

A Brief Treatise of Election & Reprobation, with certain Answers to the Objections of the Adversaries of this Doctrine.

"For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." Rom.9:15.

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**ORIGINALLY PRINTED – London, 1556.
COMPLETE & UNABRIDGED**

Supralapsarian Press

www.sovereignredeemerbooks.com

2019 EDITION

A Brief Treatise of Election & Reprobation, with certain Answers to the Objections of the Adversaries of this Doctrine.

Whereas three years ago, dearly beloved, I did write of this matter of Election & Reprobation, which is called Predestination, in a certain Commentary upon the Prophet Malachi, by the occasion of this text, "I loved Jacob, and I hated Esau," Mal.1:2-3, the which Treatise by the rage of persecution, partly perished, and part did come of late back into my hands, accompting this doctrine so necessary, that upon all occasions it ought with reverence to be uttered to the glory of God, which so wonderfully appeareth in this his rich mercy towards us, whom he chooseth from the filth of sin, to serve him in righteousness, and to the beating down of our corrupt nature, which without this, either moved forward by pride unto presumption, or fallen by infidelity to desperation. Because that without some taste of this Divine Providence in Predestination, there can be no faith, but either a doubtful wavering, leading to despair, which we have felt in the Papistrie whilst we looked to our own weakness and infirmity, not able to endure one hour in the way of righteousness; or else a vain presumption of feigned holiness, whilst we behold our own belief and good works, or the perfection that we do imagine in our own selves, as do the Anabaptists. Therefore I thought it good according to my simple talent, to testify this truth again unto the world, at the Printing of this worthy table of the great learned man, Master Beza, which is set forth in French, Latin, and Italian, and now into English, translated by our brother William Whittingham, wherein is most evidently set forth before our eyes the chief ground of this doctrine, and the principal points thereof are so deeply opened,

that there seemed to want nothing that was possible in so few lines to be uttered, yet for the shortness therein all things cannot be contained, but that some brief lessons for the unlearned {who hath not their senses fully exercised with such deep sentences} may well be adjoined, as every man hereafter shall hereunto be moved by the Spirit of God working in their hearts {that many bearing witness to the truth of this most profitable doctrine now revealed} the mercies of God in choosing his children may more and more, day by day be disclosed, and by the witness of divers consenting together in one, God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified. For herein chiefly standeth his praise, honour, and glory, that these his wonderful mercies toward his elect may be praised.

Now are no means more apt, nor doctrine more convenient to establish the faith of the Saints, than to certify by the Scriptures, that God hath chosen them before the beginning of the world to be holy to himself, and so written their names in the book of life in the heavens, that all their salvation resteth wholly upon his hands and holy counsel, which can by no means be altered or changed, so that neither death, devil, nor hell, dare now accuse them that are by adoption grafted in Christ, who are called of the eternal purpose of God, because it is God that justifieth them, and who dare condemn? It is Christ that is given for them, and how shall not all things be given also to them?

For them that he knew before, them he ordained before, that they should be like fashioned to the image of his Son, and whom he appointed before, those also he called, and whom he called, those also he justified, and whom he justified, those also he glorified, that this eternal purpose and counsel of God, being once revealed to his Saints,

by the effectual vocation and calling, which is the justification of faith wrought in their hearts by the Holy Spirit, they can no longer doubt neither of Election, Predestination, Salvation or Glorification. Neither can anything more beat down man's nature, and the pride of his vain heart, than to behold the majesty of God, making them by grace so far unlike one to the other, who were both one, altogether by nature the children of wrath, of vengeance, and damnation, as the wonderful example of Jacob and Esau, of whom the Lord pronounces that he loveth the one, and hateth the other, before they were born, and the terrible sentence against Pharaoh, whom the Scripture affirmeth that God raised up to show upon him his power, and hardened his heart, to make his name known, and such like, which everywhere are set before our eyes to cause man to fall down before God, and to fear his judgments, doth declare.

But our adversaries object against us, that this doctrine is an offence to many, and that some abuse it to carnal liberty. I do answer, that Christ is a stumbling stone to many, and all the doctrine of the Gospel is likewise slandered by the evil conversation of others, yet may we not prohibit the sweet flowers from the Bees, because Spiders suck thence their poison, no more than we may stop the sun to shine, because it hurteth sore eyes. But that it may be the glad tidings of salvation to the assurance of the faith of the one, and a clear testimony of condemnation of the other, to the beating down of the pride of man, this glorious counsel of the mighty God, ought unto all in this clear revelation of the Gospel, to be offered, opened and published. "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the savour of death unto

death; and to the other the savour of life unto life." II Cor.2:15-16.

Wherefore by the good will of God, we intend to speak of this great matter, none other ways, neither in any other sort, than that the open Scriptures shall approve our sayings. Therefore we say with the holy Apostle Saint Paul, "blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Eph.1:3-5. And though there come some wicked men which were long before appointed to this judgment, which do turn the grace of our God to lasciviousness and wantonness, as holy Jude saith, Jude 1:4, yet know we that we are chosen by Jesus Christ, that the glory of his grace, his favour and mercy towards us might be praised. For we are the elect and chosen kindred, and his people by purchase, that we should show the virtue of him, I Pet.2:9, which hath called us forth of darkness into this marvelous light. "Know ye that the LORD he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture." Psal.100:3.

This people ordained to salvation only believeth. "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. For this Elect people only was Christ sent into this world; and to them only is the word of salvation sent, as Peter saith, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." I Pet.1:2. Then

to know what this Election of God is, and what in the Scriptures it doth signify.

We describe and define Election to be the free choice of the good will of the Almighty GOD appointing and prescribing in the Book of Life before the beginning of the world, whom he will have to be saved and reckoned amongst the just, whom he will have holy and without fault before him to be his children, by adoption to set forth his glory. This choice, this choosing, this afore appointed purpose and ordinance of God is abundantly set forth in the first chapter to the Ephesians. That this commeth of the free will of God and his only grace, freely without our deserving, {contrary to the vain opinion of the Papists and Anabaptists,} the same chapter, and the next chapter following doth plainly testify; and most evidently, the Lord in his majesty, speaking to his servant Moses, declared all this to stand of his mercy, saying, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy." Exod.33:19-20. I will have mercy upon whom it liketh me, and I will show mercy where it shall be my pleasure, for so is the meaning of those words, I will have mercy upon whom I will have mercy. Paul also declaring in this place the work of God betwixt these two children Jacob and Esau, Romans 9, saith thus of this free Election, when Rebecca was with child with one and the same father Isaac, before the children were born, when they had neither done good nor bad, that the purpose of God which is by Election might stand, it was said to her, not for the cause of works, but by the grace of the caller, the elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, saith he, "Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated." Of the book of life, Moses

speaketh, "yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written," Exod.32:32, and Christ himself, Luke 10, saying to his Apostles, " notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven."

