

# CALVIN'S CALVINISM

"The Eternal Predestination of God"

&

"The Secret Providence of God"

WRITTEN BY

**John Calvin**



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"The Eternal Predestination of God"

and

"The Secret Providence of God"

— by John Calvin

Translated by Henry Cole

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# THE ETERNAL PREDESTINATION OF GOD

## TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

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"CALVIN'S CALVINISM." This definitive title is prefixed to the present publications advisedly and purposely, as embodying in its expression the nature of the original works of the immortal Genevese Reformer, and also the object of the present translation. The originals are Calvin's testimony and real mind concerning the doctrines of God's electing, predestinating and sovereign grace; while his own exposition and expression of his faith therein satisfactorily evince and beautifully manifest the spirit in which he held and taught those divine and sublime doctrines.

No servant of Christ, probably, since the days of the apostles and of the Gospel witnesses of their century, has been more grossly misrepresented or more maliciously maligned than the faithful, fearless and beloved Calvin. But the British Church of Christ shall now (the Translator intends, under the Divine blessing) see, and love, and admire, while the whole nation shall know what the heavenly John Calvin really was in his ministry, and is still, and ever will be, in his writings, as long as the originals shall survive the desolations of time.

The present and (D.v.) forthcoming Treatises derive a considerable accession of value and interest from the fact that they are the only productions of Calvin which he devoted expressly, exclusively and purposely, to the exposition and defence of the sublime doctrines of electing, predestinating and persevering grace. Those glorious truths are indeed, as a matter of natural consequence, interwoven with the whole of his written and voluminous labours, which consist principally of commentaries on most, or nearly all, the books of the Holy Scriptures. But the two Treatises now under publication are devoted wholly by the

pre-eminent Reformer to the statement and vindication of those all-high doctrines which formed the burden of his faith, testimony, confession and ministry, and as such they are signally interesting and valuable.

There are, in the religious world, almost as many different shades, phases, kinds and degrees, of Calvinism as there are Calvinists (or professors of the doctrines of Calvin), and almost as many diverse opinions on the faith and character of the Reformer himself. But (as the present Translator has already remarked) he now presents the Church of Christ in England, and the British public in general, with (they may rest fully assured) " CALVIN'S own CALVINISM."

Calvinism is a designation, by which the doctrines of the sovereign grace of God have been distinguished for the last two centuries, but more particularly and generally for the last century. The term derives, of course, its descriptiveness from the historical fact that the eminent Swiss Reformer was the chosen servant of God, appointed by Him to proclaim and defend more prominently than any contemporary or antecedent witness the sublime doctrines in question. Not that these stupendous truths originated with Calvin, but with God Himself. They form an essential portion of the revelation of His Word. They are no more Calvinism than Augustinism, or Lutherism, or Bucerism, or Cranmerism, or Latimerism, for they are Bibleism, and the ism of every saint and true minister of Christ; they are the solidity and security of all true religion; they are the fast-hold of faith; they form a substantial ingredient in every true ministry of the Gospel; and they constitute an essential doctrine in the confession of every true Church of Christ. Hence it is that the truthful and faithful Reformers interwove it with the whole worship and services, and laid it at the foundation of the confession of the Church of England!

The admirable Calvin has treated this stupendous subject with all the penetrating acumen and commanding might of mind with which he was peculiarly endowed by nature, and with that accuracy, conclusiveness and force of logical argument, of which he was a perfect and powerful master. These natural and acquired qualifications for his important task, enabled him to discover, at the farthest distance, the subtle aims of his opponents in all their hostile reality, and to establish against them a self-defending bulwark of Divine truth with impregnable and lasting solidity; while "the

unction from the Holy One," with which he was himself anointed as a son and a servant of the Most High (1 John ii. 20), sanctifying all his intellectual and literary powers, has rendered these holy and masterly Treatises as much a delight and a profit to the Church of Christ as an exposure, refutation and condemnation of the world, of human reason, scepticism and infidelity. The crowning success of the whole, however, is that the God of truth is greatly glorified by this His noble and edifying witness's indestructible testimony

When Martin Luther had, by the "hammer" of God's " Word " (Jer. xxiii. 29), beaten to atoms the mighty pile of superstition, idolatry, hypocrisy, formality, "will-worship," work-worship and infinite "abominations," erected by the twelve centuries' labour of the anti-Christian Harlot of the World, and had based on its prostrate and exposed ruins the great cardinal doctrine of salvation, Justification by Faith; the Church of Christ, thus reformed and "turned from dead works to serve the living God " (1 Thess. i. 9), soon required, under her characteristic infirmities, a stability and confidence in her newly "given faith" (Eph. ii. 8), and a security that should assure her of its appointed end " ? " the salvation of the soul " (1 Pet. i. 9). The great and merciful Head of His Church, seeing this, raised up John Calvin, and divinely and powerfully equipped him to go forth and minister to the yet unassured Church the doctrines of His electing, predestinating and immutable grace, founded on His sovereign will and inscrutable purpose. These glorious doctrines formed then, as they do now, and ever will do, "chambers" (Isa. xxvi. 20; Song i. 4) into which believers might enter, and "beds" upon which they might securely and eternally rest (Isa. lvii. 2; Psa. cxlix. 5). Thus a scope and foundation were given for the assurance of faith as broad and as sure as the Eternal Mind!

The human and unregenerate mind, however, utterly incapable of soaring to an adequate and reverential contemplation of these all-high and supernatural truths, has ever fallen back, dazzled and confounded, upon its own vain, ineffectual and often irreverent and profane reasonings (1 Cor. ii. 14). These reasonings, in all their forms, the present work of Calvin meets, exposes, refutes and condemns. It explains the real nature of these sublime mysteries, and exalts them in triumph over all the

reason, pride and malice of the "natural man." Nor has there ever been, nor is there now, nor is there likely to be, an opposing argument of unsanctified reason which the present works do not state, or anticipate, expose and refute.

And wherever the "natural man," unrenewed and untaught by the Spirit of God, does receive the sublime doctrines of grace "in the letter" of them (for myriads of such receivers there ever are), planted, as they then must be, in the soil of a graceless, hard, unbroken and unhumiliated spirit; such professors of them state them, expound, teach, preach and enforce them in a manner immeasurably beneath their highness and their holiness; in a manner tainted, more or less, with irreverence, if not with presumption or even with profanity. Such an unsanctified method of setting forth the sublime verities of electing and predestinating grace can never profit either sinner or saint, but must create in both, grief, or offence, or disgust. But where these mighty truths are taught by the Spirit of their glorious Author, which is ever the case with all the children of God, ministers and people ("All thy children shall be taught of the Lord," Isa. liv. 13), their profoundly reverent tenure and their holy exposition are always inseparably united. When thus received and deposited in the broken and humiliated hearts of the disciples of Christ, under "the unction that teacheth" (1 John ii. 20), they will be held, without exception, in all humility, reverence and adoration, and under their saving influence the prostration of soul before their majesty will be equal to the confidence they inspire, and to the triumph of faith over sin, death and hell, which they secure. In a word, they will ever be held and taught by all who are saved by them, as they were by the heavenly John Calvin, the possessor, teacher and defender of their truth, their value, their sublimity and their incomprehensibility.

There is not, perhaps, an extra-Bible saint recorded or known in whom can be found greater humility, meekness, contrition, reverence and adoration, than are evident throughout the life, ministry and writings of John Calvin. In him, therefore, all the "family of heaven" (Eph. iii. 15) on earth find not only a burning and a shining light as an eminent servant of Christ, but a holy, humble and loving brother, a broken-hearted fellow-sinner, a saved fellow-saint, and a profound fellow-worshipper; a "lamb "



before the saints, but a "lion" before the world; a "lamb" before God, but a "lion" for God. One with whom they can "see eye to eye (Isa. lii. 8) in all Divine things, while they gladly bow before the authority and power of his testimony.

Illegitimate Calvinists (as sound divines and faithful men have during the last century correctly designated the graceless imitators of Calvin) know nothing of the spirit or religion of Calvin; nor can they know either, because they possess neither. We have already described their spirit, their profession and their teaching, which are as far and as diverse from those of Calvin as darkness from light, as the "Spirit which is from above" from the spirit which is from the earth, or from beneath. They neither know Calvin's religion, nor can have any fellowship with him therein, nor he with them. These illegitimate representatives of the humble and holy Reformer, being unregenerate persons, are often unholy as well as unhumbled men. They are frequently Antinomians in doctrine, if not in practice. Not so was Calvin. He was as holy as he was truthful; as humble as he was fearless; as remarkable for his chastity as for his intrepidity. Were he now on earth, he would not acknowledge these characters as his legitimate offspring. One hour's attempt to hold communion with them would force from him that solemn sentence which will, it may be feared, be one day pronounced on them by "a Greater" than Calvin: "I know you not!"

It has been a matter of much wonder to the Translator that no English versions of these important Treatises of Calvin have ever appeared, for they embody the very faith, and testimony, and ministry of the prominent Reformer. It is surprising that none of those good and industrious men who translated into English that invaluable and imperishable work, Luther "On the Galatians," and those other standard reformative productions? Luther "On the Psalms of Degrees," Luther's "Sermons," Calvin "On Job," and Dean Nowell's "Catechism," etc., etc. ?did not give the British Church an English version of the present Treatises. Yet so it is. No English translation of these two productions has ever appeared till the present and the (D.v.) immediately forthcoming publications.

That no English illegimates ever undertook the duty of representing in English their pretended father is no marvel at all. The work must have

been by far too hot for them to undertake. Their labour would have condemned and consumed their religion as fast as they proceeded. Calvin's truth would have crushed and annihilated their error; his light would have discovered and exposed their darkness; his life would have awestruck their death; and his holy fire would have consumed their graceless profession to ashes. No one, indeed, could faithfully and really translate Calvin or Luther, or any other kindred servant of God, but a true participator in the religion of the original authors. One of a general acquaintance with the Latin, or French, or German languages of the original productions might transvert the one language into another, but he could not trans-convey the mind, and most certainly could not transfuse the saving spirit of his author, whether Calvin or Luther. None could do this but a partaker of Calvin's or Luther's spirit, faith and religion.

Whether it be the intent of the present meritoriously labouring Calvin Society to translate into English the two Treatises now under publication the present Translator knows not. If it be so, there must lie in the way of every general English lover of Calvin a very formidable pecuniary impediment. He could not procure either of these Treatises without purchasing the whole of the already-issued series of the Calvin Society, amounting to forty or more volumes. The sight of this serious difficulty formed one portion of the present Translator's resolve to undertake his delightful task, knowing that he could thereby put these invaluable relic-testimonies into the hand of any English reader for a moderate sum, and thus render the British Church of Christ a considerable monetary help, and confer upon her a lasting benefit, thus furnishing, for her perusal and profit, two invaluable productions of the Geneva Reformer, which had lain unprofitable to her, and unknown by her, for above 300 years.\*

One word more in conclusion. Above 300 years ago were the divine contents of these Treatises penned by Calvin. But such is the enduring and unchangeable nature of all Divine Truth and its confession, that these testimonies of the beloved Reformer, which flowed from his heart, to be left by his pen on the pages of the originals, still meet, even when reclothed in a different language, the spirits of all the "family of heaven" (Eph. iii. 15), as they read them with the same divine life, freshness and

unction, as they would have been felt if heard from the heart-supplied lips of John Calvin at Geneva. So blessed, glorious and true, is that word: "For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting; and His truth endureth from generation to generation" (Psa. c. 5).

If, by the Divine blessing upon the present Translations, the disciples of Christ shall be comforted, and their faith confirmed; if the lovers of the truth shall be rejoiced and its defenders re-armed; if reasoners shall be rendered dumb and infidels confounded and ashamed; if the Church of Christ shall be edified and God glorified; the Translator's satisfaction, object and reward will have been fully and abundantly realised.

3 Upper Islington Terrace, London.

December 27th, 1855.

## **THE CONSENT**

OF THE PASTORS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT GENEVA, CONCERNING "THE ETERNAL PREDESTINATION OF GOD," BY WHICH HE HAS CHOSEN SOME MEN UNTO SALVATION, WHILE HE HAS LEFT OTHERS TO THEIR OWN DESTRUCTION, AND ALSO THEIR CONSENT CONCERNING "THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD,"\* BY WHICH HE GOVERNS HUMAN AFFAIRS, SET FORTH

By JOHN CALVIN.

The Pastors of the Church o/ Christ at Geneva pray that God would grant to those most excellent Men, their supreme Lords, and to the Syndics and Senate Of Geneva, a just and holy administration of the State, and all happy prosperity and success

THE same motive which impelled us to write this book, most excellent Sirs, constrained us also to dedicate it to you, that it might go forth under

your name and auspices.<sup>1</sup> The free election of God, by which He adopts unto Himself whom He will out of the lost generation of men, has been hitherto publicly declared by us, in this city, with all reverence, sobriety and sincerity, and has been peacefully received by the people. But now, Satan, the father of all strifes, has subtly introduced, by means of a certain worthless person, a wide spreading error, and has attempted to root out our doctrine, which is drawn from the pure Word of God, and to shake the faith of the people. But since this hungry hunter after vain glory wishes to gain notoriety out of the very flames of the temple of God, lest he should catch that reward of his unholy audacity for which he has laid his nets, let his name be buried under our silence, while we leave it purposely unmentioned.

But since the trouble which this vain mortal endeavoured to cause us, reaches unto you also, it is but just that you should partake of the blessed fruit which God brings out of it. And as we have ever found you strenuous and hearty defenders of our holy cause, we have felt it to be our duty to testify, with all our ability, our gratitude. The performance of this our duty will also plainly testify what that doctrine is which you have protected by your favour and authority. And although it becomes neither the rulers of the State, nor the ministers of Christ, to be too anxious about rumours and tumults; and though all insidious revilings (which are generally lost, by degrees, in the noise they make) should be despised, both by rulers and ministers of Christ, with fortitude and an exalted mind; yet it is of the utmost importance that the great reality of the matter concerned should ever be kept in the hands, and (as engraven on public tablets) before the eyes, of all, that the plain statement of it may condemn and stop the false tongues of the foolish, the vain, or the wicked, and, at the same time, repress the frivolous whispers of the people in general.

There was spread abroad in many places a rumour that this vain person was severely bound in prison, whereas he was perfectly free, and flying about the city openly every day. And with what malignity some virulent ones imagined and stated that we wished him to be put to death, you are yourselves our best witnesses.<sup>2</sup> To refute such calumnies until they shall have vanished by contempt and tranquil magnanimity, is the becoming

duty of gravity and prudence.

On the other hand, however, lest some unstable ones should be moved, of whom serious care must be taken, to set forth plainly before all the real state of the case and cause at issue is no less expedient than a solemn duty on our part. For iniquity, unless it be resolutely met, makes its creeping way (as saith Paul) "like a canker" (2 Tim. ii. 17). Now this Defence, which we offer to all the godly, will, we hope, be a strong and effectual remedy to those who are healable, and will serve also as a wholesome antidote to the sound and the whole. And the subject itself is one to which the children of God should devote their most studious attention, that they become not ignorant of their heavenly birth and origin. For some fools, because the Gospel is called "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," would blot out under this pretext the election of God; whereas it ought to have entered into the minds of such to think from whence faith comes! Now the Scripture everywhere proclaimeth aloud that God giveth to His Son those that were ever His, that He calleth those whom He hath chosen, and that those whom He hath adopted for sons He begetteth by His Spirit; and finally, that the men whom He has taught within, and to whom His "arm is revealed," believe. Wherefore, whosoever shall hold faith to be the earnest and pledge of adoption, will assuredly confess that it flows from Divine election as its eternal source. And yet the knowledge of salvation is not to be sought from the secret counsel of God. Life is set before us in Christ, who not only makes Himself known, but presents Himself to our enjoyment in the Gospel. Into this mirror let the eye of our faith ever fixedly look. Nor let it ever desire to penetrate where access to its sight is not given.

Since this is the right way; let the children of God walk therein, lest by winging their flight higher than is lawful, they plunge themselves into a labyrinth deeper than they would wish to find themselves in. But as there is none other gate of the kingdom of heaven than faith in Christ, as contained in the promises of the Gospel openly set before us; so it must be the greatest ignorance not to acknowledge that the eyes of our minds are opened of God Himself, for He chose us unto faith in Christ before we were conceived in the womb. And yet, that the object of this impure and

abandoned one was not only to blot out all knowledge of God's election from the minds of men, but to overturn His power also, is clearly manifest from those mad dreams of his, which ye possess in your public records, written with his own hand; wherein he asserts that faith does not depend on election, but that rather election stands in faith, and that none remain in blindness on account of the in-born corruption of nature, seeing that all men are rightly enlightened of God; and that we do a great injustice to God when we declare that those are passed by of Him whom He deigns not to illumine by His Spirit.

This worthless being also maintains that all men, generally and equally, are "drawn" of God; and that there is no difference, except where resistance begins it; and that when God promises that He will make "hearts of flesh" out of "hearts of stone," nothing else is meant than the making us capable of receiving the grace of God; and that this capability, or the being made capable, extends without distinction to the whole human race, whereas the Scripture most clearly affirms that this is the peculiar privilege of the Church of God.

As to the Providence of God, by which the world is ruled, this ought ever to be confessed and held fast by all the godly: that there is no reason why men should make God a sharer in their sins, or in any way involve Him with themselves in a participation of their fault. But since the Scripture teaches that the reprobate are also instruments of the wrath of God, by some of whom He instructs the faithful unto patience, and on others of whom, as His enemies, He inflicts the punishments they deserve; this profane trifler contends that no act of God is just, but that for which there lies a plain reason before our eyes. Thus, doing away with all difference between remote and proximate and immediate causes he will not allow the severe afflictions laid on Job to be considered the work of God, lest He should be made equally guilty with the devil, and the Chaldean and Sabeian plunderers.

Now the reason why, passing by this fellow in silence, we enter into the battle with the other two, Albertus Pighius and Georgius the Sicilian, is, as we will explain to you, two-fold. This ignorant plagiary could bring forth nothing but what he obtained from these sources, and so would make what was bad in them worse and worse. To contend with him,

therefore, would have been a contest cold and bootless. Let our readers be content with one proof. With what cavils Pighius and Georgius would darken the first chapter of Paul to the Ephesians has been shewn in its proper place. They, indeed, were ignorant and disgusting; but the folly of this worthless being is fouler still, who blushed not to babble his nonsense in your Senate and venerable assembly; and not only so, but dared to defend with pertinacity what he had thus blattered in folly. For he maintained that Paul was not speaking in the above place concerning the common salvation of the godly, but shewing only that himself and his fellow-labourers were elected to the apostolic office. To disprove so futile a figment would be but a moment's work, seeing it is still fresh in your memories. But if any are willing to put themselves under such a teacher as this, they must be content to learn a miserable theology indeed, which would deprive nearly all men of a confidence in eternal life; for, according to it, the apostles alone could be partakers of Divine adoption, could alone be reconciled to Christ, could alone be blessed, could alone be joined to the company of the saints. But the place and time for the refutation of the vain figment in question was where and when it occurred. To refute so insipid an animal by a published book would not perhaps be so desirable and agreeable; for you are not ignorant how conceited he is, nor needs it be a matter of wonder that a man, who could throw off his monk's cowl and immediately transform himself into a physician, should be a person of such consummate audacity! But to nauseate many, by pleasing him with an "answer of folly, according to his folly" (Prov. xxvi. 4), would be somewhat foreign to my usual carefulness. And farther, since those two characters are known and professed enemies of the Gospel; and one of them, by attacking Calvin by name, has proclaimed war with us and this Church, it has seemed to us much better that the poison of the impious doctrine which has been spread abroad in their published books, should be purged away altogether, than that their absurdities should be farther propagated, which had much better remain buried out of knowledge; while it would, moreover, be tiresome to utterly wear out the ears of men, which have been so long fatigued and tormented with these superfluous contentions.

May God grant, noble and excellent Sirs, that (as ye have hitherto done with the highest praise) ye may go on unto the end to defend, by your unwearied faith and authority, the pure doctrine of the Gospel of Christ,

which is attacked on every side by the angry violence of the world; and that ye may never cease to receive under your protecting care all the godly who flee to your protection; so that your city may ever be a sanctuary devoted to God and a faithful asylum for the members of Christ, remaining immovable amid these horrid tumults. Thus shall ye ever find Him to be an everlasting Guardian of your safety; for whatever dwelling-place of man is dedicated to Him, shall abide safe under His power and shall never fall!

January 1st, 1552.

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## Notes

\* This portion of the CONSENT, concerning "the Providence of God," which originally formed a Conclusion to the present Treatise, is transferred by the Translator, to the "Second Part" of "CALVIN'S CALVINISM" and made to constitute a PREFACE, by John Calvin, to that Work. An arrangement which, it is considered, will be deemed appropriate; and in peculiar harmony with the subject of the "Second Part," or Second Volume; which is "A DEFENCE of the SECRET PROVIDENCE of GOD;" by John Calvin.

1. This testimony of esteem and love for their principal Pastor CALVIN, and of value for his ministerial service, as their representative, in the following Treatise (I Thess. v.13), are lasting honours to the Church of Christ, at Geneva: while the manifestation of their scriptural and prayerful subjection to "the powers that be," is a bright crown upon the genuineness of their religious profession. as disciples of Christ. (Rom. xiii. I; Titus iii. I; Pet. ii. 13 to 17.)

2. The person to whom allusion is here made, is Servetus, the crafty and angry enemy of the Truth, and of Calvin, its faithful defender: of whose being put to death Calvin is falsely reported to have been the prominent adviser, as leading Pastor of the Genevan Church. The truth of which rumour is, in this Dedicatory Preface, most solemnly denied and the whole Senate of Geneva is appealed to, in confirmation of the veracity of



the denial. (See last paragraph of preceding page.)

## **DEDICATORY PREFACE OF THE PASTORS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT GENEVA.**

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The Pastors of the Church of Christ at Geneva pray that God would grant to those most excellent Men their supreme Lords, and to the Syndics and Senate of Geneva, a just and holy administration o/ the State, and all happy prosperity and success.

THE same motive which impelled me to write this book, constrained me also to dedicate it to you, most excellent Sirs, that it might go forth under your name and auspices. The free election of God, by which He adopts unto Himself whom He will out of the lost generation of men, has been hitherto publicly declared by me, in this city, with all reverence, sobriety and sincerity, and has been peacefully received by the people. But now, Satan, the father of all disturbances, has subtly introduced a wide spreading error, and has attempted to root out my doctrine, which is drawn from the pure Word of God, and to shake the faith of the whole people. But since this hungry hunter after vain glory wishes to gain notoriety out of the very flames of the temple of God, lest he should catch that reward of his sacrilegious audacity for which he has laid his nets, let his name remain buried in our silence, while I leave it purposely unmentioned.\*

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faith to be the earnest and pledge of adoption, will assuredly confess that it flows from Divine election as its eternal source. And yet the knowledge of salvation is not to be sought from the secret counsel of God. Life is set before us in Christ, who not only makes Himself known, but presents Himself to our enjoyment in the Gospel. Into this mirror let the eye of our faith ever fixedly look. Nor let it ever desire to penetrate where access to its' sight is not given.

Since this is the right way, let the children of God walk therein, lest by winging their flight higher than is lawful, they plunge themselves into a labyrinth deeper than they would wish to find themselves in. But as there is none other gate of the kingdom of heaven than faith in Christ, as contained in the promises of the Gospel openly set before us; so it must be the greatest stupidity not to acknowledge that the eyes of our minds are opened of God Himself, for He chose us unto faith in Christ before we were conceived in the womb. And yet, that the object of this filthy and abandoned one was not only to blot out all knowledge of God's election from the minds of men, but to overturn His power also, is clearly manifest from those mad dreams of his, which ye possess in your public records, written with his own hand; wherein he asserts that faith does not depend on election, but that rather election stands in faith, and that none remain in blindness on account of the in-born corruption of nature, seeing that all men are really enlightened of God; and that we do a great injustice to God when we declare that those are passed by of Him whom He deigns not to illumine by His Spirit.

This fellow also maintains that all men, generally and equally, are "drawn" of God; and that there is no difference, except where resistance begins it; and that when God promises that He will make "hearts of flesh" out of "hearts of stone," nothing else is meant than the making us capable of receiving the grace of God; and that this capability, or the being made capable, extends without distinction to the whole human race, whereas the Scripture most clearly affirms that this is the peculiar privilege of the Church of God.

As to the Providence of God, by which the world is ruled, this ought ever to be confessed and held fast by all the godly: that there is no reason why men should make God a sharer in their sins, or in any way involve Him

with themselves in a participation of their fault. But since the Scripture teaches that the reprobate are also instruments of the wrath of God, by some of whom He instructs the faithful unto patience, and on others of whom, as His enemies, He inflicts the punishments they deserve; this profane trifler contends that no act of God is just, but that for which there lies a plain reason before our eyes. Thus, doing away with all difference between remote and proximate and immediate causes, he will not allow the severe afflictions laid on Job to be considered the work of God, lest He should be made equally guilty with the devil, and the Chaldean and Sabean plunderers.

Now the reason why, passing by this fellow in silence, I enter into the battle with the other two, Albertus Pighius and Georgius of Sicily, is, as I will explain to you, two-fold. This ignorant pettifogger could bring forth nothing but what he got from these sources, and so would make what was bad in them worse and worse. To contend with him, therefore, would have been a contest cold and bootless. Let our readers be content with one proof. With what cavils Pighius and Georgius would darken the first chapter of Paul to the Ephesians has been shewn in its proper place. They, indeed, were ignorant and disgusting; but the folly of this fellow is fouler still, who blushed not to babble his nonsense in your Senate and venerable assembly; and not only so, but dared to defend with pertinacity what he had thus blattered in folly. For he maintained that Paul was not speaking in the above place concerning the common salvation of the godly, but shewing only that himself and his fellow-labourers were elected to the apostolic office. To disprove so futile a figment would be but a moment's work, seeing it is still fresh in your memories. But if any are willing to put themselves under such a teacher as this, they must be content to learn a miserable theology indeed, which would deprive nearly all men of a confidence in eternal life; for, according to it, the apostles alone could be partakers of Divine adoption, could alone be reconciled to Christ, could alone be blessed, could alone be joined to the company of the saints. But the place and time for the refutation of the vain figment in question was where and when it occurred. To refute so insipid a mortal by a published book would not perhaps be so desirable and agreeable; for you are not ignorant how conceited he is, nor needs it be a matter of wonder that a man, who could throw off his monk's cowl and

immediately transform himself into a physician, should be a person of such consummate audacity! But to nauseate many, by pleasing him with an answer of folly, according to his folly," would be somewhat foreign to my usual modesty. And farther, since those two characters are known and professed enemies of the Gospel; and one of them, by attacking Calvin by name, has proclaimed war with me and this Church, it has seemed to me much better that the poison of the impious doctrine which has been spread abroad in their published books, should be purged away altogether, than that their absurdities should be farther propagated, which had much better remain buried out of knowledge; while it would, moreover, be tiresome to utterly wear out the ears of men, already fatigued and tormented with such superfluous contentions.

May God grant, noble and excellent Sirs, that (as ye have hitherto done with the highest praise) ye may go on unto the end to defend, by your unwearied faith and authority, the pure doctrine of the Gospel of Christ, which is attacked on every side by the angry violence of the world; and that ye may never cease to receive under your protecting care all the godly who flee to your protection; so that your city may ever be a sanctuary devoted to God and a faithful asylum for the members of Christ, remaining immovable amid these horrible tumults. Thus shall ye ever find Him to be an everlasting Guardian of your safety; for whatever dwelling-place of man is dedicated to Him, shall abide safe under His power and shall never fall!

January 1st, 1552.

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\*The person here alluded to, is Servetus, the crafty and angry enemy of the truth, and of Calvin, its faithful defender: of whose being put to death Calvin is falsely reported to have been the prominent adviser. The truth of which rumour Calvin, in this Dedicatory Preface, most solemnly denies: calling the whole Senate of Geneva in witness (See second paragraph of this page.)

## Eternal Predestination - Section 1

NINE years have now elapsed since Albertus Pighius, the Campanian, a man of evidently phrensied audacity, attempted, at the same time, and in the same book, to establish the *free-will* of man, and to subvert the secret counsel of God, by which He chooses some to salvation and appoints others to eternal destruction. But as he attacked me by name, that he might stab, through my side, holy and sound doctrine, I have deemed it necessary to curb the sacrilegious madness of the man. At that time, however, being distracted by various engagement, I could not embrace, in one short space of time, the discussion of both subjects; but having published my thoughts upon the former, I promised to consider, when an opportunity should be given, the doctrine of *predestination*. Shortly after my book on *free-will* appeared, Pighius died. And that I might not insult a dead dog, I turned my attention to other serious matters. And from that time till now I have always found plenty to do. Moreover, as I had already copiously treated of this great point of doctrine, and had set it forth clearly, and confirmed it by solid testimonies of Scripture, this new labour upon it did not seem so absolutely necessary, but that it might safely be suffered to rest for a time.

But since, at the present day, certain maddened and exulting spirits strive, after the example of Pighius with all their might to destroy all that is contained in the Scriptures concerning the free election of the godly and the eternal judgment of the reprobate, I have considered it my duty to prevent this contagion from spreading farther, by collecting and summarily refuting those frivolous objections by which such men delude themselves and others. Among these characters there started forth, in Italy, a certain one, Georgius, a Sicilian?an ignorant man indeed, and more worthy of contempt than public notice in any form, were it not that a notoriety, obtained by fraud and imposture, has given him considerable power to do mischief. For when he was a monk he remained unknown in his cell, until Lucius Abbas, one of the Tridentine fathers, raised him on high by a lying commendation, hoping that he himself should be able, from the shoulders of his favourite, to take a flight into heaven itself. This abandoned fellow, having mendaciously given it out that Christ had appeared to him, and appointed him an interpreter of the whole

Scripture, persuaded many, without much trouble, to believe, with a stupid, shameless, and more than vain folly, that which he had thus published. And that he might push the drama to the last act, he so trumpeted forth his insane visions, that he rendered his ignorant adherents, already fast bound by prejudice, perfectly astonished. And certain it is, that the greater part of men in our day are worthy of just such prophets. For the hearts of most of them, hardened and rendered obstinate by wickedness, will receive no healing; while the ears of others are ever itching with the insatiable desire of depraved speculations. There are, perhaps, others who are exceptions, and whom we might mention willingly and becomingly; but we will leave them unmentioned, resolving to make all our readers see and understand how frivolous and worthless are the objections of all the enemies of the truth.

I propose, now, to enter into the sacred battle with Pighius and George, the Sicilian, a pair of unclean beasts (Lev. xi. 3) by no means badly matched. For though I confess that in some things they differ, yet, in hatching enormities of error, in adulterating the Scripture with wicked and revelling audacity, in a proud contempt of the truth; in forward impudence, and ? in brazen loquacity, the most perfect likeness and sameness will be found to exist between them. Except that Pighius, by inflating the muddy bombast of his magniloquence, carries himself with greater boast and pomp; while the other fellow borrows the boots by which he elevates himself from his invented revelation. And though both of them, at their commencement, agree in their attempt to overthrow predestination, yet they afterwards differ in the figments which they advance. An invention of them both is, that it lies in each one's own liberty, whether he will become a partaker of the grace of adoption or not; and that it does not depend on the counsel and decree of God who are elect and who are reprobate; but that each one determines for himself the one state or the other by his own will, and with respect to the fact that some believe the Gospel, while others remain in unbelief; that this difference does not arise from the free election of God, nor from His secret counsel, but from the will of each individual.

Now Pighius explains his mind on the great matter before us thus: that God, by His immutable counsel, created all men to salvation without

distinction; but that, as He foresaw the Fall of Adam, in order that His election might nevertheless remain firm and unaltered, He applied a remedy which might, therefore, be common to all, which remedy was His confirmation of the election of the whole human race in Christ; so that no one can perish but he who, by his own obstinacy, blots his name out of the book of life. And his view of the other side of the great question is that, as God foresaw that some would determinately remain unto the last in malice and a contempt of Divine grace, He by His foreknowledge reprobated such, unless they should repent. This, with him, is the origin of reprobation, by which he makes it out that the wicked deprive themselves of the benefit of universal election, irrespectively and independently of the counsel and will of God altogether. And he moreover declares that all those who hold and teach that certain persons are positively and absolutely chosen to salvation, while others are as absolutely appointed to destruction, think unworthily of God, and impute to Him a severity utterly foreign to His justice and His goodness. And our human reasoner here condemns the sentiments of Augustine, mentioning him by name.

And in order to show, as he thinks, that the foreknowledge of God detracts nothing from the freedom of our own will, our impostor betakes himself to that cunning device of Nicolaus of Cusa, who would make us believe that God did not foresee, in their *future* aspect and reality, those things that were known to Him from all eternity, but viewed them, as it were, in a then present light. And here, moreover, he elevates his brow in a manner peculiar to himself, as if he had discovered some deeply hidden thing; whereas this subterfuge of his is in the mouth of every schoolboy. But as he still finds himself truth-bound by the leg, he struggles to escape by introducing a twofold foreknowledge of God. He asserts that God formed the design of creating man to life before He foreknew his Fall, and that therefore the thought of man's salvation preceded the foreknowledge of his death, as to its order, in the mind of God Himself. And as he rolls out these sentiments in a muddy torrent of words, he thinks that he thereby so befloods the senses of his readers, that they can perceive nothing distinctly and clearly. I hope, however, by my brevity, to dispel presently the darkness of this man's loquacity.



It is the figment of Georgius. that no man whatever, neither one nor another, is predestinated to salvation, but that God pre-appointed a time in which He would save the whole world. In his attempt to prove this, he wrests certain passages of Paul, such as this: "Even the mystery, which hath been hid from ages, and from generations, but now is made manifest to His saints" (Col. i. 26). Having twisted this passage of the apostle to his purpose, he slips away in security, thinking himself victorious. Just as if no testimony of Scripture plainly declares that some are chosen of God to salvation, while others are passed by. In a word, in the matter of election this man considers nothing but the time of the New Testament.

What my mind on this momentous subject is, my "Institute" furnishes a full and abundant testimony, even if I should now add nothing more. I would, in the first place, entreat my readers carefully to bear in memory the admonition which I there offer: that this great subject is not, as many imagine, a mere thorny and noisy disputation, nor a speculation which wearies the minds of men without any profit; but a solid discussion eminently adapted to the service of the godly, because it builds us up soundly in the faith, trains us to humility, and lifts us up into an admiration of the unbounded goodness of God towards us, while it elevates us to praise this goodness in our highest strains. For there is not a more effectual means of building up faith than the giving our open ears to the election of God, which the Holy Spirit seals upon our heart while we hear, shewing us that it stands in the eternal and immutable goodwill of God towards us; and that, therefore, it cannot be moved or altered by any storms of the world, by any assaults of Satan, by any changes, or by any fluctuations or weaknesses of the flesh. For our salvation is then sure to us, when we find the *cause* of it in the breast of God. Thus, when we lay hold of life in Christ, made manifest to our faith, the same faith being still our leader and guide, our sight is permitted to penetrate much farther, and to see from what *source* that life proceeded. Our confidence of salvation is rooted in Christ, and rests on the promises of the Gospel. But it is no weak prop to our confidence, when we are brought to believe in Christ, to hear that all was originally *given* to us of God, and that we were as much ordained to faith in Christ before the foundation of the world, as we were chosen to the inheritance of eternal life in Christ.

Hence, therefore, arises the impregnable and insubvertible security of the saints. The Father, who gave us to the Son as His peculiar treasure, is stronger than all who oppose us; and He will not suffer us to be plucked out of His hand. What a cause for humility then in the saints of God when they see such a difference of condition made in those who are, by nature, all alike! Wherever the sons of God turn their eyes, they behold such wonderful instances of blindness, ignorance and insensibility, as fill them with horror; while they, in the midst of such darkness, have received Divine illumination, and know it, and feel it, to be so. How (say they) is it that some, under the clear light, continue in darkness and blindness? Who makes this difference? One thing they know by their own experience, that whereas *their* eyes were also once closed, they are now opened. Another thing is also certain, that those who willingly remain ignorant of any difference between them and others, have never yet learned to render unto God the glory due to Him for making that difference.

Now no one doubts that humility lies at the bottom of all true religion, and is the mother of all virtues. But how shall *he* be humble who will not hear of the original sin and misery from which he has been delivered? And who, by extending the saving mercy of God to all, without difference, lessens, as much as in him lies, the glory of that mercy? Those most certainly are the farthest from glorifying the grace of God, according to its greatness, who declare that it is indeed common to all men; but that it rests effectually in *them*, because *they* have embraced it by faith. The *cause* of faith itself, however, they would keep buried all the time out of sight, which is this: that the children of God who are chosen to be sons are afterwards blessed with the spirit of adoption. Now, what kind of gratitude is that in me if, being endowed with so pre-eminent a benefit, I consider myself no greater a debtor than he who hath not received one hundredth part of it? Wherefore, if, to praise the goodness of God worthily, it is necessary to bear in mind how much we are indebted to Him, those are malignant towards Him and rob Him of His glory who reject and will not endure the doctrine of eternal election, which being buried out of sight, one half of the grace of God must of necessity vanish with it.

Let those roar at us who will. We wilt ever brighten forth, with all our power of language, the doctrine which we hold concerning the free election of God, seeing that it is only by it that the faithful can understand how great that goodness of God is which effectually called them to salvation. I merely give the great doctrine of election a slight touch here, lest anyone, by avoiding a subject so necessary for him to know, should afterwards feel what loss his neglect has caused him. I will, by and by, in its proper place, enter into the Divine matter with appropriate fulness. Now, if we are not really ashamed of the Gospel, we must of necessity acknowledge what is therein openly declared: that God by His eternal goodwill (for which there was no other cause than His own purpose), appointed those whom He pleased unto salvation, rejecting all the rest; and that those whom He blessed with this free adoption to be His sons He illumines by His Holy Spirit, that they may receive the life which is offered to them in Christ; while others, continuing of their own will in unbelief, are left destitute of the light of faith, in total darkness.

Against this unsearchable judgment of God many insolent dogs rise up and bark. Some of them, indeed, hesitate not to attack God openly, asking why, foreseeing the Fall of Adam, He did not better order the affairs of men? To curb such spirits as these, no better means need be sought than those which Paul sets before us. He supposes this question to be put by an ungodly person: How can God be just in showing mercy to whom He will and hardening whom He will? Such audacity in men the apostle considers unworthy a reply. He does nothing but remind them of their order and position in God's creation: "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" (Rom. ix. 20.) Profane men, indeed, vainly babble that the apostle covered the absurdity of the matter with silence for want of an answer. But the case is far otherwise.

The apostle in this appeal adopts an axiom, or universal acknowledgment, which not only ought to be held fast by all godly minds, but deeply engraven in the breast of common sense; that the inscrutable judgment of God is deeper than can be penetrated by man. And what man, I pray you, would not be ashamed to compress all the causes of the works of God within the confined measure of his individual intellect? Yet, on this hinge turns the whole question: Is there no justice of God, but that

which is conceived of by us? Now if we should throw this into the form of one question?whether it be lawful to measure the power of God by our natural sense?there is not a man who would not immediately reply that all the senses of all men combined in one individual must faint under an attempt to comprehend the immeasurable power of God; and yet, as soon as a *reason* cannot immediately be seen for certain works of God, men somehow or other are immediately prepared to appoint a day for entering into judgment with Him. What therefore can be more opportune or appropriate than the apostle's appeal: that those who would thus raise themselves above the heavens in their reasonings utterly forget who and what they are?

And suppose God, ceding His own right, should offer Himself as ready to render a reason for His works? When the matter came to those secret counsels of His, which angels adore with trembling, who would not be utterly bereft of his senses before such glorious splendour? Marvellous, indeed, is the madness of man! who would more audaciously set himself above God than stand on equal ground with any Pagan judge! It is intolerable to you, and hateful, that the power and works of God should exceed the capacity of your own mind and yet you will grant to an *equal* the enjoyment of his own mind and judgment. Now, will you, with such madness as this, dare to make mention of the adorable God? What do you really think of God's glorious Name? And will you vaunt that the apostle is devoid of all reason, because he does not drag God from His throne and set Him before you, to be questioned and examined?

Let us, however, be fully assured that the apostle, in the first place, here curbs with becoming gravity the licentious madness of these men, who make nothing of attacking openly the justice of God; and that, in the next place, he gives to the worshippers of God a more useful counsel of moderation, than if he had taught them to soar on eagles' wings above the forbidden clouds. For that soberness of mind which, regulated by the fear of God, keeps itself within the bounds of comprehension prescribed by Him, is far better than all human wisdom. Let proud men revile this sobriety if they will, calling it ignorance. But let this sober-mindedness ever hold fast that which is the height of all true wisdom; that by holding the will of God to be the highest rule of righteousness, we ascribe to Him

His own proper and peculiar glory.

But Pighius and his fellows are not hereby satisfied. For, pretending a great concern for the honour of God, they bark at us, as imputing to Him a cruelty utterly foreign to His nature. Pighius denies that he has any contest with God. What cause, or whose cause is it, then, that Paul maintains? After he had adopted the above axiom?that God hardens whom He will and has mercy on whom He will?he subjoins the supposed taunt of a wicked reasoner: " Why doth He yet find fault ? For who hath resisted His will?" (Rom. ix. 19.) He meets such blasphemy as this by simply setting against it the power of God. If those clothe God with the garment of a tyrant, who refer the hardening of men even to His eternal counsel, we most certainly are not the originators of this doctrine. If they do God an injury who set His will above all other causes, Paul taught this doctrine long before us. Let these enemies of God, then, dispute the matter with the apostle. For I maintain nothing, in the present discussion, but what I declare is taught by him. About these barking dogs, however,I would not be very anxious. I am the rather moved with an anxiety about some otherwise good men, who, while they fear lest they should ascribe to God anything unworthy of His goodness, really seem to be horror-struck at that which He declares, by the apostle, concerning Himself.

Now, we are holding fast, all the while, a godly purpose of vindicating the justice of God from all calumny. And the modesty of these timid ones would be worthy of all praise, if it were not the offspring of moroseness, inflated with a certain secret pride. For such men speak according to their own natural sense and understanding. But why do they fear to concede to the power of God that which is beyond the power of their own mind to comprehend, lest His *justice* should be endangered? Why, I say, is this? It is because they presume to subject the tribunal of God to their own judgment. Now Paul shows us that it is an act of intolerable pride in any man to assume to himself the judgment of his brother, because there is one Judge by whom we all stand or fall, and to whom every knee must bow. What madness is it, then, for a man to raise his crest against this only Judge Himself, and to presume to measure His infinite power by natural sense!

