Thessalonians 2:4, which is the very spirit of anti-christ. Thus, when the Scriptures declare that people were fitted for destruction, {in Romans 9:22, the vessels of wrath 'were fitted' for destruction,} and were appointed and ordained to stumble, {in I Peter 2:7,8, the disobedient and unbelieving were appointed to perish,} at the Word, they affirm most emphatically

that God can do whatever He wants with His creation, including making some people vessels of his rich blessings in Christ, and making other people vessels of his unmitigated wrath & indignation. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

Another consideration is the basic fact that to a large extent Reprobation is sub-servient to Election, {and most especially in the minds of believers, as being brought to the conscious realization that the love of God transcends everything they are by nature,} as one small heavenly glimpse of what we all are by nature, {depraved, lost, hopelessly alienated...} and the sheer thought of how each of us, considered in and of ourselves deserve to be instantly destroyed, yet, here we breathe another breath, and if illuminated by the life and light of Christ, stand in utter astonishment at the free & sovereign grace that has captivated our minds, {almost now incapable of such a vast consideration of heavenly grace and truth, for the joy and thankfulness that fills our hearts, Luke 24:41,} as we contemplate the sheer magnitude of that gracious and eternal decree of loving Jacob in spite of himself, and irrespective of any works that he could or would have performed, seeing that even his best efforts, {to in some delusional way recommend himself unto the Lord,} are altogether blasted by the absolute fact that only unto the Lord belongeth righteousness, and "unto us confusion of faces," Daniel 9:7, and thus we forever sink in our own estimation, and desire nothing more than to "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Philippians 2:11.

For those who have sheltered under the merits of Christ, boasting is so very excluded, as all is reduced to God's sovereign discriminating grace, as they survey their own salvation in humble and broken realization, that the only reason that they believe the glad tidings of the Gospel of God's Free & Sovereign Grace, {in all its assimilating truths and indispensable doctrines as a pure and simple proclamation of an accomplished redemption

through the sole merit, righteousness, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ,} whilst others understand not, perceive not, have hearts that have been fattened for the slaughter, whose ears are made heavy, whose eyes have been sealed shut, and are never converted or cleansed from their sin, Isaiah 6:9-10; I say, these so know that the only reason that their hearts were opened is because the Lord alone did open it, Acts 16:14, and that the only reason they believe is because they were ordained to eternal life in Christ Jesus. {"And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Acts 13:48.} God Himself is the sole author and efficient cause of all which he does, and his ultimate glory the supreme end to which they lead and in which everything terminates, which truth in and of itself is a self-emptying and Christ enthroning consideration.

So, in like manner, these so sheltered under the merits of Christ, and arrayed in the spotless robe of his justifying righteousness, have been given repentance unto the acknowledgment of the truth, II Timothy 2:25, and brought into submission to the ultimate authority of the written word, and therefore the question of Divine Sovereignty is already forever settled in their mind, from which they cannot deviate. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed," II Peter 1:19, and by sheer grace alone, such have indeed taken heed to the undeniable truth that the sovereignty of God is absolute; that God has decreed within himself, from all eternity, freely and unchangeably, all things whatsoever come to pass, and that if men are saved, they are saved with an everlasting salvation, Isaiah 45:17, according to God's purpose and nothing else. {"Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." II Timothy 1:9.} To acknowledge this truth is at once to acknowledge that God, who reigns in absolute righteousness, Isaiah 32:1, {and not tied to some

blasphemous standard of justice that man imposes upon him,} has in a most meticulous and precise manner foreordained and predestinated whatsoever comes to pass, and that nothing else can come to pass; and that this foreordination is all-comprehensive, completely unrestricted and never passive, nor reactionary, whereby all things are controlled, maintained and preserved in such a way that all, without exception, lead to the end he hath determined within Himself, "declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, my counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." Isaiah 46:10.

Though free-will conditionalists will continue to twist and mutilate the sacred scriptures beyond recognition unto their own destruction, II Peter 3:16, God's counsel shall stand, and only those who have been given ears to hear, Matthew 13:16, and hearts to realize that simple, yet profound truth that "except the LORD of hosts" had "left," reserved, distinguished and secured by the grace of election, in the hands of Christ, {to whom the elect were given and in whom they are preserved,} a very small remnant, "we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah," Isaiah 1:9, and this definite number, and no more, {who were written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,} Revelation 13:8, are those for whom Christ died and rose again, and who now, along with all the saints, are singing the song of the redeemed, in humble acknowledgement that Christ alone is worthy, and that if we are redeemed it is by sheer grace alone, {as no part of man's salvation is of himself, either in origin or execution,} ascribing infinite greatness, Psalm 105:3, unto him who hath redeemed us to God, by his blood, "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Revelation 5:9.

The hymn-writer Joseph Hart perhaps summed it up best when he wrote, {in defense of absolute sovereignty,} "the cause of the enmity and opposition in man to the aforementioned truth, is this, it utterly debases, or rather destroys all human strength and skill, overthrows all towering conceits of man's wisdom,

batters down all the engines of pride and vain glory, exalts none but the Creator, and lays the creature low, debasing it even to hell by declaring that it has not the least share or part in the work of salvation; no, not so much as to accept it when offered, or forward it when it began, but that it is entirely indebted for the beginning, carrying on, and accomplishing of the whole work in him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will! This the natural man cannot bear.”
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