And in the 69th Psalm it is spoken against the wicked, "let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous," Psal.69:28, and against the false prophets, Ezekiel 13, "and mine hand shall be upon the prophets that see vanity, and that divine lies; they shall not be in the assembly of my people, neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel, neither shall they enter into the land of Israel; and ye shall know that I am the Lord GOD." Ezek.13:9. There be two final causes also of this eternal purpose of election, the which Paul rehearses in the first chapter to the Ephesians, the one toucheth God, the other pertaineth to man. He hath Elected us before the foundations of the world {saith the Apostle} that we might be holy and without blame. And this answereth the wicked, which would abuse the mercies of God to their lust. Again, it followeth, the LORD hath predestinated us, that he might choose us to be his children, that his name may be praised. And this stops the mouths of all our adversaries that say, that this doctrine is not to the praise of God; so that they must cease to slander this doctrine, unless they will hinder the glory of God, and deny the open Scriptures. "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Rom.9:20.

Now it is to be noted and marked diligently, that this word Election is taken after two sorts in the

Scripture, sometimes as it signifieth absolutely the free choice, will, and appointment of God, without the respect of the revelation of the word and message of salvation. And thus speaketh the holy Apostle Saint Paul of Election, saying of the carnal Jacob, they were enemies concerning the Gospel for your cause, but concerning the Election, they are "beloved for the fathers' sakes." For the gifts of God, and his calling are such, that he cannot repent. "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Mal.3:6. Even as you once were misbelievers from God, but now have obtained mercy, by their misbelief, that they should obtain mercy also. Rom.11:28-30. "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then is it no more of works, otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace, otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded." Rom.11:5-7. This Election expresseth absolutely the secret purpose of God, without the respect of the revelation of the word, or any of our works following. Under this first kind of Election were those hundredth and twenty thousand, which God did choose and keep unto himself in Nineveh amongst the Idolaters, Jonah 4:11, and the seven thousand which God did leave for himself in Israel, in the third book of kings. I Kings 19:18. Yea, those that yet are not, are thus elect, chosen, and scattered and dispersed amongst all nations, both elect Jews and Gentiles,; the Jews in this long blindness and banishment from their own country amongst the Turks in their idolatrous wickedness; yea amongst the Edomites, the Seabees, the Indians, and Ethiopians.

And in the late blindness of the Popish Church, wherein we together with our fathers were altogether Idolatrous, {all Hypocrites and Counterfeit Christians,} this absolute Election whereby the merciful Lord God did reserve and keep his chosen unto him in all places, all ages, all countries, without respect of persons did most evidently appear. Howbeit this secrecy of election must only be left to the Majesty of God, where, when, how, and whom he thereby saves and shows his mercy. For, to the blind judgment of man all these people considered in and of themselves seemeth rejected, reprobate and cast away, as appeareth by Jonas condemning the Ninevites, by Elias condemning the Israelites, and a long while, until God had by miracle from Heaven delivered him from that error, unto the chief Apostle Peter, judging all the Gentiles to be a polluted people far from the favour of God.

The second kind of Election is set forth and known evidently and opened by the Spirit of God, working in the hearts of the elect and chosen by faith and trust in God his promises through Christ, teaching us that we are the children of God chosen to himself by Jesus Christ, from the beginning, and therefore preparing us to an holy and blameless life to the laude and praise of the Grace of God. The which Election besides the daily experience of our consciences may be approved by the testimonies of these Scriptures compared together, Isaiah 59, Romans 8, Ephesians 1, Colossians 3, and a very brief and perfect description of this Election, in these words, "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; whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the

obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ." II Thes.2:13-14. By this gracious Election was Jacob dearly beloved in his mother's womb, and Jeremy known unto God before he was fashioned in his mother's womb, Jeremiah 1, and to be short, all the elect of God are thus chosen, sanctified and beloved from the beginning, from before the foundations of the world, from everlasting to everlasting, for there is no change of time with God, seeing that all things are present in his sight. For unto him a thousand years are but one day; but the course and change of times are in us, our deeds, our knowledge, in man's changeable wisdom.

This Election must of necessity drive down the pride we have of our own strength, our own power, our own nature, our own free will, our own merits, our own justification of our own works, and bring us to the feeling of the mighty power of God, which worketh all in all things, to the restoring of all things in our Christ, both in Heaven and Earth, by whom we are called into this state, long before appointed according to his purposed pleasure, by whose power all things are wrought, that we may boldly say with the Apostle, who dare lay anything to the charge of the Elect of God? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? Who can separate us {which are this chosen Jacob} from the love of God? Can affliction? Can anguish? Can persecution? Can hunger? Can nakedness? Can peril? Can the sword? "For I am persuaded, {saith he,} that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom.8:38-39.

Lo, this is the love wherewith the Lord loveth his Jacob, whereby we say, "O Heavenly Father, Lord

of Heaven and Earth, it hath pleased thee that thou might show thy great goodness most liberally and freely towards us, before that we were, and therefore before we had done either good or evil, without any of our own merits or deservings, but only through thy free mercy to elect and choose, ordain and appoint us heirs of everlasting life, and thereby to make all things pertaining to our salvation so firm and sure, that they cannot stagger, waiver, nor fail. "Surely he shall not be moved forever, the righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance." Psal.112:6. Where contrariwise if they did hang upon our own worthiness, we should ever be doubtful, because every man is a liar, and all our righteousness is like a spotted cloth, and nothing but counterfeit hypocrisy, weighed in the balance of thy severe justice. But the grace of this thy Free Election maketh us most certain and sure, seeing no creature is able to take us out of thy hand, O God. Wherefore we do laude and magnify thy name world without end. So be it." "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I Pet.1:5.

Now after this doctrine of Election, and love of God toward Jacob, the hating and Reprobation of Esau must likewise be declared, and though the adversaries of this doctrine do seem to deny that there is any such Reprobation of the wicked, yet the words are so plain in Malachi and Romans 9, that nothing can be more evident. For what can be more plainly spoken for this purpose, then that God should say before the children were born, that he hated Esau. What was this hatred, but the Reprobation, Rejection, and Condemnation by God in his own mouth of this wicked Esau, like as in the last verse of the first Psalm, where it is said, that the Lord knoweth the ways of the just, {that is,} he hath

them written in his book in the Heavens, he loveth them as is said of Jacob, he hath such care over them that they cannot fall, but unto the glory of God, and their own commodity, and by the course of the contraries compared together in that Psalm, it should be added that the Lord knoweth not the wicked. "For the LORD knoweth the way of the righteous, but the way of the ungodly shall perish." Psal.1:6.

Like as Christ saith, it shall be answered unto them, "I know you not," Matt.7:23, the latter part of the verse is that the way of the wicked shall perish, so that it appeareth to be all one, not to be elected, accepted, and known of God, and to perish, and to be as a reprobate condemned. "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his." II Tim.2:19. An old author doth note, that this part of the last verse of the Second Psalm, regarding God being angry, "kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little," Psal.2:12, doth expound this of the first Psalm, so that the Election, Knowledge, Love, and the Favour of God and Eternal Salvation cannot be separated. Like as his anger and hatred, reprobation and condemnation consequently do follow, in Cain, Esau, Pharaoh, Judas, the Pharisees, and like obdurate persons, so manifestly uttering themselves to be of that sort whom God always hated, the children not of Abraham, but as Christ answereth unto them, of their father the devil, who was a murderer from the beginning, like as his children have been also ever since the beginning of the world, and therefore must of necessity be hated of the most merciful Lord, {"for thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness; neither shall evil dwell with thee. The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all

workers of iniquity," Psal.5:4-5,) who is compelled by the order of his works, to use these wicked rods and cruel scourges, for the chastisement of his children, doing many times the work strange from his nature, that he may do his work of mercy, peculiar unto his nature, and then utterly break, hate, reject, and cast away into everlasting fire and utter destruction this rod and scourge, like a most merciful father favoring his children and hating the rod. Like as he saith by his Prophet, "O Assyrian, the rod of my fury, and the staff of my indignation," Isa.10:5-6, and after promiseth to break the staff and "to take the spoil, and to take the prey, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets," suffering in the mean season yet these instruments of his wrath prepared unto destruction, with great patience, for this end that he may utter the riches of his glory towards the vessels of glory, which he hath prepared unto glory.