They, therefore, who allege as an excuse that modesty prevents them from subscribing to the Apostle Paul's testimony, must of necessity, in the first place, confess that whatever praise they give to the justice of God is restricted to the bounds of their own natural comprehensions. And in the next place, if agreeing in reality with us, they choose rather to suppress this part of the great doctrine, lest they should give rein to the insolence of the wicked, such caution is quite preposterous. As if the honour of God could be protected by our lies! God Himself not only rejects such protection as this, but declares, in the Book of Job, that it is hateful to Him. Let such defenders take care, lest by affecting greater caution than the Lord prescribes in His Word, they become guilty of a twofold madness and folly.

The moderation and caution which these men recommend are, indeed, beneficial in repressing the blasphemies of the impious. But if such persons persuade themselves that they shall be able by their words to put the bridle on rebels against God and His truth, their hope and expectation are ridiculous. The Apostle Paul, after having dwelt upon the secret counsels of God as far as was needful, puts forth his hand, as it were, to forbid us to go farther. Restless spirits, however, will kick and butt, and, with unsettled levity, leap over the barrier placed before them. How think ye, then, that such will stop at the nod of this or that sober mind, that would set still narrower bounds to their headlong course? You may as well attempt to hold with a cobweb a fierce-spirited horse, that has burst the bars and prances in his strength. But you will say, In a matter so difficult and deep as this, nothing is better than to think moderately. Who denies it? But we must, at the same time, examine what kind and degree of moderation it is, lest we should be drawn into the principle of the Papists, who, to keep their disciples obedient to them, make them like mute and brute beasts.

But shall it be called Christian simplicity to consider as hurtful the knowledge of those things which God sets before us? But (say our opponents), this subject is one of which we may remain ignorant without loss or harm. As if our heavenly Teacher were not the best judge of what it is expedient for us to know, and to what extent we ought to know it! Wherefore, that we may not struggle amid the waves, nor be borne about

in the air, unfixed and uncertain, nor, by getting our foot too deep, be drowned in the gulph below; let us so give ourselves: to God, to be ruled by Him and taught by Him, that, contented with His Word alone, we may never desire to know more than we find therein. No! not even if the power so to do were given to us! This teachableness; in which every godly man will ever hold all the powers of his mind under the authority of the Word of God, is the true and only rule of wisdom.

Now *wherever*, and *how far* soever, He who is "the Way", thus leads us with His outstretched hand, whose Spirit spoke by the apostles and the prophets, we may most safely *follow*. And the *remaining ignorant* of all those things which are *not learnt* in the school of God far excels all the penetration of human intellect. Wherefore Christ requires of His sheep that they should not only hold their ears open to His voice, but keep them shut against the voice of strangers. Nor can it ever be but that the vain winds of error from every side must blow through a soul devoid of sound doctrine. Moreover, I can, with all truth, confess that I never should have spoken or written on this subject unless the Word of God in my own soul had led the way. All godly readers will, indeed, gather this from my former writings, and especially from my "Institute" But this present refutation of my enemies, who oppose themselves to me, will, perhaps, afford my friends some new light upon the matter.

But since the authority of the ancient Church is, with much hatred, cast in my teeth, it will perhaps be worth our while to consider at the commencement how unjustly the truth of Christ is smothered under this enmity, the ground of which is, in one sense, false, and in another frivolous. This accusation, however, such as it is, I would rather wipe off with the words of Augustine than with my own; for the Pelagians of old annoyed him with the same accusation, saying, that he had all other writers of the Church against him. In his reply he remarks that before the heresy of Pelagius, the fathers of the primitive Church did not deliver their opinions so deeply and accurately upon predestination, which reply, indeed, is the truth. And he adds: "What need is there for us to search the works of those writers, who, before the heresy of Pelagius arose, found no necessity for devoting themselves to this question, so difficult of solution? Had such necessity arisen, and had they been compelled to reply to the

enemies of predestination, they would doubtless have done so." This remark of Augustine is a prudent one, and a wise one. For if the enemies of the grace of God had not worried Augustine himself, he never would have devoted so much labour (as he himself confesses) to the discussion of God's election.

Hence, in reference to his book, entitled, "On the Blessing of Perseverance," he pointedly says, "This predestination of the saints is certain and manifest; which necessity afterwards compelled me to defend more diligently and laboriously when I was discussing the subject in opposition to a certain new sect. For I have learned that every separate heresy introduces into the Church its peculiar questions, which call for a more diligent defence of the Holy Scripture, than if no such necessity of defence had arisen. For what was it that compelled me to defend, in that work of mine, with greater copiousness and fuller explanation those passages of the Scriptures in which predestination is set before us? What, but the starting up of the Pelagians, who say that the grace of God is given to us according as we render ourselves deserving of it?"

Augustine had, moreover, just before denied that any prejudice against his books could be justly entertained because of their want of the authority of the ancient Church. "No one," says he, "can surely be so unjust, or so invidious, as not to allow me to gain some instruction and profit for myself from this important subject." And he afterwards contends that it could be gathered from the testimonies of some of the ancient fathers, that their sentiments and teaching were the same as his own. Not to mention other authorities to which he refers, that is a more than satisfactory one which he cites from Ambrose: "Whom Christ has mercy on. He calls." Again. "When He will, He makes out of careless ones devoted ones." And again, "But God calls whom He condescends to call; and whom He will, He makes religious." Now who does not see that the sum of the whole Divine matter is comprehended in these few words? Ambrose here assigns the reason or cause why all men do not come to Christ that they may obtain salvation. Because God does not effectually touch their hearts. The holy man declares that the conversion of a sinner proceeds from the free election of God, and that the reason why He calls some, while others are left reprobate, lies solely in His own will. Ambrose



neither hesitates nor dissembles here. Now, who that is endowed with the most common judgment does not perceive that the state of the whole question is contained in, and defined by, these three summaries?

In a word, Augustine is so wholly with me, that if I wished to write a confession of my faith, I could do so with all fulness and satisfaction to myself out of his writings. But that I may not, on the present occasion be too prolix. I will be content with three or four instances of his testimony, from which it will be manifest that he does not differ from me one pin's point. And it would be more manifest still, could the whole line of his confession be adduced, how fully and solidly he agrees with me in every particular. In his book, "Concerning the Predestination of the Saints," he has these words: "Lest any one should say, My faith my righteousness (or anything of the kind) distinguishes me from others; meeting all such thoughts, the great teacher of the Gentiles asks, 'What hast thou that thou hast not received?' As if the apostle had said. From whom indeed couldst thou receive it, but from Him who separates thee from every other, to whom He has not given what He has given to thee?" Augustine then adds, "Faith, therefore, from its beginning to its perfection is the gift of God. And that this gift is bestowed on some and not on others, who will deny but he who would fight against the most manifest testimonies of the Scripture? But why faith is not given to all ought not to concern the believer, who knows that all men by the sin of one came into most just condemnation. But why God delivers one from this condemnation and not another belongs to His inscrutable judgments, and 'His ways are past finding out.' And if it be investigated and inquired how it is that each receiver of faith is deemed of God worthy to receive such a gift, there are not wanting those who will say, It is by their human will. But we say that it is by grace, or Divine predestination."

The holy father then makes these beautiful and striking observations: "Indeed the Saviour of the world Himself, the adorable Son of God, is the brightest luminary of Divine grace and eternal predestination, not only with respect to His Divine nature as the Son of God, but especially also in reference to His human nature as 'Man.' For in what way, I pray you, did 'THE MAN Christ Jesus,' as Man, merit so great a glory as that, being taken into union with the Divine Person of the Son by the word of the co-

eternal Father, He should become the 'only-begotten Son of God'? What good word or work preceded in this glorious case? What good thing did 'THE MAN' perform? What act of faith did He exercise? What prayer did He offer up that He should be exalted to such preeminent dignity? Now here, perhaps, some profane and insolent being may be inclined to say, 'Why was it not I that was predestinated to this excellent greatness?' If we should reply in the solemn appeal of the apostle, 'Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" and if such an one should not even then restrain his daring spirit, but should give more rein to his blasphemy and say, 'Why do you utter to me the caution, "Who art thou, O man?" " etc. Am I not a man as He was, concerning whom thou speakest? Why, then, am I not now what He is? He, forsooth, is what He is, and as great as He is, by grace. Why, then, is the grace different where the nature is the same? For most assuredly there is no acceptance of persons with God.' Now I would solemnly ask, What Christian man, nay, what madman, would thus reason, speak, or think? Let, then, our glorious Head Himself, the Fountain of all grace, be an ever-shining luminary of eternal predestination and a Divine example of its sovereign nature. And from Him let the stream of electing grace flow through all His members, 'according to the measure of the gift' in each. This, then, is the eternal predestination of the saints, which shone with such surpassing splendour in the SAINT of saints! And as He alone was *predestinated*, as MAN, to be our HEAD, so many of us are also *predestinated* to be *His members*."

Now, that no one might attribute it to faith that one is preferred above another, Augustine testifies that men are not chosen *because* they believe, but, on the contrary, are chosen *that they might* believe. In like manner, when writing to Sextus, he says, "As to the great deep? *why* one man believes and another does not, *why* God delivers one man and not another? let him who can, search into that profound abyss; but let him beware of the awful precipice." Again, in another place he says: "Who created the reprobate but God? And why? Because He willed it. Why did He will it? "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" And again, elsewhere, after he had proved that God is moved by no merits of men to make them obedient to His commands, but that He renders unto them good for evil, and that for His own sake and not for theirs, he adds, " If anyone should ask why God makes some men His sheep and not others,

the Apostle, dreading this question, exclaims, ' 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!'

And as Augustine, tracing the beginning or origin of election to the free and gratuitous will of God, places reprobation in His mere will likewise, so he teaches that the security of our salvation stands in that will also, and in nothing else. For, writing to Paulinus, he affirms that those who do not persevere unto the end, belong not to the calling of God, which is always effectual and without any repentance in Him. And, in another work, he maintains more fully that perseverance is freely bestowed on the elect, from which they can never fall away. "Thus," says he "when Christ prayed for Peter, that his faith might not fail, what else did He ask of God, but that there might be with, or in, Peter's faith a fully free, fully courageous, fully victorious, fully persevering will, or determination? And He had just before said, 'The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His.' The faith of such, which worketh by love, either faileth not at all, or, if there be any in whom it does partially fail, it is renewed and restored before this life is ended. That iniquity which had interrupted it is done away, and the faith still perseveres unto the end. But those who are not designed of God to persevere?if *they* fall from the Christian faith, and the end of life finds them in that state thus fallen?such, doubtless, could not have been of this number of God's elect, even while they were, to all appearance, living well and righteously. For such were never separated from the general mass of perdition by the foreknowledge and predestination of God, and therefore were never 'called according to His purpose.'" And, that no one might be disturbed in mind because those sometimes fall away who had been considered the sons of God, he meets such perplexed ones thus: "Let no one think that those ever fall away who are the subjects of predestination, who are the called according to God's purpose, and who are truly the children of promise. Those who live godly in appearance are, indeed, called by men the children of God; but, because they are destined sometime or other to live ungodly, and to die in that ungodliness, God does not call them His children in His foreknowledge. They who are ordained unto life are understood, by the Scripture, to be given unto Christ. These are predestinated and called, according to God's purpose.

Not one of these ever perishes. And on this account no such one, though changed from good to bad for a time, ever ends his life so, because he is for that end ordained of God, and for that end given unto Christ, that he might not perish, but have eternal life."

A little afterwards the same Augustine saith, " Those who, by the all-foreseeing appointment of God, are foreknown, predestinated, called, justified and glorified, are the children of God, not only before they are regenerated, but before they are born of woman; and such can never perish." He then assigns the reason: "Because (says he) God works all things together for the good of such; and He so makes all things thus to work together for their good, that if some of them go out of the way, and even exceed all bounds, He makes even this to work for their good and profit; for they return to Him more humble and more teachable than before."

And if the matter be carried higher, and a question be moved concerning the first creation of man, Augustine meets that question thus: "We most wholesomely confess that which we most rightly believe, that God, the Lord of all things, who created all things 'very good,' foreknew that evil would arise out of this good; and He also knew that it was more to the glory of His omnipotent goodness to bring good out of evil, than not to permit evil to be at all! And He so ordained the lives of angels and of men that He might first show in them what free-will could do, and then afterwards show what the free gift of His grace and the judgment of His justice could do."

In his "Manual" to Laurentinus, he more freely and fully explains whatever of doubt might yet remain. "When Christ shall appear (says he) to judge the world at the last day, that shall be seen, in the clearest light of knowledge, which the faith of the godly now holds fast, though not yet made manifest to their comprehension; how sure, how immutable, how all-efficacious is the will of God; how many things He could do, or has power to do, which He wills not to do (but that He wills nothing which He has not power to do); and how true that is which the Psalmist sings, 'The Lord hath done in heaven whatsoever pleased Him.'" This, however, is not true, if He *willed* some things and *did* them not. Nothing, therefore, is done but that which the Omnipotent *willed* to be done, either by

permitting it to be done or by doing it Himself. Nor is a doubt to be entertained that God does righteously in permitting all those things to be done which are done evilly. For He permits not this, but by righteous judgment. Although, therefore, those things which are evil, in so far as they are evil, are not good, yet it *is good* that there should not only be good things, but evil things also. For, unless there were this good, that evil things also existed, those evil things would not be permitted by the Great and *Good* Omnipotent to exist at all. For He, without doubt, can as easily refuse to permit to be done what He does not will to be done, as He can do that which He wills to be done. Unless we fully believe this the very beginning of our faith is perilled, by which we profess to believe in God ALMIGHTY!"

Augustine then adds this short sentence: "These are the mighty works of the Lord, shining with perfection in every instance of His will; and so perfect in wisdom, that when the angelic and human nature had sinned? that is, had done not what God willed, but what each nature itself willed? it came to pass that by this same will of the creature, God, though in one sense unwilling, yet accomplished what *He* willed, righteously and with the height of all wisdom, overruling the evils done, to the damnation of those whom He had justly predestinated to punishment, and to the salvation of those whom He had mercifully predestinated to grace. Wherefore, as far as these natures themselves were concerned, *they* did what they did contrary to the will of God; but, as far as the omnipotence of God is concerned, they acted according to His will; nor could they have acted contrary to it. Hence, by their very acting contrary to the will of God, the will of God concerning them was done. So mighty, therefore, are the works of God, so gloriously and exquisitely perfect in every instance of His will, that by a marvellous and ineffable plan of operation peculiar to Himself, as the 'all-wise God,' that cannot be done, *without* His will, which is even *contrary* to His will; because it could not be done without His permitting it to be done, which permission is evidently not *contrary* to His will, but *according* to His will." I have gladly extracted these few things out of many like them in the writings of Augustine, that my readers may clearly see with what a very modest face it is that Pighius represents him as *differing* from me! and makes use of him to support his own errors. I shall, indeed, hereafter occasionally refer to the testimonies

of this same holy man in the course of this discussion.

I will now enter upon the more express subject and object of the present undertaking, which are to prove that nothing has been taught by me concerning this important doctrine but that which God Himself clearly teaches us all in the Sacred Oracles. The sum of which is this: that the salvation of believers depends on the eternal election of God, for which no cause or reason can be rendered but His own gratuitous good pleasure. Most plain and eloquent on this point are the words of the Apostle Paul in his first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians: "Blessed (saith he) 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." Now I hear, in a moment, the babble of Pighius, that the whole human race were chosen in Christ; that whosoever should take hold of Him by faith should obtain salvation. In this absurd invention of his there are two most gross blunders, which may be immediately refuted by the words of the apostle.

In the first place, there is, most certainly and evidently, an inseparable connection between the elect and the reprobate. So that the election, of which the apostle speaks, Cannot consist unless we confess that God separated from all others certain persons whom it pleased Him thus to separate. Now, this act of God is expressed by the term *predestinating*, which the apostle afterwards twice repeats. He moreover calls those "chosen" (or elected) who are engrafted by faith into the body of Christ; and that this blessing is by no means common to all men is openly manifest. The apostle, therefore, by the "chosen," evidently means those whom Christ condescends to call after they have been given to Him by the Father. But, to make faith the *cause* of election is altogether absurd, and utterly at variance with the words of the apostle. "Paul does not (as Augustine wisely observes) declare that the children of God were 'chosen,' because He *foreknew* they *would believe*, but in order that they *might believe*. Nor does the apostle (says he) call them 'chosen,' because God had foreseen that they would be holy and without spot, but in order that they might be made such" Again, "God did not (says he) choose us because we believed, but in order that we might believe, lest *we* should

appear to have first chosen *Him*. Paul loudly declares that our very beginning to be holy is the fruit and effect of election. They act most preposterously, therefore, who put election after faith." He further observes, "When Paul lays down, as the sole as the of election, that good pleasure of God which He had in Himself, he excludes all other causes whatsoever." Augustine, therefore, rightly admonishes us ever to go back to that first great cause of election, lest we should be inclined to boast of the *good pleasure of our own will!*

Paul then proceeds to declare that "God abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence, according to the riches of His grace, having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself." Thou hearest in these words, reader, the grace of illumination, flowing like a river from the fountain of that eternal counsel which had been before hidden. Far, very far, is this removed from the idea that God had any respect to our faith in choosing us, which faith could not possibly have existed except that God had then appointed it for us by the free grace of His adoption of us. And Paul farther confirms all this by declaring that God was moved by no external cause?by no cause out of Himself?in the choice of us; but that He Himself, in Himself, was the cause and the author of choosing His people, not yet created or born, as those on whom He would afterwards confer faith: "According to the purpose of Him (saith the apostle) who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. i. 11).

Who does not see that the eternal purpose of God is here set in diametrical opposition to our own purpose and will? This passage also was deeply weighed by Augustine, who, in his interpretation of it, observes "that God so works out all things, that He works also in us the very willingness by which we believe." It is thus, I think, clearly brought out and proved who they are whom God calls by the Gospel to the hope of salvation, whom He engrafts into the body of Christ, and whom He makes heirs of eternal life; that they are those whom He had adopted unto Himself by His eternal and secret counsel to be His sons; and that he was so far from being moved by any faith in them to come thus to adopt them, that this His election is the cause and the beginning of all faith in them; and that, therefore, election is, in order, before faith.

Equally plain and manifest is that which we have in the eighth chapter of the apostle's Epistle to the Romans. For after he had said that all things work together for good (or are a help) to the faithful who love God; that men might not trace the source of their happiness to themselves, or suppose that by their *first* loving God they had, by thus first loving Him, merited such goodness at His hands; the apostle, by way of correcting every error of that kind, immediately adds, "Who are the called according to His purpose." Whereby we see that Paul is anxious to secure to God Himself all the originating glory, for he shews that it is He Who, by His calling, causes men to love Him, who of themselves could do nothing but hate Him. For if you thoroughly examine the whole human race, what inclination will you find in any one of them by nature to love God? Nay! Paul in this very same chapter declares that all the senses of the flesh, the whole "carnal mind, is enmity against God." Now, if all men are, by nature, enemies to God and His adversaries, it is quite evident that it is by His calling alone that some are separated from the rest, and caused to lay aside their hatred, and brought to love Him. Moreover, there can exist no doubt that the apostle here designs that effectual calling, by which God regenerates those whom He had before adopted unto Himself to be His sons. For the apostle does not simply say "who are the called" (for this is sometimes applicable to the reprobate whom God calls, or invites, promiscuously, with His own children, to repentance and faith), but he says, in all fulness of explanation, "Who are the called according to His purpose;" which purpose must, from its very nature and effect, be firm and ratifying.

Now, to explain this text as applying to the purpose of man is (as Augustine argues) absurd in the extreme. Indeed, the context itself banishes every scruple, as if to render the intrusion of an interpreter wholly unnecessary. For the apostle immediately adds, "Whom He did predestinate (or definitely appoint), them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified." Here it is evident that the apostle is speaking of a certain number whom God destined for Himself as a peculiar property and treasure. For although God calls very many?by many means, and especially by the external ministry of men?yet He justifies, and at last glorifies, no one but him whom He had ordained unto eternal life. The calling of God, therefore, is a certain special calling,



which so seals and ratifies His eternal election, as to manifest openly what was before hidden in God concerning each one so called.

I know well what are the cavillings of many here. They say that when Paul affirms that those were predestinated whom God foreknew, he means that each one was chosen in respect of his future faith when he should believe. But I do not concede to these that which they falsely imagine, that we are to understand that God foresaw something in them which would move Him to confer upon them His favour and grace. For it is evident that the elect of God were foreknown when, and because, they were freely chosen. Hence, the same apostle elsewhere teaches that God *knoweth* them that **are** His, because, that is, He has them marked as it were, and holds them as numbered on His roll.

Nor is even this important point omitted by Augustine: that by the term foreknowledge we are to understand the counsel of God by which He predestinates *His* own unto salvation. Now that it was foreknown of God who should be heirs of eternal life no one will deny. The only question that can possibly arise is this: Whether God foreknew what He would do in them, or what they would be in themselves. But it is a piece of futile cunning to lay hold on the term foreknowledge, and so to use that as to pin the eternal *election* of God upon the *merits* of men, which election the apostle everywhere ascribes to the alone purpose of God. Peter also salutes the Church as "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Did he do this believing that some virtue in them foreseen of God gained them His favour? No! Peter is not comparing men with men, so as to make some of them better or more worthy than others, but he is placing on high, above all other causes, that decree which God determined in Himself. As if he had said, that those to whom he wrote were now numbered among the children of God, **because** they were chosen or elected of Him before they were born. On this same principle he afterwards teaches, in the same chapter, that Christ was "verily foreordained before the foundation of the world" to be the Saviour, Who should wash away by His blood the sins of the world; by which that apostle doubtless means that the expiation of sin, completed by Christ, was preordained by the eternal counsel of God. Nor can that be otherwise explained, which we find in the sermon of Peter, recorded by Luke in the

Acts of the Apostles, that Christ was delivered to death "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." Peter here joins "foreknowledge" to "counsel," that we may learn that Christ was not hurried away to death by any casualty, nor by the mere violent assault of men; but because the all-good and all-wise God, who knoweth all things, had thus purposely decreed it. Indeed, one passage of the Apostle Paul ought to suffice for the end of all controversy among those who have really a sound mind. He says, "God hath not cast away His people, which He foreknew." And what that foreknowledge was he shortly after explains, where he says that a "remnant according to the election of grace" were saved. And again, that Israel did not obtain by works that which they sought after, but that "the election" did obtain it. Now that which in the former passage he called foreknowledge, he here afterwards defines to be election, and that gratuitous and free.

The fiction of Pighius is puerile and absurd, when he interprets grace to be God's goodness in inviting all men to salvation, though all were lost in Adam. For Paul most clearly separates the *foreknown* from those on whom God deigned not to look in mercy. And the same is expressed, without any obscurity, in the memorable words of Christ: "All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me; and him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Here we have three things briefly indeed, but most perspicuously expressed. First, that all who come unto Christ were before given unto Him by the Father; secondly, that those who were thus given unto Him were delivered, as it were, from the hand of the Father into the hand of the Son, that they may be truly His; thirdly, that Christ is the sure keeper of all those whom the Father delivered over to His faithful custody and care, for the very end that He might not suffer one of them to perish. Now if a question be raised as to the beginning of faith, Christ here gives the answer, when He says that those who believe, *therefore* believe *because* they were given unto Him by the Father.

The unbelief of the Scribes was a great obstacle to the ignorant multitude, because they always persuaded them that no doctrine was worthy of belief but that which was received under their sanction. On the other hand, Christ declares aloud that that light by which we are guided into the way of salvation is the gift of God. And if anyone be inclined to turn

his back upon the truth that all those whom the Father chose in Christ were given unto Him, it nevertheless remains fixed and a fact that that gift was not only antecedent to faith, but the cause and origin of it. Now in the remaining member of the sentence of Christ, "Shall come unto Me," there is a more marvellous weight still. For He not only declares that none ever come to Him, but those to whom the hand of God is stretched out; but He asserts that all who were given unto Him by the Father are, without exception, brought to believe in Him. And this He still more fully confirms in the context of His divine discourse: "No one," says He, "can come unto Me except My Father draw him."

Pighius will himself confess that there is need of illumination to bring unto Christ those who were adversaries to God; but he, at the same time, holds fast the fiction that grace is offered equally to all, but that it is ultimately rendered effectual by the will of man, just as each one is willing to receive it. Christ, however, testifies that the meaning of His worlds is very different from this. For He adds immediately afterwards, "There are some among you who believe not. Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me except it were given unto him of My Father." You see here that Christ excludes those that "believer not" from the number of them who are "drawn." Now Christ would have uttered all this in vain, and out of place, if faith were not an especial gift of God. But that is the clearest of all which He conclusively adds in continuation of His discourse. After having cited the prophecy of Isaiah, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord;" He subjoins, by way of interpretation, "Every one therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh unto Me." Herein He shews that the prophecy of Isaiah is then fulfilled when God, by His Spirit, speaks to His children and disciples *within*, in order that He may deliver them into the hands and possession of Christ. Isaiah defines this to be the manner in which God renews and increases His Church, by teaching His children from above: "And they shall be all taught of God." The prophet, therefore, is recording a peculiar favour of God, of which none are deemed worthy but His own children. Christ also here declares, by this His doctrine, that those are effectually drawn to Him whose minds and hearts God "compels."

Thus does God (saith Augustine) teach those *within* who are 'the called

according to His purpose,' at the same time giving them to know what they ought to do, and giving them the power to do what they know. He, therefore, who knows what he ought to do, and does it not, has not yet learned of God according to grace, but according to the law only; not according to the spirit, but only according to the letter." And again a little afterwards, "If as 'the Truth' saith, 'Every one that hath learned cometh,' he that cometh not most certainly hath not learned." At length the holy father arrives at this conclusion: "It does not follow (saith he) that he who *can* come, *therefore* does come. The sacred matter is not perfected unless he is *willing* to come, and *does* come. Now every one that hath learned of the Father has not only the *power* to come, but *does* come." Here, therefore, we have the forward movement of the power, the affection of the will, and the effect of the act.

Nor do I thus adduce Augustine as a witness on this occasion, that I may fight my enemies under cover of his authority; but because I cannot find words more appropriate than his wherewith to express the mind of Christ in the Evangelist. If there be any not yet quieted, he discusses the matter more fully elsewhere thus: "What doth Christ mean (argues he) when He says, 'Every one that hath learned of the Father cometh unto Me' (John vi. 45.) What is it, but as if He had said, 'There is no one who heareth and learneth of the Father that cometh not unto Me.' For if everyone who hath heard and learned of the Father cometh (unto Christ), most certainly whoso cometh not unto Him hath never heard or learned. For if he *had* heard and learned he would certainly come. This school of God is very far removed from all carnal sense and understanding. In it the Father teaches, and is heard, that 'those who hear and learn may come to the Son."

A little farther on Augustine observes, " This grace. which is secretly communicated to the hearts of men, is received by no heart that is hardened. Indeed, it is given for the very end that the hardness of the heart may be first taken away. When, therefore, the Father is heard *within*, He takes away the stony heart ' and gives ' a heart of flesh.' For it is thus that He makes *His own* the children of promise and vessels of mercy. which He had before prepared unto glory. If it be asked, Why He does not thus teach all men, in order that they may come to Christ F the

answer is, Because those whom He does teach, He teaches *in mercy*; but those whom He does not teach, *in judgment* He teaches them not. For 'He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth'" (Rom. ix. 18).

The sum of this sacred matter, however, may be compressed into a smaller compass still. Christ does not say that those are drawn by the Father who have a flexible heart given them to render them able to come to Him; but that those who do come to Him are they whom God by His Spirit touches within, and who, under the efficacy of that touch, actually come. Now that this privilege is not given to all promiscuously is a fact which universal experience makes manifest. even to the blind.

And next, when Christ declares that He will by no means cast out one of those who do come unto Him; nay, that the life of all such is hidden and kept in security, in Himself, until He shall raise them up at the last day; who does not see here that the final perseverance of the saints (as it is commonly termed) is in like manner ascribed to the election of God? It may be, and has been, that some fall from the faith; but those who are given to Christ by the Father are, as Christ Himself declares, placed beyond the peril of destruction. In the same manner also, when, in another place, Christ had said that some of the Jews did not believe "because they were not of His sheep," He places, as it were, the sheep themselves in a sure haven of safety. "They shall never perish (saith He), neither shall any one pluck them out of My hand. My Father who gave them Me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." Now Pighius will not, surely, dare to rest the safe state of the salvation of these sheep on their present faith. Yet he would suspend it all upon the free will of man!

Nor are we to consider it a point for ambiguous discussion when Christ here sets Himself alone as a sufficient protection against all the machinations of Satan, and when He declares that we shall be safe even unto the end, *because* it is His will to save us. But that there might remain no doubt upon the subject in any one's mind as to the persons whom He does undertake in His faithfulness to protect and preserve, He calls our attention a second time to the gift of the Father, declaring both the gift of the Father and the *teaching* of the Father. Nor should we pass,

without especial notice, Christ's making the Father greater than all adversaries that can possibly oppose His people. Our Lord does it, that our confidence in the security of our salvation might be as great as our reverence for the power of God. For our security and God's omnipotence are equal; the former not being less than the latter. Wherefore, amidst all the violent assaults, all the various dangers, all the mighty storms, and all the shakings convulsions and agitations, with which we have to contend, the continuance and perpetuity of our standing lie in this: that God will constantly defend that which He hath decreed in Himself concerning our salvation by the omnipotent power of His arm. If any one of us but look into himself, what can he do but tremble? For all things shake to their centre around us, and there is nothing more weak and tottering than ourselves. But since our heavenly Father suffers not one of those whom He gave to His Son to perish, as great as is His power, so certain is our confidence, and so great our glorying. And His omnipotence is such that He stands the invincible vindicator of His own gift.

Hence, Augustine advisedly observes, "If any one of these should perish God would be deceived. But no one of them ever does perish, because God never is, or can be, deceived. If any one of these should perish. God is overcome and outdone by the sin of man. But no one of them ever does perish, because God can be conquered or outdone by nothing. The elect of God are chosen that they may reign with Christ for ever. They are not like Judas, who was chosen to a temporary office only, for which he was naturally fitted." Again, "Of these not one perishes, because they are all chosen according to a purpose; not their own purpose, but God's. Seeing that there is not conferred upon them such a gift of perseverance, by which they may persevere if they will; but a gift by which they cannot but persevere." Augustine then confirms this by the following excellent argument: "If, in the great weakness of this life (in the midst of which weakness there is nevertheless need of mighty power to keep down human vanity and pride), men were left to their own will, whether they would persevere or not, so that, under the helping power of God (without which they could not persevere at all), they might stand still if they pleased; and if God did not work in them that will, man's own will itself would, amid such and so great temptations, sink under its own infirmity. And thus men could not persevere at all, because, sinking under their

own weaknesses, they would not be willing to persevere, or, being willing, would not have the power. A remedy, therefore, is provided for the infirmity of human will by its being caused to act, unceasingly and inseparably, under Divine grace. Thus, the human will, though infirm in itself, cannot fail, nor be overcome by any infirmity of its own."

Now let that memorable passage of Paul (Rom. ix. 10-13) come forth before us. This passage alone should abundantly suffice to put an end to all controversy among the sober-minded and obedient children of God. And although it is no wonder that that eyeless monster, Pighius, should mock with contempt the words of the apostle himself, yet I hope I shall bring all readers of a sound mind to abhor such barbarous audacity in profaning the Scripture as this monster evinces. As the Jews, priding themselves on the name of *the Church*, rejected under this pretext the Gospel of Christ, because it had been condemned by the consent of the (so-called) Church, the apostle, to prevent the majesty of the Gospel from being overshadowed by such shameless pride, tears from the faces of these enemies of Christ the mask, under cover of which they falsely boasted. It was, indeed, a very great difficulty, and a formidable obstacle, in the way of the weak when they saw the doctrine of Christ rejected by nearly all these very persons whom God had appointed the heirs of His everlasting covenant. The apostles had all along preached that Jesus was the Messiah of God. But the whole of this nation, to whom the Messiah had been promised, opposed and rejected Him. And what wonder! when at this very day we see thousands totter, fail and faint, frightened by this very Church mask which the Papists hold before their eyes, boasting themselves to be the Church!

The apostle, therefore, enters into the battle with the Jews in this manner: He by no means makes the fleshly seed the legitimate children of Abraham, but counts the children of promise alone for the seed. Now he might have counted the seed according to their faith. And that indeed would have been consistent, when, in reference to the promise, he was stating the difference between the genuine and the spurious offspring; and that, indeed, he had before done. But now he ascends higher into the mind of God, and declares that those were the children of promise whom God chose before they were born. In proof of which he cites that promise

which was given by the angel to Abraham, "At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son (as if the apostle had added, before Isaac was conceived in the womb, he was chosen of God). And not only this (saith the apostle), but when Rebecca also had conceived by one (embrace), even by our father Isaac (for the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth), it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written. Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Rom. ix. 10).

Pighius would slide away under the excuse that this is one of the most difficult places of Scripture. And suppose I concede this; I do not thereby acknowledge that his impious barking is to be endured, when he boastingly asserts that it is a labyrinth in which no straight way can be found. What! are we to suppose that the Holy Spirit, speaking by the mouth of the apostle, went out of His way or lost Himself, so as to lead us aside and beyond what it is useful or proper for us to know? It would have been very easy (as I have just said) for the apostle to distinguish the true children of Abraham from the spurious ones by the mark of faith alone. But he on purpose introduces the question of *election*, far higher and much farther removed. And most certainly as, according to his own record of himself, he had been carried up into the third heaven, and those secrets of God had been revealed to him which it is not lawful for a man to utter, it must be evident that he well knew how far it was expedient, and how far it was lawful, for him to go in publishing the secret things of the Most High. When, therefore, he purposely carries the question to so great a height, and brings it down to so important a point, when it might have been settled in so general, brief and compendious a manner, what godly person will hesitate to lend an attentive and teachable ear to what he testifies? Unless we are to entertain a supposition that this furious, blind monster would restrain, by his great moderation (!), the Spirit of God Himself, wantoning (in his own opinion) beyond due bounds! Our very modest (!) opponent adds, "This is one of the portions of Scripture which unlearned and unstable persons corrupt to their own destruction." Now this is the very fact which, by the plainest proof, he forces us to declare concerning himself, so lawlessly does he twist and pervert the whole context of the Apostle Paul. And when he exhorts his readers to



hold themselves obedient to the Church, in the interpretation of all such difficult passages of Scripture, he should have me a seconder of his grave admonition, if he would shew to his readers, as the Church, a sheepfold of Christ, and not a stinking sty of swine! For which is Pighius' Church but that vortex, formed of the congregated mass of all iniquities, and ever filling, but not yet full, of every kind of error?

Pighius' last admonition is, that his readers would admit nothing that is inconsistent with the infinite goodness of God, nor anything by which they might be incited to hate God rather than to love Him. And yet he runs full sail directly against God, *because* He predestines some to destruction from their very creation. But suppose the whole of this doctrine were suppressed, the reprobate would ever find occasion for hating God, and for assailing Him with their impious reasonings and arguments. What real reason they have for their noisy opposition shall be duly considered, in its place, when we shall have fully explained the mind of the apostle. At the present moment, let all those who are willing to be taught in the school of God hear what the apostle plainly, and without any ambiguity, really says and means.

The apostle places before us the two sons of Isaac, who, when begotten together in the secret and sacred womb of nature, as in a temple of God, as it were, were nevertheless, while in the womb together, separated by the oracular word of God to an entirely different destiny. Now the apostle assigns the cause of this difference (which otherwise might have been sought in the merits of the lives of these two children) to the hidden counsel of God: "That the counsel of God might stand." We here distinctly learn that it was determined of God to choose one only out of these two children. And yet Pighius, by a senseless cavil, as by a hog's snout, tries to root up these words of the apostle with all their positive plainness of meaning. He replies that the election of grace here means that Jacob had merited no such thing beforehand. But since the apostle commends this electing grace of God on the very ground that while the one was elected, the other was rejected, the vain fiction of Pighius concerning universal grace falls to the ground at once. The apostle does not here simply say that Jacob was appointed heir of life, that the election of God might stand, but that his brother being rejected, his brother's birthright was

conferred on *him*. I am fully aware of what some other dogs here bark out, and what are the murmurings of many ignorant persons, that the testimonies of the apostle which we have cited do not treat of *eternal* life, nor of *eternal* destruction, at all. But if such objectors held the true principles of theology in any degree (which ought to be well known by all Christian men), they would express their sentiments with a little less confidence and insolence. For the answer of God to Rebecca's complaint was designed to shew her that the issue of the struggling which she felt in her womb would be that the blessing of God and the covenant of eternal life would rest with the younger. And what did the struggling itself signify, but that *both* the children could not be heirs of the covenant at the same time, which covenant had already, by the secret council of God, been decreed for the *one*?

Objectors here allege that this covenant and its decree referred to Canaan, on which the Prophet Malachi dwells (Mal. i. 1~3). And, indeed, this objection might be worthy of notice if God had designed merely to fatten the Jews in Canaan as pigs in a sty. But the mind of the prophet is very different from this. God had promised that land to Abraham as an outward symbol or figure of a better inheritance, and had given it to Abraham's posterity for a possession, that He might there collect them together as a peculiar people unto Himself, and might there erect a sanctuary of His presence and grace. These great ends and objects are those which the prophet is revolving in his deep and reflective mind. In a word, the prophet is holding Canaan to be the sacred habitation of God. And as Esau was deprived of this habitation, the prophet sacredly gathers that he was hated of God, because he had been thus rejected from the holy and elect family, on which the love of God perpetually rests. We also with the prophet, must carefully consider the particular nature of that land, and the peculiar quality which God assigns to it, that it might be a certain earnest or pledge of that spiritual covenant which God entered into with the seed of Abraham. It is in full sacred point, therefore, that the apostle records that the free election of God fell upon Jacob, because, being yet unborn, he was appointed to enjoy the inheritance, while his brother was, at the same time, rejected. But Paul is proceeding much farther still in his sacred argument, and maintaining that this inheritance was not obtained by works, nor conferred on Jacob from any respect to

works which he should in his after life perform. Nor is even this all. The apostle expressly declares that the brothers were thus separated, and this difference made between them, before either of them had done any one thing good or evil. From these facts the apostle solemnly settles it, that the difference made between the children was not from any works whatever, but from the will of Him that called.

Here Pighius thrusts upon us that rancid distinction of his: that works performed were not indeed taken into the Divine consideration (for no works as yet existed), but that the election of God was ratified in the person of Jacob, because God foresaw what his faith and obedience would be. And he philosophises, in a most ingenious way, on the name Israel? that Jacob was so named from *seeing God*, that we may know that those are true Israelites (not who are blind from their own malice and wickedness, but blind only with respect to God), and who, when God presents Himself to be seen by them, open their eyes. But is it not a most ridiculous circumstance that, while this being is anxious to make others so clear-sighted, he should himself be blinder than a mole? An utterly different etymology is that which is given us by Moses! He says the name Israel was given to Jacob by the angel with whom he wrestled, and came off victorious. For ISRAEL signifies "having power with God." or "prevailing over God."

## Eternal Predestination - Section 2

But whose eyes, I pray you, will this mortal be able so to pierce or tear out as to prevent them from seeing his absurdities? Why does Paul so particularly say that the children had done neither good nor evil? but that he might do away with all respect of merit in them? Why? but that he might positively affirm that God drew His reasons from no other source than from His own mind and will when He pronounced so different a judgment on the twin brothers? I well know how common a scape-way this supposed respect of merit, present or future, in the mind of God is. But I would first of all ask this question, If Esau and Jacob had been left to the course of their common nature, what greater amount of good works would God have found in the latter than in the former? Most decidedly the hardness of a stony heart in both would have rejected salvation when offered. But (says Pighius) a flexible heart was given to both of them, that they might be able to embrace the offered grace; but the one was willing to do what, by his free will, he could do; the other refused to do it." As if the apostle were testifying that the unwillingness and refusal of Esau were also given of God! And as if God did not promise *to cause* His Israel to walk in His commandments!

According to the judgment of Pighius, however, John loudly denies that God gives us the "power to become the sons of God." Now this crazy fellow is, first of all, utterly out in taking power " to mean faculty or ability, whereas it rather signifies a *worthiness of, or right or title to, honour*. But he betrays a more than gross stupidity when he passes over, as with his eyes shut, the *cause* of this "power," so clearly described by the Evangelist, who declares that those become the sons of God who receive Christ; and he asserts, directly afterwards, "that these are born, not of flesh, nor of blood, but of God." God, therefore, deems those worthy the honour of adoption who believe in His Son, but whom He had before begotten by His Spirit; that is, those whom He had formed for Himself to be His sons, those He at length openly declares to be such. For if faith makes us the sons of God, the next step of consideration is, Where does faith come from? Who gives us that? It is the fruit of the seed of the

Spirit, by which God begets again to a newness of life.

In a word, most true is that which Augustine testifies: "That the redeemed are distinguished from the children of perdition by grace alone, which redeemed ones that common mass of original corruption would have gathered to the same perdition but for the free grace of God. Whence it follows, that the grace of God to be preached is that by which He *makes* men His *elect* not that by which He *finds* them such." And this the same holy father continually inculcates. To this it may be added, If God foresees anything in His elect, *for which* He separates them from the reprobate, it would have been quite senseless in the apostle to have argued that it was "not of works, but of Him that calleth," *because* God had said, "The elder shall serve the younger," when the children were not yet born. Wherefore, this vain attempt to solve the difficulty of God's eternal predestination by introducing the idea of His *foreseeing* works and merits in the *future lives* of the elect is openly insulting to the Apostle Paul and to his divine testimony. Paul concludes that no respect of works existed in God's election of His people, *because* He preferred Jacob to his brother before they were born, and before they had done "either good or evil." But these opponents of election, to make good their doctrine, that those were chosen of God whom some mark of goodness distinguished from the reprobate, would make it appear that God foresaw what disposition there would be in each person to receive or to reject offered grace. And suppose the apostle's expression, "not *having* done either good or evil," be received by these men; yet God, by their doctrine, will still be electing according to works, because His election will depend on future works foreseen by Him. But since the apostle takes that for a confessed fact, which is wholly disbelieved by these excellent theologians, that all men are alike unworthy, and the nature of all equally corrupt, he securely concludes that God elected those whom He did elect from His own goodwill and purpose, not because He foresaw they would be obedient children to Him. The *apostle*, moreover, is deeply considering what the nature of men would be without the election of God. But *these men* are dreaming of what good God foresaw in man, which good never could have existed unless He Himself had wrought it.

Although these things are in themselves abundantly clear, yet the context

of the apostle leads us much deeper still into this holy matter. It thus proceeds: "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God?" Now, either this supposed objection is introduced without any reason whatever, or else the doctrine of Paul gives no place for works foreseen. For what suspicion of injustice can possibly be conceived where God offers grace equally to all, and permits those who become worthy of it to enjoy it? In a word, when these objectors place the *cause* of election or reprobation in the works of men's coming lives, they seem to escape and to solve, quite to their own satisfaction, this very question which Paul supposes them to put in objection. Whence it is fully evident that the apostle was not instructed in this new wisdom. For, be it so, that the apostle introduces these men quarrelling with the justice of God quite out of place, and without any colour of reason. Let us mark the manner in which he repels the objection he supposes to be made: "God forbid! 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."

Nothing, that I see, will be more appropriate than my using here the words of Augustine in explanation of this passage: "It is marvellous (saith he) to observe into what gulphs our adversaries precipitate themselves to avoid the nets of truth, when they find themselves hemmed in by these mighty straits. They say that God hated the one of these children and loved the other, when not yet born, *because* He foresaw what the works of their future lives would be. What a wonder is it that this acute view of the mind of God in the mighty matter should quite escape the apostle! He saw no such thing, no such easy solution of the difficulty as the view of his adversaries intended. His answer implies that the matter was not so brief, so plain, so *evidently* true; so absolutely clear, as these opponents imagined. For when he had put forth so stupendous a matter for our meditation as this, how it could be rightly said concerning two children not yet born, nor having done either good or evil, that God loved the one and hated the other; he briefly and solemnly adds, 'What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Now here was the place to introduce the interpretation invented by our adversaries: '*Because*, 'God foresaw their future works.' The apostle, however, does nothing of the kind. On the contrary, that no one might dare to boast of the merits of his works, he commends the grace of God alone by the introduction of that

all-conclusive word of God to Moses: '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.' Where are merits now? Where are works either past or future, either fulfilled or to be fulfilled, as by the power or strength of free-will? Does not the apostle openly declare his mind in commendation of free grace only?" Thus far have I considered the words of Augustine.

But suppose for a moment that the apostle had introduced no such argument as that concerning the two sons of Isaac. (And, indeed, if the solution is so plain and satisfactory, that God made the difference between the two children from a respect to their future works, why should the apostle have entangled himself deeper and asserted that the cause of the difference made rested in the will of God alone?) Yet God had, at the first, in His conversation with Moses, claimed to Himself the free right of exercising His mercy as, and towards whom, He pleased. And this He did, that no one might dare to prescribe a law for *His* actions. He then openly declared that He would take out of the whole multitude of the people whom He would, and would deliver them; and all were alike covenant-breakers. He did not say that His choice of them should depend on themselves; that if He should find any worthy of pardon He would be merciful to *such*. But He positively declared that He would be the Master, Lord and Arbiter, of His own mercy; that He would spare whom He would spare, as being bound by no necessity to choose either one or another. And the apostle next infers that which of necessity follows from the above declaration of God to Moses: that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy." For if the salvation of men depends on the mercy of God alone, and if God saves none but those whom He chose by His own secret good pleasure, there can absolutely be nothing left for men to do, will, or determine, in the matter of salvation.

Now Pighius explains the solemn case thus: that salvation is not due to any endeavour of ours, nor to any works of ours, for *this* reason, *because* God *freely calls* us to that salvation. He amuses himself with his opinions quite securely, imagining that he can by one word of his easily do away with the whole doctrine of the apostle at once. Whereas Paul's conclusion

is derived thus: *because* God elects those whom He saves by His own absolute good pleasure, and not from any difference of works in *their* lives from the works and lives of others; *therefore*, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;" thus making the whole turn on the mercy of God alone. But Pighius thinks that he has made a clean escape when he talks about grace being extended to all, whereas it is due to no one. And when he says that those become partakers of grace whom the Lord finds well disposed and obedient to Him, he is forced at last to fall back on this acknowledgment, that both the "willing" and the "running" do indeed avail something; but that since they are not sufficient of themselves, the palm must, indeed, be given to the mercy of God.

All these absurdities the same Augustine refutes most admirably: "If (says he) Moses *therefore* says, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy,' because it proceeds from both ? that is, both from the will of man and the mercy of God ?this is the same as saying, The will of man alone is not sufficient, unless the mercy of God be added to it; nor is the mercy of God alone sufficient without the addition of the will of man. Moreover, if no Christian man dares say, It is not of God that showeth mercy, but of man that willeth, it evidently follows that we must understand that it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, in order that the whole glory may be ascribed to God, who prepares the will of man, when made good, to be aided by Him, and who aids it when thus prepared. More absurd still, therefore, is the cunning device of certain ones, who spin out of these important questions a conclusion that there is a kind of concurrence, or half-way meeting, between the mercy of God and the endeavours of man. As if Paul meant that men can do very little by running unless assisted by the grace of God! Whereas, the apostle reduces all things else to nothing that he may give empty and whole place to the mercy of God. For whence is the beginning of all right running? Can anyone, of himself, go to meet God? Can he do it, until led and directed by the Holy Spirit?

Here, again, let me adopt the language of Augustine. "There are daily *drawn* unto Christ (says he) those who were His enemies. No one *can* come unto Me (says Christ), except My Father draw him.' He does not say



'lead him,' as if the will of man, in some way, preceded; for who is *drawn* that is already *willing to go*? But he that is chosen of God is drawn in a wonderful way by Him, who knoweth how to work in the hearts of men. Not that they may be made to believe against their wills, or unwillingly, but that *they* may be *made* willing who before were unwilling. Hence we see that a man's eternal *election* of God is proved by this subsequent '*running*'; yet so proved, that God's mercy alone (which lifts up those that are down, and brings back the wandering into the way; nay, which raises the dead to life, and calleth things to be which are not) hath the pre-eminence."

We have next to consider the remaining members of the apostle's sentence concerning the reprobate. Of these Paul brings before us Pharaoh as the most signal instance. For God Himself thus speaks of him, by Moses: "And in very deed, for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee My power." This passage the apostle has faithfully rendered, giving, as it were, word for word, thus: "Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show My power in thee." The verb used is HIPHIL, derived from the root AMAD, which signifies "to stand." Pharaoh, therefore, is declared to be put forth openly and prominently as one whom God might make a memorable example of His power. Now whence (or from what state or condition) did God receive Pharaoh, in order that He might place him in that position? Pighius would have it that God *sustained* him *by His power* for a time *when deserving of death*. Suppose I should permit him to take refuge under such a cover of escape; he is still entangled and held fast in the fact that God, leaving Pharaoh to his own will and inclination, destined him to destruction.

If Pighius be anxious here to dwell upon the long-suffering of God, I fully agree with him; this fact, nevertheless, remains fixed and unaltered, that the reprobate are set apart, in the purpose of God, for the very end, that in them God might show forth His power. And that the longsuffering of God is, in the present instance, far removed from the apostle's mind and argument is evidenced from his immediate inference, when he observes "Whom He will He hardeneth." He would not have added this unless, under the expression "raised thee up," he had meant to comprehend that purpose of God by which Pharaoh was ordained to magnify by his

obstinacy the redemption of God's people Israel. For if anyone should say that Pharaoh's being "raised up" signified his being raised from above to the summit of kingly honour, that indeed is some part, but not the whole, of the matter. For the LXX. Greek interpreters have here used the same expression as that by which they render the verb HIPHIL, derived from the radical KUM, "to arise." Moreover, God is said to "raise up" that which he causes by an outstretched arm, as it were, to accomplish the end He has ordained. The Scripture here principally looks at the *beginning*, or *first-cause*, of that which it is recording, that it may ascribe the whole to God alone. In this same manner God is also said to "raise up" prophets and ministers of salvation, that no man might claim any of these things to himself on the ground of his own industry. Therefore, the meaning of Moses has been faithfully expressed by the term, "raised up," if you will but so receive it; nor did Paul receive it otherwise. And most certainly the expression "raised up" comprehends, not less distinctly than summarily, what he had touched upon both concerning the elect and the reprobate, since he is claiming for God the right and the power to have mercy on whom He will, and to harden whom he will, according to His own pleasure and purpose. The apostle *therefore* maintains that the right of hardening and of showing mercy is in the power of God alone, and that no law can be imposed on Him as a rule for His works, *because* no law or rule can be thought of better, greater, or more just, than His own will!

But as some formerly would have it that the apostle is here introducing the wicked railing against God, Pighius also flees to this refuge. And suppose this be granted to him, the knot is by no means untied then. For, in the first place, the apostle does not move a question about nothing. And, in the next place, his answer is such that he admits the objection of the adversaries to be true. And what does Pighius get by such shuffling as this? He only proves by such quibbles that his cause is a bad one. But who will be found to cede to him what he asks, when he thus violently sunders, on the one hand, things thus immediately connected together, and, on the other, binds into one bundle things manifestly separate and distinct? After the apostle had shown that God had made a distinction between the elect and the reprobate by His incomprehensible will, he draws in the same context this inference: "For He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy; and whom He will He hardeneth." To which he

immediately subjoins, "Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault?" When Paul thus makes the persons speaking evidently plain and distinct, who would not rather attend to Paul's own words than to any extraneous comments upon them? Augustine here also, as in many other instances, most wisely observes, "It signifies but little in whose person you receive that to be spoken, which the apostle, by his answer, implies to be true. If the objection had been fake, it is not very likely that the apostle would have been silent had the cause of the adversaries been so good, so clear, and so plausible. For if it be false that God hardens whom He will, this knot, so insolvable by all human intellect, might have been settled by the apostle in one word."

Pighius, under this view of the matter, pretends that the apostle declined to give a plain and pointed answer, because he did not deem impudent persons worthy of being conversed with; that they might rather learn to think humbly, than proudly to require a reason for the works of God. Just as we elsewhere read (says he) that the Jews, who asked Christ by what authority He did His works, were repelled by a like question only. But the words of Paul himself stand directly against such a supposition, for he afterwards curbs the insolence of all those who indulge an audacious curiosity in scrutinizing the secrets of God. He maintains, however, while so doing, the fact that the reprobate are vessels of the wrath of God, in whom He shows His power.

Augustine, therefore, reasons far differently from Pighius, and much more accurately, where he argues: "When Paul had supposed the question to be put, 'Why doth He yet find fault?' does he reply, That which thou hast said, O man, is false? No such thing. His answer is, 'Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?'" What Augustine says elsewhere is worthy of notice. "Paul (observes he) does not break off the discourse of the adversaries by a severe reproof when they are contending against God with profane petulance, as if the justice of God required a solemn defence, but he expresses himself in the way which he thought most expedient. Certain foolish persons consider that the apostle failed in his reply on this occasion, and that having no reason to give, he merely repressed the audacity of the opponents. But the apostle's words have inconceivable weight. 'Who art thou, O man?' In such questions as these

the apostle throws a man back into the consideration of what he is, and what is the capacity of his mind. This is a mighty reason rendered, in a few words indeed, but in great reality. For who that understands *not* this appeal of the apostle can reply to God? And who *that* understands it can find anything *to* reply?

Wherefore (says Augustine elsewhere), "If these arguments of Paul have any weight with us as men, let us also gravely listen to the apostle when he appeals to us, directly afterwards, in those striking words, 'Who art thou, O man?' etc. For although God did not create the *sins* of men, who but God did create the *natures* of men themselves? which are, in themselves, undoubtedly good, but from which there were destined to proceed evils and sins, according to the pleasure of His will, and, in many, such sins as would be visited with eternal punishment. If it be asked, Why did God create such natures? The reply is, Because He willed to create them. Why did He so will? 'Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?' If vain reasoners have anything more to say, behold! a reason is here rendered to man! A reason sufficient for him, and all that is due to him, if indeed he will receive even this, who is disposed to contend for the liberty of his own will, while he is himself under the bondage of his own infirmity. But if a depraved desire to quarrel with God still frets anyone, let such an one (saith Augustine) speak and hear as becometh man: 'Who art thou, O man?' But let him hear and not despise. And if anyone be a despiser, let him believe himself to be 'hardened of God,' that he may despise. If anyone despise not, let him believe that he is gifted and aided of God that he might not despise. But let the one believe that he is hardened according to his desert; the other, that he is helped according to grace." And what the desert of man is Augustine had before shown in these words, "Every sinner is inexcusable, either on account of his original sin and sinful nature, or else from the additional act of his own will, whether he knew that he was sinning, or knew it not; whether he had a judgment of what is right, or had it not. For ignorance itself, in those who will not understand, is undoubtedly sin; and in those who cannot understand ignorance is the punishment of sin."

But let the testimony of Augustine now aid us no farther. Ponder with me, readers, this momentous matter itself by itself. Paul comparing, as he

here does, man with God, shows that the counsel of God, in electing and reprobating men, is without doubt more profound and more deeply concealed than the human mind can penetrate. Wherefore, O man, consider (as the apostle adviseth thee) who and what thou art, and concede more to God than the measure and compass of thine own nature. But suppose we give place, for a moment, to the philosophizing of Pighius: that the condition of all men is equal, except in those who deprive themselves of eternal life, who, nevertheless, were elected even as others. What would there be here obscure or difficult of solution? What would there be that common sense could not receive? What that natural judgment could not make clear? But when you hear of a mystery surpassing all human understanding, you may at once conclude that all solutions of men, derived from common natural judgment, and which might avail in a profane court of justice, are frivolous and vain. Here, however, Pighius attempts to meet us with the remark that those are never repulsed of God, nor sent away in doubt, who humbly keep their minds in subjection; that, therefore, those who thus contend against God are the refractory and haughty only; and that such contention is found in none others. To this assertion I will assent without difficulty, on condition that Pighius confess, on his part, that the apostle condemns of impious pride all who measure the justice of God by their own comprehension. But that God may obtain the praise of His justice, He must, according to the judgment of Pighius, render a plain reason for everything He does. Whereas, our rule of modesty ought to be, that where God's reason for His works lies hidden, we should nevertheless believe Him to be just.

Now the son of Sirach is not ashamed to extol God with the praise that, as a potter, He separates and distinguishes vessels according to His will; and that men are also as clay in the hands of God who forms them, and who renders to them accordingly as He has decreed. For *krivsi*", in this passage, if you compare it with what has preceded, cannot signify anything else than the good pleasure of the workman, or potter. Nor do we want to seek an interpreter beyond the apostle himself, who, under the same figure, openly rebukes the audacity of all who require of God a reason for His works. Shall the clay (demands the apostle) say unto the potter, *Why hast thou made me thus?*" He, therefore, will truly confine

himself to the moderation of the apostle, who, holding the will of God, though hidden, to be the highest justice, gives to Him the free power of destroying or saving whom He will. How much soever therefore Pighius may twist himself in twisting the words of the apostle, he cannot make this similitude apply otherwise, in the present instance, than the apostle had applied it, who introduces it to show that God fashions and forms by His own right all men to whatever destiny He pleases and wills.

If this, at first appearance, should seem to anyone out of the way or unintelligible, let him hear a farther admonition of the admirable Augustine: "If (says he) beasts could speak, and should quarrel with their Maker because He had not made them men like us, there is not one of us who would not, in a moment, fly into a rage with them. What, then, do we think of ourselves? Who or what are we that we should contend with God for having made each of us what we are? That man is most certainly mad who will not ascribe to God a far greater and higher excellency than that which he and the human race possess above the beasts of the earth. What remains, then, but that the sheep of God's flock quietly and peacefully submit themselves unto Him?" This would be far more becoming than, after the example of Pighius, to make men the potters instead of God, and to leave each one to shape out his destiny by his own virtue.

But Pighius says, "What is here obscure is elsewhere made plain. As the furnace proves the vessels of the potter, so does temptation prove the just." This is true. But from this he concludes that, therefore, if a just man shall he constant in faith and piety, he will be a vessel unto honour; but if he fail, through want of courage and constancy, he will be a vessel unto dishonour. And since, according to his account, each one by his own will, assisted by Divine grace (which is common, he says, to all men, and prepared for all men), at length perseveres, he concludes that we are made vessels unto honour by our invincible fortitude. Now, I will not stop to observe how absurdly Pighius here confounds together two entirely different things ?the forming of the vessel, and the proving of the vessel when formed ?I would merely remark that God's proving His own people by various trials and temptations does not at all alter, or interfere with, His predestination of them by His eternal will and counsel before they were born. Nor does it alter His forming them, from all eternity, such as

He willed them to be afterwards in time. Nor does that passage of Paul in any way support these views of Pighius, where the apostle says, "If a man, therefore, shall purify himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour." Paul is not here shewing in what way men, extricated and cleansed from their filth, are made vessels unto honour; but how the faithful, who are already chosen and called, become adapted for the pure uses of God. And now, observe what an exact harmony there is between the mind of Pighius and the mind of the apostle! Pighius' words are: "What is here obscure in the apostle. he elsewhere renders quite plain ? why and how it is that God makes some vessels to honour and not others. Thus, in order that Jacob might be a vessel of mercy, his soul had purified itself, on which account he was deservedly made a vessel unto honour; and it was thus that God, having a respect unto this self-purification, which He foreknew, loved and chose the patriarch before he was born."

So Pighius. Now hear Paul. He, on the contrary, when exhorting the faithful thus to purify themselves, in order to lay a "foundation" for this doctrine, prefaces it by saying, "The Lord knoweth them that are His." In the same way he elsewhere exhorts the people of God to holiness, by arguing: "For we are His workmanship, created unto good works, which God hath *before ordained* that we should walk in them." Paul, therefore, who, with all soberness of mind, glories in being a wise master-builder, lays the foundation of all salvation in the free grace of God alone. Pighius, on the contrary, begins his building from the earth's plain surface, without any foundation at all. And, in the same way, when handling that passage of Jeremiah, (chap. xix. 11), he consumes a multitude of words to no purpose whatever. The prophet is not, in that passage, describing the origin of our formation, but he is asserting and maintaining God's rightful power in breaking to pieces and destroying vessels already formed and finished. The mind and intent of the apostle, therefore, in his use of this similitude, are to be carefully observed and held fast ?that God, the Maker of men, forms out of the same lump in His hands one vessel, or man, to honour, and another to dishonour, according to His sovereign and absolute will. For He freely chooses some to life who are not yet born, leaving others to their own destruction, which destruction all men by nature equally deserve. And when Pighius holds that God's election of grace has no reference to, or connection with, His hatred of the

reprobate, I maintain that reference and connection to be a truth. Inasmuch as the just severity of God answers, in equal and common cause, to that free love with which He embraces His elect.

The apostle then arrives at this conclusion: "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?" This forms no ground or reason (means the apostle) that anyone should question God, or contend with Him. Pighius here (as those like him are wont to do) seizes upon the word longsuffering. Nay, he dwells on that word with a lofty boast bordering on ferocity, as if God hardened not the elect otherwise than by parental indulgence, as it were. "God (says he) makes men vessels unto dishonour in no other way than by kindly enduring them while they are abusing His longsuffering, and treasuring up for themselves wrath against a day of wrath." What, then, becomes of the difference which God made between the two brothers before they were born? If we are to believe Pighius, this difference was made because God foresaw what the hardness of Esau's heart would be. How is it, then, that the election of grace is so distinctly manifest in the case of Jacob, when Esau stood in the same grade and position with Jacob until he excluded himself from the number of the children and family of Isaac? But this shifting and shuffling of Pighius is so utterly refuted by one very short sentence of the apostle Paul, that it is quite needless to go any farther to fetch arguments for refutation. In what sense the Hebrews use the terms "vessels" and "instruments" everyone knows who has the least acquaintance with the Scripture. Wherever we hear of "instruments," we shall also find God concerned as the Author and Overruler of the whole that is done, while His hand directs the whole. And why are men called "vessels " of wrath? but because God shews towards such His righteous severity which He abstains from shewing towards others? And why are they made "vessels of wrath?" Paul tells us: That God might, in them, "shew forth His wrath and make His power known." The apostle says that they were "fitted to destruction." When? and how? but from their first origin and primitive nature. For the nature of the whole human race was corrupted in the person of Adam. Not that the still higher and deeper purpose of God did not precede the whole. But



it was from this fountain that the curse of God commenced its operation. From this source began, in effect, the destruction of the human race. Correspondently, the apostle testifies that God had "afore prepared" the "vessels of mercy" unto glory.

Now if this being "*afore prepared* unto glory" is peculiar and special to the elect, it evidently follows that the rest, the non-elect, were equally "*fitted* to destruction," because, being left to their own nature, they were thereby devoted already to certain destruction. That they were "fitted to destruction" by *their own wickedness* is an idea so silly that it needs no notice. It is indeed true that the reprobate procure to themselves the wrath of God, and that they daily hasten on the falling of its weight upon their own heads. But it must be confessed by all that the apostle is here treating of that difference made between the elect and the reprobate, which proceeds from the alone secret will and purpose of God. Paul says also, that the "riches" of God's "grace" are made known on the "vessels of mercy "; while, on the contrary, the "vessels of wrath" rush on to destruction. Most certainly nothing is here heard of Pighius' absurd prating?that grace is the same towards all, but that the goodness of God is the more brightly illustrated by His enduring the vessels of wrath while He suffers them to come to their own end. But with respect to God's *longsuffering*, the solution of its operation is perfectly plain. It is immediately connected with His *power*. God does not only permit a thing to be done, or to continue, by His longsuffering, but He rules and overrules what is done by His almighty power.

Nor on any other grounds than these can that inviolable engagement of God stand, where He says, "I the Lord thy God am a jealous God; merciful to a thousand generations, but a severe avenger unto the third and fourth generation." This compact, I say, cannot stand, unless the Lord by His own will decree to whom He will show the mercy, and whom He will suffer to remain devoted to eternal death. He extends His grace (He declares) even unto a thousand generations. Now I would ask, Does God regard the children of the godly according to their *own merits* when He continues the grace that was shown to their fathers themselves, upon no other grounds than because He had *promised that he would* do so? To Abraham, who had deserved no such favour, God freely binds Himself in

faithfulness that He (God), for the patriarch's sake, will be a God to his posterity. Hence that solemn appeal to God after the patriarch's death: "Remember, Lord, Thy servant Abraham" (Deut. ix. 27). Here most certainly is made a choice of men, and a distinction between them; and that, not according to the merits of each, but according to the covenant made with their fathers. Not that all the posterity of Abraham, which descends from him according to the flesh, possess this privilege; but the faith and salvation of all those only who out of the seed of Abraham are chosen unto eternal life ought to be referred to this promise.

Exactly the same is the nature of that vengeance which God takes even upon the third and fourth generation. As to what some allege, that all who sin are punished from age to age, each one in his day and order, that is a more than frivolous subterfuge. In this manner the Pelagians of old, finding that they could not disentangle themselves from the nets of those testimonies of Scripture which make it evident that all men sinned in Adam, fell a cavilling at the truth, and hatched the doctrine that all the posterity of Adam sinned by *imitation of him*, not *through a total corruption of nature derived from him*. And as godly teachers then attacked them, truly maintaining that all were actually condemned on account of the sin and guilt of Adam, from which sin and guilt the grace of Christ alone frees them; so, in the present case, that the antithesis and parallels may agree with, and respond to, each other, it of necessity follows that God avenges in the persons of the children the sins which He condemned in their fathers. Nor can many other passages of the Scripture be otherwise explained, where God declares that He "recompenses the iniquity of the fathers into the bosom of their children after them." In vain do the opponents bring against us that passage of Ezekiel, "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father: the soul that sinneth, it shall die;" because it forms one particular part of God's vengeance on sin, when He leaves men void and destitute of His Spirit. For being thus left destitute, each one bears the consequences of his own sin. Wherefore, the children are said to bear the sins of their forefathers, and not "undeservedly" (as the profane poet would intimate), because they are guilty on the very ground that, being (as the apostle says) the children of wrath, being thus left to their own natural will and inclination, and being from their origin the heirs of eternal death, they can do nothing but augment, in a

perpetual and uninterrupted course, their own destruction.

We may here most opportunely explain that passage of Isaiah, which the Holy Ghost has been pleased to repeat with a particular application six times over in the New Testament. The Prophet Isaiah is sent forth with a commission of prodigious awfulness, as it at first appears: "Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed." The prophet being here represented as the minister of blindness, arises confessedly from the nature of the office he had to execute and from the effects by which, it was certain, it would be followed. Our great question lies in *the cause* of that blindness. It will be also confessed to be a deserved punishment, inflicted on that ungrateful and rebellious people, that light to them should become darkness. And there had, moreover, preceded in them a malicious and obstinate unbelief, which fully deserved to be visited with such a recompense. But as the prophet testifies that there was a certain select number on whom salvation shone from the preaching of the Word of God, the question to be solved is, Did those favoured ones escape the horrible judgment which lay upon the rest by any virtue of their own, or were they held safe and secure in the hand of God?

And a weightier question still presses itself upon us: How it came to pass that, out of that great multitude, *some* repented, while the disease of *others* remained incurable ?

If anyone should weigh this in the balance of *human* judgment, he would decide that *the cause* of the difference was in the men themselves. But God will not suffer us to stop here. He declares that all those who do not follow the stream of the common ruin are saved *by His grace*. Whether or not repentance is *His* own work ought not to be brought into controversy. So evidently true is that which Augustine says: "Those whom the Lord wills to be converted, He converts Himself; who not only makes willing ones out of them who were unwilling, but makes also sheep out of wolves and martyrs out of persecutors, transforming them by His all-powerful grace." If the wickedness of man be still urged as *the cause* of the

difference between the elect and the non-elect, this wickedness might indeed be made to appear more powerful than that grace of God which He shows towards His elect, if that solemn truth did not stand in the way of such an argument: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy!" But Paul's interpretation of the passage of Isaiah before us leaves no doubt whatever remaining. For after he had said that the election of God was determined and fixed, he adds, "But the rest were blinded, that that might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet," etc.

I grant that this blindness in the Jews was voluntary, and I freely acknowledge their sin therein. But I perceive who they are whom Paul excepts from this blindness; they are those whom it pleased God to choose out of the rest. But why did He choose some rather than others? Let no one be offended, then, that He still chooses, from time to time, some and not others; and let us, like Paul, except these chosen ones from the general mass of those who are blinded. Nor let us ask the reason why God makes the difference. For, as Paul says, it is not becoming man to contend with God. The same apostle, when speaking elsewhere to the Jews, from whose virulent malice he had so severely suffered, says: "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the prophet unto our fathers, saying, Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive." (Acts xxviii. 25, 26). He charges their sin home upon them, accordingly as they fully deserved. Some persons will here erroneously and ignorantly conclude that *the cause* and beginning of this obduracy in the Jews was their malicious wickedness. Just as if there were no deeper and more occult *cause* of the wickedness itself, namely, the original corruption of nature! And as if they did not remain sunk in this corruption *because*, being reprobated by the secret counsel of God before they were born, they were left undelivered!

Now let us listen to the Evangelist John. He will be no ambiguous interpreter of this same passage of the prophet Isaiah. "But though (says John) Jesus had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him, that the saying of Esaias the prophet might be fulfilled which he spake, Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed? Therefore they could not believe, because that

Esaias said again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart," etc. Now, most certainly John does not here give us to understand that the Jews were prevented from believing by their sinfulness. For though this be quite true in one sense, yet *the cause* of their not believing must be traced to a far higher source. The secret and eternal purpose and counsel of God must be viewed as the original cause of their blindness and unbelief. It perplexed, in no small degree, the ignorant and the weak, when they heard that there was no place for Christ among the people of God (for the Jews were such). John explains the reason by showing that none believe save those to whom it is given, and that there are few to whom God reveals His arm. This other prophecy concerning "the arm of the Lord," the Evangelist weaves into his argument to prove the same great truth. And his words have a momentous weight. He says, "*There/ore, they could not believe.*" Wherefore, let men torture themselves as long as they will with reasoning, the cause of the difference made?why God does not reveal His arm equally to *all*?lies hidden in His own eternal decree. The whole of the Evangelist's argument amounts evidently to this: that faith is a special gift, and that the wisdom of Christ is too high and too deep to come within the compass of man's understanding. The unbelief of the world, therefore, ought not to astonish us, if even the wisest and most acute of men fail to believe. Hence, unless we would elude the plain and confessed meaning of the Evangelist, that few receive the Gospel, we must fully conclude that *the cause is the will of God*; and that the outward sound of that Gospel strikes the ear in vain until God is pleased to touch by it the heart within.

A different occasion for citing this passage of Isaiah presents itself to the other three evangelists while they are each recording the life and ministry of our Lord. In Matthew, our Saviour separates and distinguishes His disciples from the common mass of men. He declares that it was given to them (His disciples) to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but that He spoke to others in parables, that hearing, they might hear and not understand, that the saying of Isaiah might be fulfilled. Now I am willing to confess that those to whom Christ spoke parabolically were unworthy, in themselves, of greater light. But, on the other hand, I would wish to ask, what greater merit, in themselves, had the apostles to be freely admitted into familiarity with Christ? into which familiarity Christ *did*

freely admit them. Here the antithesis is clearly established, that grace was freely conferred on few, when it might have been with justice denied equally to all. For shall we say that the apostles procured for themselves, by their own merits, that which the Lord declares was freely "given" to them? Nor are we to pass by without particular remark that the Saviour terms the things which He taught them "mysteries." And most certainly there is nothing in the whole circle of spiritual doctrine which does not far surpass the capacity of man and confound its utmost reach. No explanation by words, therefore, however lucid, will suffice to make the mysteries of the kingdom of God understood, unless the Holy Spirit, at the same time, teach within. But Christ would have His disciples to magnify it, as a precious pledge of the favour of God toward them, that He honoured them above the common mass of men in blessing them with the external means of teaching. Though He was, all the while, gradually leading them to that high and singular privilege which distinguishes "friends" from "servants," as John hath it (John xv. 15): "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you." These friends are thus taught from above to the very end, that they might understand those things which are beyond all natural comprehension. Hence it was that Christ, on such occasions as these, so frequently uttered that loud appeal, "He that hath ears to hear let him hear." By which expression Christ not only distinguished attentive from inattentive hearers, but He implied also that all are deaf save those whose ears God is pleased to bore that they may hear, which divine blessing David magnifies in the name of the whole Church of God (Psalm xl. 6): "Sacrifice and offering Thou didst not desire; mine ears hast Thou opened."

But I will proceed no farther with discussing the several portions of God's Word relative to this divine and deep matter. Let this summary suffice: if we admit the same Spirit of God, who spoke by the apostles, to be an interpreter of the prophet Isaiah, we must also acknowledge that that secret and incomprehensible judgment of God which blinds the greater part of mankind, "that seeing, they may see and not perceive," etc., is to be adored while it does so. Here let human reasonings of every kind that can possibly present themselves to our minds cease for ever. For if we

confine our, reflections to men, apart from the grace and eternal purpose of God, the first thing that will strike us is that God gives freely to those that ask Him, and that others sink and die under their need, for which they do not seek a remedy. But if we have not in our mind and understanding that which Augustine saith, "That the nature of the Divine goodness is not only to open to those that knock, but also *to cause* them to knock and ask;" unless, I say, we understand this, we shall never know the real need under which we labour.

If we come to *the help*, universal experience proves that all do not comprehend that power of the Holy Spirit, by which everything is done that ought to be done. Let no one deceive himself by vain self-flattery. Those who come to Christ were before sons of God in His divine heart, while they were, in themselves, His enemies. And *because* they were pre-ordained unto eternal life, they were *therefore* given unto Christ. Hence the faithful admonition of Augustine: "Let those who thus come to Christ remember that they are 'vessels' *of grace*, not *of merit*. For grace is to them all merit! Nor let us delight in any other knowledge than that which begins and ends in admiration! Let *those* deride us who will, if God but give His nod of assent from heaven to *our* stupidity (as men think), and if angels do but applaud it!"

## **Eternal Predestination - Section 3**

We will now, in a summary way, collect those OBJECTIONS of Pighius, which seem to carry with them any kind of colour, that our readers may understand that the *weapons* with which our antagonist fights are quite as bad as the *cause* which he alleges for kindling the flame of so mighty a contest. He asserts that the whole question turns on this, to what *end* man was created. And, in the first place, he holds it as a great absurdity to suppose that God expected any *return* from the creation of man, since, being content in Himself alone, He could want *no one* else, nor *anything* else.

I also confess that God has no need of any external aid, prop, or addition;

but I deny the justness of the conclusion that, therefore, He had no respect or consideration of Himself when He created man for His own glory. For what meaneth that word of Solomon, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil"? (Prov. xvi. 4.) Wherefore we evince no absurdity when we say that God, though needing nothing to be added to Himself, yet created the race of men for His own glory. And this ought to be considered, and most deservedly so, the great and essential end of man's creation. The sophism of Pighius, therefore, is the more ridiculous when he reasons that God could have no respect of Himself in the creation of man because He is, in Himself, infinitely perfect. It is quite curious to observe how our opponent wriggles himself out of the net in which the above word of Solomon entangles him. "God (he says) did indeed make all things for Himself not, however, with any reference to His own glory, but because of the infiniteness of His goodness." And that this absurd interpretation may not want abundance of weight, he asserts that no commentators agree with me, except a few detestable heretics (as he terms them). Now why should I waste time on the refutation of such futile absurdities as these? The Hebrew word LAMAAUIHU, which Solomon uses, has the same meaning as our expression, "for His own sake." One person, inflated with his half-Latin gabble, is anxious to explain to us the meaning of the adverb *propter*; whereas, if he had but one spark of a sound mind, the context itself would clearly demonstrate to him that "the wicked were made for the day of evil" only because it was God's will to shew forth in them His glory; just as, elsewhere, God declares that He raised up Pharaoh for the very cause that, in him, He might show forth His power and name to all the nations of the earth.

To give some colour to his absurd error Pighius introduces the testimony of Moses, where he appeals to the Jews in those words, "And now, O Israel, what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love Him, and to worship Him?" What one of my readers is so senseless as not to see at once that we have here a man, destitute of a sound mind, blattering without the least modesty? I am sure there is not such a reader of these pages. What! does God desire to be worshipped by us more for our sakes than for His own? Is His regard for His own glory so buried out of His sight that He regards us alone? What, then, is to become of all those



testimonies of the Scripture which make the glory of God to be the highest object and ultimate end of man's salvation? Wherefore, let us hold fast this glorious truth?that the mind of God, in our salvation was such as not to forget Himself, but to set His own glory in the first and highest place; and that He made the whole world for the very end that it might be a stupendous theatre whereon to manifest His own glory. Not that He was not content in Himself, nor that He had any need to borrow addition from any other sources; but it was His good pleasure so highly to honour His creatures, as to impress on them the bright marks of His great glory.

After commencing with so much success (!), Pighius subjoins another end which God had in the creation of man. Having a respect (he says) to the nature of His own goodness, God wished to create a rational creature, capable of receiving that goodness which (he adds) could not be done without His bestowing on that creature freedom of will. This being admitted, he considers all my teaching to fall to the ground at once, when I maintain that God decreed a difference between the elect and the reprobate. Because man (he argues), being thus made by his free will the arbiter of his future state, had either event, the good or the evil (to be saved or to be lost), in his own hand.

Now, in the first place, readers are here to be admonished and exhorted ever to hold God, their Maker and Creator, in that highest of all honour which is due to Him, and never to exercise an insolent or forward eye when considering His purpose in the creation of the human race, but to view Him with reverence and soberness, and with the pure eye of faith. I know full well that no mention whatever can be made of God's eternal predestination, but, in a moment, numberless unholy and absurd thoughts rush into the mind. Hence it is that many over-modest persons are found, who wish that the glorious doctrine of predestination were never named at all, lest occasion should thereby be given to wanton minds to exalt themselves against God. I, however, passing by all such over-careful speculations and leaving them to others, consider it unjustifiable in a Christian man thus cautiously to keep back the genuine confession of the truth, lest it should be exposed to the grin of the profane. For in the first place there is nothing more precious to God than

His truth. In the next place, He will not have His justice to be protected by our dissimulation. And finally, it needs no such protection. On these points, however, we shall dwell more fully hereafter. I will now briefly reply to Pighius on the point more particularly in question.

Pighius contends that men were so immediately created unto salvation that no counsel of God concerning the contrary event, namely, his destruction, preceded his creation. As if the Lord did not foresee before man was created what his future condition would be! And as if He did not afore determine what it was His will should be done! Man, that he might be the image of God, was adorned from the first with the light of reason and with rectitude of nature. *Therefore* (as our opponent would reason), God being (to speak reverently) blind, foresaw not all events, but waited in doubt and suspense for the issue of those events! Such is Pighius theological reasoning! Such are the *antecedents* and *consequents* of his logic! Hence he boldly concludes, from his view of the end of man's creation, that God so disposed the creation of all men that they should all, at their creation, be made (without distinction, difference, or discrimination) partakers of His goodness and blessedness. But godly minds can by no means whatever be brought to reconcile God's election and reprobation of men thus. They cannot harmonise by such carnal reasoning the voluntary sin of man and the eternal purpose of God. They cannot see, with these human eyes, how it was that man should be placed in that condition when first created, that he himself, falling by his own will, should be the cause of his own destruction; and yet that it was so ordained by the secret and eternal purpose of God that this voluntary destruction to the human race, and to all the posterity of Adam, should be a cause for the saints humbling themselves before God, and worshipping His eternal purpose in the whole. For, although it pleased God thus to ordain the whole, yet man did not the less willingly, on his part, hurl himself into this headlong ruin, who, nevertheless, had been endued with an upright nature, and had been made in the image of God. But I would repeat my being perfectly aware how much absurdity and irreconcilable contradiction these deep things seem to profane persons to carry with them. Nevertheless, let one conscience suffice us in the place of a thousand such witnesses. To which conscience, if we duly listen, we shall be ashamed not to confess that man perished justly, seeing that he chose

rather to follow Satan than God!

But let us now hear Pighius' PROOFS of his above views, arguments and conclusions. In these he labours to shew that salvation was ordained for all men without distinction or difference. "If it were not so (he says), the Holy Spirit speaks falsely when He declares that God is the Father of all men" (Mal. ii. 10). The prophet is there treating of marriage, the faith of which many husbands, at that time, violated. Malachi is reminding such violators that God is the avenger of conjugal infidelity. Let our readers hence gather how much religion and conscience Pighius has in dealing with the holy Scripture! He then adds, from the Psalm, "The Lord is good to all" (cxlv. 9), from which he concludes that, *therefore*, all were ordained unto eternal life. Now, if this be true, the kingdom of heaven is open for dogs and asses! For the Psalmist is not magnifying that goodness of God only which He shews to man, but that also which He extends to all His works. But why should not Pighius thus fight for his brethren?

Then follows a *third proof*, that, according to Paul, "There is no difference between the Jew and the Gentile" (Rom. x. 12). Now all this I receive most fully, provided there be but added what the same apostle teaches, that the Gentiles were called to a participation of the Gospel because they were ordained thereto by the eternal counsel of God (Rom. xvi. 26). He cites also that passage in Ecclesiasticus, "God hateth nothing that He hath made." As if we had not always maintained that God hateth nothing in us that is His own, save that fallen nature only, which may be justly called a deformity of the first creation. The great question of reprobation, however, by no means turns on this hinge, whether or not God hateth anything that He hath made. For although long before the Fall of Adam God had, for secret reasons of His own, decreed what He would do, yet we read in the Scripture that nothing was, or is, condemned by Him but sin.

There flows from these premises, therefore, the plain and solid conclusion that God had just causes for reprobating a part of mankind? causes, however, hidden from us?but that He hates and condemns nothing in man, except that which is contrary to His justice. The next Scripture which he tacks on to his argument is that of Paul, who declares (he says) that God "included all under sin, that He might have mercy

upon all" (Rom. xi. 32). As if Paul in this passage were disputing about the *number* of men! Whereas he is abstractedly lauding the grace of God towards *all* of us who attain unto salvation. Most certainly nothing was less in the mind of the apostle than an extension of the mercy of God to all men. His sole object was to prostrate all glorying of the flesh, that we may clearly understand that no man will ever be saved but he whom God saves by grace alone. Behold, then, with what glorious arguments our opponent demonstrates that none are chosen unto salvation from above in preference to others! And yet this ape of Euclid puffs himself off in the titles of all his chapters as a first-rate reasoner.

The third end of man's creation which is so clearly and powerfully expressed by Solomon, "The Lord hath made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. xvi. 4), Pighius attacks in this way. With reference to God's condemnation of the reprobate and His punishment of sin, he argues, "If we say that God in His eternal decrees had any respect to what would happen to each person *after* his creation, we must necessarily confess that the *discrimination* between the elect and the reprobate was, in the Divine mind, *antecedent* to the Fall of man. Whence it will follow that the reprobate are not condemned *because* they were ruined in Adam, but *because* they were already devoted to destruction even before the Fall of Adam." To this witless argument I reply, What wonder is it that Pighius should thus (to use his own expression) *indiscriminately* confound all things in reference to the deep judgments of God, when he knows not how to make the least distinction between *remote* and *proximate* CAUSES! After men have looked this way and that way, they can never, by so doing, fix upon the *cause* of their destruction, nor upon the fault that produced it. And why? because the *proximate* fault rests with themselves. And should they complain that the wound is inflicted on them from some other quarter, the internal sense of their mind will bind them fast to the conclusion that the evil arose from the voluntary defections and fall of the first man. I know full well that the insolence of the carnal mind cannot be prevented from immediately bawling, "If God foreknew the Fall of Adam, and yet was unwilling to apply a remedy, we are rather perishing in our innocence by His bare external decree than suffering the just punishment of our sin." And suppose we grant that nothing was in this way foreseen of God, or thus

viewed by Him, the old complaint concerning original sin will still be made, and as loud as ever: "Why was not Adam left to sin for himself as a private individual, so as to bear the consequences alone? Why was he made to involve us, who deserved no such calamity, in a participation of the same ruin? Nay, under what colour of justice does God visit on *us* the punishment of *another's* fault?" But, after all has been said that can be said on the subject, the internal feeling of every man's heart continues to urge its conviction, nor will it suffer any child of Adam to absolve himself (even himself being his own judge) from the sin, the guilt, or the punishment consequent on the *original transgression* of Adam! Nor can anyone, in truth, raise a controversy on the matter. For as on account of the sin of one man a deadly wound was inflicted on all men, all men at once acknowledge the judgment of God thereon to be righteous!