Thus was Pharaoh the manifest scourge and rod of God, to correct, to chastise, and to exercise the Israelites, and to spread the power of God through all the world. Therefore was Moses sent unto him with the rod of God's mighty mercy, to break asunder this rod of chastisement. "And the LORD said unto Moses, see, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh, and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh, that he send the children of Israel out of his land. And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and multiply my signs and my wonders in the land of Egypt. But Pharaoh shall not hearken unto you, that I may lay my hand upon Egypt, and bring forth mine armies, and my people the children of Israel, out of the land of Egypt by great judgments. And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch forth

mine hand upon Egypt, and bring out the children of Israel from among them." Exod.7:1-5.

Again the Lord saith, now shall I stretch my hand to strike thee, and thy people with a plague, and thou shalt perish from the earth, for therefore have I caused thee to stand {for so is the Hebrew word} that I may show in thee my strength, and that my name may be renowned through all the earth. Exodus 9. Then the Lord sendeth a great hail, so that feeling the hand of God the tenth time, Pharaoh was compelled to cry, the Lord is just, and I and my people are sinners, as followeth in the same chapter. Yet for all this the Lord hardeneth his heart, that he pursueth the children of Israel to his own destruction. Exodus 14. So that resisting the power of God he perisheth in this world, and in the world to come he is appointed to the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels by the just judgment of the Almighty Lord, who being refused and so openly resisted, justly doth give over the wicked to their own reprobate minds, {"and even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind," Rom.1:28,} with greediness to fulfill their fleshly desires and obstinate purpose to perpetuate that which the devil and the world willetteth them to do, and so causeth them to heap upon their own heads their own damnation, treasuring and storing up all their life long, works deserving the wrath of God against the day of his wrath and vengeance, as the Apostle saith to the Romans.

This Reprobation then is the declaration of God, his severe justice and just judgment, against the serpent and his seed, whom, by the word of his eternal wisdom he hath accursed from the beginning, and appointed to everlasting torment. The which necessary work for the proceeding of God

in his holy providence, eternal and never ceasing regiment and governance, because it is the work of the will of the Almighty God, which is very law, equity, and justice itself, free from all affections, far from all fault, crime or sin; and this ought to be known unto us all, that all flesh may tremble, and consider before whom it standeth, even before that Great Lord and Mighty God, who hath power both over the body and soul to cast into hell fire. Matt.10:28. To whom no man may say, what doest thou? "Where the word of a King is, there is power, and who may say unto him, what doest thou?" Eccl.8:4. Being like the clay in the potters hand, or the staff or axe in the hand of the smiter. Who offendeth against no law, because his godly will is the law itself, and to know his pleasure, is to know the law; to follow his will, is to do the law, so that of necessity this great Lord is so far and free from all sin, that nothing is good but that which is wrought by him, nothing can be evil that he worketh in his creatures.

No, even the fall of Lucifer, the father of the reprobate doth utter forth his majesty, and doth show his justice, which old Satan himself, was worthily cast down into the bottom of hell, and eternally condemned to everlasting pain and torment, because he did so ambitiously and proudly attempt to climb up above his appointed place in the heavens. And where the malice of this old Serpent caused Adam the first man to mount above his estate, to desire to know good and evil like a god, the marvelous mercy of God, and inestimable love towards mankind caused and compelled this wicked work of the Serpent to serve his glory, and to turn to our great commodity and profit, in that he raiseth of the seed of man another Adam, most innocent and holy, against whom no devil, neither any hellish

power may prevail, by whom we are not only reconciled unto God, and do obtain pardon for this offence, but we are born anew, and as it were again created unto greater glory by far, than we were at the first; for the first man had only a promise to live in the earthly garden so long as he did not eat of the forbidden fruit, but we have the promise of the heavenly paradise, and everlasting pleasures. "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift, for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." Rom.5:14-17. He had earthly meat and fruit, we have the heavenly manna which feedeth unto life everlasting. "This is that bread which came down from heaven; not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead, he that eateth of this bread shall live forever." John 6:58. He was created to work in the Garden works natural, we are renewed unto works supernatural, above nature, heavenly and celestial. He was overcome by the Serpent; we do overcome and triumph over the Serpent, Sin, Devil, Death, and Hell. He had the gift of reason and understanding, we have the rich wisdom of God his Holy Spirit, whereby we discern our own infirmity and weakness, and his almighty power, mercy, and goodness. To be short, where he did run from God, hid him, and sewed fig leaves to cover his shame, following his fond fantasy; we do boldly behold the course of God's working in our nakedness, sin, and infirmity, and magnify, acclaim and praise our Lord God, who

shows forth his grace by our sin, who utters forth his power by our weakness, his wisdom by our foolishness, which setteth forth his elect vessels, his chosen Abels, by Cainites the vessels of his wrath. In which Cain the first murderer, and therefore manifestly of the Serpent's seed, appeareth evidently the just judgment of the Almighty God, accursing and condemning in Satan and Cain, all sins and wickedness, to utter that he abhorreth sin, and hateth it, being so far contrary from his nature, which is justice itself, contrary from his will, which is equity, and his law which is judgment.

In Pharaoh, a child of the same father, reprobate, indurate, and accursed, whom God stirred up for the declaration of his great power and mighty arm, Rom.9:17, as well in the manifold miracles wrought for his people, which nothing had needed, neither had been occasioned, if there had not been such a tyrant so indurate and so obstinate, to withstand God and oppose his servants, as also by the subversion and drowning of him and his people in the Red Sea, a sign and token first of the eternal and inequitable destruction and damnation of Almighty God, whereunto the wicked are appointed, and then of the salvation assigned and sealed up for the elect and chosen in Christ; and here we do learn also the power of God, which the very Sorcerers, the enemies of God were compelled to confess before Pharaoh. Exodus 8. We do learn moreover the justice of God, which justice Pharaoh himself was compelled against himself, to denounce and affirm. Exodus 9. And finally we may see expressed most manifestly the fatherly mercy of the God of Jacob, which did give the king and the whole people of Egypt a price for his chosen Jacob. "For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour; I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and

Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee, therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not, for I am with thee, I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name, for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him." Isa.43:3-7. Lo, the love towards Jacob, and the hatred towards Esau. "As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." Rom.9:13. What shall we speak of Judas and others, manifestly reprobate, which are compelled by the testimony of their own consciences to pronounce themselves wicked, and therefore to fear God in his severe justice and just judgment, and to fly therefrom by the terror of their evil consciences, which is more sore than a thousand witnesses, against such as God doth leave to their own selves. The which terrible examples, the Elect of God, having before their eyes were opened, great cause to praise their Heavenly Father, through his Son Christ, who hath sent them his Holy Spirit of truth and comfort, which will never suffer them to be tempted above that they are able to suffer and to bear.