If, then, nothing can prevent a man from acknowledging that the first origin of his ruin was from Adam, and if each man finds the *proximate* cause of his ruin in himself, what can prevent our faith from acknowledging afar off, with all sobriety, and adoring, with all humility, that *remote* secret counsel of God by which the Fall of man was thus pre-ordained? And what should prevent the same faith from beholding, at the same time, the *proximate* cause within; that the whole human race is individually bound by the guilt and desert of eternal death, as derived from the person of Adam; and that all are in themselves, therefore, subject to death, and to death eternal? Pighius, therefore, has not sundered, shaken, or altered (as he thought he had done) that pre-eminent and most beautiful symmetry with which these *proximate* and *remote* causes divinely harmonise!

Now, our readers must bear in mind that both of the following propositions are equally condemned by Pighius. He denies either that God from the beginning, before man had yet fallen, decreed what should take place after his Fall, or (in other words) that He chooses out of the fallen mass those whom He willed so to choose. He laughs at Augustine and all like him; that is, at all the godly who imagine (as he terms it) that, after God *foreknew* the universal ruin of the human race in the person of Adam, He ordained some to eternal life and others to eternal destruction. For since he takes it as an acknowledged fact that the counsel of God

concerning the creation of all men to salvation was *antecedent* to the Fall of Adam he maintains without a doubt that *that* purpose of God still remains fixed and unaltered. Otherwise (argues he) God would not be consistent with Himself, and His immutable purpose would be subverted by the sin of man. He severely attacks that appearance of direct contradiction (as they term it) in our doctrine. He maintains that since God (as we teach) decreed, before Adam was created, what should happen to himself and to his posterity, the destruction of the reprobate ought not to be imputed to sin now, after the Fall, committed, because, he says, it would be absurd to make the effect *antecedent* to its cause. Now I maintain that both these propositions which Pighius combats are true. And, as to his holding before our eyes a pretended disagreement between the two sentiments, there is no such discordance at all.

What we maintain is this: that man was so created, and placed in such a condition, that he could have no cause whatever of complaint against his Maker. God foresaw the Fall of Adam, and most certainly His suffering him to fall was not contrary to, but according to, His divine will. What room is there for quibbling or shuffling here? And what does such quibbling profit or effect? Yet Pighius denies the truth of this position, *because* (he argues) the *before* conceived counsel of God concerning the salvation of all men still stands unaltered. As if no solution of his pretended difficulty could be found. The truth of the matter is, that salvation was not offered to all men on any other ground than on the condition of their remaining in their original innocence. For, that the decree of God concerning the salvation of all men was decisive and absolute, no one of a sound mind will hold or concede. For when man was placed in a way of salvation, his having willingly fallen therefrom was a sufficient ground for his just condemnation. But it could not be otherwise. Adam could not but fall, according to the foreknowledge and will of God. What then? Is Adam on that account freed from fault? Certainly not. He fell by his own full free will, and by his own willing act.

Now, if Augustine had said that it was once (or on one occasion) purposed of God to save all men, the wily argument of Pighius might have some weight in refutation of such an opinion. But when he declares his mind to be that Adam was so constituted, at his first creation, that his

*proximate*, or his own, rejection of life was well known to God; nay, that his rejection of it was, as it were, already included in the secret counsel of God; Augustine truly and justly concludes from such grounds that the reprobate are so involved and bound up in the universal original guilt that, being left thus in death, they righteously suffer that judgment of God. The same I also hold. And I maintain that, as all men are lost in Adam, those who perish, perish by the just judgment of God; and yet I, at the same time, witness as my solemn confession that whatever happened to, or befel, Adam was so ordained of God.

And now, as I proceed, it will be my object, not so much to consider what Pighius says, nor in what order he says it, as to take care that this worthless fellow be prostrated and buried under the ruins of his own desperate impudence. And my great concern shall be to satisfy godly consciences, which we very frequently find to be disturbed by such fellows by reason of their simplicity and inexperience. To accomplish these ends I will select, out of the flowing stream of our opponent's interminable loquacity, those parts of it which appear to be the most taking and prominent, or the most specious and plausible, that all may witness how much such a fellow can "say, without saying anything"! One reason (he says) why he cannot believe in particular and special election is because Christ, the Redeemer of the whole world, commanded the Gospel to be preached to all men, promiscuously, generally, and without distinction. But the Gospel is an embassy of peace, by which the world is reconciled to God, as Paul teaches. And, according to the same holy witness, it is preached that those who hear it might be saved. To this pretended difficulty of Pighius, therefore, I would briefly reply that Christ was so ordained the Saviour of the whole world, as that He might save those that were given unto Him by the Father out of the whole world, that He might be the eternal life of them of whom He is the Head; that He might receive into a participation of all the "blessings in Him" all those whom God adopted to Himself by His own unmerited good pleasure to be His heirs. Now which one of these solemn things can our opponent deny?

Hence, the Apostle Paul declares this prophecy of Isaiah to be fulfilled in Christ: "Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given Me," etc. Accordingly, Christ Himself declares aloud, "All that the Father giveth Me

shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out (John vi. 37). And again, "Those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition" (John xvii. 12). Hence we read everywhere that Christ diffuses life into none but the members of His own body. And he that will not confess that it is a special gift and a special mercy to be engrafted into the body of Christ, has never read with spiritual attention Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. Hereupon follows also a third important fact, that the virtue and benefits of Christ are extended unto, and belong to, none but the children of God. Now, that the universality of the grace of Christ cannot be better judged of than from the nature of the preaching of the Gospel there is no one who will not immediately grant. Yet, on this hinge the whole question turns. If we see and acknowledge, therefore, the principle on which the doctrine of the Gospel offers salvation to all, the whole sacred matter is settled at once. That the Gospel is, in its nature, able to save all I by no means deny. But the great question lies here: Did the Lord by His eternal counsel *ordain* salvation *for all men*? It is quite manifest that all men, without difference or distinction, are *outwardly called* or invited to repentance and faith. It is equally evident that the same Mediator is set forth before all, as He who alone can reconcile them to the Father. But it is as fully well known that none of these things can be understood or perceived but by faith, in fulfilment of the apostle Paul's declaration that "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" then what can it be to others but the "savour of death unto death?" as the same apostle elsewhere powerfully expresses himself.

And farther, as it is undeniably manifest that out of the multitudes whom God calls by His outward voice in the Gospel very few believe, if I prove that the greater part of these multitudes remain unbelieving (for God deems none worthy His illumination but whom He will), I obtain thereby the next conclusion, that the mercy of God is offered equally to those who believe and to those who believe not, so that those who are not divinely taught within are only rendered inexcusable, not saved. Some make a distinction here, holding that the Gospel is saving to all as it regards its *power* to save, but not in its *effect of saving*. But they by no means untie the knot by this half-way argument. We are still rolled back to the same great question point, whether the same *power to believe* is conferred



upon all men! Now Paul assigns the *reason why* all do not obey the Gospel. He refers us to the prophet Isaiah: "Lord, who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" (Rom. x. 16.) The prophet here, astonished at the fewness of those who believe, seems to cry aloud, 'That it was a thing of the highest shame and reproach that, while the Word of God was sounding in the ears of all men, there were scarcely any hearts inwardly touched by it!' But that so awful a depravity in man might not terrify the contemplators of it, the apostle Paul afterwards intimates that it is not given to *all* thus to believe, but to those only to whom God *manifests Himself* (verse 20). In a word, the apostle in this chapter intimates that any effort or sound of the human voice will be ineffectual, unless the secret power of God work in the hearts of the hearers. Of this fact Luke places before our eyes a memorable proof, who, after he had recorded the sermon preached by Paul (Acts xiii. 48), says, "And as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Now, why was not this same doctrine of Paul received with the same mind and heart by all who heard it? Luke assigns the reason and defines the number of the receivers: "*As many as were ordained to eternal life believed.*" The rest did not believe *because they were not* ordained to eternal life." And who is the giver of this disposition of heart but God alone?

As to those who absurdly argue that these characters were ordained to believe by the natural impulse of their own hearts, such silly persons are no more worthy of refutation than those would be who should affirm that the world was made by itself. The secret of the whole lies in the hidden wisdom of the Gospel, which is deeper than can be penetrated by any acuteness of human intellect. "The natural man (saith the apostle) receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Is it because he will not? That indeed is quite true; for all are rebellious against God who are not subdued and humbled by His Spirit. But the apostle carries the matter much deeper and higher than this, both as to man and as to God, showing that there is that "foolishness" and ignorance in *man* that he *cannot* understand the things of the Spirit, and that the wisdom and counsel of God decreed the whole. For (saith the apostle), "Who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been His counsellor?" No one (argues he) can know the secrets of God, but by His Spirit only. Whence, he fully concludes, that those alone are the scholars of God who are gifted, not

with the spirit of this world, but with His own heavenly Spirit, "that they may know the things that are freely given them of God" (1 Cor. ii. 12).

Now, what does the apostle mean by drawing this comparison between "the spirit of the world" and "the Spirit which is of God" but this, that men while unregenerate can only be wise in their own way, and can only cleave unto the earth, but that God as a heavenly Father illuminates His own children in an especial manner? And yet, Pighius would here thrust upon us the absurd notion that where it pleases God, each one may prepare himself by his own voluntary will and endeavour. As if Paul were not speaking to the Corinthians, whom he shortly afterwards describes as having been thieves, drunkards, slanderers, dissolute, and laden with every monstrous iniquity, until they were cleansed by the Sanctification of the Spirit. Now what could there be in these characters whom God had dragged out of hell itself? what could there be in these awful sinners, I say, that could help them to meet God half-way, as it were, or to deserve the illumination of His Spirit? But why should I employ a wide circle of words? The Spirit of God, who reveals to us the "mysteries of the kingdom of heaven," is the Spirit of adoption; and divine adoption is wholly gratuitous, the free gift of God. Therefore, the Spirit Himself is *freely given* on whomsoever He is bestowed. Now, that the Spirit is not thus freely bestowed on all men universal experience undeniably proves. Wherefore, faith is the special gift of God, and by that gift election is manifested to, and ratified in, the soul that receives it.

This is what Paul means when he says that Christ, who is a "stumbling-block to the Jews" and "foolishness to the Greeks," is "*to them that are called*, the wisdom of God and the power of God." But the next question is, where does *calling* come from? Whence but from God, who calleth according to His purpose those whom He hath chosen? From this state of things flows the conclusion (and this we hold fast) that the Gospel, which is, in its essential nature, "a savour of life unto life," and ought to be so to all that hear it, becomes "a savour of death unto death in them that perish," who thus remain in their darkness and unbelief *because* "the arm of the Lord" is not revealed to them. If, then, amidst so universal a corruption and depravity of our nature some few *do* believe the Gospel, to ascribe the faith of such to their own goodness would be perfectly

impious. No! Let thanks, on the contrary, be given to God continually (according to the admonition of the apostle), "*because* He hath from the beginning *chosen* such believers unto salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth," in which words the apostle traces faith and sanctification to the eternal election of God as its *source* and *cause*. What shall we say then? Were these *chosen because* they had sanctified *themselves* and rendered themselves meet or worthy to be chosen? The apostle asserts most expressly that this sanctification was the work of the Spirit of God. And as the nature of faith is the same, and equally the gift of God and the work of His Spirit, it incontrovertibly follows that those who are illuminated unto faith *are* thus illuminated and gifted with faith, *that* their election of God may be *manifested* and ratified by these its very effects. And most certainly, when we hear that no one cometh unto Christ but he that is drawn by the Father, we may safely adopt the language and argument of Augustine: "Who can be said to be drawn who is *already willing* to go? And yet no one comes to Christ but he who is willing. Wherefore, every comer to Christ is *drawn* in a wonderful way, *that he may be willing*, by Him who knows how to work inwardly on the very hearts of men; and so to work in them, not that they may believe against their wills (which would be impossible), but that *they* may be *made* willing to believe *who* were before unwilling to believe."

All this Pighius loudly denies, adducing that passage of the apostle (1 Tim. ii. 4): "Who will have all men to be saved;" and, referring also to Ezek xviii. 23, he argues thus, "That God willeth not the death of a sinner," may be taken upon His own oath, where He says by that prophet, "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the wicked that dieth; but rather that he should return from his ways and live." Now we reply, that as the language of the prophet here is an exhortation to repentance, it is not at all marvellous in him to declare that God willeth all men to be saved. For the mutual relation between threats and promises shows that such forms of speaking are *conditional*. In this same manner God declared to the Ninevites; and to the kings of Gerar and Egypt, that He would do that which, in reality, He did not intend to do, for their repentance averted the punishment which He had threatened to inflict upon them. Whence it is evident that the punishment was denounced on condition of their remaining obstinate and impenitent. And yet, the

denunciation of the punishment was positive, as if it had been an irrevocable decree. But after God had terrified them with the apprehension of His wrath, and had duly humbled them as not being utterly desperate, He encourages them with the hope of pardon, that they might feel that there was yet left open a space for remedy. Just so it is with respect to the *conditional promises* of God, which invite all men to salvation. They do not positively prove that which God has decreed in His secret counsel, but *declare only* what God is *ready to do* to all those who are brought to faith and repentance.

But men untaught of God, not understanding these things, allege that we hereby attribute to God a twofold or double will. Whereas God is so far from being variable, that no shadow of such variableness appertains to Him, even in the most remote degree. Hence Pighius, ignorant of the Divine nature of these deep things, thus argues: "What else is this but making God a mocker of men, if God is represented as really not willing that which He professes to will, and as not having pleasure in that in which He in reality has pleasure?" But if these two members of the sentence be read *in conjunction*, as they ever ought to be? "*I have no pleasure in the death of the' wicked;*"and, "*But that the wicked turn from his way and live*"? read these two propositions *in connection* with each other, and the calumny is washed off at once. God requires of us this conversion, or "turning away from our iniquity," and in whomsoever He finds it He disappoints not such an one of the promised reward of eternal life. Wherefore, God is as much said to have pleasure in, and to will, this eternal life, as to have pleasure in the repentance; and He has pleasure in the latter, because He invites all men to it by His Word. Now all this is in perfect harmony with His secret and eternal counsel, by which He decreed to convert none but His own elect. None but God's elect, therefore, ever do turn from their wickedness. And yet, the adorable God is not, on these accounts, to be considered variable or capable of change, because, as a Law-giver, He enlightens all men with the external doctrine of *conditional* life. In this primary manner He calls, or invites, *all men* unto eternal life. But, in the latter ease, He brings unto eternal life those whom He willed according to His eternal purpose, *regenerating* by His Spirit, as an eternal Father, *His own children* only.

It is quite certain that men do not "turn from their evil ways" to the Lord of their own accord, nor by any instinct of nature. Equally certain is it that the gift of conversion is not common to all men; because this is that one of the two covenants which God promises that He will not make with any but with His own children and His own elect people, concerning whom He has recorded His promise that "He will *write* His law *in their hearts*" (Jer. xxxi. 33). Now, a man must be utterly beside himself to assert that this promise is made to all men generally and indiscriminately. God says expressly by Paul, who refers to the prophet Jeremiah, "For this is the covenant that I will make *with them*. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers: but I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Heb. viii. 9, 10). Surely, to apply this promise to those who were worthy of this new covenant, or to such as had prepared *themselves* by their *own* merits or endeavours to receive it must be worse than the grossest ignorance and folly; and the more so, as the Lord is speaking by the prophet to those who had before "stony hearts." All this is plainly stated also, and fully explained, by the prophet Ezekiel (chap. xxxvi. 26).

That *obstinacy* and *enmity* are common to all men I fully admit, and I also maintain that the heart of no man is softened and made flexible and obedient to the will of God until God gives him the will and power to do what He commands. For why are we called "new creatures," but because "we are His workmanship, created unto good works"? But, I pray you, what kind of a division, and how iniquitous a division, of all praise and glory would it be to make God the Creator of us mortal men, and yet to make each one of us his *own creator* unto righteousness and eternal life? In this way God would only have for Himself the praise of ineffectual and failing grace. That portion of the glory which is the far more excellent would fall to our lot. But the Scripture positively affirms that to circumcise the hearts of men is the work of God alone, nor is regeneration ascribed to any other than God Himself. Hence it is that whatever in man is created anew, in the image of God, is called "spirit." "That which is born of the flesh *is flesh*; and that which is born of the Spirit *is spirit*" (John iii. 6). God does, indeed, frequently invite us to repentance, but He Himself is everywhere declared to be the Author of conversion; His "law" is said "to convert souls." The intermediate agency of this conversion,

however, is frequently transferred to the ministers of the Word. But as, while they labour by praying, by sowing, by watering, it is God alone that "giveth the increase," it is not at all to be wondered at that it should be declared to be His work alone to open the heart of *His own* to "attend to the things spoken" by His ministers.

Hence it is that Augustine, after having treated of the elect, and having shown that their salvation is safely secured under the faithful custody of God, so that no one of them can perish, makes these solemn and blessed observations: "All the rest of mankind, who are nor of *this number* (says he), but are of the same fallen mass, being ordained vessels of wrath, are born for the use and service of these elect ones. For God created no one, even of them, at random, or by chance, or for nought. Nor does He work ignorantly whatever of good He works in, or by, them. For His creating in them a human nature is itself a good thing. And His adorning by them the order of this present life is a good thing. But God brings no one of these to spiritual repentance and to reconciliation with Himself! Although, therefore, these are born out of the same lump of perdition as the elect of God, yet by their hardness and impenitency of heart they all, as far as in them lies, 'treasure up unto themselves wrath against the day of wrath.' While out of this same fallen mass God calls some to repentance by His goodness and mercy, leaving these, the rest, in just judgment, to their own destruction." Thus, Augustine.

But that no one might imagine that there is here any discrepancy, variance, or conflict between divine grace and our industry, these sentiments of the holy father everywhere meet us in his works. "Men toil (says he) to find in our own free will what good thing there is that is our own, and which we have not received from God. I, for my part, know not what good things of the kind can be discovered in us at all." In another place, arguing on the same deep subject, he draws this conclusion "Wherefore, unless we hold fast these two positions, not only that that power of will which is free to turn this way and that, and which is one of those *natural* good things which a bad man may badly use, is the gift of God; but that *that good will* which is one of those spiritual good things of which there cannot be made a bad use, is of God also; unless, I say, we hold fast these two propositions, I know not on what grounds we are to

defend the sacred position of the apostle, involved in his memorable question, 'What hast thou that thou didst not receive?' But if there be in us a certain kind of *free* will, received from God, which may yet be either good or evil; and if there be in us also a *good* will, rendered so by ourselves; that which proceeds from ourselves is better than that which we receive from God." Augustine arrives at this final inference from the above premises: "Where God (says he) is pleased to give this will to obey Him and to come unto Christ, it is an act of His *free mercy*, not *according to the merits* of those on whom He bestows the gift and to whom He shows the mercy. Where God is *notwilling* to bestow the gift, nor to show the mercy, it is a display of His *wrath* which declares that none can come to Christ to whom the will to come is not given. And though He has the *power to draw* them, He draws them not; but they are left to perish, and thus to manifest the *truth* of His Word, that 'no one can come unto Christ, except the Father draw him.'"

The difficulty which, according to Pighius, lies in that other place of Paul, where the apostle affirms that "God will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4), is solved in one moment, and by one question, namely, *How* does God wish all men to come to the knowledge of the truth? For Paul couples this *salvation* and this *coming to the knowledge of the truth* together. Now, I would ask, did the same will of God stand the same from the beginning of the world or not? For if God willed, or wished, that His truth should be known unto *all men*, how was it that He did not proclaim and make known His law to the *Gentiles* also? Why did He confine the light of life within the narrow limits of *Judaea*? And what does Moses mean when he says, "For what nation is there so great who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is in all things that we call upon Him for? And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day?" (Deut. iv. 7, 8.) The Divine lawgiver surely here means that there was no other nation which had statutes and laws, by which it was ruled, like unto that nation. And what does Moses here but extol the peculiar privilege of the race of Abraham? To this responds the high encomium of David, pronounced on the same nation, "He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments, they have not known them" (Ps. cxlvii. 20). Nor must we disregard the express

*reason* assigned by the Psalmist "*Because* the Lord loved thy fathers, *therefore* He chose their seed after them" (Deut. iv. 37). And why did God thus choose them? Not because they were, in themselves, more excellent than others, but because it *pleased* God to choose them "for His peculiar people." What? Are we to suppose that the apostle did not know that he himself was prohibited by the Holy Spirit from "preaching the word" in Asia, and from passing over into Bithynia? But as the continuance of this argument would render us too prolix, we will be content with taking one position more: that God, after having thus lighted the candle of eternal life to the *Jews alone*, suffered the *Gentiles* to wander for many ages in the darkness of ignorance; and that, at length, this special gift and blessing were promised to the Church: "*But* the Lord shall arise upon *thee*; and His glory shall be seen upon thee" (Isa. lx. 2). *Now* let Pighius boast, if he can, that God willeth all *men* to be saved! The above arguments, founded on the Scriptures, prove that even the external preaching of the doctrine of salvation, which is very far inferior to the illumination of the Spirit, was not made of God common to *all men*.

This passage of the apostle (1 Tim. ii. 4) was long ago brought forward by the Pelagians, and handled against us with all their might. What Augustine advanced in reply to them in many parts of his works, I think it unnecessary to bring forward on the present occasion. I will only adduce one passage, which clearly and briefly proves how unconcernedly he despised their objection now in question. "When our Lord complains (says he) that though He wished to gather the children of Jerusalem as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but she would not, are we to consider that the will of God was overpowered by a number of weak men, so that He who was Almighty God could not do what He wished or willed to do? If so, what is to become of that omnipotence by which He did 'whatsoever pleased Him in heaven and in earth'? Moreover, who will be found so profanely mad as to say that God cannot convert the evil wills of men, *which* He pleases, *when* He pleases, and as He pleases, to good? Now, when He does this, He does it *in mercy*; and when He doeth it not, *in judgment* He doeth it not."

The knot immediately before us, however, is not yet, I confess, untied. I have nevertheless extorted from Pighius thus much: that no one but a



man deprived of his common sense and common judgment can believe that salvation was ordained by the secret counsel of God equally and indiscriminately for *all men*. The true meaning of Paul, however, in the passage now under consideration is perfectly clear and intelligible to every one who is not determined on contention. The apostle is exhorting that all solemn "supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men: for kings and for all that are in authority." And because there were, in that age, so many and such wrathful and bitter enemies of the Church, Paul, to prevent despair from hindering the prayers of the faithful, hastens to meet their distresses by earnestly entreating them to be instant in prayer "for all men," and especially "for all those in authority." "*For* (saith the apostle) God will have all *men* to be saved." Who does not see that the apostle is here speaking of *orders of men* rather than of individuals? Indeed, that distinction which commentators here make is not without great reason and point; that *nations* of individuals, not *individuals* of nations, are here intended by Paul. At any rate, that no other "will" of God is here to be understood than that which is revealed by the external preaching of the Gospel is undeniably evident from the context. The plain meaning of the apostle therefore is, that God "willeth" the salvation of all men considered generally, whom He therefore mercifully calls, or invites, unto Christ by the open preaching of the Word.

But Pighius renews the battle with me on the field of "*respect of persons*." And because it is written that there is "no respect of persons with God," he at once concludes therefrom that *all men* are equally loved of God. I *did*, indeed, answer him, arguing that by the term "persons," in the Scripture, is signified all those external circumstances attached to men, which external circumstances involve not the great *cause* of all, but which procure favour to some men and load others with hatred and contempt. Pighius, however, thunders out that this explanation of the term is absurd beyond all expression or conception. But if the matter were put to the vote, I am quite satisfied that I should have many men of the highest estimation in the Church, both as companions and as leaders, in my interpretation of the term in question. Let one ground on which my explanation rests suffice for the present occasion. There is in the Hebrew language the noun PANIM, which is of the same signification as the

plural Latin noun *Facies*, which signifies "faces" or "appearances. The Hebrew noun PANIM is used when judges are forbidden to "accept *persons* in judgment." The same term is used when Moses testifies that "the Lord regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward" (Deut. i. 17; x. 17). This same noun is also frequently used in the history of Job. Now I would ask, What else can be understood by this term than all kinds of external appearances (as we generally term them) by which we are often drawn aside from the reality, with which they stand connected? In the same manner, the apostles, when speaking of servants and masters, Jews and Gentiles, nobles and obscure, high and low, use the Greek term *proswpon*, to denote that external *appearance* of excellency which some have above others, and which often prevents what is just and right in, or towards, such persons from being clearly seen. Hence it is also that Christ opposes the judging according to *o;yi;n* (that is, "aspect") to *just judgment*. As if He had said, Wherever the favour or hatred of men rules, it cannot be but that such prejudice must pervert all equity and righteousness.

Everyone, therefore, will immediately see that Pighius, carried away by the maddened insolence of hatred against the truth, cared not what he said. But now let us listen to this admonitor's correction of our interpretation. He pronounces "respect of persons" to be a vice that has place in the administration of justice. Whence he concludes that God is no respecter of persons, *because* He is impartial to all men, and *because*, as is becoming in a dispenser of the public justice and of the public good, He shews Himself, as a matter of course, impartially liberal and beneficent. Thus prates Pighius, putting an extinguisher upon the light of the Scripture, and babbling just what first comes into his own truthless head. For the whole Scripture confirms my interpretation and view; nor does my opponent produce one passage to prove *his* absurd figment. And what wonder, when he can bring forth his mad dreams with so much confidence and security, when he has not even weighed the meaning of the very *term* itself upon which he is uttering so much vain talk. And I suppose his thus pouring out words, in contempt of all grammar and sense, is to shew himself off as a great theologian! With him "person" (*persona*) signifies nothing more or less than "man." Whereas it is all the while more than evident that by "person" is signified an *external quality*,

assuming which, or clothed with which, men are considered worthy of favour and respect or justly subjected to contempt. But whether God be an equal and impartial dispenser or not, the testimony of Christ, we think, is much more worthy of credit than that of Pighius. Our Lord then introduces the blessed God, under the person or character of the master of a household, speaking thus, "Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with Mine own? Is thine eye evil because I am good?" According to which reasoning of our Lord, Paul, that he might set forth the adorable God, bound and responsible to no one, nor hindered by any person or thing from dispensing His grace, "according to *His own will*," closes his argument with this interrogation: "Or, who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again?"

Now, in the first place, if there had been one grain of the fear of God in this man Pighius, could he ever have dared thus insolently to call God to order? For he absolutely prescribes it as a rule to the Most High, that He ought to extend His bounty to all equally, as from a public treasury. Thus leaving nothing to God by which to exercise His free beneficence. God judges of every individual (Pighius says) according to the dignity, merit and works of each individual, and not according to His own good pleasure. For what merit in them, then, did God choose the family of Abraham? What dignity did He find in that race which moved Him to prefer them to all the rest of the world? God Himself assigns no other reason than *because* "He loved their fathers." This He declares more expressly elsewhere: "Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and He chose their seed after them, even you, above all people" (Deut. x. 14, 15). In another place, God reduces all their merits to nothing by declaring Abraham and all his family to have been idolaters: "And Joshua said unto the people, Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the Flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods. And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the Flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed and gave him Isaac" (Jos. xxiv. 2, 3). From the above passages, at any rate, I obtain that which Pighius denies: that the sovereign pleasure of God was clearly preached by Moses. But

our opponent denies that it depends on the sovereign decree of God that one is chosen and another left, asserting that it depends on the affections of men. What then meaneth this, "That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth; it was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger"? (Rom. ix. 11, 12.) But the blasphemy which Pighius afterwards vomits out is execrable: "God (he asserts) is made not only unjust, but cruel, if He be represented as ordaining any human being whatever to destruction." Pighius, however, will one day stand before the tribunal of that God of whom Paul declares, "That He will manifest His power upon the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Nay, our opponent even now feels, under the sense of the eternal destruction which awaits him, that God is not a being fabricated out of the opinions or thoughts of men, but that He was, is, and will be, the eternal Judge of the whole world. This miserable mortal (I say) is even now experiencing how true that word is, "That God overcometh when He is judged" (Ps. li. 4).

I am willing to confess, however, that a godly and upright life is sometimes contrasted with "person"(*persona*), as when Peter says, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons (*proswpolhvpth*)"but in every nation he that *feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him*"(Acts x. 34, 35). But the answer to those who would bring this Scripture against us is, that what gifts soever God bestows on His own children He approves and delights in, while in the whole moral nature of man He finds nothing but what deserves His righteous hatred. Wherefore, in order that God may have worshippers whom He may love, He must, while they are yet devoid of all good, first bestow upon them in the midst of their unworthiness of it His free love, and thus freely give them that which He may afterwards love Himself. "But this *first* (or *preventing*) grace He bestows on whom He will (saith Augustine), because He is *merciful*, which grace, if He does not give, He is *just*. And where He giveth it not, it is because He *willeth* not to give it, that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy.' And when Peter says that God is 'no respecter of persons,' he shows, at the close of the chapter, what he means by it, namely, that God sometimes, passing by the children of those who do worship Him, delivers from destruction the children of the reprobate." And what Augustine farther

says on this mighty subject is well worthy of being borne in memory: "No more glorious glass, in which to behold predestination, exists (says he) than the blessed Mediator Himself, who, according to His *human* nature, considered *as such*, attained to the honour of becoming the 'only begotten Son of God' by no merit of His own." But this good pleasure of God, which God Himself sets before us for our admiration in Christ, the Head of the Church, Pighius will not admit or suffer even in the individual members of His body. Nay, he contends that the blessed mother of Christ was chosen on account of her own merit, as is proved (he says) from her own song, "Who hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden." Such are Pighius' PROOFS that the election of God is founded on the merits of men, and that it is not sovereign and free, *because* He chose, in the case of Mary, that which was mean and contemptible!

On this same Divine principle is dissipated also another objection adduced by Pighius: "When Christ (he says) calls the blessed of His Father to inherit the kingdom, He does not state their *being elected* to be *the cause* of their right to that inheritance, but *because* they had done works of charity" (Matt. xxv. 34-36). Now I would by no means hurry away men to the secret election of God, that they may with open mouth expect salvation from thence; but I would exhort them to flee directly to Christ, in whom salvation is set forth before our eyes, which salvation, had it not been revealed in Christ, would have for ever *remained* "hidden in God." For whosoever walketh not in the plain way of faith, to him the election of God can be nothing but a labyrinth of destruction. Wherefore, if we would enjoy the certain remission of our sins, if our consciences would rest in a sure confidence of eternal life, if we would call upon God as our heavenly Father without fear, we must by no means make our *beginning* with the investigation of what God decreed concerning us before the world began. Our contemplation must be what God, of His Fatherly love, *has revealed* to us in Christ, and what Christ Himself *daily preaches* to us through His everlasting Gospel. Our deepest search and highest aim must be to become the sons of God, and to know that we are such. But the *mirror* of free adoption, in which alone we can behold so high and unspeakable a blessing, is Christ the Son, who came down to us from the Father, for the very end that, by engrafting us into His body, He might make us heirs of the kingdom of heaven, of which kingdom He is

Himself the earnest and the pledge. And as, moreover, this inheritance was once obtained for us by the blood of Christ, and remains consigned to us on the sacred pages of the everlasting Gospel; so the knowledge and possession of it can be attained in no other way than by faith.

In a word, I not only now freely confess, but everywhere inculcate, in all my writings both that the salvation of men is inseparably connected with their faith, and that Christ is the only door by which any man can enter the kingdom of heaven, and also that tranquil peace can be found nowhere but in the Gospel. I have, moreover, ever taught that whosoever shall turn aside even the shortest step from the Gospel of Christ, and from faith therein, can do nothing but lose himself in doubts, ambiguities and perplexities; and that the more confidently anyone attempts to break in upon and penetrate those profound mysteries of God's secret counsel, without the Gospel and faith therein, will ever, in so doing, get so much the farther and farther from God. Wherefore, that the children of God, notwithstanding their election of God before all worlds, are to walk by faith, I deny not, but constantly affirm.

Hence, on these principles another argument set against us by our opponent is done away with, when he alleges "that God will crown at the last day those gifts of His Spirit which He may have bestowed on His elect in this present life." But this does not alter the truth and fact that God engrafts, by faith and by the sanctification of His Spirit, those whom He hath chosen in Christ into His body. Nor does it alter the truth that He calls and justifies, in His own time, those whom He predestinated to these blessings before the foundation of the world. Wherefore, Paul connects both these works of God most beautifully, where he says, "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God;" to which he immediately adds, "to them who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). This, then, is the way in which God governs *His own*. This is the manner in which He completes the work of His grace in them. But why He thus takes them by the hand at all there is another and far higher *cause*, namely, His *eternal purpose*, by which He ordained them unto eternal life. Wherefore, the impudence of Pighius is the more ridiculous; for he hesitates not to grasp most insolently, for his own purpose, a testimony of the Scripture which thus stands directly against

him. For in the first place, he would absurdly remind us that it is not said that all things "work together for good " to the *elect* or the *beloved*. But he asserts that a different *cause* is assigned, namely, that it was because *they* loved *God*. Whereas the apostle purposely adds the correction of all possible error upon the point by subjoining "who are the called according to His purpose," that no one might attribute "the working of all things for his good " to his own merit.

In fact, the mind of the apostle in this passage is first to show how the faithful, for whom God causes all things to work together for good," ought to be affected towards Him?that they ought to "love God." And love to God is, indeed, a peculiar first-fruit of being "called" of God. But that those who are thus "called" might not cleave to themselves and their own merits, Paul moreover teaches them that the real source of their salvation and of "all things working together for their good" is seated much higher than themselves?in heaven itself and in the eternal purpose of God, *even because* they were first chosen of God, and were therefore "the called according to His purpose." This knot also Pighius thinks he can loosen and settle by a single sentence, which is positively a solemn joke. He says that God "calls" *all men to holiness*. Whereas the apostle most plainly sets forth "*calling*" as being effectual only by the absolute "*purpose*" of God? "Who are the *called* (saith the apostle) according to His *purpose*." Over these truths, so prominently and striking plain, Pighius would spread a darkness so thick that their transparent clearness should scarcely be seen. What, for instance, can be more perspicuously clear than this passage of Scripture? "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. viii. 30). Now, to what extent soever our opponent may mangle and lacerate this sentence of the Apostle Paul, he can never so stretch it out as to make it reach to all mankind. Hence is evident the extreme folly of the arguments of all those who labour to subvert the election of God by substituting for it faith and good works. This is making, or attempting to make, "the daughter swallow up the mother" (as the old proverb hath it).

## Eternal Predestination - Section 4

The last subterfuge of Pighius in reference to the scripture before us is this: that God predestinated none unto salvation, but they were those whom He foreknew. But this way of escape I have already blocked up against these opponents; where I have shown that God could have foreseen nothing in man but what was worthy of eternal destruction, until He Himself should have created him anew by His Spirit. If, then, no one man has anything good which he hath not received from God, what can one man bring into God's sight more than another in which he can excel his fellow man? God therefore foreknew *His own*, not as foreseeing their merits?for they had none?but because He cast upon them an eye of mercy and favour, thus distinguishing them from others, and numbering them among His children, notwithstanding all their sin and unworthiness, according to that word of Paul, "Who maketh thee to differ?" But Pighius' free foreknowledge, which he calls naked (that is, naked of all preference in the mind of God), is no foreknowledge at all. With what feathers of merit or acceptableness, then, will Pighius adorn *his* foreseen and predestined man, so as to prevent him from coming before God naked and deformed in every part? For the Scripture declares aloud, that whatever there is in fallen and corrupt man by nature is hateful in the sight of God. And it pronounces, with a voice equally loud, that nothing is acceptable to God but His own image in those who are created anew in Christ.

Pighius next proceeds thus: When we are anxiously inquiring the reason why the wicked are eternally condemned, the Scripture does not cast in our teeth such tyrannical sentences as these in reply: Because they were distinguished from the elect by the eternal counsel of God, because it pleased God to ordain them to eternal destruction. We do not, I say, find in the Scripture such shocking and hard answers to our inquiries as these. These are merely the reasons assigned by men in order to make such sentences as these appear to be true?I will it so;. I command it to be so; My will is an all-sufficient reason. No! The reasons which we hear from the mouth of Christ Himself are these "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink," etc., etc. Similar to this argument is that also which Pighius advances in another place. Christ



(says he) will not in the last day say to the wicked that they were eternally condemned, "*because* they were born of the corrupt seed of Adam, *because* they inherited the desert of eternal death from his sin, and *because* it was just and righteous that they should perish for his fault." No, says Pighius, the reasons that Christ Himself will assign before assembled worlds in that day will be these: because they did not give bread to the hungry, because they did not clothe the naked, nor perform other kindred works of charity.

But if original sin and guilt are not, in the estimation of Pighius, sufficient to condemn men eternally, and if the secret judgment of God can have no place with him, what will he make of the case of infant children who are taken out of this life before they could possibly have performed any of the works of charity above alluded to? Now there was the same natural condition of birth and of death both in those infants who died in Sodom and in those who died in Jerusalem, and their works, or rather no works, were precisely the same. How is it, then, that Christ will separate in the last day the one from the other, placing the one on His right hand and the other on His left? Who does not here adore the glorious judgment of God, who ordained that the one part of these children should be born at Jerusalem, whence, through the knowledge of the truth they might afterwards be translated to a better life, while the others should be born in that wide entrance into hell, Sodom? As therefore I hold, in truth, that Christ will in the last day recompense unto the elect the reward of righteousness, so I by no means speak falsely when I assert that the reprobate will in that day pay the punishment of their unrighteousness and of all their iniquities. And though I firmly maintain that God, in His eternal counsel, chose those whom He pleased unto life eternal, and left those whom He pleased to eternal destruction; yet there will not be found in the whole of my doctrine an assertion, either that there are no punishments ordained for evil works, or that there is no reward ordained for good works. No! "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). But the great question is, *whence come* that righteousness and holiness which will then be thus crowned? Whence but from God Himself, who begat these rewarded ones unto newness of life by His own Spirit? And whence

is this gift of regeneration, but from God's free adoption?

Pighius' argument is just like the reasoning of a man who should maintain that the day WAS not *originally* made of created light, *because* it is the shining of the sun that *now* makes the day. This comparison is not, however, I confess, strictly true in all its parts. For the light that was created "in the beginning" has properly God as its author. Whereas our eternal condemnation so wholly rests in ourselves, that it is not, lawful for us to fetch from afar any *foreign* or representative colours which may tend in any way to lessen our sight of its mighty reality. My only object in adopting this comparison was to shew, in a concise manner, how preposterously Pighius withdraws from our view the great *remote* cause by setting immediately before our eyes the proximate cause in the consideration of these momentous matters. He contends that the wicked will be eternally condemned because they have brought upon themselves the wrath of God by their *own* evil doings. And on this ground he concludes that their eternal condemnation does not proceed from *the decree* of God. Whereas I maintain that they have heaped evil deeds upon evil deeds throughout their lives, *because*, being essentially depraved by their birth in sin, they could do nothing else *but* sin. Nevertheless, they sinned thus, not from any outward impulse or constraint, but knowingly and willingly from the spontaneous motion of the heart. Nay, that the corruption and depravity of nature are the source and fountain from which all sins of every kind flow can be denied by no one who would not root out the very rudiments of all godliness. But if you ask me the *reason* why God corrects sin in His own elect, and does not deem the reprobate worthy the same remedy; I reply, the *reason* lies *hidden in Himself*.

It is in this way that the apostle Paul reasons in the 9th chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. After he had proved God to be the great disposer and ordainer of eternal life and eternal death, and had shewn that those will at length be saved whom He rescues from eternal destruction; and after He had loudly declared that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy on whom He will show mercy," and that "whom He will, He hardeneth"; after these declarations, the apostle brings forth copious and, as it were, palpable *causes* of the blindness of his own nation, namely, *because* the greatest part of them

rejected Christ, and *because* they obstinately resisted God, "stretching out His hands unto them (as the prophet expresses it) all the day long." Wherefore, these two solemn principles divinely harmonise with each other, that every man is, in himself, the *cause* of his own eternal condemnation, and that, nevertheless, all those who are destitute of the Spirit of God rush blindly against Christ. Agreeably to these Divine principles, Paul, bringing in the Jews guilty, *because*, "going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God," and were, on that account, cast out of the Church of Christ; Paul, I repeat, having thus enforced these Divine principles, yet plainly teaches that it was entirely *of grace* that the rest stood in the truth and faith, and did not thus fall, according to that remarkable declaration of God Himself: "Yet have I left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him" (1 Kings xix.18). For, as Augustine is careful to remark, "These seven thousand did not stand by their own strength. It was God who reserved them to Himself, that they might be a remnant. But Paul still more expressly declares that the remnant gathered by the coming of Christ in His day was a 'remnant saved according to the free election of grace.' Hearest thou the term 'remnant'? By this expression is signified that a small number was separated from the general mass of mankind. And the apostle affirms that these were saved, not by their own will or strength, but by the free grace and mercy of God. He traces their salvation to God's free election, by which he plainly means that the *sole cause* of their not perishing with the rest of mankind was because they were *freely elected* of God. Whence follows the plain conclusion, that if *all men* were elected, *no man* would perish."

Now if a mortal man should pronounce *his* "I will" and his "I command," and should say that HIS *will* ought to be deemed a *sufficient reason* for HIS *actions*, I confess that such an "I will" would be tyrannical indeed! But to call God's "I will" and God's "I command" tyrannical is profanity, blasphemy and madness! For no mortal dares impute to God anything unequal or excessive, so as to imply that there can be in Him any inordinate *will*, wish, or desire, as in men. On the contrary, such honour and reverence are ever due to His *will*, that it is worthy of being considered as containing in itself all the validity of a *just reason*, because

the will of God is the source and rule of all righteousness. For as to that distinction commonly held in the schools concerning the *twofold will* of God, such distinction is by no means admitted by us. The sophists of Sorbon prate about an *ordinate will* of God and an *absolute will* of God. But this is a blasphemy deservedly abhorred in its sound to all godly ears, but plausible and pleasant to the ears of Pighius and of all his fellows. I, however, on the contrary, contend that so far from there being anything inordinate in God, whatever there is of order, in heaven or in earth, flows from Him alone and from *His will*. Whenever, therefore, we carry the *will* of God to its utmost height, and show that it is *higher than* all reason, far be it from us to imagine that He ever *wills* anything but *with the highest reason*. We also deeply feel that He so possesses, as His own right, the sum of all power, that our sacred duty is to be content with the nod of His will alone in all things. For if that be true which the Psalmist saith, "Thy judgments, O Lord, are a great deep" (Ps. xxxvi. 6), when the mind of a man launches forth into that height of pride that it cannot rest in the alone good pleasure and will of God, let him take solemn heed that *that* "great deep" swallow him not up! Indeed, it must be so, it cannot be otherwise, and such vengeance is gloriously just!

Wherefore, let that noble and solemn appeal of Augustine never fall from our memory: "Listen to what God is and what thou art. He is God! Thou art man! If thou seem to thyself to be speaking of justice in the works and ways of God, is the *Fountain* of all justice, thinkest thou, dried up? Thou, as a man, expectest an answer from me, who also am a man. Therefore, let us both hear the apostle saying, with reference to all questioning of God, 'Nay, but who art thou, O man?' Better is believing ignorance than daring knowledge! Search for *merit*, and you will find nothing but *punishment!*' O the depth!' etc. Peter denies; a robber believes! ? 'O the depth!' etc. Askest thou the reason? ?I tremble before 'the depth!' etc. Reason thou?I will wonder and admire! Dispute thou?I will believe! I see the *height*; I will not rush into the 'depth!' Paul quietly rested, because he found reason for wonder and admiration. *He* calls the judgments of God 'unsearchable'; and comest thou on purpose 'to search into them'? Paul says, 'His ways are past finding out;' and comest thou on purpose 'to find them out?'" Akin to these holy sentiments is that also where Augustine saith in another place: "Wilt thou join me in dispute? Nay, rather join

with me in admiration and wonder! Rather join me in exclaiming, 'O the depth!' etc. Let us agree to tremble together, that we perish not in presumption together!"

Pighius displays, in his own estimation, great acuteness when he argues thus: "There would be no deep abyss at all if the *will* of God were to be considered as the *highest of all reason*, because nothing would be more easy than to say that all things were done *because* God so pleased, where His will ruled absolutely and alone." But by babbling thus sophistically, he ridiculously passes over that very point which forms the great question at issue. It is quite plain that all things are done *because* it so pleased God. But the great question is: *Why* did it please God that one thing should be done in one way, and another thing in a way quite the contrary? Pighius then proceeds with the same line of silly argumentation. And in order that he might show that God had a *reason* and a *cause* in all His counsels, he adduces, as a proof, the answer which Christ gave to His disciples in the case of a blind man: "That he was born blind, that the works of God should be made manifest in him." Thus does Pighius make a shadow battle, and then fight it out, imagining that he has gained the victory. But when, and where, did the monstrous idea enter *my* mind that any counsel of God was without God's *reason* for it? As I constantly make God the RULE of the whole world, who by His incomprehensible and wonderful counsel governs and directs all things, will any man say that he can gather from my words that I make God to be carried this way and that way at random, or to do what He does with blindfold temerity?

Now, it is singular that Pighius quotes some words of mine by which, if I mistake not, he is himself most evidently refuted. The words to which I allude are those wherein I assert that God has a *purpose* in all His ways and works, how *hidden* soever they may be, Which purpose is that He may spread the glory of His Name. But my opponent would set before the eyes of his readers a colour of *contradiction* in my sentiments, because I hold that no *reason* for the goodwill of God in any of His works is to be *required* or *investigated*; and yet that I, at the same time, show what that reason is. But it is useless to waste time in exposing such cold and self-evident absurdities. The Lord has as *a reason* for all His works His *own*

*great glory*. This is His ultimate object in them all. Hence, on the testimony of Paul, God raised up Pharaoh, "that He might show His power in him; and that His name might be declared throughout all the earth" (Rom. ix. 17). Now does the apostle Paul, I pray, contradict himself when he exclaims immediately afterwards that the judgments of God are "past finding out?" The same apostle declares also that the vessels of wrath "*appointed*" by the Lord "unto destruction" were "*endured*" by Him "with much longsuffering," in order that "He might show His wrath, and make His power known in them (Rom. ix. 22). Now, is the wondering admiration of Paul which immediately follows, "O the depth!" *contrary*, I pray you, to this his sentiment? Tell me, I repeat, does the apostle here contradict himself? If he does not, neither do I in my like solemn argument *contradict* myself!

But Pighius goes farther still into error, absurdity and confusion, in his way of arguing. He spreads a false colour over the very term *cause* by introducing the *final cause* in the place of the *formal cause*. For although *the end* to which God looks in His works be not obscure, namely, His own great and wide glory, yet the *reason WHY* it pleaseth Him so to work by no means appears so wholly and immediately plain. The pith, however, and sum of the present point of the whole great question is this: although God does not demonstrate to us by plain and satisfactory arguments His own righteousness in all His works, yet our bounden duty is to be assured that whatever He doeth, He doeth righteously. It is therefore our duty to rest in His will alone. So that our knowledge of His *will* and *pleasure in whatsoever* He doeth, though the cause of His doing it should surpass our comprehension, ought to suffice us more than a thousand reasons. Hence the folly of Pighius in quarrelling with me and accusing me of inconsistency, *because*, while I maintain that no reason for the Divine will should be inquired into, I yet loudly affirm that God willeth nothing but what He judgeth just and right to be done. For he asserts that this latter member of my argument is really *rendering a reason* for the will of God as the cause of all; the rendering of which reason (he says) I elsewhere declare to be inconsistent in myself or in anyone else. But what *knowledge of the cause* can I be said to profess if I only believe that God does what He does with a great design and what He judges right to be done, and especially if I profess myself to be all the while unable to

*comprehend* the certain and special *reason* of the Divine work and counsel? Added to all this, my opponent, considering the mighty *difference* between the reverence of faith and the audacity of inquiry into God's will a matter, of no moment at all, seizes hold of that which I teach to be a matter of faith, and preposterously hurls it into the circle of that common knowledge which is of human conception.

Upon this absurd principle, if anyone should affirm that God hath a glorious object in His every act, and should shortly after exclaim, with the apostle, that God's "judgments are unsearchable" and "His ways past finding out," he must, at the moment of such exclamation, be set down as a man contradicting himself. Pighius however, is mistaken altogether. For he calls upon me to acknowledge *my* very own words, when the passage to which he refers is absolutely one which I had *cited* from Augustine. It is this: "When men ask us (says that holy man) *why* God did this or that, our answer is to be, 'Because it was His will.' If they go on to inquire, *Why* did He so will it? our reply should be, Now thou askest that which is greater and higher than the will of God itself! Thou askest that which none can find out!' Let human rashness, then, keep itself within bounds. Let it never seek after that which is not, lest it should not find that which is." Most truly does Augustine speak in these words, and he has my fullest assent. Nor do my above sentiments contain anything which does not perfectly harmonise with these words of the holy father. My sentiments and arguments are, that the will of God is the best and most rightful adjustment of all the things that He hath made and done.

There is another objection of the same chaff which Pighius raises against my following published sentiments: "I deny that the reprobate are distinguished and separated from the elect by any respect of God to the merits of the latter; because the grace of God *makes* them worthy of His adoption of them, it does not *find* them worthy" (as Augustine frequently remarks). In another place I thus express myself: "I deny that any injury is done to the reprobate by their reprobation, *because* they *deserve* eternal destruction." Here Pighius spreads out his wings in tumultuous exultation, noisily exclaiming that I neither understand myself nor my own sentiments, nor at all remember what I have myself before said. But so far am I from thinking it necessary to spend many words in my

defence, that I can hardly bring myself to employ even a few words for that object. I will observe, then, that when God prefers some to others, when He chooses some and passes by others, the difference is not made on the ground of *worthiness* or *unworthiness*, either in the one or in the other. Therefore, it is false to say that the reprobate are worthy eternal destruction. If, therefore, in the *former* case, there is no comparison of men with each other, nor any connection of *worthiness* with the reward of eternal life; in the latter case, there is certainly no proof that the condition of all men is *equal* with reference to the *election of God*. Add to this, that Augustine, having asserted in one part of his writings that no man ever failed of salvation who was *worthy* of it, qualifies this expression in his subsequent recapitulations, carefully excluding all idea of *works* and referring all *acceptable worthiness* to the free grace calling of God.

Pighius, however, still pushes on his violent opposition, alleging that if what I teach be true, that those who perish were ordained unto everlasting death by the eternal will of God, of which *the reason* is imperceptible to us, the persons so ordained *are made* worthy of everlasting death, *not found* so. I reply that *three* things are here to be considered: 1. That the eternal predestination of God, by which He decreed, before the Fall of Adam, what should take place in the whole human race and in every individual thereof, was unalterably fixed and determined. 2. That Adam himself, on account of his departure from God, was deservedly appointed to eternal death. 3. And lastly, that in the person of Adam, thus fallen and lost, his whole future offspring were also eternally condemned; but so eternally condemned that God *deems* worthy the honour of His adoption *all those* whom He freely *chose* out of that future offspring. Of these mighty things I have neither dreamed any part, nor fabricated any part. Nor am I called upon, in the present instance, to *prove* each particular, for I consider that I have most effectually done that already. All I shall do is to wash off from myself the calumny with which my opponent has soiled me, when he says that these things can in no way be made to harmonise or consist with each other. Whereas, what I have ever invariably taught, and still teach at this day, is, that whenever election is the subject of discussion, the great point to be maintained, from first to last, is that all the reprobate are justly left under



eternal death, *because* they died and were eternally condemned in Adam; also, that those perish justly who are by nature the children of wrath; and finally, that, therefore, no one can have cause to complain of the too great severity of God, seeing that *all men* bear, in themselves and in their individual persons, the guilt and desert of death eternal.

When we come to speak of the first man in our discussion of the doctrine of predestination, my teaching is that we ought ever to consider the solemn case to be this: that he, having been created perfectly righteous, fell of his own accord and willingly, and that, by that fall he brought destruction eternal on himself and his whole future race. And though Adam fell not, nor destroyed himself and his posterity, either *without* the knowledge or *without* the ordaining will of God, yet that neither lessens his own fault, nor implicates God in any blame whatever. For we must ever carefully bear in mind that Adam, of his own will and accord, deprived himself of that perfect righteousness which he had received from God; and that, of his own accord and will, he gave himself up to the service of sin and Satan, and thus precipitated himself into destruction eternal. Here, however, men will continually offer one uniform *excuse* for Adam?that it was not possible for him to help or *avoid* that which God Himself had *decreed*. But to establish the guilt of Adam for ever, his own *voluntary* transgression is enough, and more than sufficient. Nor, indeed, is the secret counsel of God the *real* and *virtua1 cause* of sin, but manifestly the *will* and *inclination* of man.

The folly of the complaint of Medea is justly derided even by the ancient poet, when he represents her as uttering the well-known lamentation, "O that the ship, made of planks cut down by axes from the Pelian grove, had never sailed from Egina to Colchis, my native land!" Medea had betrayed her country, carried away by the passion of a desperate love which she had conceived for a foreigner, and an entire stranger. And when her conscience smites her for her perfidy and barbarous cruelty, when the shame of unlawful indulgence overwhelms her, she absurdly turns her thoughts of regret to various *remote* circumstances as the *causes* of her misery. But since every human being can always find the *cause* of his evils in *himself*, of what avail is it to look about him on every side, or to seek that *cause* in heaven? Thus Medea's fault plainly appears in that she

had sinned voluntarily and willingly. Why, then, does she plunge herself into a labyrinth of lost thought by rushing into the mysteries of heaven? For, although mortal men may employ their thoughts in circuitous reasonings, ever so long and deep, they never can so far delude or stupefy themselves as not to find and feel that they carry the originating cause of all their sins deeply seated in their own hearts. Impious reasoning, therefore, will attempt in vain to absolve from the guilt of sin that man who stands condemned by his *own conscience*. And as to God's having knowingly and willingly permitted man to fall, His *reason* for so doing may be *hidden*! UNJUST, it cannot be! And this, moreover, should ever be held fast without controversy, that sin was ever hateful to God. For that praise which David loudly bestows on the Most High strictly applies to His adorable Majesty in every respect: "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity" (Ps. v. 5). Wherefore, in ordaining the Fall of man especially, God had an *end* most glorious and most just; an end, into our contemplation of which the mention or idea of *sin* on the part of God can never enter; the very *thought* of its entrance strikes us with horror!

Although, therefore, I thus affirm that God did ordain the Fall of Adam, I so assert it as by no means to concede that God was therein properly and really the *author* of that Fall. That I may not, however, dwell extensively on this great point now, I will only express it as my view, belief and sentiment, that what Augustine so deeply teaches on this matter was fulfilled in God's ordaining the Fall of Adam: "In a wonderful and unutterable way *that* was not done *without* the will of God (says he), which was even done *contrary* to His will; because it could not have been done at all, if His will had not *permitted* it to be done And yet He did not permit it *unwillingly*, but *willingly*." The great and grand principle, therefore, on which Augustine argues cannot be denied: "That both man and apostate angels, as far as they were themselves concerned, did that which God *willed not* or which was *contrary to* His WILL; but that, as far as God's *overruling omnipotence* is concerned, they could not, in any manner, have done it *without* His will." To these sentiments of the holy man I subscribe with all my heart. I solemnly hold that man and apostate angels *did*, by their sin, that which was *contrary* to the will of God, to the end that God, by means of their *evil will*, might effect that which was *according to* His *decreeing will*. If anyone should reply that this is above

the capability of his mind to comprehend, I also acknowledge and confess the same. But why should we wonder that the *infinite* and incomprehensible majesty of God should surpass the narrow limits of our *finite* intellect? So far, however, am I from undertaking to explain this sublime and hidden mystery by any powers of human reason, that I would ever retain in my own memory that which I declared at the commencement of this discussion? that those who seek to know more than God has revealed are *madmen!* Wherefore, let us delight ourselves more in wise ignorance than in an immoderate and intoxicated curiosity to know more than God permits. Let all the powers of our mind restrain themselves within the bounds of this reverential assurance, that God willed nothing by the sin of man, but what *became* of His *infinite justice!*

Pighius thus continues: "If the apostasy of man be the work of God, that which the Scripture declares is not true when it saith, 'That all things which God doeth are very good.'" Now I can sacredly testify, and with all candour confess, that this comment of my adversary never entered my mind. I have everywhere asserted that man was created in the beginning perfectly upright. I have constantly asserted this, I say, for the very purpose of preventing the depravity which he contracted by his Fall from being attributed to God. I have, with equal constancy, asserted that the eternal death to which man rendered himself subject so proceeded from his own fault that God cannot, in any way, be considered the *author* of it. Now, if I had ever asserted that the departure of the first man from God proceeded in any way from the inspiration or motion of the Spirit of God; if I had not, on the contrary, uniformly contended that Adam fell by the instigation of the devil and by the impulse of his own heart; then, indeed, Pighius might justly have made his furious attack upon me. But now, removing as I do from God all the *proximate cause* of the act in the Fall of man, I thereby remove from Him also all the *blame* of the act, leaving man alone under the sin and the guilt. While I thus teach, then, why does my opponent calumniously and wickedly slander me by asserting that I make the Fall of man "*one of the works of God*"? But *how* it was that God, by His foreknowledge and decree, ordained what should take place in Adam, and yet so ordained it without His being Himself in the least a participator of the fault, or being at all the author or the approver of the transgression; *how* this was, I repeat, is a secret manifestly far too deep to

be penetrated by any stretch of human intellect. Herein, therefore, I am not ashamed to confess my utter ignorance. And far be it from anyone of the faithful to be ashamed to confess his ignorance of that which the Lord God has wholly enveloped in the blaze of His own inaccessible light!

And here, let my readers be assured that I offer no counsel to others which I do not follow myself with my whole heart. For the Lord is my witness, my conscience also bearing the same witness in the Holy Ghost, that I so meditate upon these His stupendous judgments of God daily, as not to feel the least curiosity or desire to know anything beyond that which I now know and have testified. Nor does any misgiving suspicion of God's all-surpassing justice ever steal into my mind. Nor does any inclination to murmur ever entice my spirit. In a word, I fully rest, not less calmly than willingly, in the following sentiments of Augustine: "God (says he), who created all things very good, foreknew that evil would arise out of that good; and He also knew that His glorious and omnipotent goodness would be the more highly exalted by His producing good out of evil, than by His not permitting evil to be at all. He ordained the life of angels and of men, that He might first of all make it manifest by that life what *free will* could do, and then afterwards show what the blessing of His *grace* and the *judgment of His justice* could do." To these Divine sentiments I would merely add (repeating my heartfelt assent to them), that if the ears of any persons so continually itch that they cannot let any one of the mysteries of God remain hidden and closed, that teacher would be worse than insane who should attempt to satisfy such disciples by his instructions.

No! Let us rather hear, and tremble at, that which happened to David when he was inclined to inquire into certain unusual judgments of God, which appeared in the external circumstances of persons and of this present life: "So foolish was I (says he), and ignorant; I was as a beast before Thee" (Ps. lxxiii. 22). An exalted prophet like David (we see) could not *attempt* to be wise beyond what is lawful without being confounded and made to feel himself to be, as it were, a brute beast. Is it to be supposed, then, that *we* can indulge with impunity a preposterous wantonness of mind in attempting to comprehend the counsel of God, the deepest of all things in heaven or earth? After Paul had testified that God

chose whom He would out of the lost mass of mankind, and had reprobated whom He would, the apostle was so far from attempting to explain how or why God did so, that, overwhelmed with wonder, admiration and awe, he burst forth into the exclamation, "O the depth!" etc. Shall we, then, unawed by that "depth" and destitute of all reverence, dare to search into the "depth" of the Fall, and to inquire how it was that God suffered the whole human race to fall in Adam? I have already observed that the Fall of Adam is a standing lesson of humility to all his posterity; a lesson from which they may learn that they are nothing in themselves, and can do nothing to regard eternal life; that Adam was perfect, and could do perfectly, and yet he fell! "O the depth!" Now, the one and only right rule of being wise is for the mind of man to restrain itself by that bridle of wonder? "O the depth!" etc.

We have not, however, touched upon this mighty question even thus lightly, merely because it was abstruse and hidden in the inmost recess of the sanctuary of God, but because an idle curiosity is not to be indulged, of which curiosity, high-minded speculation is the foster-mother and the nurse. And although I greatly approve all that Augustine says in his "*Commentary on Genesis*" (chap. xi. 4-8), where he is bringing all things down to form a *lesson in the fear and reverence of God*; yet that other part, where he shows that God chose out of the condemned race of Adam those whom He pleased, and reprobated those whom He pleased, appears to me to be far more calculated to inspire and exercise *faith*; and his treatment of that subject is likely to produce more abundant fruits. I, therefore, for my part, find more freedom and happiness in enforcing that doctrine which contains in its teaching the corruption, sin and guilt of human nature. This substance of doctrine appears to me, not only to be more conducive to instruction in all fundamental godliness, but to be more theological. Let us remember, however, that in this latter substance of doctrine, concerning the depravity and corruption of human nature, we must reason soberly and humbly. The greatest care must be taken that we go no farther than the Lord leads us by His Word. For we know too well how captivating the allurements of the reasonings and penetrations of human wit are. Wherefore, the greater caution is to be exercised that the simplicity of faith bind fast all our senses by her golden chain.

Now, that God draws men unto Himself by the secret inspiration and influence of His Holy Spirit even our daily prayers bear witness. For when we pray for our persecutors, what else do we petition for them than that *they*; may become willing to obey God *who* were *before* unwilling; that *they* may, with us, receive the truth *who* *before* resisted it; that *they* may love God *who* before fought against Him? But it is openly manifest that it is not given to *all men* indiscriminately; that God should, on a sudden, deem those worthy eternal life who had deserved eternal destruction a hundred times over. "But *how it* is (saith Augustine) that God bestows this grace, making some, according to their *just desert*, vessels of wrath, and making others, according to *His grace*, vessels of mercy; if we ask *how* this is, no other reply can be given than this, '*Who* hath known the mind of the Lord?' And though the pride and insolence of the world kick violently at such a comparison, though made by the Holy Spirit Himself, yet *it* is by no means to be borne that the condition of God should be worse than that of man! For what creditor among men has not the privilege of *demanding payment* from one debtor, and of *forgiving the debts* of another?" This similitude is very frequently, and most appropriately, used by Augustine. "It cannot indeed be (says he) but that the natural mind of man must, in a moment, become ruffled when he hears that the same grace of God is denied to some who are indeed unworthy, and freely given to others who are manifestly equally unworthy. Let us, however, well consider that after all were equally under eternal condemnation, it is by no means lawful or right in us to impose on God a restraint that should prevent Him from having mercy on whom He will." Most rightly, however, does Augustine contend that the justice of *God* is by no means to be measured by the short rule of *human* justice. "After all has been said that can be said (observes he) upon this stupendous subject, let the short but awe-filled exclamation of the apostle terminate all our disputations. Let us with him stand in awe of the unsearchable mind of God and breathe, 'O the depth!' etc. If impudent tongues make a noise, contending or demanding more, let us never be ashamed nor grieved to utter the apostle's loud rebuke, 'Nay, but who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?'"

Now, though I believe I have, in my "Institutes," already refuted with clearness and brevity the various absurdities of opposition which my

adversaries heap upon my doctrine from all quarters, that they may calumniate and defame it; and though I think I have effectually met and exposed many of those figments by which ignorant persons delude and bewilder themselves; yet, as Pighius has found much delight in nibbling at my testimonies and my replies to opponents, I will not object to wash off from myself, as I proceed, his virulent soil.

Some of our adversaries have preposterously asked, How can men be certain of their salvation if it lies in the secret counsel of God? I have replied in these statements, which are the truth. Since the certainty of salvation is "set forth" unto us in Christ, it is useless, and not without dishonour to Christ Himself, to pass over this fountain of life, which is thrown open that men may draw out of it, and to labour and toil in vain to draw the water of eternal life out of the *hidden abysses* of the mind and counsel of God! Paul testifies, indeed, that we were "chosen before the foundation of the world," but it was in Christ." Let no one, then, seek confidence in his own election of God anywhere else than "in Christ," unless, indeed, he would blot out, and do away with, the "book of life" in which his name is written. God's adoption of us "in Christ" is for no other end than that we should be considered His children. Now the Scripture declares that all those who believe in the only-begotten Son of God are the children and heirs of God. Christ, therefore, is the clear glass in which we are called upon to behold the eternal and hidden election of God; and of that election He is also the earnest. But the eye, by which we behold that eternal life which God sets before us in this glass, is faith. And the hand by which we lay hold of this earnest and pledge is faith. If any will have the matter more plainly stated, let them take it thus: election *precedes* faith as to its Divine order, but it is seen and understood by faith. What I here just touch upon, however, readers will find more fully explained in my "Institutes." Hence Christ, when dwelling on the eternal election of *His own* in the counsel of the Father, points out, at the same time, the ground on which their confidence may safely rest; where He says, "I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word" (John xvii. 6). We see here that God begins with Himself, when He condescends to choose us and give us to Christ. But He will have us begin with Christ, if we would know that we are numbered

among His "peculiar people." God the Father is said to have given us to His Son, to the end that each one of His chosen might enjoy the knowledge that he is an heir of His heavenly kingdom as long as he abides in Christ, out of whom death and destruction beset us on every side. Christ is therefore said to "manifest the name" of the Father unto us, because He seals on our hearts by His Spirit, the knowledge of our election by the Father, which is openly declared unto us by the voice of the Gospel of the Son.

Now, if we would believe what my friend, Pighius, says, he would make it appear that I so labour and sweat, and so turn things upside-down, so confound and transfound everything, as to make it perfectly evident that I am condemned by my own conscience in all I write or say. Pighius, indeed, can pour out the flood of his characteristic loquacity with all the ease in the world, and without one drop of sweat at all. But that his tongue might have full play, he seems always to take care to wet himself well with wine, that he may be able to blow forth at random, and without any check of shame whatever, those blasts of abuse that first fill his two swollen cheeks. Another objection is, "that if the predestination of God be the immutable and inevitable cause of salvation, all faith and confidence in us, and the need of them, are at once taken out of our hands." Without offering a word of my own argument in reply to a statement so preposterously absurd, I will merely observe, that when Paul testifies that we are made partakers of Divine adoption, because we were chosen before the foundation of the world; what is there, I pray, inexplicable or perplexed in this doctrine and its connection? For when the apostle teaches, in the same context, that those who were thus chosen of God first, were afterwards called according to His purpose, he beautifully harmonises, if I mistake not, the sure confidence of our faith with the immutable decree of the election of God.

Pighius farther reasons thus: "If all those who are *members of the body of Christ* are 'written in the book of life,' then drunkards, adulterers, thieves, perjured persons, murderers, etc., etc., will inherit the kingdom of God. All this, however, is flatly contrary to the plain testimony of the Apostle Paul, for multitudes of these have been 'engrafted into Christ' by baptism, and have 'put on Christ.'" Now, in the first place, I would entreat my



readers to direct their thoughts for a minute to this loose-reined profanation of the Scripture, in which Pighius so much delights to revel; and next, that they would mark the just judgment of God in avenging that profanation, which judgment Pighius so evidently exemplifies in himself. For, with him, to trample under foot the whole of Scripture together is nothing! Provided that he can deceive the eyes of his readers by false colours of the Word of God, and make himself great in the estimation of the inexperienced, he will snap his finger at uprooting the very first principles of all godliness. The Lord, however, deprives him of his common senses, and exposes him to the ridicule even of children.

Now circumcision is represented by the Apostle Paul as being twofold: the circumcision of "the letter" and the circumcision of "the Spirit;" In the same manner also, we are ever to think and speak of baptism. Many bear in their bodies the *sign* only, but are far from the possession of the *reality*. Thus Peter also, after having said that we are saved by baptism, immediately declares, by way of an additional correction and caution, that the bare external washing of the flesh is not sufficient, unless there be also the answer of a good conscience. "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh (saith he), but the answer of a good conscience towards God" (1 Peter iii. 21). Wherefore the Scripture, when setting forth the Sacraments, ever speaks of them in a twofold sense. When it is dealing with hypocrites who, glorying in the empty *sign*, disregard the *reality*, in order to prostrate the vain confidence of such, it carefully distinguishes the reality from the sign, by which distinction the perverseness of their minds is at once exposed and defeated. It is in this manner that Paul reminds the Corinthians (1 Cor. x. 5) that it was of no profit to the ancient people that they were all baptised in their passage through the Red Sea, and "did all eat the same spiritual food" with us, and "did all drink the same spiritual drink" with us; that is (Paul means), did all partake of the same *outward signs* of spiritual gifts with us. But when the apostle is addressing believers, he speaks of the Sacraments in their *legitimate* and *efficacious* use as answering the ends of their Divine institution. When, therefore, Paul is thus speaking of the Sacraments, he uses the phrases, who have "put on Christ," who have been "engrafted into His body," who have been "buried together with Him," who have been "baptised in His Name," etc., in their essential meanings. But Pighius absurdly concludes,

from Paul's use of these expressions, that all those who have been sprinkled with the visible element of water are really regenerated by the Spirit and are really incorporated into the body of Christ, so as to live unto God and in His righteousness. Nor is he ashamed to fill page after page of his writings with such absurdities as these. Whereas, when I am speaking in my writings of men generally, I call all those "members of Christ" in an *external* sense who have been sprinkled with the water of *external* baptism. Shortly afterwards, however, Pighius draws in a little his expanded wings, and remarks that many fall away from Christ who had been really engrafted into His body; and he makes it out that those whom Christ received from the Father, as committed to His faithfulness and care, are so saved by Him as to have their salvation still dependent on their own free-will. "There are many (says he) who want not the protection of the grace of Christ, but who are wanting to themselves."

Most certainly the indolence and ingratitude of those can never be condemned with sufficient severity who willingly withdraw themselves from the protection of God. But it is an insult to Christ, by no means to be endured, for a man to say that the elect of God are saved by Him provided they take diligent care of themselves. In this manner that protection of Christ is rendered wholly precarious and doubtful, against which, however, Christ Himself declares that the devil and all the machinations of hell shall never prevail. Christ Himself promised that He would give eternal life unto all those that were given unto Him of the Father. And He testified that He had been a safe keeper of them all up to the day on which He thus promised, and that "none of them was lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled" (John xvii. 2, 12). In another place He declares that the elect of God are in His hands, and that no one shall pluck them out, because God is mightier than the whole world. If, then, eternal life is certain to all the elect; if no one can be plucked from the hand of Christ; if they can be torn away from Him by no violence, no desperateness of assault; if their salvation stands in the invincible might of God; what a brazen and audacious brow must Pighius possess to attempt to shake such a certainty and security as this? But this is not all. He goes on to say, "Though Christ casts no one out, indeed; yet many of their own will depart from Him. And those who were the children of God for a time do not continue such." Pighius here betrays his

wickedness and perverseness as an interpreter by his refusing to acknowledge that all those whom the Father gave unto Christ are safely preserved in His hands unto the end, that they might be saved. Because, all those who fall away are declared by John not to have been of Christ's flock at all. "They went out from us (says the evangelist), but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us" (1 John ii. 19).

If your doctrine and argument be true, says Pighius, that all the elect are thus secure in the hand of Christ "unto the end," the condition of salvation on which Christ Himself lays down is proposed in vain, where He says, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matt. x. 22). Here, everyone must confess, that my opponent prevaricates. He had undertaken to prove that our confidence of our salvation could not consistently *stand with* our election of God. But now, his reasoning draws us away from that point, and leads us to prove that the *former* necessarily *stands on the latter*. I thus find myself so perpetually tossed to and fro by the billows of this man's violent attacks, that scarcely a moment passes in which I am not in danger of being drowned. But, as God ever upholds His elect to prevent them from sinking, I feel quite confident that I shall stand against all my adversary's incessant storms. When Pighius asks me *how I know* that I am elected, my answer is, "Christ is, to me, more than a thousand witnesses." For when I find myself engrafted into His body, my salvation rests in a place so safe, secure, and tranquil, that it is as if I already realised it in heaven. If Pighius say, in reply, that the eternal election of God cannot be judged of by *present grace*, I will not attempt, on my part, to bring forward as proofs those feelings which believers experience in this matter, because it is not given unto "strangers" even to taste that bread on which the "children" of God feed. But when Pighius dares to prate that it is nowhere found in the Scripture that the children of God know their eternal election by their present grace, a falsehood so bare and base is disproved by the Word of God in a moment. After Paul had testified that those who were elected are called and justified, and at length attain unto a blessed immortality, fortified, as it were, by a strong bulwark on every side, he thus exults and triumphs, "Who shall stand against God's elect?" etc. And that no one might suppose this doctrine of

security to apply to all men generally, he directly afterwards applies it to the peculiar use of each believer: "For I am persuaded (says 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. viii. 33, 38, 39). Now, whereas Pighius will have it that the believer's confidence of eternal salvation may be broken short at any moment, Paul extends it into futurity and into an eternity beyond the limit of this present life, and demonstrates that such a confidence proceeds from no other source than from God's election! Pighius, on the contrary, so represents the believer's confidence and his election as *opposite* and *contradictory*, that he makes them destroy each other.

"What, then, does Ezekiel mean (inquires Pighius) when he denounces destruction on the righteous man, if he shall turn aside from the right way?" (Ezek. xviii. 26.) Now we deny not that there are sometimes in the reprobate many things which are found also in the children of God; but how brightly so ever they may shine with the appearance of righteousness, it is quite certain that they never proceeded from the spirit of adoption. Such reprobate persons, thus apparently righteous, could never truly call upon God as their Father. For Paul testifies that none are ever "led" by that spirit of adoption but *the sons of God*, whom he also pronounces to be "heirs" of eternal life. Were it otherwise, that which the same apostle testifies in another place would not stand good, where he says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God." And again, "But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. ii. 12, 16). Were it otherwise (we repeat), the apostle Paul would have in vain called that Spirit, by which the faithful are sealed, "the *earnest* of their *future inheritance*." But, that the right knowledge of our election of God strengthens our faith in our final perseverance, *that one* prayer of Christ ought to furnish an abundant proof, in which He commends all the elect to His heavenly Father, separating them by name from the world, and praying that when this world should be no more, they might remain saved from all its evil, being made "perfect" and "one" with Himself and the Father in glory (John xvii.).



## Eternal Predestination - Section 5

Then follows another objection of Pighius: "It is not without purpose (says he) that Paul warns all the faithful to take heed that they 'receive not the grace of God in vain,' Nor is it without a purpose, that Christ exhorts all His disciples to 'watch and pray.'" But if we understand and hold fast the important difference between the unconcerned security of the flesh and that tranquil staidness of mind which faith produces, the knot of this objection is untied at once. Believers ought to rest in the certainty of their salvation. But for what end? That they might lie still in sleepy quiet? That they might throw themselves down in cowardly indolence? Oh, no! But rather that, as they thus enjoy a quiet rest in God, they might give themselves the more unto prayer. Paul exhorts such to "work out their salvation with fear (*timore*) and trembling" (*tremore*) (Phil. ii. 12). Why is this exhortation? Is it that they might live in fear and uncertainty as to the issue? By no means. But that, nestling under the shadow of the wings of God, they might continually commit themselves unto His care, depending on Him alone, and so resting in His almighty power, as not to doubt of their being victorious unto the end. For Paul immediately subjoins the *reason why* the faithful should be thus anxious to shelter under the wings and omnipotent power of God: "For it is God (saith he) that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 13). Moreover, that the faithful might not remain in hesitation and suspense, he had already relieved them from all possible doubt. "Being confident (saith he) of this very thing, that He which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6). The Holy Spirit, therefore, nowhere exhorts us to the care and exercise of prayer under any idea that our salvation fluctuates in a state of uncertainty or doubt, for it rests safely in the hand of God. He nowhere imposes upon us a fear which might tend in any way to shake our confidence in the free love of God. No! The blessed Spirit, by such exhortations as these, designs only to quicken our natural slothfulness and unconcern.

It is to carry out, and enforce, this last objection of his also that Pighius

calumniously twists and perverts the words of the apostle in the eleventh chapter of his Epistle to the Romans: "And if some of the branches be broken *off*, and thou being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive tree; boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou bearest not the root, but the root thee. Thou wilt say then, The branches were broken off, that I might be grafted in Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee. Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but towards thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off" (Rom. xi. 17-22). But the real meaning of this passage is as follows: After the apostle had, in this chapter, spoken of the twofold election of his nation (the national and the eternal), and had shown that by the falling away of many of them, it had come to pass that those who before had been the legitimate and proper heirs of life, by means of the covenant which God had established with their fathers, were "broken off" and cast out, as banished from His kingdom; after speaking thus of his own nation, Paul directs his word to the Gentiles, warning them not to triumph over the Jews, nor to offer them any insult, because God had taken them into their place. Now we are here carefully to observe that, as the universal rejection of the Jews did nor at all alter or shake the fixed election of God, so as to prevent Him from saving some "remnant " of them, so the universal election of the Gentiles did not embrace every individual of the Gentiles, so as to make them all sharers of eternal life. Paul, I repeat, is here speaking of God's twofold election of the Jewish nation. For the whole family of Abraham had been, in a certain sense, elected of God. But as many of them were not ordained unto eternal life by God's secret judgment and counsel, the *greater number* perished, though the election of God still rested on the "*remnant*." Now, however, that the covenant of life is transferred to the Gentiles, that general adoption of the family of Abraham belongs to us. But this does not prevent those few of the family of Abraham from still enjoying their adoption, who were ordained thereunto by the secret good pleasure and decree of God.

Paul, therefore, when thus contrasting the Gentiles with the Jews, calls

the former "wild olive trees" engrafted on the original sacred root after its natural branches had been broken off. Nor is the apostle here speaking of individuals in a private sense, nor is he treating of the secret election of God abstractedly. He is showing what a mighty change of things was made when the legitimate children were rejected and strangers substituted in their place. The whole of this exhortation Paul is not so much addressed to those believers who had truly and in heart received the grace of God, as to the whole body of the Gentiles, which was promiscuously composed of various members, believers and unbelievers. And yet, there is nothing singular in God's restraining the pride and insolence of the flesh in His own Gentile children, seeing that they all labour under this corrupt infirmity. But Pighius most ridiculously concludes from the above exhortation of the apostle that the certainty of God's election and its final accomplishment depend upon the perseverance of men. This conclusion of Pighius is, we repeat, most absurd, because, in the falling away of all men generally from God, His eternal election must nevertheless stand and prevail.

As to the profane who stigmatize the judgment of God, representing it under an utterly false colour, and saying, "It is in vain for the reprobate to strive after righteousness and holiness, because, according to the doctrine of election, they must ultimately and inevitably perish." Such a calumny, as it is the offspring of the grossest ignorance, may be shaken off from us by a very brief reply, thus: There can be no real desire of doing good in men which does not proceed from God's election of them. The reprobate, however, made, as they are, vessels unto dishonour, never cease to provoke the vengeance of God upon themselves; thereby manifestly proving, as in written characters, that they are ordained to destruction. To Pighius, however, such a doctrine is the very climax of absurdity. So much so, that he declares there is no monstrosity equal to it to be found in all the discussions of this subject put together. But by this one declaration it is manifest that he is so carried away by a rabid lust of reviling all that is good, that abuses boil over, out of his breast, without any real occasion whatever. The Scripture plainly teaches that none but the elect of God are ever ruled or "led" by His Spirit. What rectitude or right-doing then can there be in man without the "leading" of the Holy Spirit? Hence it is that Paul saith, "The works of the flesh are manifest,



which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like" (Gal. v. 19-21). And he elsewhere declares that all the thoughts of the carnal mind are "enmity against God" (Rom. viii. 7).

What inconsistency, then, is there in my affirming that all those who are not regenerated by the Spirit of God are the slaves of sin, and carried headlong at the will of the flesh? Those whom God chooses, He justifies by His own righteousness. What marvel, then, if the reprobate, who are destitute of the righteousness of God, should do nothing, nor know how to do anything, but sin? But God has chosen His own for the very end that they might be "holy and without blame." If, then, holiness be the fruit of free-election, who can but confess that all the rest of men remain sunk in the filth and profanity of nature? Christ declares that none can hear His voice but His own sheep. And He asserts, on the other hand, that all those who will not hear the voice of the Father sounding in His mouth, "are of their father the devil" (John viii. 43, 44). When Pighius wants to show that reprobates study to do good works, he must, to be consistent, also show that their obstinacy is pleasing to God. But Pighius, in support of his doctrine, that the reprobate really do devote themselves to good works, argues that Saul excelled in many virtues. Nay, that he pleased God. That the virtues which shine in the reprobate are laudable in themselves I by no means deny. And this is what the Scripture means when it says that Saul, and others of the same character, "did what was right." But as God looks at the heart, the fountain from which all works flow, a work which is, in a general sense, good in itself, may nevertheless be an "abomination in the sight of God." In fact, this first principle of all godliness is wholly unknown to Pighius: "that there is nothing so pure that the uncleanness of man will not defile." It is no wonder, therefore, that our opponent, looking at the works of Saul, while wearing his external mask, lauds his innocence and virtues. When Pighius contends that Saul did in one instance please God, I grant it, and I make this case an exception to my general remark. God did, indeed, so honour him in his office as king, that the house of Israel, as we find in the Scripture, never once censured him, as Ezekiel also testifies. So Judas was chosen to the apostolic office. Will Pighius conclude that Judas was therefore

numbered among the children of God? But my opponent calumniates all this my testimony, making me to be speaking all the time of the single actions of life abstractedly considered; whereas I am speaking of the continuous course and tenor of life. In a word, if we make not all the goodness and righteousness that can be found in man to proceed from the Spirit of sanctification, the whole testimony of the Scriptures must be shaken.

It is useless to spend farther time and trouble in replying to the other cavils of our adversary. His next objection is in every enemy's mouth: "All teaching is vain, and all exhortation worthless, if strength and power to obey wholly depend on the election of God." And this farther cavil is akin to it: "Men will, as an inevitable consequence, give themselves up to indolence and unconcern when they are thus taught to rest in the eternal counsel of God." The replies to these objections, already given by me in my "Answers," are so attacked by Pighius with his usual abuse, that I will allow them to remain quiet, and will not repeat them here to be defiled again by his hands

But if there be any ultramorse ones who are not yet satisfied, and who consider that there is more weight in the testimony of Augustine (which acknowledgment I have often and willingly made myself), I will produce his sentiments on this subject in his own words, thereby testifying my own assent to their truth. His words, as found in his book entitled, "On the Blessing of Perseverance," are these: "Men say that the doctrine of predestination stands adverse to *all preaching*, rendering it altogether useless. According to this, the preaching of Paul himself was altogether useless, which was full of this doctrine. Did not this great teacher of the Gentiles preach the doctrine of predestination continually? But did we ever hear of his ceasing to preach the Word of God because he found his preaching *useless*? Paul preached, 'It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.' But do we ever find that, on that account, he ceased to exhort us 'to will' and wish those things which please God, and 'to work' ourselves with all our power? Paul preached, 'He that hath begun the good work in you will perform it unto the day of Jesus Christ.' But did he ever cease to persuade men to begin themselves, and to persevere unto the end? Nay, the Lord Himself called upon men to

believe in Him. And yet His declaration is eternally true, and His description not without its solemn purpose, when He testifies, 'No man can come unto (that is, no one can believe in) Me, unless it were given him of My Father' (John vi. 65). Nor, on the other hand, is the exhortation of the Lord *to believe* vain because His description of those who alone do believe is true. How can it be said that the doctrine of predestination stands against preaching, and exhortation, and correction, and renders them useless (which are *all* so frequently used in Scripture), when the same Scripture speaks so much of predestination also?"