But here we have two kinds of men that are adversaries to this doctrine of Reprobation. The one sort uttering themselves most manifestly reprobate, obstinate, and willfully wicked, crying and blaspheming, "we will follow our own lusts, what need we to care how we live or what we do? If we be elected with Jacob, we shall be saved, if we be rejected and cursed with Cain, we shall be damned." These children of their father the devil, not submitting themselves to the governance of God,

careless as to what becometh of them, must be beat down with the consideration of the majesty and mighty power of God, which suffereth not one sparrow to fall upon the earth without his will and providence, neither one hair to fall from the head of his elect and chosen, how fiercely so ever they shall rage against them.

Wherefore, {O, ye serpents seed,} how soever you shall be offended with this that I shall speak, know this, that as the mighty God hath made the scattered sands able enough to stay the raging seas, so shall your proud ways of your boiling stomachs and over busy heads, be broken and brought full low, where and when it shall please the Lord of all flesh by these his weak vessels to bring it about. And license must you ask, as did your father the devil, executing his tyranny upon the good man Job, as we read in the first chapter of that History, before you can lay hands either of body or goods of his chosen, and therein shall you be limited and appointed {as there it plainly appeareth} how far you shall be able to extend your violence. For God doth hold your hearts in his hand, be you never so great tyrants, and can soon cause you to faint and fail from your fury, turning your hearts round about as him liketh best. And because you thus blaspheme God both in words and deeds, following your father Lucifer, abusing God's creatures, and despising his benefits, his tolerance, and his long sufferance, which might move you to repentance, {as holy Paul warns,} you treasure up for yourselves even wrath and vengeance against the day of vengeance. Jer.46:10.

I do fear nothing at all to offend you with my writing, neither do you pass anything at all what is written or spoken, though you used to swear, stamp, and stare for a little space in a furious rage, when

you hear and feel things contrary to your own poison. But the Scriptures of God, all good writings, all truth, unto such dogs and hogs are uttered to this purpose, that they may be a testimony of condemnation of the light of God's truth rejected and despised. Therefore for the elect of God that they may understand the course of God's effectual working in all his creatures, and reverence his Majesty, and magnify and extol his holy name, is this written. Yet doubtless do I know amongst the chief vessels and chosen children of God there be many which have not attained to this point of doctrine of Election and Reprobation, whom I am very loth to offend, and therefore I desire them, the love of God to suffer me quietly without their grief to utter unto others the comfort of my conscience, which I have hereby undoubtedly received, like as I have many times harkened unto them in the contrary.

First praying thus both of us together unto our Heavenly Father, even whilst acknowledging our own infirmity and utter weakness. "Oh, Father in the heavens, whatsoever we are, whatsoever we have, whatsoever we know, it is only by thy free grace, for we were by nature the children of wrath, and we are not born anew of flesh and blood, either of the seed of man, or of the will of man, flesh and blood cannot reveal the mysteries of thy heavenly kingdom unto us. But by thy blessed will, are we that we are, and by the same know we that we know; therefore {Oh, heavenly Father,} do we commit into thy hands only our salvation. "But Israel shall be saved in the LORD with an everlasting salvation, ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end." Isa.45:17. If our knowledge be small, yet we doubt nothing but that we are the children of thy everlasting kingdom, and therefore by thy mighty power, we shall grow when it shall be thy pleasure,

to a more full and riper knowledge, of a more perfect age, wherein our faith shall be fully able to comprehend and perceive the breath, depth, height and largeness of thy great mercies, and gracious promises. But seeing this power of full knowledge and perfect revelation passeth all power natural, and remaineth only in thy power, and the light of thy Spirit, {Oh, Lord,} do thou what shall please thee, to open to us thy servants and children, depending on thy hands, as much on the light of thy countenance, and at such times as shall seem good to thy wisdom and fatherly mercy. "Thou shalt arise, and have mercy upon Zion, for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come." Psal.102:13. In the meantime thus resting wholly upon thee, neither can we despair, neither will we be too much careful, although we cannot attain to the knowledge of many of thy works, neither to the understanding of many places of the scriptures, but we will confess unto thee the weakness of our faith, waiting always for further revelation of thy glorious light to be uttered unto us, when thou shalt think of thy Fatherly benevolence and goodness meet and convenient, knowing most surely that thou wilt pity our childish infancy, and cause the same to serve for thy glory and our great commodity, seeing that we do err and are childish, as sons before such a father which cannot put off his fatherly pity, but rather as thou hast brought us unto thee, to be the heirs of thy kingdom by the blood of thy natural Son, so we are most sure that thou wilt lighten us in the end, with the full fruition of the bright light of thy continuance, that we may see thee and know thee as this thy Son our Redeemer knoweth thee, yea, see thee our Father, face to face, and know as we be known. Thus rest we entirely upon thy most gracious hand to increase our knowledge at thy good pleasure, Oh,

Mighty Lord and most Merciful Father. So be it. Amen."

If you can thus submit your selves, good brethren, to the wisdom of God, working in us weaklings what him liketh, all the stumbling blocks which might offend you, may easily be removed. There be two things especially which do seem to stand against this doctrine of Election and Reprobation, or of God his Governance and Providence, for all is one in effect, the one toucheth God, the other man. The first and principal objection is, that the wicked do make God the author of sin in the Reprobate, the which no doubt we may remove in four manner of ways.

First, by the absolute authority of scriptures. Secondly, by the testimony of their own consciences. Thirdly, by the nature of sin. Fourthly, by the majesty of God, which is bound to none of his creatures, to make him this or that vessel. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Rom.9:21-23.

For the first, Saint James saith, "let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God, for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man, but every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Jas.1:13-14. Then lust when it hath conceived bringeth forth sin, James 1, and even thus it appeared in the first fall of mankind. First, though the Lord our God had warned and commanded the contrary, our old enemy stirreth the concupiscence and lust of the

woman, with the goodness, pleasantness and beauty of the apple, her lust now conceiving this, bringeth forth sin, enticing also her husband to the breaking of God's commandment. Genesis 3. But contrariwise, saith James in the same place, least you should err and conceive any evil opinion of God, "every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning," Jas.1:17, nether change into darkness, that he should give now good things, now evil, now light, now darkness. No, saith the Apostle Paul, let God be true, and all men liars. Can God be unjust? How shall he then judge the world? Romans 3. Again, God saith by his prophet Ezekiel, "as I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live." Ezek.33:11. And unto wicked Jerusalem saith our Saviour Christ, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Matt.23:37. Lo, here appeareth the goodness of the living Lord, so diligently calling the wicked to him by his word, by his prophets, by his messengers, and at the length by his own Son, that he cannot in any case be reckoned the author of their evil, nor cause of their fall. But contrariwise, their own willful and wicked stubbornness is the cause of their evil, and the only occasion of their fall, as it is written, thy perdition and destruction is of thine own self, but only of me is thy salvation. "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help." Hos.13:9. And infinite Scriptures to the same purpose attest to the truth of this matter, that

we may say with Daniel, "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee," Dan.9:8, to the shame and covering of our faces.

Secondly, the testimony of the consciences of the wicked, which shall accuse or excuse them at the great day, which is always of the force and value of a thousand witnesses, which is the worm that shall never die, but gnaw the wicked forever. "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh." Isa.66:24 This conscience, I say, of theirs shall condemn the wicked, and what shall God then do? Or wherein is his dreadful majesty to be charged? Cain by his own conscience is compelled to confess, "greater is my wickedness than can be remitted." Thou dost cast me from the face of the earth, saith he, and I must hide myself from thy face. "And Cain said unto the LORD, my punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth." Gen.4:13. Lo, the just judgment of God and his worthy condemnation, openly confessed. Who dare then blame God? Cain dare in no wise do it. Neither yet proud Pharaoh, who condemned in his own heart and conscience, accuseth himself and his people, and justifieth God, delivering all men from this wicked blasphemy, saying openly, I have sinned now, the Lord is just, and I and my people are wicked. "And Pharaoh sent, and called for Moses and Aaron, and said unto them, I have sinned this time, the LORD is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." Exod.9:27. What doth Judas? Doth he not

cry likewise, I have sinned, betraying this innocent blood. Matthew 27. And to utter indeed that thing he most felt within his breast, he is compelled to take vengeance, and execute a judgment most terrible against himself, uttering to all the world himself most wicked, and that the justice of God punishing such wicked traitors and murderers, ought most worthily to be feared, magnified, and reverenced, throughout the whole world. Like as all the other wicked and desperate persons, which for anguish of heart, and terror of conscience, do murder themselves, doth evidently and continually witness unto the worlds end, that there is a Just Lord, the God of Judgment, whom they do fear, and before whose face they dare not appear, to accuse him of any sin, but rather taking the crime, blame, shame, and punishment entirely unto themselves, who worthily by their own conscience, have deserved it, doth thus torment themselves, and with violent hands judge the sin they have committed in their own sinful souls and bodies. Thus must God always be found just, and overcome when he is judged, by the testimony of our own conscience, which shall accuse or excuse us at the great day. Romans 2. Wherefore let no man be so foolish to say, that God is the author of evil, unless he will be reckoned worse than Cain, more proud than Pharaoh, more wicked than Judas, or any other reprobate from the beginning.

Thirdly, the nature of sin being defined by the authority of scriptures, to be a thought, word, or deed, contrary to the will of God; for such things only defile the man, as Christ our Master saith, "are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the

mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man," Matt.15:15-18, and therefore are only to be reckoned sin. No such thought can be attributed or ascribed unto God, as can be against his will, therefore no sin can be his work.

Neither can he be the author of evil, which therefore is called God, because he is the Author and Doer of all good, and so far from evil, that he turneth all our evil to some good, all our sin to the uttering forth of his grace, our lies to the declaration of his truth. No, this is the perfect Work Master which worketh all things without fault or trespass according to his eternal purpose. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28. All others do fail, fault, and trespass, and sin in all their works, that he may be justified in all his doings, and all creatures fall down before his face and presence. Who though he do work all in all things, yet doth he work the same to such godly end and purpose, known only to his majesty, that though we be compelled to say, God is the author of the fact, yet must we answer, but not of the crime. Because he is the Master of the house, and Lord over the family, and therefore may do anything without the blame of his servants. And like as that which is no fault in the master of the house, is a great fault many times in many of his servants, because it is the breaking of their master's commandment; even so doubtless the selfsame work is sin in his servants and creatures, which to God is no sin, but an ordinary work appointed for some special purpose, either for the manifestation of his power, as was the hardening of Pharaoh, or for the declaration of his mercy, as was the fall of David, of Peter, of Mary, and all other repentant sinners. And wherefore, I pray you, may not this Lord thus use his own servants, without any blame of sin, seeing that he hath created and made

them all only to serve his glory, his justice, and his mercy. Or how can he be unjust, or the author of any sin, by whom all the world must be judged and brought to the balance of justice and equity. When the first world shall be condemned for their sin and iniquity, and we now living shall be judged for our sins; especially all those which not only do evil themselves, but are authors and fathers to wicked doers. "Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them." Rom.1:32.

Fourthly, the majesty of God can be subject to no sin, because it can be under no law. And that only is worthily called sin which is done against a Law, therefore no work that God doth ought to be reckoned evil; either that he is the occasion of any evil, which only is the mind, sense, spirit, and power of the Law, without whom no law of itself is good. For every good law is the mind, will and commandment of God, and whatsoever law is not the mind, will, and commandment of God, the same be wicked, {as was the laws of the Scribes and Pharisees, and of the cursed Papists,} who of necessity set up the body of Antichrist, to utter their own unrighteousness, that Christ the Son of Righteousness, the Head of his body, in his manifold mercies, more plainly might appear, and shine with more lustre and glory to his own. Again, we define sin to be the affection, motion, or operation of any reasonable creature, against the law of God. His majesty must needs be exempted and excused, who is the Law Maker and the Creator of all. There is no creature, having any evil motion, nor led with any bad affection, which might make his work evil. Like as the creature is for the most part blame worthy, because even when it doth the best of all, it is

subject to some evil affection, either self-love, or hatred of some other, yea the Lord God may use any of his creatures in any work, without the blame of any evil, as well as the smith may make his coals to flame, or to quench them, either the same piece of iron, sometimes his hammer, sometime his tongs or chisel.

Wherefore, though very much might be said in this part, that as the potter may make of one piece of clay what him liketh, the smith may make of his iron divers instruments, yet following the godly wisdom of Paul, I think it more meet to beat down man's subtleties, with the contemplation of the Majesty of the Mighty God, pronouncing boldly that such as say, {if my lies and sin set forth his glory, why am I then judged as a sinner, let us do evil that good may come, and so in their wicked words dare make God the author of evil,} have their worthy damnation already, as Paul saith, Romans 3, for of necessity, which their eyes cannot see, such a diversity of sin and grace, of righteousness and unrighteousness, of the contrary and change of things, must be in this wonderful creation of heaven and earth, by the high Majesty of God appointed and ordained. For what needed the goodly creature of light, if there had been no darkness; or how should this benefit have been felt or perceived? What matter or cause of uttering justice might have been found without sin and unrighteousness? How should grace have been showed, if no wrath had been deserved? No, the mighty God thereby most evidently sets forth his majesty, in that he sheweth how the heavens fall into darkness without him, the earth into dust, the angels into devils, men into sin, and so finally without him all things to come to nought, that he might be magnified creating all things for himself; yeah, even the wicked for

destruction. His Son, our Saviour renowned, who hath redeemed us all, his Holy Spirit exalted, who hath renewed all us that be his elect and chosen. Now to what creature is the majesty of God bound and found debtor of his Spirit? If he withhold it from any, his dreadful majesty may rightly withhold it, for who hath given him first, to ask anything again of debt or duty? If his Majesty do give his Spirit, it is of his free mercy and grace. If the earth fall into dust, if man fall into sin, that all things may be known to be nothing without God; what blame deserveth God, or who dare accuse him? No, let all flesh fall down before his Majesty and confess the Glory of God.