Shortly afterwards the holy father remarks, "Those hear these things, and do them, to whom *it is given*; but those to whom it is *not* given, do them *not*, whether they hear them not, or hear them. Neither, therefore, is the preaching of fruitful and persevering faith to be withheld because of the necessity of preaching predestination, in order that men, by the preaching of the *former*, might hear those things which they ought to do, and that they *to whom it is given* might do them. 'But how shall they hear (as the apostle argues) without a preacher?' Nor, on the other hand, is the preaching of predestination to be withheld because of the necessity of preaching that faith which is fruitful, and which persevereth unto the end, in order that he who lives in faith and obedience may not glory in his obedience as being his own, but the gift of God, as it is written, 'He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.'" "And again (continues Augustine), as he that hath received the gift so to do rightly exhorteth and preacheth, so he that hath received the gift so to do heareth and obeyeth. Hence it is that the Lord so frequently saith, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' And from whom those who have the gift receive it the Lord Himself shows us: 'I will give them (saith He) a heart to know Me, and ears to hear Me.' Ears to hear, therefore, are the gift itself of all obedience, with which all those who are endowed come to Christ. *Wherefore*, we both PREACH and EXHORT. Those who have ears to hear, hear us and obey; but in those who have not, that solemn scripture is fulfilled: 'That hearing they might hear and not understand;' hearing, indeed, with the outward ear of the body, but not with the inward ear of the heart. But why it is given to one to hear, and not to another; why it is given of the Father to some to come unto the Son, and not to others? so we ask this question? The reply is, 'Who hath known the mind of the Lord?' Are we, then,

therefore, to deny what is manifest because we cannot comprehend what is hidden?

"From this is plainly seen (continues the holy man) how preposterous the extreme caution of those is who, through fear of some supposed absurdity or contradiction in it, would hide or altogether suppress a doctrine most necessary to be known. But suppose that some, upon hearing the doctrine of predestination, give themselves up to indolence and unconcern, and rush headlong from diligence and labour into concupiscence, following their own lusts, is all that is said in the Scripture concerning the *foreknowledge* of God therefore to be considered untrue? Would not those have been if God had *foreknown* that they would be *good*, although they are now revelling in wickedness? And if God foreknew that they *would be evil*, evil *they will be*, in whatever goodness they may now appear to shine. Are, then, all those things which the Scripture saith in truth concerning the prescience of God to be *denied* or held in *silence* because such cases as these are found among men? And that, too, when it is certain, that if these truths were not declared, men would nevertheless rush into other errors of some kind?

"A *reason for not declaring* the truth (continues Augustine) is one thing; the *necessity of declaring* the truth is another. To enumerate the various reasons assigned for the propriety of not declaring the truth would exceed both our limits and our purpose. One reason assigned is: Lest those who do not understand should be made worse, while we are wishing that those who do understand may be made wiser and better. But those who are not made wiser and better by any certain doctrine of truth which we teach are assuredly not made worse. But where the reality of the case is, that when we are declaring a doctrine of truth, he who cannot understand it is rendered worse by our declaration of it, while he who can understand it is rendered worse by our keeping silence, ?What is to be done (it is asked) in such a case as this? Why, is it not much better that the truth should be declared, in order that he who can receive it may receive it, than that it should be kept back in silence, that *neither* may receive it? For by this silence *both* are rendered worse?he that does, and he that does not, understand. Whereas, he that does understand might, by hearing the truth and receiving it, teach others also. Hence, some of us are unwilling

to declare and teach that which, according to the testimony of Scripture, we ought to declare and teach. And the cause of this our fear is, lest, by our speaking out, he should be offended who cannot understand us. Whereas we ought also to fear, lest, by our silence, he who would have understood us, had we spoken, should be left to be carried away perhaps by the false teaching of others."

This sentiment, thus briefly expressed, Augustine afterwards expands and confirms in the following manner: "Wherefore, if the apostles and those teachers of the Church who followed them, performed the twofold service, solemnly holding forth the doctrine of God's eternal election, and also retaining the faithful under the discipline of a godly life, why should these men of our day think they act rightly in the matter of their teaching by keeping themselves shut up in silence within the strong tower of invincible truth, holding, as they do, that though what is said concerning election be eternally true, yet that it ought not to be preached openly to the people? On the contrary, however, the doctrine of election ought to be preached constantly and thoroughly, that he that hath 'ears to hear' might hear. And who hath these 'ears' but he who hath received them from Him who hath promised to give them? Wherefore, let him that receiveth not the truth reject it; but let him that heareth and understandeth the truth, receive it and drink it, and drink and live! As therefore *godliness* is to be *preached*, that God may be rightly obeyed and worshipped; so is *predestination* to be *preached* also, that he who 'hath ears to hear' the free grace of God might glory in God, and not in himself."

Hence, though there was in this holy man Augustine a singular devotedness to the edifying of the Church, yet he so wisely tempers the system of preaching the truth, that he would have offence guarded against (where it can be done lawfully) with all prudence. His admonition is, that whatsoever truths are preached should be preached at the same time consistently. He remarks: "If any one should address the people and say, If ye believe not, it is because ye are predestinated of God to eternal destruction such an one would not only foster his own indolence, but would indulge malice towards his hearers. If a preacher should extend his sentiments into the future, and should say that those who heard him never would believe because they were reprobates, such preaching would

be IMPRECATION, not DOCTRINE!" Teachers of this description Augustine would have expelled from the Church at once (and most deservedly) as foolish or designing prophets, from whom no good can be expected. And the holy father elsewhere truly contends that a preacher then profits others when he pities them and helps them forward, and who invites those whom he wishes to benefit to proceed in the right way, without any appeal to them in the form of taunting rebuke. But why some profit by the preaching of the Word and some profit not, far be it from us to say that this is according to the judgment or wisdom of the 'clay,' when it is all according to the will and wisdom of the "potter"!

When men do come into the way of righteousness, or return into it, by means of holy correction or rebuke, who is it that works salvation in their hearts but He who 'giveth the increase,' whoever soweth, or whoever watereth? No free will of man can resist Him that willeth to save. Wherefore, we are to rest assured that no *human wills* can resist the *will* of God, who doeth according to His will all things in heaven and in earth, and who has already done by His will the things that shall be done. No will of men, we repeat, can resist the will of God, so as to prevent Him from doing what He willeth, seeing that He doeth what He will with the wills themselves of all mankind. And when it is His will to bring men by any certain way that He may please, does He bind their bodies, I pray you, with chains? O, no! He works within; He takes hold of their hearts within; He moves their hearts within; and draws them by those, now, new wills of their own which He has Himself wrought in them. But that which Augustine adds in continuation must by no means be omitted. "Since we know not (says he) who belongeth to the number of the predestinated, and who doth not, we ought so to feel as to wish *all* to be saved. From this it will come to pass that whosoever shall come in our way, we shall desire to make him a partaker of the peace which we ourselves enjoy. 'Our peace,' however, will nevertheless 'rest upon the sons of peace.' Wherefore, as far as we ourselves are concerned, wholesome and even severe correction will ever be made use of by us as a medicine towards all men, both to save them from perishing themselves, and to prevent them from causing others to perish. But it will be of Cod alone to make that medicine *beneficial* to those whom He *foreknew* and *predestinated*."If, then, these things be true, and if they be thus testified by a witness so

eminent as the chief of the holy fathers, let them not be vomited forth from the mouths of hatred upon the head of Calvin by his ignorant and evilly-disposed persecutors. I would, however, that these insipid cautious ones, who so much desire to please by their teary moderation, would just consider that Augustine, to whom they so willingly yield the palm of knowledge in Divine things, surpasses them just as far in modesty also. This conviction would tend to prevent them from puffing off their soured timidity for real modesty.

But now let me deal a little farther with Pighius. My readers must bear in mind three special and summary particulars. First, that whatever mountain of absurdities he heaps up to launch at my doctrine, with a design to its suppression, is hurled not so much at me as at God Himself! Secondly, in order that he may wrest out of my hands those passages of the Scripture which make for me, he shews himself so ignorant a trifler as to make it manifest that he cannot support his own cause in any other way than by corrupting and subverting the Bible altogether. And lastly, that he rushes headlong into such an extreme of impudence, as to appeal, without hesitation, to Augustine himself as an authority for his absurdities. "If God (argues this worthless and daring mortal) created any men for destruction, He is not worthy of being loved. Those poor creatures, who were deprived of eternal life *be/ore they were born*, are more deserving of pity than of punishment." Now, if the testimonies which this aweless being attempts to shake were mine, he would be fighting against a mortal man. But since it is God Himself whom he thus insults and reproaches, I shall feel no shame in applying to him a hundred times over the solemn appeal of the apostle, "Nay, but who art thou, O man, that contendest against thy Maker?" This miserable mortal feels now, and all his fellows will hereafter feel, the effects of those reproaches which they hurl at God from their foul and profane mouths. Such reproaches fail and fall by the weight of their own wickedness long before they reach heaven. Their only certain course is to fall back, with all their weight, upon the heads of those who utter them. Let me be permitted just to produce one specimen of this rebel's foul madness in adulterating the Scripture. The ninth chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans is both confounded and dismembered in the following manner: ?

At his commencement, to save all labour and trouble in untying the Gordian knot, he cuts it right in halves (as he thinks) by this one word. He says that Israel was chosen of God, but not all *Israelites*, because (he says) the descendants of Israel did not all truly represent their father Israel, who received that name from "seeing." And from this he concludes that God's election becomes not real and ratified in any but in those who "*open their eyes*." But this pre-eminent teacher of clear-sightedness, in interpreting the name Israel, is most ridiculously stone-blind himself, while thus vainly attempting to make a sharp point out of a blunt log. Meantime, this blind instructor never thinks of the fact that Israel (the "open-eyed" one, according to his lucid interpretation) was made "open-eyed" by the peculiar grace of God, for he had been chosen of God even in the womb of his mother. Nor do any others ever possess "eyes" to see God, or His truth, but those whose minds God Himself enlightens by His Spirit. And those only are deemed worthy the light of His Spirit whom He adopted for Himself even while still in their blindness, and whom He makes His children. After this, Pighius, like a wild beast escaped from his cage, rushes forth, bounding over all fences in his way, uttering such sentiments as these: "The mercy of God is extended to every one, for God wishes all men to be saved; and for that end He stands and knocks at the door of our heart, desiring to enter Therefore, those were elected before the foundation of the world, by whom He foreknew He should be received. But God hardens no one, excepting by His forbearance, in the same manner as too fond parents ruin their children by excessive indulgence." Just as if anyone, by such puerile dreams as these, could escape the force of all those things which the apostle plainly declares in direct contradiction to such sentiments! And just as if it were nothing at all to his readers, when Paul positively asserts that, out of the twins, while they were yet in the womb of their mother, the one was *chosen* and the other *rejected!* and that, too, without any respect to the works of either, present or future (of the former of which there could be none), but solely by the good pleasure of God that calleth! As if it were nothing, when the apostle testifies that "it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy," who hardeneth whom He will, and hath mercy on whom He will! As if it were nothing when the same apostle avers, "that God sheweth forth His power in *the vessels of wrath*," in order that He might make known the riches of His grace *on the vessels of*



*mercy*! Paul undeniably here testifies that all those of Israel who were saved were saved according to God's free election; and that, therefore, "the election obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Rom. xi. 7). All these solemn particulars, however, we have more fully discussed in their order in our preceding pages.

If our opponent were a hundredfold more acute, and clever than he is, all the cavils he could muster would never prevent even the deaf from hearing the loud. thunder of the above declarations of the apostle. And yet, after having heaped up words, mountain on mountain, he leaves this feeble mountain of his own standing at last: "God did not create those reprobates whom He *foresaw* would be such, but He *knew* that some whom He *should* create *would* be reprobates." But what is all this folly, more or less, than bedaubing the eyes of the Potter, and His hands also, in order that we might not be able to discern His real form and features, nor to see His work? And it is just the same when he attempts to disentangle himself from the Divine net of the apostle which lies hidden in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians. He so sports and flourishes his bombast, as if, by his loud, empty noise, he could strike even the apostle himself dumb, and force him to be silent. "God (says this vain mortal) chose us in Christ, because He *foreknew* that His grace, which otherwise was free to all, would *find a place in us only*, and that we alone should receive it. He chose us out of all men, because He foresaw that that which was set before all men for their reception would become peculiar to us, who alone would receive it. It was thus that He chose us 'to the glory of His grace,' which sanctifies us; just in the same manner as the praise of all belongs to the preceptor, while doctrine and its benefit belong to the scholar." As if that eternal purpose, which Paul elsewhere sets forth in opposition to all human works, were not the purpose of *God alone*! As if the glory of free grace were not, in this passage, more strikingly exhibited under the expression, the "good pleasure of God," than by any other terms! Why! God is said to have saved us "according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself" for this very reason, because, finding no *cause* in us, He *made Himself* the *cause* of our salvation. Is it for nothing, think ye, that the apostle repeats five times over that the whole of our salvation is the effect of, and dependent upon, that eternal decree, purpose and good pleasure of God? Is it with no

intent whatever that the apostle declares that we were "blessed" in Christ because we were "chosen" in Christ? Does not the apostle refer all sanctification and every good work to the election of God, as waters are traced to their originating source? Does not Paul attribute it to the same grace that we are the "workmanship of God, created unto good works, which He hath before ordained that we should walk in them"? Why did God choose us out, and separate us from the rest, but that we might know that we are what we are, and that we are blessed above all others by the free favour of God alone? Behold, then, readers, how sweetly (!) God's foreknowledge of good works in us, according to the doctrine of Pighius, harmonises (!) with the apostle's context in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians! How much better would it have been, in our opponent, to have retained the character of an admirer of the apostle, which, for a moment, he was compelled to assume, than to have turned thus aside on a sudden to haughty speculations, and to have thrown off the mask of the admirer altogether to his own exposure. These great subjects, however, which I had more fully digested in the former part of this work, I have now only cursorily touched with the lip.

This worthless being, Pighius, indeed, flogs Augustine severely for being a man (as he says) who, in the discussion of this great subject, betrays more violent impetuosity than calm reason; one who dashes up against this thing and that person in his way, and who brings forth those things which seem to be utterly at variance with the goodness of God. And yet, this same vain mortal, devoid of every feeling of modesty, appeals to this same holy father's authority, in confirmation of his own absurdities. And with what impudence he does this, I will demonstrate in a few short words He lauds the industry of the holy man for his having so carefully winnowed this important question in his book written to Simplicianus, Bishop of Mediola. But did this fellow really ever open that book? I doubt it; because he makes it to be one book instead of two! And it is something rather marvellous that this very eminent interpreter should have singled out this production of Augustine from all his other works, which work the holy father himself acknowledges that he wrote at the commencement of his episcopate. For although Augustine wrote that book against Pelagius, he does not hesitate candidly to confess that he afterwards wrote much more fully and solidly on that subject. His own words are these: "The

predestination of the saints is, indeed, set forth by me in that book. But necessity afterwards compelled me to defend that doctrine with greater industry and labour when I was contending for the truth against the Pelagians. For I always found that each heresy, as it arose, brought its own questions into the Church, against which the Divine Scripture required defence with greater diligence than if no such necessity had arisen."

But let us now see what that authority is which this impudent person adduces from the works of Augustine. "My author (says he) stands in the opinion that the rejection or contempt of vocation is the cause of reprobation, and this opinion he fully affirms." Now the fact is that the mind of Augustine is directly the contrary. For in his book, entitled, "Recollections." he says, "I once laboured hard for the free will of man, until the grace of God at length overcame me." But I will omit to notice here what he farther says in the book now in question, and in other places before cited by me, wherein he is explaining his mind, which is of more value to the faithful, at least, than a thousand opinions of Pighius, or of any others like him. How then does Pighius dare, with something more than impudence, to refer to Augustine as an authority for those sentiments which, throughout his whole work, he rejects with a determination quite as great as the candour with which he condemns them? But that I may not pursue these observations too far, I only observe that those authorities which Pighius adduces are indeed extant in the work of Augustine in question; but the fact is, that they are refuted in the same page on which they are found. "If (argues Augustine) the Scripture saith, 'It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy;' because the will of man alone is not sufficient to enable him to live justly and righteously, unless it be aided by the mercy of God; if this be the case, we might just as well argue, and the Scripture might just as well say, 'It is not of God that showeth mercy, but of man that willeth.' For, according to this, the mercy of God is not sufficient, unless it be aided by the consent of our will. But the truth and the fact are, that *our willing* is vain unless God *have mercy*. But how shall it be said (I know not) that God's having mercy is vain unless we also will? For where God hath mercy we are sure to have will, because the very nature of that mercy, when shown, is to make us willing, according

to that word of the apostle, 'For it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do.' For if it be inquired whether or not a good will be the gift of God, who will be found so daring as to deny it?"

Shortly afterwards Augustine draws this conclusion: "Wherefore, the truth is that 'it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy,' because, although God *calleth* many, yet He hath mercy on those only whom He *so calleth*, as to make that call effectual in them that they may follow it. Hence. it would be utterly false if anyone were to say, 'It is not of God that showeth mercy, but of man that willeth;' because God hath mercy on no one ineffectually or in vain. On whomsoever God hath mercy, him He *so calleth* as to make the manner of his calling effectual, so that he *shall not re/use* Him that calleth." Wherefore, Pighius spoke with the greatest truth when he said, in his prefatory remarks, that this great question of predestination had been industriously winnowed by Augustine in his book addressed to Simplicianus. But he himself most grievously transgresses in the matter. For while he is catching at the chaff blown about in the air, he disregards altogether the wheat that is evidently left upon the floor.

But some small space must now be found for dealing with Georgius of Sicily. All things connected with this miserable creature are so insipid, vain and disgusting, that I really feel ashamed to spend any time or labour in his refutation. Nor would I condescend to enter the field with this shadow, if the silly consternation of many at his pretensions did not compel me to do so. And I doubt not that there will be many who, from their considering the easy victory which I must of necessity gain over his trifling puerilities will quite deride my needless attempt. Indeed, if he were not a mischievous person, I should consider him much more worthy of being trampled under foot in contempt, than of being refuted by the use of words. But as his books, flying throughout Italy, drive many mad on every side, I had rather, in such a kind of necessity, act a little of the madman myself with such a mad fellow, than suffer by silence so much mischief to be done in the Church by his madness. When of old the prophet Ezekiel saw that certain old prophetesses were blinding the eyes of the people, he felt no shame in entering into the battle with women (Ezek. xiii. 17). Let us, therefore, if we would be the true servants of

Christ, not feel aggrieved at being compelled to take up arms for the purpose of driving away those, whosoever they may be, who are labouring with all their might to throw their chaff into the granary of the Lord.

When we testify that men are predestinated either to salvation or to destruction by the eternal counsel of God, Georgius considers that we hallucinate and are deceived in that matter on three accounts in particular. The first of which, he says, is that we are ignorant that the word election is received in different senses in the Scripture. "For God, he observes, is sometimes said to elect or choose certain persons to a certain temporal office, where no mention whatever is made of eternal life, nor any consideration of it entertained. But by what kind of arguments will this stupid trifler attempt to persuade us that we are so inexperienced in the Scriptures as not yet to know that Saul, who was really a reprobate, was yet chosen or elected to be king? and that Judas, who was one of the twelve, whom Christ declares that He Himself had chosen, was called by Christ a devil? Why does not this vain fellow point out some passages of the Scripture as having been evilly and impiously brought forward by us in support of our testimony which will make our errors manifest? The fact is, that this dreamer fabricates dreams of his own which are the children of his own brain, and against these he wages war as if they really were our dreams. And yet it is marvellous, meanwhile, how utterly he forgets himself and his own precept concerning the different meanings of the word election, when he attacks us and applies to us the words of the apostle: "Lest, after I have preached the Gospel to others, I myself should become a reprobate" (or a castaway). For he concludes from this passage that Paul (according to the doctrine of election) positively uttered a falsehood when he expressed his fear lest the immutable election of God should fail in his case; and that he really knew not, or was not certain of, his own election. Now this miserable being does not see that "reprobate" (or "disapproved") is in this passage, opposed to "approved"; and "approved" would signify that such an "approved" one had given sure evidences and proofs of his godliness. How was it that the different meanings of the term "reprobate" did not come into the mind of our silly opponent? For when "reprobate silver" is spoken of by the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. vi. 30), and "reprobate earth" in Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. vi. 8), it does not mean that such "reprobate silver" or

"reprobate earth" was ordained of God to eternal destruction; but that it was silver and earth that had become alloyed, adulterated, unfruitful and worthless. And that the term "reprobate" applies to men in this passage of the apostle, as it doth also in another epistle, is at once manifest in each place from the context. And yet, the election to any temporal office is so plainly distinct from that eternal election by which God chooses and adopts us unto everlasting life, that the Scripture sometimes joins them together in the same person, on account of their immediate affinity.

Thus, when Paul glories that God "separated" him from his "mother's womb," he is speaking of his apostolic office. But the same apostle, ascending yet higher, glories at the same time in the grace of God also, by which he had been called unto the hope of salvation. In like manner, Christ, although He declares that one of those whom He had chosen to the apostolic office was a devil, yet elsewhere joins the grace of adoption with the apostolic honour, saying, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you; that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain." For He declares that His own were given to Him of the Father, for the very end that He should not suffer anyone of them to perish, save him who was already "the son of perdition." Although, therefore, we everywhere read in the Scriptures that God chose these or those to this or that kind of life, or to this or that temporal office, such facts do not at all alter the greater fact that God chose unto salvation those whom He was pleased to save. Nor did the one election militate against, contradict, contravene, or impede the other.

The second account on which Georgius declares we are in error and delusion is, because we do not hold that all the believers (as he calls them) of the New Testament were chosen unto salvation, as those were of whom the apostle speaks in the first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians. But we have already more than fully shown that Paul in that chapter traces the faith by which the children of God enter upon the possession of their salvation unto eternal election as its true and only source; and most certainly faith is especially to be reckoned among those spiritual riches which are freely given to us in Christ. And from whence does Paul testify that all and every one of our spiritual blessings flow but from that eternal and hidden fountain? the free adoption of God? Again,

the apostle uses these words, "Wherein He hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence." How did God thus abound? And from what source did this abundance flow? The apostle tells us immediately afterwards, "According to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself" (vers. 8, 9).

Wherefore, if faith be the fruit of Divine election, it is at once evident that all are not enlightened unto faith. Hence, it is also an indubitable fact that those on whom God determined in Himself to bestow faith were chosen of Him from everlasting for that end. Consequently the sentiments of Augustine are truth, where he thus writes: "The elect of God are chosen by Him to be His children, in order that they *might be* made to believe, not because He foresaw that they *would* believe." I forbear to cite here other passages of the apostle similar to the above, because they will have to be considered very shortly in their proper place. But as there is one passage in the evangelist Matthew, where the elect of God seem to be spoken of as an infinite number, where Christ Himself says that "there shall be such great signs and wonders shown by false christs and false prophets that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect;" Georgius explains "the elect" in this place as signifying all those who persevere in faith and righteousness. And this interpretation is perfectly right, provided that he at the same time confess that this perseverance depends on election alone. But Georgius, to shut out all idea of special or particular election, makes each individual among men the author of his own election.

## **Eternal Predestination - Section 6**

The third account or cause why we are in error, according to our worthy friend Georgius, is because, though the Scripture does indeed make mention of men being "blinded" and hardened," yet we do not bear in mind that such greater punishments are inflicted on sins of greater magnitude. We, however, on our part, do not deny that which is clearly confirmed by numberless testimonies of the Scripture, that God punishes with blindness, and with many other modes of judgment, contempt of His

grace, pride, obstinacy, and many other kindred sins. And, indeed, all those conspicuous punishments, of which mention is made throughout the Scriptures, ought to be referred to that general view of the righteous judgment of God in the display of which we ever see, that those who have not duly feared God, after they had known Him, nor have revered Him as they ought, have been "given over to a reprobate mind," and left to wallow in every kind of uncleanness and lust. But on this deep subject we shall dwell more fully hereafter.

Although, therefore, the Lord doth thus strike the wicked with vindictive madness and consternation, and doth thus repay them with the punishment they deserve; yet this does not at all alter the fact that there is, in all the reprobate generally, a blindness and an obstinate hardness of heart. So, when Pharaoh is said to have been "hardened" of God, he was already, in himself, worthy of being delivered over unto Satan by the Most High. Moses, however, also testifies that Pharaoh had been before blinded of God "for this very purpose" (Exod. ix. 16). Nor does Paul add any other cause for this, than that Pharaoh was one of the reprobate (Rom. ix. 17). In this same manner also does the apostle demonstrate that the Jews, when God had deprived them of the light of understanding, and had permitted them to fall into horrible darkness, suffered thereby the righteous punishments of their wicked contempt of the grace of God. And yet the apostle plainly intimates that this same blindness is justly inflicted of God upon all reprobates generally. For he testifies that the "remnant were saved "according to the election of grace," but that all "the rest were blinded." If, then, all "the rest," in the salvation of whom the election of God does not reign, are "blinded," it is doubtlessly and undeniably manifest that those same persons who, by their rebellion and provocation of the wrath of God, procured to themselves this additional blindness, were themselves from the beginning ordained to blindness. Hence the words of Paul are manifestly true, where he says that the vessels of wrath were "afore prepared unto destruction"; namely, all those who, being destitute of the Spirit of adoption, precipitated themselves into eternal destruction by their own sin and fault. Wherefore, I hesitate not to confess that in the secret judgments of God something always precedes, but "hidden." For how God condemns the wicked, and yet justifies the wicked, is a mystery that is shut up in that secret mind of God, which is



inaccessible to all human understanding. Wherefore, there remains nothing better, nothing more becoming us, than to stand in awe with the apostle, and exclaim, "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.) For God's judgments are a profound abyss.

Georgius then goes on to say "that no one syllable can be found in the whole Scripture from which it can be lawfully concluded that those who were reprobated by the eternal judgment of God were 'blinded,' and that all which we testify concerning predestination rests on the mere craft of philosophic invention; for that God could not be ignorant of any of those things which should come to pass, and that whatsoever things He did foresee, could not but come to pass according to that foreknowledge." To this lying misrepresentation of our doctrine I give no answer. My books are its standing refutation. The fact is, that as the unbounded favour of the reverend abbot gave this conceited fellow the license of saying what he pleased among his silly brethren, and as he had the audacity to puff off among them all the dreams that entered his brain as the oracles of God, he really promised himself the same credit outside the monastery. But what is the benefit of my now using many words to prove that which I have proved a thousand times over? that we do not gather that difference between the elect and the reprobate (against which Georgius so violently but vainly wars) from the bare foreknowledge of God (according to this fellow's stupid perversion of our testimony), but that we prove it to be taught in numberless manifest and said passages of the Holy Scripture. And yet, this fellow imagines, and would make it appear, that we war with the prescience of God alone. Readers, however, will find above twenty plain passages already cited by me which prove the contrary to this vain imagination. He boasts that special and particular election is a fiction of our own; for that God chooses no special or particular persons. Christ Himself, however, declares aloud on the contrary, "That He knows whom He has chosen" (John xiii. 18).

Behold, then, readers, with what mighty war-engines of his own fabrication Georgius labours to shake that eternal counsel of God, by which some are chosen to salvation and others ordained unto destruction! Paul does indeed make the righteousness of God common to

all by faith, nor does he admit any distinction whatever, testifying that "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." I also confess with my whole heart, according to Paul, that the righteousness of God is freely extended to all through faith. But whence cometh faith unto men? Only from the free illumination of the Spirit. And whom does Paul consider to be those who believe in Christ? Those only whom His heavenly Father has drawn. And most certainly Christ on His part reckons no one among His own but him who was given to Him by His Father. He accordingly declares that those who were given to Him were before, His Father's. Georgius, we well know, will here thrust in our faces his mad dream about natural faith, which absurdity it does not belong to my present purpose to stop to refute. I shall only say that the righteousness of God is "unto all, and upon all them that believe" in Christ. But on the testimony of the same apostle, I assert that where one believeth and another doth not believe, it is God alone that makes the difference; that it is of God alone that some have the advantage of others in obtaining the blessing, that no one might glory. I affirm that, in order that we might know the things which are freely given to us of God, our eternal inheritance is sealed upon our hearts by the earnest and seal of the Spirit. I also affirm that our ability to believe in Christ is given to us of God. I moreover maintain that "the eyes of our understanding are enlightened" of God, that we might know "what is the hope of His calling." And finally, I testify that faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Paul does indeed declare that "there is no difference." But his meaning is that there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for that God invites both, equally, unto salvation. Now Georgius here affirms that these two races of men comprehend all mankind. Be it so, he cannot by that argument prove that righteousness is promised severally and separately to each individual of mankind. And suppose we were to grant this last point, we must come after all to the original proposition and fact, that no one can become a partaker of the good offered him, but by faith. By this argument, then, the monk must be driven to the necessity of making faith common to all men. And this, as we have before abundantly proved, is directly contrary to the mind of the apostle Paul. Our monk will follow up his argument by saying, that according to our doctrine the elect alone have "come short of the glory of God." And how does he arrive at

this conclusion? Because (says he) the grace of Christ is poured out on all who have sinned. But I so hold the grace of God to be universal, as to make the great difference consist in this: that *all* are not called "according to God's purpose."

Georgius imagines himself to argue very cleverly when he says, "Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. Therefore, those who would exclude the reprobate from a participation in the benefits of Christ, must, of necessity, place them somewhere out of the world." Now we will not permit the common solution of this question to avail on the present occasion, which would have it that Christ suffered sufficiently for all men, but effectually for His elect alone. This great absurdity, by which our monk has procured for himself so much applause amongst his own fraternity, has no weight whatever with me. John does indeed extend the benefits of the atonement of Christ, which was completed by His death, to all the elect of God throughout what climes of the world soever they may be scattered. But though the case be so, it by no means alters the fact that the reprobate are mingled with the elect in the world. It is also a fact, without controversy, that Christ came to atone for the sins "of the whole world." But the solution of all difficulty is immediately at hand, in the truth and fact, that it is "whosoever believeth in Him" that "shall not perish, but shall have eternal life." For our present question is, not what the power or virtue of Christ is, nor what *efficacy it has in itself*, but *who those are* to whom He gives Himself to be enjoyed. Now if the possession of Christ stands in faith, and if faith flows from the Spirit of adoption, it follows that he alone is numbered of God among His children who is designed of God to be a partaker of Christ. Indeed, the evangelist John sets forth the office of Christ to be none other than that of "gathering together all the children of God" in one by His death. From all which we conclude that although reconciliation is offered unto all men through Him, yet, that the great benefit belongs peculiarly to the elect, that they might be "gathered together" and be made "together" partakers of eternal life.

Be it observed, however, that when I speak of reconciliation through Christ being offered to all, I do not mean that that message or embassy, by which Paul says God "reconciles the world unto Himself," really comes

or reaches unto all men; but that it is not sealed indiscriminately on the hearts of all those to whom it does come, so as to be effectual in them. And as to our present opponent's prating about there being "no acceptance of persons with God," he must first "go and learn" what the word "person" meaneth agreeably to our preceding explanations of it; and then we shall have no more trouble with him on that score.

"But Paul teaches us (continues Georgius) that God 'would have all men to be saved.'" It follows, therefore, according to his understanding of that passage, either that God is disappointed in His wishes, or that all men without exception must be saved. If he should reply that God wills all men to be saved on His part, or as far as he is concerned, seeing that salvation is, nevertheless, left to the free will of each individual; I, in return, ask him why, if such be the case, God did not command the Gospel to be preached to all men indiscriminately from the beginning of the world? why He suffered so many generations of men to wander for so many ages in all the darkness of death? Now it follows, in the apostle's context, that God "would have all men come to the knowledge of the truth." But the sense of the whole passage is perfectly plain, and contains no ambiguity to any reader of candour and of a sound judgment. We have fully explained the whole passage in former pages. The apostle had just before exhorted that solemn and general prayers should be offered up in the Church "for kings and princes," etc., that no one might have cause to deplore those kings and magistrates whom God might be pleased to set over them; because, at that time, rulers were the most violent enemies of the faith. Paul, therefore, makes Divine provision for this state of things by the prayers of the Church, and by affirming that the grace of Christ could reach to this order of men also, even to kings, princes and rulers of every description.

But it is no matter of wonder that the more audacity this worthless fellow betrays in wresting the Scriptures, the more profuse he should be in heaping passages on passages to suit his purpose, seeing that he does not possess one particle of religion or of shame which might restrain his headlong impudence. But the more diffuse he is in his wild discussions, the more brief I shall study to be in my answers, by which I hope to curb his pretensions. He cites that passage of Isaiah lvi.3: "Neither let the son

of the stranger speak, saying, The Lord hath utterly separated me from His people." And he takes it for granted that that text can never be applied to the reprobate. For he judges it absurd to suppose that the elect are ever called "the sons of the stranger." To this I reply that it is by no means unusual to find in the Scriptures those who were elected before the foundation of the world considered, nevertheless, "strangers," or "the sons of the stranger," until they are gathered into the family and among the children of God by faith. The words of Peter, borrowed from the prophet Isaiah, are: "Which in time past were not a people; but now are the people of God" (1 Pet. ii. 10). Now to whom is Peter here speaking? Is it not to those of whom he had testified in the beginning of the epistle, that they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God"? Paul sets this matter forth in a still more open light in his Epistle to the Ephesians. After he had therein dwelt very largely on their eternal election of God, he subsequently reminds them that, "At that time they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. ii. 12). And is it any cause of wonder if Isaiah, building thus, under the inspiration of the Spirit, the temple of God out of profane stones, should declare that there would be a new consecration of it! For as the calling of the Gentiles lay hidden all along in the heart of God, what else appeared in them outwardly than all damnable uncleanness? All those among them who were at length incorporated in the spiritual body of Christ by faith were, indeed, all that time really the sheep of God, as Christ Himself testifies (John x. 16). But they were sheep as yet shut out of the fold, and "wandering upon the dark mountains." And though *they* themselves all the while knew it not, yet the Shepherd knew *them*, according to that eternal predestination by which He chose *His own* unto Himself before the foundation of the world. Augustine sets this forth very soundly and beautifully.

"Now if that word of the prophet Ezekiel be true (continues Georgius), 'The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father,' no part of mankind are left in original sin." But I really will have nothing to do with this unclean beast at all (Deut. xiv. 7). My purpose is to come to the help of the ignorant only, that they may not be taken and carried away with such worthless cavillings as these. No one thing is more certain, than that all

those remain under the general destruction who are not engrafted into the body of Christ. This good brother monk, prodigal of dealing with strangers, huddles all together and presses into the household even those against whom God has shut and barred the door. But that man is wilfully mad, whoever he may be, who does not confess that no one of those who died naturally in Adam can be restored unto eternal life in any other way than in that ordained of God. The manifest difference between the seed of a believing and that of an unbelieving man, as determined by the apostle, is this, that the former is "holy," but the latter "unclean." And on this sacred principle, before the Gentiles were ingrafted into the Church with the Jews by the breaking down of "the middle wall of partition between them," the apostle calls the branches of Abraham "holy" from their holy root. But what need is there of a lengthened discussion of this point? Did not the same prophet Ezekiel, whose word this monk so abuses, frequently condemn the uncircumcised Gentiles to destruction as profane persons? Nor would circumcision be the covenant of life even now on any other grounds. How, then, can it be true to assert that the son shall not bear the punishment of the sin of the father? And, on the other hand, I ask, How shall that man boast himself to be innocent who is born an unclean raven from an unclean egg? For original sin is so derived from Adam universally, that it becomes the peculiar property of the nature of every man. No one, therefore, can justly complain, under an imagination that he is bearing the guilt of another's sin, and considering himself free from fault. But if it is not lawful for God to punish, in their children, the sins of their fathers, what is the meaning of that word, "Visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation"? (Exod. xx. 5.) And, again, "Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth generation"? (Exod. xxxiv. 17.) Moreover, the first part of this visiting vengeance is, that the non-elect children of Adam, being left destitute of the Spirit of God, remain sunk in the original sin of their nature.

When Georgius argues thus: "John says he that sinneth, I will blot his name out of the book of life; if you explain this applying to the reprobate, they never were written in the book of life. If you interpret it as referring to the elect, the eternal counsel of God will be mutable and fail" Now, our

monk prates in this way, as if God did not always address us in a manner adapted to our comprehension as men. How base a specimen of ingratitude thus to insult God, for having, through the greatest indulgence towards us and our limited comprehension, expressed Himself in such simple terms! If this worthless fellow goes on with his interpretation of the Scriptures at this rate, according to the letter, he will by-and-bye fabricate for us a corporeal God, assigning as his reason, because the Scripture speaks of God as having ears, eyes, feet and hands. The meaning of the passage, however, is most simple and plain: that those are "blotted out of the book of life" who, having been considered for a time the children of God, as being among them, afterwards draw back and fall away into their own place, as Peter most truly describes Judas to have done. Such characters, however, as John testifies, "were never of us; for if they had been of us, they would not have gone out from us" (1 John ii. 19). That, however, which John expresses thus summarily, the prophet Ezekiel sets forth essentially and circumstantially: "They shall not be in the secret assembly of My people; neither shall they be written in the writing of the house of Israel." The same key also will unlock the difficulty that may appear in the cases where Moses and Paul express their willingness "to be blotted out of the book of life." The fact is, that they were so carried out of themselves, as it were, by the excess of their grief, that they uttered their readiness rather to perish than that the Church of God, populous as it then was, should be extinguished. When, however, Christ bids His disciples "rejoice because their names were written in heaven," He speaks of that as an everlasting blessing, of which they never should be deprived. In a word, Christ unites and harmonises both meanings, concerning names being written in the book of life, when He says, "Every tree that My heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up." Whereby He plainly intimates that the reprobate also sometimes take root, in appearance, and yet are not planted by the hand of God.

On that comparison of the Apostle Paul (Rom. v. 12), where he says, "As by one man sin came into the world unto condemnation; so by one Man came the gift of righteousness unto life," Georgius argues thus: "If, therefore, many died through one, much more must the grace of God abound, that many may reign in life by Christ." Now if the apostle were

here proving that the grace of Christ extended unto all men, acknowledging myself vanquished, I would be silent and say no more on the subject. But as the apostle's purpose is simply to show how much more powerful the grace of Christ is in the faithful than the curse which they derived from Adam, what is there in this blessed truth to shake the eternal election of those whom Christ has restored from the ruins of the Fall to the possession and enjoyment of everlasting life, leaving the rest to perish in their sins? But our monk wishes to dwell on the particular *expressions* of the apostle. "Paul (he says) comprehends the whole race of mankind when he uses the terms, 'the sin of *one man*,' and 'came upon *all men*.' Therefore, no one can be lawfully excluded from the participation of eternal life." But if we are allowed to reason at this rate, I should be inclined to contend that, if it be so, God must needs, and as a natural consequence, create some new worlds, that in them things might be managed better than in this! Christ declares that the curse in Adam by no means equalled the grace in Himself, because, as His apostle saith, "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound." Now if the numbers of the sons of men (of the elect and the reprobate, of those under the curse and those under grace) be reduced into one, Christ could not certainly save more than Adam destroyed, namely, more than these two numbers of men. Therefore, the faith of Paul must be altogether imperilled in his own election and salvation, unless some new world should immediately rise out of the sea! I will use, however, in the defence of the truth, no other shield than that which our monk himself fits on my arm by another passage of Paul, which he boastingly adduces, "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." If this worthless opponent of the truth applies the second member of this text to all the sons of Adam, Paul immediately holds up his hand to stop him. For he plainly testifies, directly afterwards, that he is therein speaking of the members of Christ only. "Christ (saith he), the Firstfruits; afterwards, they that are Christ's at His coming." Now, Paul is here undeniably speaking of the resurrection, which shall be followed by a blessed immortality? that immortality in which, in our creed, we confess our faith when we utter, "I believe in . . . the life everlasting."

That I may not, however, wear out my readers to no purpose by taking up the absurd arguments of this worthless person one after the other, my



purpose now shall be to lay hold of a few more out of the many that still remain unnoticed. In what sense we are to understand that God willeth not the death of a sinner, but that all should turn and live, I have explained at length in former pages. For when God exhorts men to repentance, and offers life to them upon their return, that exhortation and offer are common to all men. But with respect to His own children, God makes them worthy of the inestimable privilege of His taking out of them their "stony hearts," and giving them "hearts of flesh." Nor do I by any means concede to the monk that all those words of the Lord are spoken in vain, and into the air, by which He leaves all the wicked who are convicted of their malice against Him without excuse; while He so works in His elect that the doctrine of His truth becomes *effectual in their hearts* by the secret power of His Spirit, while the Word *sounds in their ears*. Nor is there the least reason why that common slander should distress the mind of anyone, which profanely intimates "that God merely mocks men by exhorting them to walk, when He knows that they are disabled in their feet." For surely God doth men no injury whatever when He demands nothing more of them than that which they really owe Him, unless indeed the debtor, who has nothing to pay, may boast before his creditor that he has paid him all; and that, too, while the creditor laughs at his boasts with astonishment! But I will pursue this part of the serious battle no farther. The truth involved cannot be destroyed without the destruction of every man's conscience also.

God commands the ears of His people Israel to be stricken by, and filled with, the voice of His prophet. For what end? That their hearts might be touched? Nay; but that they might be hardened! That those who hear might repent? Nay; but that, being already lost, they might doubly perish! If thou reply, O monk, that the cause was mightier, and so ruled over all the consequences; this confession is all I wish to be granted me in the present instance. Hence, it is by no means absurd that the doctrine of the truth should, as commanded of God, be spread abroad; though He knows that, in multitudes, it will be without its saving effects. Nor less frivolous is the cavil, when the monk declares that that word of Christ cannot be made to stand consistently with the doctrine of election, where He is speaking of the "sheep" that was "brought back" after it had been "lost." I am satisfied, however, that I can, with much more propriety and effect,

hurl back at the monk the javelin which he launches at me. The very reason why Christ represents that it was a *sheep* that was thus "brought back" after having been "lost" for a time, was because, being a sheep, in reference to its free and eternal election of God, it was safe all the while it was lost under the protection of the eternal Shepherd!

Of the same trash is that logical dilemma which he introduces, and by which he hopes to bewilder us all: "If (argues he) there were such a thing as special election, the exhortation of the prophet could not possibly be made consistent with it, where he says, 'Let the wicked forsake his way.' For if that exhortation be addressed to the elect, how can those be 'wicked' in whom 'all things work together for good'? If it be addressed to the reprobate, how can the reprobate be exhorted to repentance?" My reply is, that the exhortation of the prophet is addressed both to the elect and to the reprobate?to the former, that those among them who have, for a time, shaken off the yoke, and have wantonly gone out of the way, might, by being thus warned, return to a right mind; to the latter, that lying stupefied in their iniquities, they might, by such piercing appeals, be goaded into a sense of their awful condition. For we never imagine to ourselves, nor falsely picture to others, that the elect always hold on the right course, under the constant direction of the Holy Spirit; on the contrary, we ever affirm that they slip with their feet, wander out of the way, and dash against various rocks of sin and of error, and frequently are quite out of the right way of salvation. But as the protection of God, by which they are governed and defended, is stronger than all things, it is impossible that they should fall into utter ruin. "Men (continues the monk) are commanded to take heed lest they perish. But it is all the while certain that the elect are placed beyond all danger. And to the reprobate all heed or caution must be vain." To this argument also I reply: There is nothing strange in this sacred matter at all. The elect, who are engaged in a perpetual conflict, require to be thus furnished with armour necessary for the battle. Moreover, the diligence of all men, generally is stimulated by such exhortations. While the reprobate, by disregarding all exhortation, prove themselves at length to be incurable. For medicine is sedulously administered in diseases until despair of all cure makes its irremediable appearance.