All things doth only rest upon thee, O Lord, for thou hast created all things of nothing, so that without thee they all do fall to their original, to show themselves vain and nothing worth, weak, wretched and miserable; wherefore if we have any good thing, it comes of thy free mercy; if we have any weakness, sin, or infirmity, it comes of our own concupiscence, lusts, and vanity; our perdition is of ourselves, our sin is of ourselves, only of thee is our salvation, thou hast made us clay, pots and vessels to thine use. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers, all things were created by him, and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist." Col.1:16-17. Do thou with us as thou shalt think good in thine eyes, and the shame shall fall upon our own faces. "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the LORD

our God, to walk in his laws, which he set before us by his servants the prophets." Dan.9:9-10.

The second cause which concerneth man {whereby many mistake this doctrine} is that God exhorteth man always in his Scriptures to good and forbiddeth evil with many terrible threatenings, which things seemeth not to be needful {say they} seeing the Elect shall be saved and the Reprobate condemned by decree and sentence given upon them before they be born. To this we do answer, that these exhortations and communications are very necessary to both twain, because God leadeth us men always like reasonable creatures, not like insensible stocks or stones. And to the Elect they are most necessary pricks and spurs, to stir the dull flesh toward his duty, as all good men feel and can bear witness unto. To the Reprobate they are testimonies of the good will of the Almighty God to them opened and uttered, but openly resisted, refused, and rejected, according to the saying of our Saviour Christ, "if I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloke for their sin," John 15:22, no pretense or excuse for their sin. Peradventure you will answer me, they cannot render obedience unto it, for "with men this is impossible." Matt.19:26. What is the cause thereof I pray you? Because they lack the Spirit of Christ to lead them, you will say. I dare easily grant you, but will they grant this? Will they {think you} submit themselves under a poor Christ, II Cor.8:9, and the foolishness of the cross, I Cor.1:18, and not rather boast and brag about their wisdom, their knowledge, and their upright dealing, and righteousness. Are not these the men that dare thus boast? We know as much as the Preacher can tell us. Is the Spirit of God departed from us to speak only with him? As was said against Moses, "hath the

LORD indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?" Numb.12:2. Or as the Pharisees did answer unto Christ, which were with him hearing these words, and said unto him, "are we blind also," Jesus said unto them, "if ye were blind, ye should have no sin, but now ye say, we see; therefore your sin remaineth." John 9:40-41. Thus doubtless they are so far from the submission and subjection to Christ, that contrariwise they do willingly and naturally follow their father Lucifer, who did lift himself arrogantly above Christ the Son of Righteousness, and evermore fighteth against Christ, though the mighty power and high wisdom of God turneth his evil will and all theirs to his own glory and good purposes. None other ways than bodily and natural darkness, II Thes.2:11, which by the wonderful wisdom of God clearly setteth forth the bright sunshine, and yet laboured by continual course to shadow the sun, and to cover the whole earth. Wherefore the Lord God to drive away this natural darkness from man, exhorteth to justice and equity, which is his nature, and the image which man ought to emulate, and who always commandeth things thereunto agreeable, and forbiddeth that which is not, that is to say, iniquity, and exhorteth therefrom by his Prophets and Preachers, publishing his will and pleasure, which is the light and law most perfect to man his noble creature, whom he hath made for his honour and glory, whom he hath appointed to bear his image upon earth, of justice, righteousness and innocency. But because this image could by no creature perfectly be expressed, unless the same were fully replenished with the selfsame Godhead, because that all things have some imperfection, betraying their original creation, the darkness, as John calleth

it, John 1:5, or the tohu wa-bohu, Gen.1:2, as Moses doth it name.

The vain vanity and wild deformity, whence they were by creation altered, recovered, and brought into light and life, as appeared in Adam falling from truth to lies straight at the beginning; now of necessity the Son of God {who only is good of nature} becometh man, and taketh this office to bear the image of God invisible. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature." Col.1:15. And to be the Head of that spiritual perfection which was to be wrought in mankind, by his afore appointed purpose, and becoming the first begotten of all creatures, for by him were all things created both in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, majesty, lordship, rule, and power, by whom, and in whom all things are created, and he is before all creatures, and in him all things have their being. Col.1:17. And he is the Head of the body, he is the beginning and first begotten of the head, that in all things he might have preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should dwell all fulness, and by him to reconcile all things to himself. And to set at peace by him through the blood of his cross both things in heaven and things in earth, for even you, saith Paul, which in times past were strangers, because your minds were set upon evil works, hath he now reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to make you holy and blameless, and without fault in his sight. Col.1:13-23. Seeing then that this cannot be denied to be the course of God his holy working, to drive away this darkness, and to bring man to his light, to take away sin, and to bring man to a life blameless, the state of innocency, and his own likeness; shall it not be most necessary to have preachers and teachers, to tell us this same, and to admonish us whereunto we

be called, seeing of ourselves and our own reasons no such thing can be perceived? Therefore have we preachings and exhortations as Paul saith, "for after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I Cor.1:21. And as he also saith of himself in another place, we do preach this richness in Christ the hope of your glory, "warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." Col.1:28.

Thus serveth then exhortations, appeals, entreaties and publications of the law and will of our Lord God, that he may be known to be the Lord and Governor over all the things he hath created, and the only Law Maker amongst his creatures, publishing unto all that perfect equity and justice which ought in no case to be resisted. Whereunto if they cannot attain, they must confess and acknowledge their own infirmity and weakness, and submit themselves under the mighty hand of God, and so doing they shall be received as children of the most loving and most merciful Father, in such degrees of perfection as he hath appointed to the beautifying of the body of his Son our Head. Heb.13:21. So that the Lord God doth teach all, and lighten all men that come into the world both chosen and reprobate, John 1:9, with such a knowledge as doth the good prince, which unto all his subjects proclaimeth his statutes, and publisheth his laws, but like a good and tender father, he leadeth his children, regenerate and born anew, neither of flesh nor blood, nor the will of man, John 1:13, and guideth them with his fatherly spirit in the paths of the same laws, writing in their hearts what is his good will and pleasure. "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel;

after those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the LORD, for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more." Jer.31:33-34.

In the which course of God, and his wonderful work, the wicked hath no cause to complain, for as their father whom they do follow is named "the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience," Eph.2:2, so they have the world at will, and are rich roisters and wealthy worldlings, trampling under their feet poor Abel, and the despised Christians; neither will they change their estate with any such, not until they be called from darkness to be partakers of light, of life, and the heavenly treasures laid up in Christ. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." Col.1:13. Until that appointed hour of their deliverance they despise that lowly estate, excusing their purchases, their merchandise, and their earthly lusts and delights. Luke 14:16-24. Wherefore in the other world they that here are oppressed shall have comfort, and the other torment.

Such is the order then of God and his effectual working, that by the contrariety of the Chosen and Reprobate, of Jacob and Esau, of Pharaoh and Israel, and the wisdom of God, and the wisdom of the world, he will set forth his Majesty, his Power, his Divinity, his Godhead, so much as may be known unto man {that is to say} in his wisdom, justice, mercy, and almighty ness. For comparing his wisdom to any other wisdom, now appeareth the contrary,

that it is very foolishness, even darkness compared unto light, death unto life, lies unto truth, even as Paul saith, when they reckoned themselves wise, they were made very fools, and changed the truth with lies, the glory of the immortal God, to mortal and corruptible creatures. They following their own righteousness could not come to the righteousness of God in Jesus Christ. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." Rom.1:21-22.

Wherefore of necessity God did shut all under sin that his mercy might flow over all, and that his mighty power might appear. He hath created the heavens and earth, wherein we do see light and darkness, death and life, shame and glory, weakness and strength, lies and truth, righteousness and unrighteousness, to serve to the setting forth of his glory, that man may be driven to say with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen." Rom.11:33-36.

And as this holy Apostle Paul doth submit himself to the great depth of the wisdom of God, and his wonderful Regiment and Providence, and would beat and drive down all flesh by the consideration of the same. So also all our fathers from the beginning hath laid this the only foundation of their faith. Wherefore Moses beginneth to establish the faith of

man at the history of the creation, and so forth by the order of God in his present governance about the things made and created. And David for a confession of his faith pronounceth of this providence, Psalm 95, I do know that thou art a great Lord and a Lord above all gods. All things whatsoever the Lord's pleasure was, he hath made in the heavens, the earth, the seas, and the bottomless waters. "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the LORD our maker." Psal.95:6. Again, by the word of God all things were set in their places, and by the spirit of his mouth all the powers that be in them. And Paul considering most deeply, and pronouncing most plainly this divine governance of the creatures, and godly providence of the Creator, in all things for his elect and chosen, saith thus, "we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called, and whom he called, them he also justified, and whom he justified, them he also glorified." Rom.8:28-30.

So that this appeareth to be no new learning or vain doctrine of God's Providence and Election. But the only ground of faith and certainty of conscience in all conflicts against the world, the flesh and the devil, against sin, death, and hell, as the Apostle useth it in the latter end of the same chapter, and all the fathers from the beginning hath felt it. For how could Adam by any other work or creature, either by comfort of any other doctrine, stay his conscience? But in that the Lord God promised to provide for him, and to save him from his enemies {who once had overcome him} by the

blessed seed, Gen.3:15, which not by merits, but by mercy and grace, and therefore of his free purpose before appointed, should be sent unto him to break the head of the Serpent. Why? Should Abraham have left his country and his own father's house, if he had not felt this divine providence, fatherly care, free choice, and election of him and his seed? By the which lively awareness of God in his careful providence, and free choice, sending him seed when he was past hope of seed, {concerning his dead bodies and all the works of nature,} and by the stedfastness of faith in the temptations about the same seed, to be made a slain sacrifice, Gen.22:8, amongst other grievous temptations and adversities from time to time laid upon him, this chosen vessel Abraham is called the father of all faithful. As by his history appeareth a fatherly care of our God, for all his people, both for bodies and souls, for wife and child, and all together. And Isaac his son, that chosen seed, in whom all the Nations of the earth were promised to be blessed long before the child was born, hath this promise of inheritance given him by favour, that the promise might be sure to all the seed as Paul saith, Rom.4:16, unto whom and his faithful seed, this free promise and fatherly Election and Predestination {or what else you will call it} was again revealed and opened, in these words, "and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Gen.26:4. And the lively sense and feeling of this election and fatherly care of God for him, did then especially shine in his heart, when the Lord said unto him, "go not down into Egypt; dwell in the land which I shall tell thee of. Sojourn in this land, and I will be with thee, and will bless thee; for unto thee, and unto thy seed, I will give all

these countries, and I will perform the oath which I sware unto Abraham thy father." Gen.26:2-3. And after that grievous temptation undoubtedly wherein he was compelled for fear of the Philistines, to deny his wife and call her his sister, and after the manifold contentions with the Philistines, wherein his God did preserve him, and at the end in the wonderful miracle of his children, whose birthright was altered by the unsearchable providence of God, the manifest notes and tokens of the free Election and Choice of God did evidently appear.

And Jacob chosen and beloved in his mother's womb, experienced this free work of God in his great favour, who had chosen him before he was born, and taking occasion of the necessity of his brother, seeketh the birthright, the which God had unto him before appointed and promised, renouncing the course of nature, and then doth he leave and forsake his father's house, and patiently taketh all troubles offered unto him. In the which oftentimes undoubtedly he feeleth the heavy and grievous temptations that his fathers Abraham and Isaac had before {for no creature more often suffereth trouble than the very elect of God} for the experiment of his faith, whereby the lively sense and undoubted tokens of his favorable election after many battles and victories, might be made more conspicuous, certain and sure, through present comfort always ministered unto him either by secret inspiration or manifest revelation, witnessing the singular care of his Heavenly Father over him, his dearly beloved and chosen child, as his wonderful vision of the ladder and the angels descending from heaven doth declare, and the other vision wherein the angel did show him the party colored sheep for his portion, to multiply and increase his substance; as also when God biddeth him go into his own country from this

deceitful Laban, and defendeth his Jacob from him; and finally the glorious victory given unto him over the angel, comforting him against the fear of his brother Esau, doth bring forth unto his heart and conscience the assured sign and token of the favour of his heavenly Father, first electing and choosing, and after evermore governing, guiding, and preserving by the free mercy of his Divine Providence.

Jeremiah also chosen in his mother's womb, as appeareth in the first chapter of his Prophecy, where it is said from the mouth of God, "before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee, and I ordained thee a prophet unto the nations," Jer.1:5, who then felt the most lively signs and tokens of his Election, when his flesh repined, grudged and feared to take in hand the execution of this great and dangerous embassage, and the power of God by his Spirit doth touch his heart, and openeth his mouth to the planting and rooting up of all people and kingdoms, to break, destroy, and make waste, and raised him as a fenced town, a brazen wall, an iron pillar against the kings, priests, and people of the land. Now though sometimes his flesh doth grudge for the burden of his office, and anguish of heart, as though he had been an object of wrath, yet always after the brunt of temptations uttering his weakness, he findeth the merciful providence of his Heavenly Father, to take a continual care for him, and not only comfort and assist him, but also most evidently to punish his enemies. "And I will make thee unto this people a fenced brasen wall, and they shall fight against thee, but they shall not prevail against thee, for I am with thee to save thee and to deliver thee, saith the LORD. And I will deliver thee out of the hand of the

wicked, and I will redeem thee out of the hand of the terrible." Jer.15:20-21. "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart, for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts." Jer.15:15-16.