Another objection urged by Georgius is, "That Abraham is not called the father of the elect, but the father of the faithful; and that salvation is not promised to the elect, but to the believing." Whom, then, will he make those to be, who are to be gathered together with their father Abraham into the kingdom of heaven? For Christ most certainly declares that this great blessing belongs to the elect alone. Nay, Christ also declares that a limit shall be put to the horrible coming destructions, "*for the elect's sake!*" What! Shall we deny that those are the children of Abraham who, together with him, are made the members of God's household, the Church? And how was it, I pray you, that so great an honour was conferred on Abraham, as that he was called the father of the faithful, unless it was because he was chosen of God? And how is it that those are accounted degenerate children of his who do not duly represent their believing father by their faith?

In fact, the audacity of this worthless renegade is perfectly execrable. He labours with all his might, in all his arguments, to deface, blot out, and do away with, that very mark by which God, more especially than by any other, designates and distinguishes His people. I confess, without any hesitation, that eternal life is promised "to them that believe," provided, however, that the monk deny not, on his part, that eternal life is in like manner promised to the elect; for thus saith Isaiah, "And Mine elect shall possess it" (Isaiah V. 9). I shall demand also of my opponent, that he confess that those only believe whom God enlightens by His Spirit, and that he confess, moreover, that election is the mother of faith. Paul testifies that he is ready "to endure all things for the elect's sake" (2 Tim. ii. 10). And Christ proclaims aloud that God the Father "is the avenger" of all the elect (Luke xviii. 7). Paul, moreover, exhorts the Colossians that they "put on, as the elect of God, and as the holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering," etc. (Col. iii. 12). In another place the apostle declares the elect to be free from every charge of sin or guilt. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" Rom. viii. 33. Are, then, believers to be robbed of all these blessings? This would be making a worse than hostile separation of those things which God hath mutually, and indeed inseparably, joined together. Nay, "that the election of God might stand," those who were once blind are "illuminated" unto faith. By that faith they receive the righteousness

of Christ; and by that faith they are "kept" and "persevere unto the end."

Georgius farther argues: "When the Scripture denounces destruction on them that are lost, it by no means refers or attributes the cause of that destruction to the eternal counsel of God, but declares that it rests with the lost themselves." We, however, never so represent the reprobate to be left destitute of the Spirit of God, in His appeals to their resisting consciences, as to charge the fault of their iniquities on God. What sins soever men commit, let them charge all the fault on themselves alone. And if any man should attempt to escape the fault or guilt of his sin, I affirm that such an one would find himself bound too securely by the chains of his own conscience ever to free himself from righteous condemnation for his transgressions. Let Adam excuse himself as long as he will, by saying that he was deceived by the enticements of the wife which God gave him. Within himself, nevertheless, will be found the deadly poison of infidelity; within himself will be found that worst of all counsellors, depraved ambition; within himself will be found the flaming torch of a devilish defiance of God! Far less excusable, therefore, shall they be who attempt to force, out of the profound secrets of the eternal counsel of God, that cause of their iniquities, which is ever putting forth its awful head from the deep corruption of their own hearts. Richly do they deserve to be "given over to a reprobate mind," who have not glorified God as they ought, even as far as He may be known by the contemplation of "His works that are seen "the heavens and the earth. Those who wilfully, deliberately, and maliciously reject the grace of Christ, and turn their backs upon the burning and shining light of the gospel, deserve still heavier punishment. Wherefore, let each one acknowledge his own sins and condemn himself alone, and, confessing from his heart all the fault to be his own, let him supplicate the mercy of his Judge.

If any reprobate one should cavil, and be inclined to make a noise, the Scripture furnishes a ready and silencing reply, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself!" (Hosea xiii. 9). For, as we have observed towards our commencement, if the complaint of Medea of old, in the classic poet, is utterly ridiculous, when she laments that the trees were ever cut down from Mount Pelion to furnish wood for building the ship Argo, when the

fact was, that the flame of love, burning out of her own lustful heart, was the real cause of her destroying her father and her whole kingdom, together with herself; much less, most certainly, are their arguments to be listened to who would fetch from afar, even from the clouds themselves, remote causes of their sin and fault; when the sight of it is ever before their eyes, issued forth continually from the deep-seated fountain of their own hearts, the evidences of which are plain and perpetual, how much soever they may strive to hide them. The Scripture therefore assigns the cause of all evils to the natural sins of men!

Indeed, the great question between me and the monk is not whether men yield necessary obedience to the secret judgment of God, or are inevitably carried on in their sin by it without any fault of their own, which we not only declare to be a false tenet, but a foul and detestable profanity; but the question between us is whether the wicked, who by their voluntary sins provoke the wrath of God against themselves, were afore reprobated of God (as the righteous but incomprehensible cause of all) "according to the counsel of His own will." Now, as Paul severely condemns the sins of men, powerfully pressing them home upon their own conscience, and determinately vindicating, at the same time, the justice of God from the profane slanders of men; so he openly declares and dissembles not, that those who precipitate themselves into destruction by their sins, are "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Christ also charges home their guilt on the reprobate as they deserve. But He at the same time, shows that the great cause of all was that they were "trees, not planted by the hand of His Father." In a word, we are told that the Father gave unto the Son those that were His, that He might sanctify them. In the opposite view, Paul, having shewn that "the elect obtained it (namely, "the righteousness of faith"), adds, that all the rest were blinded." Vain, therefore, are all the arguments of Georgius, who, fixing his eyes on the open sins of men only, never thinks of that hidden source of all the wickedness of mankind, the corruption of nature!

The monk considers that we are implicated in a great absurdity because we make the will of man free to sin, when the reprobate certainly sin of necessity. But that freedom of will in man of which we speak, and with which our monk is so familiarly acquainted, is, after all, quite unknown to

him. Now Paul calls some "free" who are "*free* from righteousness," namely, those who, destitute of the fear of God and of all temperance, revel in iniquity. Does it follow, then, that such are not "the servants of sin"? Our monk condemns us also for limiting and binding the power of God. "For (says he) if God foreknows and ordains all things that shall come to pass, He has not power to change them afterwards." A prodigious wonder this, truly, that God is not like a mortal man, who is ever flexible and variable, and changes his mind and purposes every hour! Why, the very thing against which the monk so violently fights is that the adorable God is ever of one mind and consistent with Himself Hence, his great hallucination is, that by separating the fixed decrees of God from His power, he makes Him to be divided against Himself. If we were to speak as the Stoics, we should say, according to the noted sentiment of Seneca, "that God is a necessity in Himself." We, however, with greater reverence and sobriety, say "that God always wills the same thing; and that this is the very praise of His immutability." Whatever He decrees, therefore, He effects; and this is in Divine consistency with His Omnipotence. And the will of God, being thus inseparably united with His power, constitutes an exalted harmony of His attributes worthy that Divine Providence, by which all things in heaven and earth are governed.

As to this miserable being's vain display of heaping testimonies upon testimonies of the Scripture which have nothing to do with each other, and have often contrary meanings and applications; to all this I pay but the least regard. But though I am willing to pass by his ignorance, I am anxious to put a rein upon his impudence, to prevent his causing any distress to the simple-minded. After having shown, from one passage of the apostle Paul, that God "sends upon those that receive not the truth, strong delusion that they should believe a lie " (2 Thess. ii. 10, 11); he brings forward, on the back of this, another passage of a reference quite diverse, where the apostle says that the doctrine of the Gospel is "hid in them that are lost; in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Cor. iv. 3, 4). I confess, indeed, that these blind ones are called "those that *believe not*." But if unbelief is the *sole* cause of the blindness in these characters, what is the meaning of the words which immediately follow, "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts"? We know that

darkness rules everywhere; but it is God alone, as we here see, that brings light out of darkness.

As Georgius moreover accuses us of cruelty, averring that we block up the way of salvation against ourselves and many others also, while Christ Himself most kindly invites Canaanitish women and "lost sheep," and even "strange dogs"?to all this we reply that we faithfully set forth before all men the doctrines of faith and repentance, to the end that all men (if God will) might be profited by Christ. When our Lord Himself was entreated by the wife of Zebedee that He would set one of her sons on His right hand and the other on His left, by way of restraining this foolish and untimely desire, our Lord declares that such a wish was unbecoming her present state and calling; and He, at the same time, intimates by no means obscurely that there is a place decreed of His heavenly Father for everyone, which shall be revealed in its time. In this same manner, also, that superstition of men that dwells on future events and issues (which rest with God alone), and which superstition is so plainly revealed in the Scripture, ought ever to be exposed by us, and not indulged by our keeping silence. For until the day of the revelation of the issues shall come, our duty is to do what God commandeth: to exhort all men, without exception, to repentance and faith. For the doctrine and preaching of the Gospel belong to all men, and are for the benefit of all men; and for those ends are they committed unto us, to be openly declared by us, even until the reprobate shall, by their deplorable obstinacy, block up our way and shut the door.

Finding himself compelled by our testimony to admit the doctrine of predestination, confirmed as it is by the multiplied testimony of so many passages of the Scripture, Georgius throws a new cavil into the field, than which nothing can be imagined more stupid or more putrid: "That the believers of the New Testament are said to be 'chosen' of God, as being those to whom God made known the riches of the mystery, which had been hidden from ages." To confirm this sense which he puts upon the subject by his own silly invention, he collects together all those texts of the Scripture which set forth the excellency of the grace revealed by Christ. And then he arrives at the conclusion, that whatever is contained in the first chapter to the Ephesians, has no other intent than to show

that God condescended to dignify the believers of the New Testament by bestowing on them this peculiar treasure. And when pushed to state the time to which this grace refers, he says that it was made common unto all men, without distinction *from the coming of Christ to the end of the world*.

The words of Paul, however, show a very different boundary to this grace. The sum of Paul's testimony is, that those only are illuminated unto faith who were predestinated unto eternal life "according to the eternal good pleasure of God." Nor can it be denied that there was, at the first preaching of the Gospel, a special call of certain persons. Nor was the Gospel published to all. And suppose it he granted that it did sound in the ears of all, as proclaimed by the *external voice*; yet Paul's testimony refers to a far *deeper call*, even to that call by which the Spirit of God penetrates into the hearts of men. When, however, we make this great distinction between the *outward* and the *internal* and *effectual* call, such a distinction is, to Georgius, all a dream! But whether the making of this difference be a trifling or a grave matter, the experience of faith furnishes a rich *understanding*. Moreover, the apostle does not treat of election in this chapter to the Ephesians in any other sense, or with any other object, than he does elsewhere, as when (2 Thess. ii. 13) he "gives thanks to God, because He had, from the beginning, chosen the Thessalonians to salvation." And Paul, be it remembered, is here separating a small company of believers from the multitude of the wicked.

The monk will here reply, "That lawless despisers of grace, when spoken of, are always set forth in opposition to the elect." But this is nothing whatever to the purpose; for all I am contending for, in the present instance, is that some are specially chosen of God in preference to others. Whereas Georgius, on the other hand, continues to prate that we are only predestinated to be born at a *certain time*, namely, *after the coming of Christ*, as he argues above. How stands the case, then, with the reprobate Judas, of whom Christ declares that he was not one of the elect, but "had a devil," though he had heard the words of his Divine Master and had enjoyed His domestic fellowship? But Christ immediately and distinctively adds, "I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen" (John xiii. 18). If, however, we are to listen to this fanatical being, the



condition of Herod, who was *since* Christ, was better than that of David, who was *before* Christ; and, according to him, the impious Scribes and Pharisees will *precede* the holy prophets in the *honour of election!* For he will say that the latter, by reason of their age and time, were not in the number of elect believers. Nay, he everywhere clamours that the grace of election belongs generally to a certain age. In a word, he offers himself as a guarantee that the apostle has nowhere spoken of predestination otherwise. What! Does the apostle include all the men of his own age, when he says, "Whom God did predestinate, them He also called"? What! Does he not separate from the general multitude of men those of whom he speaks as "being the called, according to His purpose"? Finally, when the apostle elsewhere says, "But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise (1 Cor. i. 27), does he, when making so evident a distinction; intend his words to apply to his whole generation?

But finding himself still entangled in the net of the truth, he seizes upon another way of escape: "That those are not called the elect whom God preferred above others, but those who persevere in the common election and grace." By which he means that those are at length considered of God the elect who distinguish themselves from the common multitude of men by the constancy of their faith. The passage of the apostle Paul, which he adduces to prove his doctrine, is this: "I charge thee before God and the elect angels." Now what the monk requires to be granted to him from this passage is, that as the elect angels did not separate themselves and fall away with the apostate angels, they *procured for themselves*, by such high merit, the grace of election. But suppose we should assert, on the contrary, that it was because of their being *elect angels* they stood fast, how much more near the truth would be such an assertion!

When Christ predicts that the delusion of Satan shall be so great as even, if it were possible, to "deceive the very elect," He implies the impossibility that Satan ever should carry away the elect by any violence he may adopt. By what power, then, are we to suppose that the elect will be thus secure? Georgius dreams, *by their own strength!* Far different, however, is the positive declaration of Christ: "No one (says He) shall pluck out of My hand those sheep which My Father hath committed to My charge. My Father that gave them to Me is greater than all; and no one can pluck

them out of My Father's hand" (John x. 29). In the same manner the apostle by no means commends believers to depend upon their own faithfulness; but, on the contrary, he reminds them that "*God is faithful, who hath called them: who also will do it*" (1 Thess. v. 24). The monk, however, makes each one the author and disposer of his own election. Whereas Christ positively declares that those whom He hath chosen out of the world are *His own* (John xv. 19). In perfect harmony with which declaration of Christ, Paul asserts aloud that "all things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose" (Rom. viii. 28). And he asserts the same great truth, as loudly, concerning children not yet born: "That the purpose of God might stand; not of works, but of Him that calleth. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" (Romans ix. 11-13). To what necessity, then, is the monk here driven? Why, this worthless being will positively have to prove, according to his own doctrine, that Jacob, even while yet enclosed in the womb of his mother, procured *for himself*, by his *own industry*, the honour of his *own* election; and that he stood in the possession of it, by his own faithfulness, unto the end.

Just the same amount of common reason and common sense is there in the monk's dispute, "That the casting off, concerning which Paul speaks, did not refer to single persons, but to the whole body of the Jewish people." For his exposition of the passage is, that the nation of the Jews, by rejecting Christ, deprived themselves of the inheritance of eternal life. Now, I am free to confess, that on this one point has been founded the cause of all dispute, upon the mighty subject now in question. But no one of a sound mind will conclude, or suppose, that the whole great question is bounded by these narrow limits. For, in the first place, the apostle Paul plainly teaches that the generation of Abraham consisted both of elect and reprobate individuals, promiscuously mingled together. And in the next place, the same apostle declares, generally, that from the mixed multitude of the human race are produced by birth, as distinctive classes, the "vessels of wrath" and the "vessels of mercy," for the manifestation of the glory of God.

Paul does, indeed, make the first *proximate* cause of the reprobation of Israel to be their not having believed the Gospel. That this cause is plainly

set forth by the apostles I by no means deny. But he first clearly lays down, be it remembered, the great doctrine concerning the secret judgments of God. Two things are distinctly dwelt on by the apostle. First, that God was never so bound to one people, as to prevent His free election from reigning in the choice or reprobation of certain individuals. And secondly, that the Jews, by their ingratitude, shut themselves out from the family of God, when they were the peculiar heirs of the covenant of eternal life. But lest the appearance of change in the purposes of God should disturb the mind of anyone, by this later rejection of the Jews seeming to shake the secret counsel of God, the apostle guards against such a consequence by the appropriate declaration that "the gifts and callings of God are *without repentance*" (Rom. xi. 29), and that, therefore, "the remnant according to the election of grace" should be saved (Rom. xi. 5). By which words the apostle means that the election of God, which stands in His secret counsel, remains firm and immovable.

But the impudence of this worthless mortal discovers itself more basely still in his declaring that Esau was not reprobated *before he sold* his birthright. I willingly acknowledge the testimony of the apostle, where he says that *after* Esau had deprived himself of his inheritance he was rejected (Heb. xii. 17). But are we to suppose that his rejection by his father Isaac, which he was then suffering, entirely did away with that former judgment and purpose of God, which was the *original cause* of his reprobation? Most certainly not. No more than the faith and obedience of Jacob did away with his free and eternal adoption of God.

The observation with which I opened this discussion, I now repeat at its close: that no one will ever attempt to disprove the doctrine which I have set forth herein, but he who may imagine himself to be wiser than the Spirit of God. Now-a-days, however, the soured opposition of men has attained to such a height, that they will not willingly and quietly receive even that which is evidently taken from the Scripture itself, without arrogating to themselves the prerogatives of God by imposing on others the law of speech and of silence. And yet some of these insolent ones wish to conceal their real principles under the garb of modesty, professing that, for themselves, they would not dare to deny that which had been testified by all the servants of God. For my part, I soberly and reverently

profess that I know no other law of modesty than that which I have learnt in the school of my heavenly Master! I am, however, fully aware that all possible prudence should be adopted in tempering all things to the building up of men in the most holy faith. But as I have studied to do that throughout my ministry, and in the present TREATISE also, with faith and a good conscience?if the nice objections of some are not yet satisfied, I feel, for myself, that I have done my duty. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

## **Eternal Predestination - Section 7 - A Brief Reply**

THERE has been cast in my way the silly script of a certain worthless mortal, who, with all his vileness, boasts of being a defender and avenger of the glory of God by waging war against the *Divine principle* and doctrine: "That the world is so governed by God, that nothing is done therein but by His *secret counsel and decree*."

Meanwhile, this miserable being sees not that when he is catching at fallacious pretences of clearing the justice of God from imputation, he is all the while utterly subverting His power, all which is, as it were, attempting to rend in pieces God Himself. But to give a colour to his profanity, he prefaces his undertaking not less wickedly than maliciously with the remark: "That God is not the *cause* of evil; nor *wills* sin." As if, when we claim for God the supremacy of all rule, we assert that He is the author of sin!

Now it is evident that JOHN CALVIN is attacked by this sentence. But it is well known that JOHN CALVIN is too far removed from the blasphemy with which this worthless being would charge him to need any lengthened protection of himself from its malignity.

John Calvin constantly declares aloud throughout his writings, wherever sin is the subject of discussion, that the name of God is not to be mingled or mentioned with sin, because nothing is consistent with the character of

God but rectitude and equity. How foul, then, is the calumny to involve a man, so long deserving well of the Church of God, in the crime of making God the author of sin!

The OBJECT of this malicious calumny does indeed affirm throughout his publications that nothing is done but by the WILL of God! But he, at the same time, asserts that those things which are done wickedly by men are so overruled by the secret counsel of God, that that counsel hath no connection whatever with the sinfulness of men.

The sum of the doctrine of the thus reviled one is, that God, in wondrous ways and in ways unknown to us, directs all things to the end that He wills, that His eternal WILL might be the FIRST CAUSE of all things. But why God wills that which may seem to us inconsistent with His nature the reviled one confesses to be incomprehensible! And, therefore, he declares aloud that the *why?* of God's works is not to be audaciously or curiously pried into; but that, on the contrary, as the counsels of God are a mighty deep, and mysteries that surpass the limits of our comprehension, it becomes a man rather to adore them with reverence than to investigate them with presumption.

Meantime, the object of all this foul calumny maintains, as a *sacred principle*, that, although the *reason why* of the counsels of God lies hidden and unknown, nevertheless, the high praise of His justice is ever to be given to God, because *His will is, and must be*, the highest rule of all equity! Wherefore, let him, whosoever he may be, who desires to load the man that constantly teaches these things with so atrocious a charge, as the making God the author of sin, first take upon himself the task of proving that when those wicked men who, by crucifying Christ, did "that which the hand of God and His counsel before determined to be done," they made God a partaker of their wickedness, and involved Him in a share of their guilt! The words, "That which Thy hand and Thy counsel before determined to be done," are not the words of Calvin (let it be remembered), but of the Holy Spirit and of Peter, and of the whole Primitive Church (Acts iv. 28).

Let these unreasonable and extravagant men, then, cease to defile the pure and lucid doctrine of the Holy Spirit, with their pollution and their

filth, and thus to blind the eyes of the simple; that the inexperienced, who understand not the real nature of the question, may not, when they hear sin mentioned, dash against the awful and abhorrent rock of making God the author of sin! After David had complained that he was oppressed by the unjust violence of his enemies on every side, he fails not to add, "that God had done all this!" When Job was despoiled of his substance by plunderers and tormented by the devil, he likewise confesses that all these evils came upon him from God! If anyone should reply, "That in this manner God is made the author of sin," let him wage his war with the holy prophets of God and with the Holy Spirit Himself. But while the holy prophets and the witnesses of the Holy Spirit held fast the sacred distinction that, though all things were thus done as ordained of God, and yet that whatsoever God wills or decrees is righteous and just, they, with equal plainness and firmness, set HIM high above all, who rules with His secret and sovereign reign Satan himself and all the wicked.

This short reply, thus far made, had John Calvin said no more, might have been sufficient to refute the iniquitous calumny of this worthless being, who so purposely and perversely corrupts and deforms his sentiments and doctrine. But that this calumniator's ends and aims may be the more completely uncovered, neither the time nor pains will be lost, perhaps, if we look into some other rising volumes of his malicious smoke. Now, as this vain being's purpose is to deprive God of His supreme rule and government; and as, with all the impudence imaginable, he cuts down, at one stroke, the *principle* that *the purpose of God is the first cause* of all things; I will summarily lay hold of and examine some of the *intermediate causes* and *reasons* which he brings forward.

This abandoned mortal asserts that Plato's opinions were far above mine, because he does not suffer God to be called the author of sin. Whereas, this mortal knows not really what Plato either thinks or says. And so abhorrent is the very term evil to this profane scribbler, that he positively denies that those numberless "evils," of which we are all the subjects, proceed from God. This is nothing, more or less, than despoiling God at once of His office as the JUDGE of the world! But when Calvin, and before him Luther and Bucer, and antecedently to them, Augustine, and

other godly teachers, testify that the will of God is the supreme cause of all things that are in the world; it was the farthest possible from the mind of each of them, and of them all, to entangle God in any shadow of fault. And as to Calvin, he, in all his writings, repudiates with fervid zeal, and pronounces to be detestable, that idea of the absolute, or tyrannical, power of God, which philosophising theologians set afloat throughout their schools. And for this reason: because the power of God ought not, and cannot be separated from His eternal wisdom. By this testimony the impudent barking of this unclean dog is at once refuted, when he makes honest and faithful teachers in the Church of Christ to utter things that are blasphemous, abhorrent, and before unheard, and which, after all, are, with a futility equal to their malignity, brought out from the wicked workshop of his own brain!

After vomiting forth all this foul calumny, this impure being professes to prove that God is not the cause of evils?first, from the law of nature; and next, from the authority of the *divine* Plato, as he terms him, by whom (he says) God is called the cause of good. The solution of the whole matter is perfectly simple. The image of that rectitude which we confess to be in God is stamped upon all natural knowledge of good and evil. In proportion, therefore, as each one forms his life according to the law of nature, in so far he represents the nature of God. For righteousness is a delight to God in the same proportion as iniquity is an abomination to Him. But how He rules and overrules by His secret counsel all those things that are done wickedly by man it is not ours to define; but it is ours to be assured, and to declare, that in whatsoever God doeth He never deviates from His own perfect justice!

I make the same reply to this worthless being's second argument. This noble champion for God puts the following question: If God be the author of sin (as he affirms that we say), why does He at all prevent sin from being committed? Why does He not throw the rein upon the necks of men altogether? Now, what means the barking of this dog about God being made the author of sin? The fact is, that this fellow fabricates monsters in his own imagination that he might get the fame of fighting with them. What, then, if I retort, but in quite a different manner, that question which may truly be put in assertion of the omnipotence of God: If God

does not will to be done the things that are done, why does He not prevent their being done? why does He throw the rein on the necks of men to do them? But from this mode of figurative repugnance and contradiction we may at once elicit the substance of that which Augustine testifies: "God in a secret and marvellous way *justly wills* the things which men unjustly do. Although according to His will, as truly expressed in His law, He hates iniquity, and has pleasure only in rectitude. And from this fountain flow all the curses which are appended to the law. For if iniquities did not displease Him, as being utterly contrary to His nature, He would neither denounce nor exact punishments." Wherefore, all that this worthless being has heaped together to vindicate God (as he thinks) from ignominy is utterly superfluous and vain. And, in fact, it is himself all the while who throws over God the idea of ignominy, while he is anxiously labouring, in a doubtful case (as he thinks), to make God appear to be good.

Having blattered forth his revilings till he was tired, our holy champion draws a little nearer, affirming that some men in these perilous times, not daring to teach openly that God is the cause of evils, intimate the same thing in varied forms of speech, asserting that Adam sinned by the will of God, and that wicked men perpetrate all their wickednesses not only by the *permission* of God, but by His actual *impulse*. Upon this our noble rhetorician exclaims with great lamentation, "O miserable man! How could it have been that God willed this, who had created Adam in His own image?"

As if it were mine to render an exact reason for the secret counsels of God, and to make mortals understand, to a pin's point, that heavenly wisdom, the height and depth of which they are commanded to look upon and adore. No! let Moses rather break short all such foolish loquacity by that word of his: "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God; but these which I testify are revealed unto you" (Deut. xxix. 29). We here see how Moses, commanding the people to be content with the doctrine of the law, admonishes them to leave His hidden counsels to God alone, as mysteries to be adored, not to be inquired into.

Here, finding the point of his pen to have become somewhat bent and blunt, he sharpens it anew for a furious attack upon those who (according



to his own account) assert that wickednesses are perpetrated not only by the will of God, but by His very impulse. Finding himself now entered into a boundless field, he exults and raves, leaving no kind of abuse whatever unuttered, that he might distress the minds of godly ministers, whose virtues, I would to God, he could imitate, even in a hundredth degree. He first of all classes them with the libertines, from whom, if he differed in the least degree in principle, he certainly would ruin this best of all causes by his sheer ignorance. Now as there exists a book of Calvin expressly written against these libertines, what kind of a face must that man possess who returns, for a labour so useful and holy, so undeserved a reward? He positively contends that if God does impel men to sin, the devil himself does no more. Suppose we concede, for a moment, this profane comparison, what will our hero say about the servants of Christ, upon whom the devil wages war ever, but God never? But let us see upon what arguments this profane being rests his profanity. "Let Satan (saith he) do what he will, and tempt as he will, he cannot compel the will of man. But God, who holds the heart of man in His hand, *can* compel the will. If, therefore, God *will force*, do so He will and must, whether you will or no." Here the ignorance and its audacity are at once manifest.

Now, all men of a sound mind are agreed that there is no sin but that which is voluntary. Wherefore, you will not find one of a sound judgment who will assert that men sin against their will. But Calvin, according to the Word of God, following also Augustine and other godly writers, teaches that when men sin of their own will and accord, God, nevertheless, gives into the hands of Satan "strong delusions," that he may drive the reprobate hither and thither, as Paul testifies (2 Thess. ii. 11). Satan, in this manner, goes forth, at the command of God, to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets to deceive Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 21). But it is not my purpose here to accumulate testimonies from the Scripture. My present object is merely to show how preposterously this barking dog howls against the innocent. "How (saith he) is a wicked man known to be such but by doing wickedly?" As if we, by attributing to the secret judgments of God, all the license which He puts into the hands of Satan, thereby make the adorable God the author of sin! As if we did not, on the contrary, openly and universally testify that God is, and must be, ever utterly remote from sin, because (as we show) it is in the strictest

justice and righteousness that He blinds and hardens the reprobate! "But in this way (argues this hero for God) the will of God and of the devil will be the same." Not so. There is, as I have before shown, a mighty difference, because, although God and the devil will the same thing, they do so in an utterly different manner. For who will deny that Satan eagerly desires the destruction of the wicked, which destruction, nevertheless, proceeds from God? Yet the object of the righteous JUDGE is infinitely different from that of the enemy, breathing out unmitigated cruelty! God willed that Jerusalem should be destroyed utterly; the same destruction Satan also desired. I would rather untie this sacred knot, however, by the words of Augustine than by my own, who, in his "Manual" against Laurentius (chap. ci.), nobly discusses the question: how it is that man wills with an evil will that which God wills with a good will (as where a wicked son, for instance, wills the death of his father, and God wills the same death); and finally, how it is that God performs that which He has decreed by the wicked wills and passions of men, rather than by the good wills of His own servants. I refer my readers to the exposition of the sacred matter as given by Augustine in the portion of his works to which I have alluded.

If, then, a diversity of end prevents not the will from being the same, would it not have been according to his desert if this champion for God had been swallowed up in the deeps of hell before he had thus defiled the Divine Majesty and polluted it by his foul cavils? And yet, he dares to charge us with denying in our hearts that justice of God which we profess with our mouths! Whereas, this vile being himself, while he dares with unbridled insolence to assert that those against whom he wars never study uprightness of life, so indulges himself in all iniquity, as if there sat no JUDGE upon the throne of heaven at all! But I would calmly ask, In which breast is it the more probable that the righteousness of God is made a laughing-stock? in the breast in which all desire after godliness is found, or that in which the rein is given to every species of iniquity? The real fact is, that there is no one thing in Calvin, and in those like him, which this goodly teacher of morality more thoroughly hates than the *unswerving rigour of their moral discipline!*

Insidious, however, and unlettered as this worthless mortal is, he yet

attempts to enlist in his base service the most scurrilous wit, demanding "whether it was God that rather willed the sin of Adam or Satan." Did ever godly or really serious men permit themselves to be facetious or pass jokes upon mysteries so profound; nay, to bark at them as impudent dogs? They do indeed confess that the Fall of Adam was not without the rule and overrule of the secret providence of God, but they never doubt that the end and object of His secret counsel were righteous and just. But as the reason lies hidden in the mind of God, they soberly and reverently await the revelation of it, which shall be made in the day in which we shall see that God "face to face," whom we now "behold through a glass darkly" and unintelligibly. Having thus revelled in the vilest abuse of the best and most godly of men, the next thing that this pious warrior would have done is, that all their tongues should be wrenched out and thrown into the fire!

There is no slight probability, however, that the rage of this being against Calvin is all intended as a holy offering to the memory of his friend, Servetus, and that lamenting the death of his kin companion, and finding no other method of satisfying his revenge, he surpasses all hangmen in cruelty towards the defenders of the truth. Concerning the doctrine of the twofold will of God which Calvin, following Augustine and other godly teachers, ascribes to God Himself, this excellent theological judge declares that he wonders at the childish babble by which it is set forth. Everyone must surely set him down as one of the most learned of men who can talk about "the childish babble" of another! But this offensive affectation fully proves that he thus prates under a panting hunt after vain glory. And he afterwards adds. "That this distinction, the twofold will of God, was invented by us, because without it we should have laid ourselves open to the charge of blaspheming God." Whereas, by this one word of his, his own frenzied madness is expressed and exposed; for he forgets that he himself has perpetually upbraided the most innocent men with uttering open blasphemies. And was it (I pray you) any doubtful blasphemy in himself when he made God the author of sin, and asserted that He not only wills sin, but actually impels men to sin, thus representing Him as renouncing His own nature, and feasting upon, and delighting Himself in, iniquities? And after having impudently vomited forth these revilings, he now, forgetting himself altogether and what he

has uttered, says that we cover over our blasphemies with a certain colouring, that they might not be perceived.

It is worth while, however, to observe what arguments he adduces in his attempted refutation of *the twofold will* of God. He accuses us of attributing, by this doctrine, *unfaithfulness* to God; as making Him say one thing and think another, contrary to the testimonies of the Scripture, wherein God says, "I am the Lord, I change not" (Mal. iii. 6); "With Him is no variableness" (James i. 17). But this silly mortal considers not that it is not Calvin only, and other like witnesses of the truth, who are attacked by this calumny, but Moses himself, who, when declaring that the law was given unto the Jews and to their children, leaves all "hidden things" with God, saying that they "belong" to Him (Deut. xxix. 20). Not that there is any difficulty whatever in refuting this calumny, for God, commanding that which is right, thereby testifies what truly pleases Him; nor is there any other counsel concealed in His own mind by which He either loves or wills to accomplish anything whatever that He condemns in man. But He exercises His judgments in a marvellous way, so that, by His surpassing wisdom and equity, He ordains and directs to a good end things that are, in themselves, evil. Nor wilt Calvin ever concede that God wills that which is evil?that is, in as far as it is evil?but that His secret and righteous judgments shine forth marvellously in overruling the iniquities of men. For instance, by the incestuous deeds of Absalom God punishes the adultery of David. Wherefore, when God commands Adam not to taste the fruit of the "tree of knowledge of good and evil," He thereby tests his obedience. Meanwhile, He *foreknew* what would take place; and not only *foreknew* it, but *ordained* it. If this truth be too hard and rough for the palate of our delicate theological judge, let him not blame the savour of the doctrine, but his own acerbity and disrelish. And when he attempts to thump into our hearts with all the weight of his iron mallet, wielded by his ponderous words, that the will of God is one only, which He reveals unto us by His prophets and by Christ, Augustine, by the force of his authority, wards off all the blows of his maul. "These (saith the holy father) are the mighty works of the Lord, exquisitely perfect in every point of His will; and so wisely perfect, that when the angelic and the human natures had sinned?that is, had each done not what God willed, but what each nature willed, though each nature did that which was

contrary to the will of God in one sense? yet God, by the same will of each nature, accomplished that which He willed righteously, using as the Supreme Good even evil deeds to the eternal condemnation of those whom He had justly predestinated to everlasting punishment, and to the eternal salvation of those whom He had predestinated unto grace. For, as far as the former were themselves concerned, they did that which God willed not; but with reference to the omnipotence of God, which could thus bring good out of evil, they could not by any means have willed to do it independently of that Omnipotence. For by the very fact of their acting contrary to the will of God, by that very acting the will of God was done through them. For in this very omnipotent way of working consists the mightiness of the works of God! So that, by an inexplicable manner of operation, that is not done without the will of God which is, in itself, even contrary to His will, because without His will it could not have been done at all. And yet God willeth not unwillingly, but willingly. For as the God of Goodness, He would not suffer evil to be done at all, unless, as the God of Omnipotence, He could, out of that evil, bring good!"

Wherefore, let this worthless being hurl all those horrible heresies and blasphemies, which he thus directs against the most godly ministers of our day, at the head of the eminent Augustine himself. It is indeed perfectly true that the will of God is to be sought for nowhere but in the Scripture. But while this gross hog is rooting up everything with his snout, he does not consider, that though reverence and sobriety are ever cultivated by the faithful, yet the secret judgments of God cannot be done away with or reduced to nothing! But it is one thing to contemplate and adore that "great deep" (Ps. xxxvi. 6) with all the modesty of faith, and quite another to reject it with contumacy, because it at once engulfs all the powers of the human mind which attempts its comprehension. This vile mortal, however, in order that he might do away with all those testimonies of the Scripture, instructed by which we assert the wonderful and glorious providence of God, contents himself with broadly declaring that all we heretics have ever abused piety, making it a mere cloak, and have, under the name of God, originated every kind of evil. Why, if this round assertion is to be deemed sufficient to settle the whole matter, the same may as well be admitted as competent to disprove all heavenly doctrine, and to obliterate the name of God altogether.

This worthless being afterwards adds, "That he can answer every argument which we may bring against him in two ways. By showing, first, that all those passages which seem to attribute the cause of evil to God, do not intend His effectual will, but His permitting or His leaving a thing to be done." But away with that calumny altogether, which is built upon the terms good and evil, when used in discussing God's eternal will and decrees. For we well know that nothing is more contrary to the nature of God than sin. But men act from their own proper wickedness when they sin, so that the whole fault rests with themselves. But to turn all those passages of the Scripture (wherein the affection of the mind, in the act, is distinctly described) into a mere permission on the part of God is a frivolous subterfuge, and a vain attempt at escape from the mighty truth! The fathers, however, did interpret these passages by the term permission; for finding that the apparent asperity of the more direct terms gave offence to some at first hearing, they became anxious to mitigate them by milder expressions. In their too great anxiety, however, thus to mitigate, and in their study to avoid giving any such offence, they relaxed something of that fixedness of attention which was due to the great truth itself.

This worthless being, however, who professes to be so familiar with the fathers, betrays his utter ignorance of their real minds; for seizing hold of those instances of inexperience in Augustine which I have already alluded to as being found in his writings while he was, as yet, not deeply versed in the Scripture, he passes over all those plain and powerful passages wherein he acknowledges the secret judgments of God in their real and actual operations (if I may so express myself) of blinding and hardening the reprobate. The same ignorance and unletteredness is manifested also by this vain being when he tells us, on the authority of Hieronymus, that when God is spoken of as doing or creating *evils*, the expressions are *figurative*." But if "evils" are nothing more or less than *adversities* (as is perfectly well known and universally acknowledged), why hunt after a figure in things which are, in themselves, perfectly manifest and plain?

But let us look into the doctrine of permission a little more closely, yet briefly. Joseph is wickedly sold by his brethren. Joseph himself declares that he was sent into Egypt by God through the means of this wickedness,

not by his brethren, who perpetrated it; and he declares that all this was done by the counsel of God, that the family of his father might be nourished and kept alive. Now, is all this, I pray you, mere permission? Job also testifies that it was God who took away from him all that substance of which the robbers and plunderers had despoiled him! Does God's "taking away," I pray you, declare no act on the part of God? God is said to have turned the hearts of the Gentiles to hate His people. Shall we say that this was a mere permission on the part of God? The Scripture itself expresses the "turning" as a positive and open act of God. So when God is said to deliver men over "to a reprobate mind," and to give them up "to vile affections," there cannot exist a doubt that those acts of His awful judgments are thereby declared by which He takes righteous vengeance on the reprobate! If God were merely an inactive looker-on while these mighty judgments were being effected, and merely permitted them to be executed, would He, by such mere permission of an observer, really execute the office of a JUDGE? God calls Nebuchadnezzar the "axe in His hand" (Isa. x. 5); He terms also the Assyrians the "staff of His indignation"; all wicked men He designates His "rod"; and He positively declares that by means of these He will do what He hath decreed to do. What place will mere permission find here? Jeremiah, addressing the Medes, exclaims, "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully; and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood" (Jer. xlviii. 10). Behold! what cruelty soever these bloody men commit, the prophet, in another sense, calls the work of God, because God, by their hand, executed His vengeance on the Babylonians. David, in like manner, testifies that what evil soever he was suffering, it was God that did it, and that, therefore, he was "dumb" (Ps. xxxix 9). Now, by what figures or tropes, I pray you, will any man convert the term "didst it" into permittedst it, or make the doing a thing merely the permitting it to be done? Paul likewise declares that it is God who sends upon the wicked strong delusions that they should believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11). Where, therefore, the "effectual working" (Eph. iii. 7) of God appears manifest, as it does here, by what alchemy or contrivance will anyone extract from such "effectual working" the Divine will and purpose?

This pre-eminent theological teacher and judge prescribes, as a canon, for the interpretation of such passages as, "Thou art not a God that hast

pleasure in wickedness" (Ps. v. 4), that all those should be considered, as intended by that text, who seem to attribute evil to God. But what has this at all to do with the present question? No spot of iniquity is affixed by us on God. All we affirm is quite the reverse. All we maintain, throughout our arguments, is that God rules and overrules all the actions of the world with perfect and Divine rectitude. If anyone of us sundered the power of God from His justice, then indeed we should lay ourselves justly open to the tacit censure of those who continually and reproachfully repeat to us "that there is nothing more contrary to the power of God than tyranny." But now, while we make Him "to have no pleasure in wickedness," is He, under this pretext, to be torn from His throne, as the Judge of the world, and as having no Omnipotence whereby to work good by means of evil men and their evil deeds? For the fact is, that as God frequently works out His judgments by the hands of the wicked, whosoever shall confine Him within the bounds of permission will at once expel Him from His office as Judge of the world! The sons of Eli had evilly and disgracefully abused their priestly office, and they perished by the hand of the Philistines. Now, by the canon of our great theologian, we must interpret this as meaning that all was done by the permission of God. But what saith the Scripture? That all was done because God had purposed to destroy them. Just observe to what extent of madness all madmen are driven by their madness where there is no religion, no modesty, no shame to stop them. They rush on, till they bring not only men, but God also, under subjection to their frenzied fictions.

But as it would be utterly absurd to hold that anything could be done contrary to the will of God, seeing that God is at Divine liberty to prevent that which He does not will to be done, how ingenious a workman this being is in getting rid of this argument which stands against him, let us now in a few words explain. He first of all asserts that it is ridiculous to inquire into this at all. What a pity it was that Augustine had not such a monitor by his side, to save him all the holy labour which he spent upon this great question, and by which labour (according to our theological hero) he made himself "perfectly ridiculous"! Whereas, Augustine proves, by this very argument, that everything that is done on earth is effectually ruled and overruled by this secret providence of God. Nor does he hesitate to conclude that everything that is done, is done by the *will*



*of God!* According to which conclusion, the Psalmist testifies that God, sitting in heaven, doth what He will: "But our God (saith the Psalmist) is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased" (Ps. cxv. 3). But why, I pray you, is this question a ridiculous one? Our great theological monitor replies: "Because it is not lawful to ask of God a *reason* for His actions." Why does not our modest monitor, then, retain this great modesty throughout his treatment of this mighty matter? Whence arise, then, this modest being's furious clamours and tumults? Whence, but from the fact that the proud and ignorant reject, with hatred and disdain, the counsels of God? because, forsooth, their puny minds cannot grasp their profundity and immensity! Leave, then, to God the *liberty* to order all things according to His own *will*, and all strife about the matter will end at once. But it is just and right that madmen should be left thus to contend one with the other, that they may put an end to each other by a mutual destruction.