And to be short, all the elect of God are thus chosen and called, guided, and governed from their mother's womb, according to the saying of the princely prophet, "thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb; thou art my God from my mother's belly." Psal.22:9-10. And then do they feel most sensibly and lively this their Election, when temptations and adversities doth assail and assault them, in the which conflicts of the flesh and the spirit, of sin and grace, of light and darkness, they are compelled to cry and call, to sigh and sob before their Heavenly Father for the deliverance of this mortal and sinful body subdued to vanity, and though they do most evidently perceive how they are called from darkness to light, from love of iniquity, to the hatred of the same, from obedience sometime given to Satan and to the lusts of the flesh, to the obedience of the Spirit, which fighteth against the flesh, and though, I say, they perceiving this, be not able to quench these raging lusts, yet do they mourn and daily lament, calling for the grace of their Heavenly Father, which lamentations, sighing and sorrowings for their sins, be the sensible feelings and lively signs and tokens of God's infallible and sure Election. Wherefore whosoever shall feel these secret sighs and mournings, thereby hating sin and desiring therefrom to be delivered, considering their own utter weakness, and wishing always to be of more perfection, {desiring to be found only in Christ, clothed in his righteousness

alone,} let them with all thanksgiving unto God rejoice, knowing that this proceedeth not from flesh nor blood, but from the Spirit of our Head Jesus Christ, who maketh intercession for his afflicted members {who are his Saints} with unspeakable groanings. Rom.8:26-27. Whom though for a time he doth permit to be afflicted, both in spirit and body, as sometimes he did Job, Jonas, Jeremiah, and others, yet at the end he giveth unto them most triumphant victory, according to the everlasting purpose of his Divine Providence, who is to be feared, reverenced, renowned and praised forever. "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Rom.8:37. So be it!

Heretofore have we answered generally to them that would make God the author of evil, and to them which do say, that this doctrine taketh away exhortations and threatenings, and the preaching of the word. Now by the grace of God, we will more briefly answer to some arguments which they bring forth of the scriptures, setting apart all such calculations as man's reason, {which in God's mysteries can never be satisfied,} which by the craft of the devil, he doth exploit and manipulate. But first we will speak something of good works, and the true understanding of those scriptures which commend them unto us, lest we should seem to dissuade from the same, or extenuate the meaning of the Holy Spirit, in such sentences as our adversaries do wickedly pervert, for the blind assertion of man's power against this doctrine of Grace and Free Election, which dare affirm that by works they purchase part of their salvation, the which {as we have said} is freely given by this Election in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world was laid.

The good works which are so in deed, that is to say, which proceed of the spirit of adoption, and the knowledge of God's mercies in electing, calling and justifying, first of all have this use, as they declare the power of God to be in us, and the spirit of Christ, which doth conform us to his image, and this is the end whereunto we are elected and predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Rom.8:29. Elected before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless. "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." Eph.1:4. Created unto good works, which God hath prepared for us to walk therein. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph.2:10. These possess the prize, as Paul saith, not only of this life, but of the world to come. "For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." I Tim.4:8. Therefore saith our Saviour Christ, "come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was an hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink, &c." Matt.25:34-35.

Of this excellent commendation and reward of good works, we do learn the dignity of the same, not of the worthiness of themselves, which are never able to stand in God's judgment, for our very righteousnesses are, as Isaiah saith, as clothes filthily polluted, Isa.64:6, but of the dignity of the grace of the promise of God, who worketh them in

us. For it is God, saith Paul, that worketh in us both the will and also the work, even of his purpose. Phil.2:13. Therefore all is of grace, not of works, least any should glory. "Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Eph.2:9-10. For if there were any power in ourselves, or dignity in the works, then had we something to glory, but now that all is confessed to be of God's free mercies, and nothing of ourselves, we conclude that God crowns and rewards his own works in us, that who so glorieth should glory in the Lord. I Cor.1:31. "In the LORD shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory." Isa.45:25. And where some allege this place, Matthew 25, so to commend works that they should be the cause of the election and the favour of God, they do not consider the first words, "come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt.25:34. Wherein we may note, that they being the blessed and beloved of the Father, are called to the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom, not won by works, but prepared by the Heavenly Father for all his children before they did any works at all. Saith Christ, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me, for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." John 17:24. Just as the wicked have their place of eternal torment, there named for them before prepared and appointed; and in both twain the works doth only declare what the trees are whereof they spring, and testify what that fountain is from whence they flow, according as our Saviour Christ saith, "the tree is known by its fruit," Matt.12:33, and a good man, out

of the good treasure of his heart doth bring forth good works, and the evil man evil works. This doth James bid us, to show our faith by our works, and saith, that Abraham did thus confess his faith by his works, and Rahab by her works, which evidenced their justification. Where we are compelled, with all the godly learned to expound the word justified, declared to be just, or else we do make James contrary to himself, contrary to Moses, whose sentence he in the same place alledgedeth, contrary to Paul, and the whole course of Scriptures. And thus must all the general sentence of works be understood, that by these works wherein God will have us to walk, we are known to have his Spirit to be good trees, and so judged by our fruits, as is the good apple tree by the apples; not that the apples make him good, but testify that he is good, and that it hath within itself a kindly power of good juice and nourishment. So we feeling the power of the Spirit working in our hearts godly motions, and so bringing forth good fruits of faith and good works, do confirm our election and vocation, as Peter speaketh, to ourselves and others. "Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation." I Pet.2:12.

The second use of works is that God in us by them may be glorified. Whereof our Saviour Christ saith, "let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt.5:16. And this is the chief use of good works, the laude and glory of God whereunto we were first created in the earthly Adam, and now are anew restored by the heavenly Adam Christ Jesus, to walk in good works, and to be holy, blameless, and without fault, before him in love; and

to this end that God in them might be glorified, doth scripture commend unto us good works and setteth forth the crown of glory to them that therein are so exercised. "So run, that ye may obtain," I Cor.9:24, as saith the Apostle, labour for the crown incorruptible, "to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." I Pet.1:4-5.

Now because these latter days are the times wherein our Saviour Christ did say, that faith should fail, and charity should wax cold, we that have so clear a revelation of God's great mercies in Jesus Christ may give no occasion to the slothful flesh, either in ourselves or others, but after the example of the Scriptures we must always exhort to good works, and so tame our bodies and bring them into subjection {as Paul saith} least whilst we preach to others, we ourselves be found reprobates, II Cor.13:5, the which sentence is evilly alleged by the adversaries of Election, as though Paul might have become a reprobate, or as if yet he had not been certain of his salvation, but that it should hang upon his well doings. For he saith first in the same sentence, "I do so run, not as at an uncertain thing, and so fight, not as one that beateth the air," I Cor.9:26, but as he saith to the Romans, "for I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom.8:37-39.

Likewise they allege from the second chapter to the Philippians, that Paul willeth us to work our own salvation, but they do not consider that he

straightaways addeth, that it is God which worketh both the will and the work. Phil.2:12-13. And in the chapter before, he saith, that it is God which hath begun a good work, and will finish it. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Phil.1:6. So that such Scriptures may never be alleged for works, against grace, for to set up our salvation of ourselves, which only comes of mercy in the Free Election, whereby we were chosen in Christ Jesus, and created anew in him, by his Holy Spirit to bring forth good works. Therefore do we conclude with Paul, that we are saved and justified freely by Grace, not by works, for so grace were no grace, and that all are shut up under sin, that mercy may be upon all, upon whom it pleaseth him to show mercy. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom.3:24-26. And for the consideration of these great mysteries of Election and Reprobation, we cry with Paul, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever." Rom.11:33-36. So be it.

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