Here we are brought back to the old point of vain defence resorted to by our theological hero: "That many things are done contrary to the will of God." This we most willingly grant, provided that this contrary to the will of God be not carried too far. God, for instance, often willed to call the Jews together, "but they would not"; though He called them to Himself by His prophets, "rising up early," as He Himself forcibly expresses it (Jer. vii. 13). But as conversion is God's peculiar gift, He converts Himself effectually those whom He wills to be converted in reality. In what sense it is that Paul says, "God will have all men to be saved" (1 Tim. ii. 4), let readers, as we have before observed and explained, learn from the context. There are different degrees and kinds of salvation (as we have shown above when opening this passage). But God does not deem all men (as we have before shown from the history of the world and from the few nations to whom God sent even His external word) worthy of the external word; and they are few whom He makes the partakers of His secret illumination.

But to extricate himself the more easily from his perplexity, this unworthy mortal finally catches up for his defence the shield of free will. He says, "That there is no wonder whatever in God's not preventing men from doing evil, who have the free will to do what they please." Whereas,

that is the mighty wonder! And it is resolvable only by the sublime truth and its doctrine that whatsoever men do, they do according to the *eternal will and secret purpose* of God! But why does this vain being thrust upon us a term fabricated out of nothing? What is free will, when the Scripture everywhere declares that man, being the captive, the servant, and the slave of the devil, is carried away into wickedness of every kind with his whole mind and inclination, being utterly incapable of understanding the things of God, much less of doing them?

In this refutation of dog-faced dishonesty, as the *omnipotence* of God is honestly and clearly maintained against calumnies of every kind, I feel confident that I have humbly performed a work both useful and gratifying to the Church, and also acceptable unto God.

# **A Defence of the Secret Providence of God**

## **TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE**

**TO**

**SECOND VOLUME.**

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IT is an awful and deplorable fact that the adorable Redeemer and only Saviour of men is, according to the prophetic declaration of the Scripture concerning Him, "A stone of stumbling and rock of offence" (Isa viii. 14; 1 Pet. ii. 8), wherever He comes in His Spirit, life and power. Equally lamentable are the sure consequences which follow the written or preached proclamation of the essential doctrines of His everlasting Gospel. Nor have any of those doctrines met with a greater degree of enmity, hatred and violent opposition from men, than the two all-high and glorious truths of His revealed Word which are now immediately before us—"THE ETERNAL PREDESTINATION OF GOD" and the "wonderful counsel and excellent working" (Isa. xxviii. 29) of "THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD," by which He works out, in His sovereign way, the decrees of His sovereign will.

The former of these momentous doctrines forms the subject and object of the preceding Treatise, for a view of the nature of which, and of Calvin's success in its unequalled execution, the reader is referred to the Preface, by which it is introduced to the English Church of Christ.

The present Treatise of the same beloved Reformer of undying memory

and of imperishable "high esteem, in love, for His works' sake" (1 Thess. V. 13), is devoted to a discussion of that equally sublime and equally incomprehensible subject, "THE SECRET PROVIDENCE OF GOD." This unfathomable and incomprehensible deep Calvin enters with the same acute and powerful intellect which characterises the preceding Treatise, and with a holiness and reverence of spirit correspondently profound. He states, in all its fulness, the mysterious and inscrutable depth of the mind of God in the awe-filling dispensations of His "secret providence," and presents a noble, admirable and unanswerable DEFENCE of their sure justice, Divine holiness and infinite wisdom.

Neither of these glorious doctrines of the Bible has been declared, in any age or place, by the tongue or by the pen of the servants of God without exciting (as we have already stated) the hostile enmity and, more or less, violent opposition of men. It is no marvel, therefore, that Calvin, who was called to so prominent a ministration of them, should have met with a parallel amount of hatred, malignity and violence, in his day and generation, nor that he should therefore have been necessitated to employ as much time and toil in their public defence as in their public ministration.

Luther and Calvin, therefore, each bore his large and inevitable share of the "offence of the cross" (Gal. v. 11). But while Luther's heavy share exceeded, perhaps, that of Calvin in the number, rage, hostility and mightiness of his adversaries; the enemies of Calvin surpassed those of Luther in hatred, malignity, misrepresentation, contumely, slander and violence. And these peculiarities of hostile and determined opposition were in exact accordance with the natures of the ministerial works of these two blessed and prominent servants of the Most High.

Luther's mighty work lay in the exposure and demolition of the principles and authorities of churches and of kingdoms, and in the defiance of the power of popes, kings, princes and potentates of the earth. But the work of Calvin lay more directly with the hearts, principles and spirits of men ? filled with hatred against those very truths which he was expressly called of God to declare almost anew, with all the light and penetrating power of his ministry, to a truth-hating world.

Both these pre-eminent servants of God, however, "hidden in the hollow of His hand" (Isa. xlix. 2), defended from without by His omnipotent power, and sustained within by the consolations of His Spirit, "finished the work which He gave them to do," and are now wearing in eternal glory the crowns "which the Lord, the righteous Judge, had laid up for them," from all eternity, as their sure reward (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8).

Those enemies of the loved and noble Swiss Reformer, who resisted his testimony concerning "The secret providence of God," were, if possible, more numerous, more hostile, more acrimonious and violent, and certainly more false, misrepresentative, scandalising and malignant, than those who resisted his witness concerning "The eternal predestination of God." Though these twin cardinal truths of the Bible ever stand, in all direct consequence, necessarily and inseparably connected, this excess of virulent hostility to the former glorious doctrine is strikingly manifest from the present attack of "a certain worthless calumniator," whose malicious and mendacious violence called forth that DEFENCE which forms the burden of the present Treatise.

The method of defensive reply adopted by Calvin is characteristically plain, honest and satisfactory. He gives the articles of accusation (or slanders) in the order in which they were published by the calumniator, and he makes his replies to them consecutively in defence of the sovereignty and secrecy of "The Providence of God." But the reader is informed, by way of premonition, that the parenthesis? (that is, "Slander I., II., III., etc.") ?which are found in all the headings to the sections, are Calvin's parenthetical comments, as it were, on the calumniator's terms, "Article I., II., III.," etc., by which parenthesis in each case Calvin testifies that each article is the basest calumny!

Who this prominent calumniator was is now unknown. It was very probably Servetus, to whose insidious designs and persecuting animosity Calvin himself makes so much allusion in the preceding Treatise. One thing is certain?and it is worthy our recollection?that this calumniator of Calvin, and of his doctrine and ministry, was a deadly enemy to the truth, and that he was as industrious in his researches for hostile materials, as subtle in his reasonings, and as indefatigable in his inventions of opposing arguments, as he was malicious and violent in his opposition.

So that it may with much safety be concluded that the following sheets contain the most of, if not all, the strongest (or rather vilest) arguments which the utmost efforts of the rationalist, the sceptic, and the infidel can bring against those two essential doctrines of the revealed Word, which the two present Treatises so admirably state and defend. For "there is no discharge in this war" of the truth (Eccles. viii. 8). Wherever it is written or preached, conflicts, persecutions and sufferings for its sake by writers and by preachers must, with solemn certainty, be endured (2 Tim. iii. 11; 2 Peter ii. 2).

No! The "offence of the cross" of the Redeemer and of His truth has not "ceased" (Gal. v. 11), nor will it cease till time shall be no more. The same false accusations, slanders, misrepresentations, and perversions of the doctrines, principles and actions of the true servants of Christ (especially with reference to the two great doctrines of the everlasting Gospel now immediately under discussion). which have existed in all ages, in various forms of violence and malignity, still prevail on every side.

Wherefore (to make a few condensed and concluding observations upon the completion and issue of this Second Volume) the excellency and usefulness of these Treatises of the beloved, able and immortal Calvin will be found, it is hoped, as originally designed by the translator to be threefold.

First, the clear and truthful statement of the sublime doctrines of God's sovereign grace, sustained by the Scriptures and by the experience of the just, throughout the Treatises will be edifying and establishing, it is trusted, to all those members of the Church of Christ who can trace, with any degree of comfort, by the light and testimony of the Spirit and of the Word their "calling" of God. While the divine and powerful arguments, by which the scriptural statements are illustrated and confirmed, will strengthen the assurance of their salvation, by showing them that its security rests on the very nature and attributes of God as its "sure foundation." The blessed and beloved "poor" of God's family, indeed, who form the greater portion of His heavenly household, may not feel themselves competent to follow the acute and deep Calvin throughout the extent of his arguments; yet some, even of them, may be able, in a profitable measure, to do so with admiration and thankfulness, to the

strengthening of their faith and hope. For a "poor wise man" (Eccles. ix. 15), in whom dwells the Spirit of wisdom and of truth, has more mental power and judgment in such things than the world, and even the saints themselves, generally give him credit for. And though we are instructed to look around us, and to mark who they are that compose the generality of the disciples of Christ? "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called" (1 Cor. i. 26) ?yet we have great cause to glorify God (as a certain "noble" disciple once observed) that the Word does not say not any noble, or wise, or learned, or educated, or intelligent, are called. Into the hands of some of these, therefore, who may be able to follow, understand and appreciate the divine and deep arguments of Calvin, these his Treatises may fall and, by the glad and thankful perusal of them, their minds may be informed and enlarged into the length, breadth and depth of that "sure foundation" on which their faith and hope repose for eternity.

But secondly, Calvin speaks and writes in these Treatises not to the Church of Christ only, but also to the unregenerate, human-reasoning and profane world at large. He shows the world, as well as the Church of Christ, that the sublime doctrines of "the eternal predestination of God" and of "His secret providence" must, of consequent necessity, be true, not only from the declarations of the Holy Scripture, but from the very nature and attributes of the adorable God Himself. Wherefore, these volumes carry with them Calvin's holy, masterly and unanswerable testimony to the whole English nation, wheresoever they may come; and this is what it was also intended by the translator they should do, and which it is hoped they will do, successfully, to the eternal profit of men and to the glory of God. Hence, these Treatises will arm the disciples of Christ with weapons for their defence of the truth, as well as feed them with "strong meat " for their enjoyment, nourishment and strength (Heb. V. 14).

Nor do we despair of these same volumes being made profitable to the ministers of Christ, especially to His younger servants, equipping them also with insubvertible arguments for the Truth's defence, as well as enriching them with sound doctrine for its proclamation. And the present day is one of widely prevailing rationalism, scepticism and infidelity. The "wise," the "scribes," and "the disputers of this world," with their

"doubtful disputations" and their "oppositions of science, falsely so-called" (1 Cor. i. 20; 1 Tim. vi 20), abound in every direction. Against all this, and all these, Calvin furnishes, in the present Treatises, the twofold materials of Scripture and argument for erecting, in any place, at any time, an impregnable tower in defence of the truth; while the same testimonies, as being heaven-commissioned, contain in them "the arrows of the Almighty," some of which may perhaps hit, with the sharpness of saving mercy, the hearts of a few of the enemies of the "King of kings," and bring them to His feet! (Ps. xlv. 5.)

In this twofold respect, indeed, Calvin has commanded a field, trodden a path, and pursued a "line of things" unoccupied by any minister of Christ with anything like the same prominence, ability and effect, either before his day or since he left earth for heaven. Many true servants of Christ have set forth, and still do set forth, the sublime doctrines of grace scripturally; but they are not gifted with mental powers to prove the necessity of their truth from the very nature of God Himself, and from the ever unchangeable and inseparable harmony of His eternal attributes, as Calvin did throughout his ministry, and as he has done in these his two admirable productions. No man has occupied this sphere, nor wrought in this line of ministerial labour, with anything approaching to competent ability since the sixteenth century?the glorious era of the Reformation. Nor has anyone appeared qualified to perform such service to God and His Church in the present century. In the last and the preceding centuries there were a Dr. Owen, a Dr. Gill, a Romaine, and perhaps a few others, who possessed the mental ability, the learning and the spiritual gifts for the task. But they had not the "calling" of God to that branch of His service. God did not set that "line of things" before them. The only man in the last century who stood at this post, with spiritual and mental endowments at all adequate to the work, was that talented servant of God, that accomplished scholar, that "burning and shining light" of the Church of England and of the Church of Christ?Toplady. His ministry, however, by the inscrutable will of the sovereign Disposer of all things, was as short as it was brilliant. He died at the lamented age of thirty-six, after a ten or twelve brief years' ministrations, and left no successor his like, either in the Church of England or out of it. Nor has any equal to him, in rich experience of Divine truth, in the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or in



sanctified mental talent, since appeared. Toplady did enter upon Calvin's peculiar twofold field, and his written testimonies on the stupendous doctrines now in question are an enduring treasure to the British Church of Christ and to her whole nation.

The above remarks, intended merely to describe the nature and merits of the two present Treatises, will not, it is hoped, be deemed invidious or partial. They are designed to be solely explanatory of the state of the case in reference to these productions of the immortal Swiss Reformer. Even those distinguished one-in-a-century servants of God, Bunyan, equally immortal with Calvin, and that widely useful and highly-honoured "master in Israel," Huntington, were wholly incompetent to execute such works as these Treatises. Those great and good men were each of memorable value and profit to the Church of Christ in their respective centuries, and their bequeathed works and services will probably continue, especially those of the former, to the end of time; but neither of them could have occupied the field or performed the work of Calvin. No servant of God, however great or useful, could have done, or could now do, that, but one who, to a deep experience of Divine Truth and to commanding natural powers, should have added, or should now add, a sound classical, mathematical and logical mental training. And a servant of Christ, thus divinely, naturally and acquiredly qualified for his highest services, scarcely appears, we repeat, once in a century; nay, as the course of centuries has proved, in the bright and pre-eminent instances of Luther and Calvin, scarcely once in three centuries. That no one has stood forth in the present century, or can now be found, prepared of God with this threefold equipment of grace (1 Cor. xv. 10), nature and acquirement for his high service, both before the redeemed Church and before the more learned world, trained both at the feet of Christ and at the feet of Gamaliel (Luke x. 39; Acts xxii. 3), is a source of lamentation to all who are competent to form a right judgment.

And thirdly, these Treatises, it is confidently believed (and this was a third motive for their translation and publication), will fully vindicate the doctrine and character of John Calvin, and unload his revered name (in the English mind at least) from that mountain of malignant obloquy and slander which has been heaped upon it, more or less, for these three

centuries past. These, his own unequalled testimonies, will not only prove the might and invincibleness of his spiritual and mental powers, but will make equally manifest the holiness, the humbleness, and the adoration of his soul as one of "the redeemed from the earth," one of the "sealed" among men, as God's own (Rev. xiv. 3; vii. 4).

Nor can the translator refrain from offering, ere he close these observations, his sincere expressions of gratitude to those "Brethren and Friends" who have come thus readily and liberally forward with their "gold and silver," on public grounds, not for themselves only, to insure the publication of these volumes, when no other means of their publicity was attainable. And in these his grateful acknowledgments, he is fully assured that he is joined by those few much interested friends by whose counselling and arranging aid the original "proposal" was put forth.

Should, then, these two Treatises of the truthful, faithful and able Calvin be so honoured as to be made of any sacred service in edifying the disciples of Christ, and building them up in their most holy faith; should they be found in any degree useful in equipping the friends of the Truth with armour for its effective defence; should they lend aid in silencing the clamours, shaming the slanders, refuting the doctrines, and defeating the designs of the enemies of God and of His revealed truth in the present day, or in future generations of the English Church of Christ; these feeble labours of their translation will have received the highest reward with which their author ever wished to be honoured.

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## **Introduction - The Secret Providence of God**

**by John Calvin**

**THE** moment I think of speaking upon that Providence of God, by which

He governs not only the vast machinery of the whole world and each smallest part of it, but also the hearts and the actions of men, a mighty and complex subject presents itself before me. But as I have already treated of the stupendous matter in a manner calculated, I hope, to satisfy, in a measure, all sound-minded and unprejudiced readers, I shall only touch it in a summary and passing manner upon the present occasion, adopting all possible brevity. Nor indeed can any splendour of speech be expected from me, nor any brilliancy of thought that shall correspond with the magnitude and excellency of the theme. I shall merely recapitulate, in a few bare words, those arguments which I have fully developed in my "Institutes" But if I shall see such need, I will now interweave with these arguments some further testimonies from the Holy Scripture. And I shall also, as I hope, so wash away, by a plain refutation, the designing and malignant cavils of Pighius\* and his fellows,? that they shall not, in the least degree, hurt or hinder the minds of the godly.

By Providence, we mean, not an unconcerned sitting of God in heaven, from which He merely observes the things that are done in the world; but that all-active and all-concerned seatedness on His throne above, by which He governs the world which He Himself hath made. So that God, as viewed in the glass of His Providence, is not only the Maker of all things in a moment, but the perpetual Ruler of all things which He hath created. That Providence, therefore, which we ascribe to God, pertains as much to His operating hands as to His observing eyes. When, therefore, God is said to rule the world by His Providence, we do not merely mean that He maintains and preserves that order of nature which He had originally purposed in Himself, but that He holds and continues a peculiar care of every single creature that He has created. And true and certain is the fact, that as it was the wonderful wisdom of God that originally made the world, and disposed it in its present beautiful order, so, unless the omnipotent power of God, ever present, sustained it thus created and disposed it, it could not continue in its designed order and form one hour.

That the sun rises upon us day by day; that in a course so rapid his rays should be so tempered and his degrees so adjusted; that the order of the stars, so wonderfully arranged, should never be disturbed; that the

vicissitudes of the seasons should recur so continuously; that the earth should open her bowels with such annual regularity for the nourishment of man; that the elements and their separate particles should not cease to perform their appointed functions; in a word, that the fecundity of nature should never be worn out nor fail?all this marvellous operation, co-operation and continuance, can surely never be thought to proceed from any other cause than from the directing hand of God! And what else is the 104th Psalm but a long and loud praise of this universal Providence! The apostle Paul lauds this same Divine Providence when he says, "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28). Wherefore, as the one only God has an essence peculiar to Himself, so that living principle of vegetation, by which all creatures subsist and without which they must soon perish, must be considered by faith a secret infusion of God.

But the knowledge of a general and universal Providence is vague and confused, unless we hold, at the same time, the belief, and indulge the contemplation, that God covers under the wings of His care each single one of His creatures. To teach us this glorious lesson was the object of Christ when He said, "That not a sparrow that is sold for half a farthing falls to the ground without the heavenly Father's knowledge" (Matt. x. 29). In considering this special Providence of God, however, by which He secretly broods over the care of each individual creature as the work of His hands, it will be necessary that we take a sacred view of the certain degrees and distinct peculiarities which it divinely embraces.

As man is the noblest work of God, for whose "good" all things were created which the heavens and the earth contain, the Scripture sets forth the Providence of God as concerned principally in the care and government of the human race. Paul, in explanation of that passage, "Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn," observes, "Doth God take care of oxen?" implying that the providential care of God does not rest on them in particular as its peculiar sphere of action, but is more especially employed in the care of men. In this respect, as the course of the Divine Providence lies in the dealings of God with men as beings endowed with reason, its conduct assumes a surer light and a brighter glory. For marvellous are the judgments of God; at

one time, in punishing the wicked; at another, in teaching the faithful patience and crucifying their flesh; at another, in purging out the wickednesses of the world; at another, in awakening the sleep and sloth of many; at another, in breaking down the arrogance of the proud; at another, in making the wisdom of the wise a laughing-stock; at another, in destroying the machinations of the malicious. On the other hand, the surpassing goodness of God is brightly displayed in succouring the distressed, in protecting and defending the cause of the innocent, and in coming to the assistance of those who are in despair of all help. The 107th Psalm contains a beautiful and glorious description of the conduct of the Providence of God, which is manifested towards men. In that Psalm the prophet shows that those vicissitudes, which men generally consider violent floods of change, are not waves of trouble, rolling over men with blind impetuosity, as it were, but bright glasses wherein to behold the goodness, the wrath, or the justice of God! And at the close of this blessed Psalm, the penman of it draws the concluding inference that if the godly and the "wise" would duly "observe" these various changes in the world, they would gain understanding in the ways of God, and would find abundant cause for rejoicing. While the Psalmist also implies that the same contemplation, if exercised by the wicked, would stop their mouths, by giving them an awe-striking sight of the wonderful works of God!

But here we must take a view of other and loftier steps of the Divine Providence. For though God thus shows Himself the Father and the Judge of the whole human race, yet, as the Church is His sanctuary in which He resides, He there manifests His presence by clearer and brighter proofs; He there shows Himself as the Father of His family, and condescends to grant a nearer view of Himself, if I may so speak. The Scripture is filled with testimonies of this, which declare that God keeps a more especial watch over the faithful: "The eyes of the Lord (saith David) are over the righteous" (Ps. xxxiii. 21); "He preserveth the souls of His saints" (Ps. xcvi. 10); "For He careth for you," saith Peter (1 Peter v. 7); "Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered," saith the Lord Himself (Matt. x. 30). In a word, the Church is the great workroom of God, wherein, in a more especial manner, He displays His wonderful works; and it is the more immediate theatre of His glorious Providence.

For this reason it is that God is said to have appointed angels, which are, as it were, His hands, to be guardians in a peculiar manner to His saints that believe in Him; that the angels also might have no separate position or office apart from the body of Christ, of which they also are members. Therefore, that we may take a circumspective and comprehensive view of the whole Divine matter, our eyes must rest, first, on that general government of the whole world, by which all things are cherished and caused to vegetate, that the natural state of them all, collectively and individually, may remain and be preserved the same.

Secondly, our eyes must rest on the watchfulness of God, in ruling and guarding the single parts and particles of all these created things, which watchfulness is such that nothing occurs in them or concerning them, unknown or unnoticed. We must look, thirdly, at God's more especial care of the human race, which is such that the life and death of men, the public destinies of kingdoms and of nations, and the private cases of individuals, and whatsoever men usually ascribe to fortune, are under His heavenly rule and disposal. And lastly, we must contemplate that peculiar protection by which God defends His Church, in which protection He more expressly manifests His presence and His power.

The vast and multiform utility of this doctrine no words can adequately express. Nor will anyone profitably contemplate the Providence of God in the government of the world, as it is set before us in the Scriptures and seen by faith, but he who, feeling that he has to do so with his Maker and with the Creator of all things, first "bows the head" with that awe and reverence and with that humility which becomes one standing before such stupendous Majesty! For if man is ever wont to pay such honour to his fellow-men, as to judge of their works with candour and modesty, especially where anything seems somewhat obscure and difficult to comprehend at the moment; if man, in such cases, is the more anxious and diligent in inquiring into the truth, and would rather suspend his judgment than, by a hasty decision, do his fellow-man an injury; is it not, I ask, worse than madness, and something more than ferocity, to use a tenfold greater liberty with God, and to bring His stupendous works down to the scale of our puny judgment; to pronounce a precipitate opinion upon things infinitely sublime and wholly incomprehensible; to

attempt to fathom His secret counsels; and, above all, to trifle with mysteries so deep and so profoundly adorable? This insolence has, indeed, stalked abroad in all ages, but has taken greater strides and made louder boasts in the present day than in any age or time preceding. Many infidels now-a-days, finding that they cannot tear God down from heaven (which, like the giants of old, they really attempt to do), strive mightily, at least, to force out of their own and all other men's consciences every particle of religion and of true worship, by vomiting forth the foulest and basest blasphemies, thus betraying their profanity, and their rage against God and His truth.

In the greater part of these characters the source of all the evil is evidently this: being persons of a light and fervid spirit, they first give indulgence to their own vain curiosity. Then, having no fixed aim or object before them, they give themselves up to utterly useless speculations. Upon the back of this comes an unbridled audacity, which instigates their tongues to speak with a rashness exactly commensurate with their impudence. Others, again, are the subjects of an evil state of spirit, different indeed, but just as mischievous. For, bewildering themselves in absurd dreams, they drown their minds in self-will, or desperation, or sloth. Now all these are the very wiles of the devil; and his object in adopting them is to involve the true, sound and holy doctrine in all sorts of "lying wonders" of inventions, by which means he would not only rob us of all its profitableness and fruit, but would also render it either contemptible, or hateful, or destructive. But whatsoever plans the devil may adopt, be it ours ever to steer clear of the perverted caution to which some have recourse, who, to meet such perils as these, find no shorter way than the obscuring or corrupting of that which the Scripture declares with all possible and naked simplicity.

Now, a much more appropriate and effectual remedy for all these evils is to hold our minds under the constant consideration in what manner and to what end the Providence of God should be contemplated. The first end is, that it may keep us free from all presumptuous confidence and hold us fast in the fear of God, and also may stir us up to continual prayer. A second end is to bring us to rest upon God with still and peaceful minds, and to teach us to despise, in all courage and security, the dangers which

surround us on every side and the numberless deaths which constantly threaten us from every quarter. Each of these great ends I will now, with all possible brevity, endeavour to explain. Those who imagine that there is any such a thing as fortune or chance, or who expect anything from their own industry, or plans, or labours, are carried hither and thither after every expedient, are driven in all directions, turn every stone (as they say), devise every new means, and gallop about like the horse in an open field. But with all this to do, there is no prayer, no fear of God!

He, however, who knows and feels that men and their counsels, and the issues of all things, are ruled and overruled by the Providence of God, will confess with trembling, as did the prophet Jeremiah: "I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself: it is not, in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. x. 23). Bearing in mind also those words of Solomon? "A man's goings are of the Lord: how can a man, then, understand his own way?" (Prov. xx. 24) ?he will commit himself wholly unto God, and depend entirely upon Him. Where there is such a state of mind, prayers will ever follow, that God will begin and perfect every work which we undertake, while we thus rest on Him in all quietness, and on Him alone. Just in the same degree will he who dreams about the will of fortune give himself up to be driven about in fear by the devil and by the wicked, as by ferocious brute animals?as if they could do anything of themselves! And thus will such an one fret and fume with perpetual anxiety; and, looking at his life as hanging continually by a single thread, as it were, he will live in unending torment. He will scarcely be able to put forth one foot without despairing of his life or well-being. Whereas the faithful, having the all-ruling hand of God ever before them, will never hesitate to cast all their cares and concerns upon Him. And they will all the while rest assured that the devil and all wicked men, whatever tumults they may cause, are not only held of God by their feet in chains, but are compelled to do His pleasure, under which assurance they will pass their lives in security and peace.

The two following distinctions will also throw a Divine light upon this sacred matter. The Providence of God is to be viewed with reference to all time past, as well as in connection with all time future. In contemplating



the Divine Providence of the former, all power is to be ascribed to God in all things (whether viewed *with* their means [*media*], *without* their means [*media*], or *contrary* to their mediums [*media*]?that God ordains and appoints all things. The consideration of the time past should be thus: If anything has taken place successfully, and in fulfilment of a mortal man's wishes, let him not "sacrifice to his own drag" (as Habakkuk expresses it); nor let him speak of his own prudence, virtue or good fortune; nor give that praise to man, nor to any creature, which is due to God alone. But let him ever feel assured that God was the first cause and author of all his good, through what secondary medium soever it came. And in the case of all preceding adversities, let a man rest in the consolation that all took place according to the good pleasure of God; for by complaining and contending against God, I shall profit myself nothing, and shall bind myself in the chain of the guilt of impious obstinacy against my Maker. And let a man so entertain the memory of his past life, as to acknowledge, in all the punishments he has endured, the sins he has committed which caused them.

With reference to the time future, the Providence of God is to be contemplated by all godly minds thus: Let the minds of the godly be ever intently fixed on God's promises and threatenings. For as soon as their minds turn aside from these, they are shut up against all instruction in the fear of God, and the progress of faith ceases. But he who shall always keep his eye fixed on the omnipotence of God, as seen in the glass of His Word, and shall rely on His promises therein also contained, will mount on the wings of faith above all the countless perils of the world. And then, bowing before the threatenings of God also beheld in His Word, he will humble himself under the sight of them as so many rods.

When I spoke of the Providence of God being viewed with its mediums, my meaning was this: If anyone shall have assisted his fellow-man when sunk under an extremity of distress, the deliverance rendered by the hand of man is not a human, but a Divine deliverance. The sun rises day by day; but it is God that enlightens the earth by his rays. The earth brings forth her fruits; but it is God that giveth bread, and it is God that giveth strength by the nourishment of that bread. In a word, as all inferior and secondary causes, viewed in themselves, veil like so many curtains the

glorious God from our sight (which they too frequently do), the eye of faith must be cast up far higher, that it may behold the hand of God working by all these His instruments. But in what manner the Providence of God can work, without any medium or instrument at all, Christ taught us by His own example, when He repelled the assaulting Tempter with this shield: "Man doth not live by bread only: but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God doth man live" (Matt. iv. 4). For as the Redeemer knew that the power of God needed no external support whatever, so He knew that He could supply that strength *without* bread, which He is nevertheless mercifully pleased to supply *by means of* bread.

And O! what glory is due to the Providence of God when viewed *contrary* to all *means (media)*! When I am persuaded that it is mightier than all obstacles that can oppose it! By this confidence alone I am conqueror of every fear or apprehension. Indeed, this is the very wrestling school in which God exercises and tries our faith. When so many obstacles present themselves before us which seem likely to prevent His designs (as we view them), how many creatures appear in a threatening form, above and below, in heaven and in earth! And what, in such case, is to be done? If our faith can but mount up to the Divine height of the power of God, it will combat and conquer with no great trouble all the *means (media)* which stand in its way, and which strive to prevent its victory. Whosoever, therefore, shall restrain himself within these bounds, and shall neither torture himself with perplexed speculations, nor make an excuse for indolence because he hears that God alone doeth all things such an one shall neither sink under despair, nor turn aside to frivolous reasonings, which are wholly unbecoming in the presence of the Majesty of God.

But we must now examine this sacred subject still more narrowly. Whence arise contentions about the Providence of God? The Divine Providence itself, rightly considered and contemplated, as it ought to be, genders no contention. But human reason, when considering the works of God, finding itself blind, rushes into a quarrel with its Maker. But what marvel, if those counsels of God harmonise not with fleshly reason, which the angels, with uplift eyes, wonder at and adore! This depravity, however, is utterly intolerable, that we, who by nature are hardly gifted

with worthiness to creep as worms on the earth, should approve of nothing but that which, as if lying on the ground, we can look down upon with our natural eyes. But in order that this Divine doctrine of the Providence of God may become profitable, it will be, we hope, a useful labour in us thus to calm the minds of the ignorant and inexperienced, and to refute the "*slanders*" of the wicked and profane.

For these ends it will be desirable to consider, in the first place, that the will of God is the great cause of all things that are done in the whole world; and yet, that God is not the author of the evils that are done therein. But I will not say, with Augustine?which, however, I readily acknowledge to have been truly said by him?"In sin or in evil, there is nothing positive." For this is an acuteness of argument which, to many, may not be satisfactory. I would rather assume another principle of argument, and say, "Those things which are vainly or unrighteously done by man are, rightly and righteously, the works of God!" And if this should appear to some, at first sight, to be paradoxical or self-contradictory, let not such be so fastidious or hasty as not to inquire, with me, into the Word of God, and see how the Divine matter stands as viewed in that glass. But again, that I may not defend anything with senseless pertinacity as belonging properly to God, which I have only ascribed to Him myself by my own opinion, let us hear what the Scripture really testifies, and let us form our definition of the works of God wholly from thence. As to all those things which God really directs by His counsel, but which, as generally viewed, seem to be fortuitous; concerning all such things the clear testimony of the Scripture runs thus, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the *whole disposing* thereof is of *the Lord!*" (Prov. xvi. 33.) In like manner, if a branch falling from a tree, or an axe slipping out of a man's hand unawares, should fall upon the head of a passer-by and kill him, Moses testifies that God did this according to His Divine purpose (Deut. xix. 5), who willed that that man should be killed. Other Scripture testimonies to the same purport I here advisedly leave unadduced, because my intention is only to point at them with my finger on the present occasion. But since the Stoics found, on such arguments as these, their doctrine of necessity, the true doctrine of the will and purpose of God, is hateful to many, even to those who dare not condemn it as false. But this doctrine of *Stoical necessity* is an old calumny laid upon us,

under the burden of which Augustine frequently complains that he was bowed down. It ought to have ceased long ere this. But certainly, for men professing any honesty, or candour, or faith, to lay such a reproach upon us is most unworthy of them, and most disgraceful.

What the vain imagination of the Stoics was is well known. They wove their doctrine of fate out of Gordias' web of complex causes, in which, when they had entangled God Himself, they fabricated certain golden chains (as the fables have it) to bind the very God of heaven, and to make Him *subject to inferior and secondary causes!* The Stoics are imitated by the astrologers of the present day, who make their doctrine of *fated necessity* out of certain positions of the stars. We leave the Stoics, then, to their doctrine of fate, while we acknowledge the will of God to be the ruling cause of all things. But to take contingency out of the world altogether would be absurd. I omit to notice here those various distinctions which are made in the schools. That which I shall adduce shall be simple, in my judgment, and not strained; and also, that which shall be profitable for the conduct of life.

I would argue, then, in this manner: What God hath decreed must necessarily come to pass; yet so, that what does thus come to pass is not, in itself, really and naturally a necessity. We have a familiar illustration of this in the bones of Christ our Lord. The Scripture plainly testifies that Christ assumed a body in all things like unto ours. Wherefore, no man in his senses will hesitate to confess that the bones of Christ's body were frangible like our own. There appears to me, however, to be another and a separate question involved in this matter: Whether any bone of Christ's *could* be broken? For, according to God's decree and Word, it was necessary that all the parts of His body should remain whole, unbroken and uninjured. Not that I am thus speaking and arguing because I wholly object to the received forms of expression, when men speak of necessity as being, in one sense, absolute, or when they speak of *the necessity of the consequent* or *the necessity of the consequence*. But I speak thus, and argue thus, that no subtlety of reasoning might prevent the simplest reader from understanding and acknowledging the truth of what I testify. If, therefore, we consider the nature of the bones in the body of Christ, they were frangible, or capable of being broken. But if we look at the

decree of God, which was fulfilled in its time, the bones of Christ's body were no more subject to fracture than the angels are subject to human sorrows. In this case, therefore, when we are required to look into the law and order of nature as appointed of God, I by no means reject the contingency involved, in my sense and meaning of such contingency.

We must here also carefully bear in mind that principle which I have before laid down, that when God displays His power through *means (media)* and *secondary causes*, that power of His is never to be *separated* from those means or inferior causes. It is the excess of a drunkard to say, "God has decreed all that is to come to pass, and that must come to pass; therefore, to interpose any care or study, or endeavour of ours, is superfluous and vain." But since God prescribes to us what we ought to do, and wills that we should be the instruments of the operation of His power, let us ever deem it unlawful in us to sunder those things which He hath joined together. For instance, God, "in the beginning," commanded the earth to bring forth every kind of herb and fruit without any human art or culture. But now He makes use of the hand of man as the instrument of His operation: If any one should boastingly desire to receive bread by merely opening his indolent mouth, because the blessing of God fructifies the earth, he would not only, by such a boast, trample underfoot the Providence of God, but would do away with it altogether. For he would separate and rend asunder those things which God has joined together by an inseparable connection.

Wherefore, with reference to the time future, since the events of things are, as yet, hidden and unknown, everyone ought to be as intent upon the performance of his duty as if nothing whatever had been decreed concerning the issue in each particular case. Or (to speak more properly) every man ought so to hope for success in all things which he undertakes at the command of God, as to be freely prepared to reconcile every contingency with the sure and certain Providence of God. The Lord, moreover, promises His blessing upon the work of our hands. By this promise each godly man will acknowledge himself to be appointed of God, an instrument of His glorious Providence. And such godly one, relying on this same promise, will gird himself with alacrity to his undertaking, and will be persuaded that he is not casting into the air

labour in vain; but, resting on the Word of God, he will believe that God, by His secret counsel, will direct all his labour to the issue that shall be best. In a word, as the Providence of God, rightly considered, does not bind our hands, but free them for work, so it not only does not hinder prayer, but strengthens and confirms its earnestness.

A like sobriety of mind ought to temper our judgments concerning the time past, and in reference to things which may have already taken place. There is no exhortation more conducive to patience than our hearing that nothing happens by chance; but that whatever takes place, is the fulfilment of that which has been decreed by "the good pleasure" of God. Meanwhile, it by no means follows that our own indolence, or rashness, or thoughtlessness, or some other fault, is not the immediate cause of any adversity under which we may be suffering. And though the causes of events are not always clearly seen, or understood, yet godly minds will not, even under such ignorance, cease to render unto God the praise of His wisdom and justice in every event that transpires.

Where, however, the counsels, the wills, the purposes, and the attempts of men intervene, a greater difficulty of argument and judgment presents itself to our thoughts, especially when we desire to show how the Providence of God reigns and rules in all such cases also; not only to prevent anything from being done otherwise than according to His will, but also that men may not even agitate anything in their deliberations but what He inspires. God gives indeed daily and marvellous proofs of His Providence where He gives full rein to the foolish counsels of men, and, seeming not to notice their great preparations, frustrates by the issue all their hopes. The Scripture also reveals another field, wherein God manifests His dominion and the mighty working of His hand?when He makes the wicked mad; when He strikes them with a bewildered giddiness, or deprives them of their senses, or stuns them with stupefaction; and when also He "takes away their spirit," strips them of their courage, and so fills them with fear, that they are death-struck by the fall of a leaf! Pighius, therefore, wants common consideration, when he would confine God within the narrow limits of His material creation; when he would make of God nothing more than a kind of wise manager, or a skilful general, who, well versed in military tactics foresees the plans

of his enemies, and forms his counterplots, as remedies, according to circumstances. As if the Scripture did not plainly represent God as He "Who taketh the wise in their own craftiness," cutteth off the spirit of princes, and maketh their "knowledge foolishness"! It is, therefore, the grossest ignorance in Pighius, when he denies that when a man is killed designedly by his fellow man, he dies by the will and decree of God! He entertains this idea, I suppose, imagining that where the will of man is engaged, the will of God is not concerned! What is to become, then, of all those testimonies of the Scripture which declare that the swords of men are wielded by the hand of God? Were the sons of Eli killed without the will of man? Yet the praise is given to God; that it was *He* who righteously willed that they should be slain (1 Sam. iv. 10~12). But that God continually rules the hands of men, that He sometimes binds them fast and at other times turns them this way and that to execute His eternal decrees, no one will call in question who has the least acquaintance whatever with the Scriptures. Nay, it is a fact, universally admitted by common sense, that whatsoever men undertake, the issue thereof is in the hand of God. But since even this knowledge in men is generally weak and unsettled through the dense darkness of the human mind, the Scripture has erected for us a loftier place of observation, by standing on which we may look around us and behold God so ruling and overruling all the works of men, as to bring them to the issue which Himself hath decreed.

The sum and substance, however, of the whole Divine matter is this: Although men, like brute beasts confined by no chains, rush at random here and there, yet God by His secret bridle so holds and governs them, that they cannot move even one of their fingers without accomplishing the work of God much more than their own! But the faithful, who render unto Him their willing service, as do the angels, are to be considered, in a peculiar manner, *the hands* of God! I am now, however, speaking more immediately of those men whose purposes are anything but a desire to do the will of God, or to adopt any counsel consistent or in harmony with His counsel, or in accordance with His will. The wicked do indeed frequently glory in themselves at any accomplishment of their wishes. But the event at length proves that they were only fulfilling all the while that which had been ordained of God, and that, too, against their own will, while they

knew nothing about it! Moreover, God Himself very frequently makes use of the wicked to punish the sins of men, especially of His own people. And sometimes He drags them by the neck, as it were, to make them the instruments of His goodness to men and saints.

To adduce instances of the former marvellous dispensations of His Providence would be a labour too great and too extensive for our present purpose. It would, however, be better perhaps just to touch with our finger a few examples. God having excited the Assyrian to make war on Judah, calls him the "rod of His anger," and declares that he was armed with the "staff of His indignation" for his weapon (Isaiah x. 5). But the same adorable God afterwards inveighs against his pride, and rebukes him for not acknowledging himself to be "an axe" and "a saw" waged and forged by another's (God's) hand (ver. 15). In this same manner those whom their own ambition, or cruelty, or avarice, urges on to violent deeds, are said to be "sanctified" of God to do His work, and to be His hired soldiers to accomplish His purposes. The Lord Himself, moreover, testifies that He calls such together by His "hiss" and by His "trumpet," to take up arms in His cause, to perform His decrees (ver. 26). That the way of God's goodness is prepared by the evil deeds of men one single portion of the writings of Moses will fully demonstrate. The conspiracy of the brethren of Joseph against him was more than wicked, perfidious and cruel, when they sold him to the Midianites. But Joseph himself transfers the cause of this selling him, though with a different motive, to God Himself! "Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither: for God did send me before you to preserve life. So now, it was not *you* that sent me hither, but *God*" (Gen. xlv. 5, 8). It is evident, therefore, that though they did wickedly, God nevertheless did His work by their means, that they might find life in death. They, as far as their own intent was concerned, had killed their brother. But, out of that intent life (that is, provision for their natural life, and that of their whole family) shone upon them.

We may see the same working of God in Satan, the captain of all the wicked and the prince of all darkness and iniquities. God sends Satan to Ahab, with his own Divine command that he should be "a lying spirit in the mouth of all the king's prophets." Thus the impostor spirit becomes



the minister of the wrath of God, to blind the wicked who would not be obedient to His truth. On the other hand, the apostle Paul calls the "thorn in the flesh" that was sent upon him, the "messenger of Satan to buffet him." Here the poison of Satan is made of God an antidote to cure the apostle's pride. Now, what kind of a physician, I pray you, is Satan in himself, who has never learned anything but to kill and to destroy? But God, who once commanded the light to shine out of darkness, can marvellously bring, if He pleases, salvation out of hell itself, and thus turn darkness itself into light. But what worketh Satan? In a certain sense, the work of God! That is, God, by holding Satan fast bound in obedience to His Providence, turns him whithersoever He will, and thus applies the great enemy's devices and attempts to the accomplishment of His own eternal purposes!

Now if the Scripture did not clearly express God's secondary or instrumental mode of operation, this knot would not, even then, be very difficult to untie. The other and more difficult question is, whether it is *God* that works in the hearts of men, directs all their counsels, and turns their wills this way and that, and prevents them from doing anything but that which He hath decreed they should do. We are not here inquiring whether or not God works all the godly and holy affections which are found in the hearts of His people, because that is, beyond all dispute, certain. The great question is, whether He holds also in the hand of His power all the depraved and impious affections of the wicked, and turns them hither and thither, that they might desire to do that which He hath decreed to accomplish by their means?

Most certainly, when Solomon declares that "the heart of the king is in the hand of God, and that, as the rivers of water, He turneth it whithersoever He will" (Prov. xxi. 1), his intention is to shew, generally, that not only the wills of kings but all their external actions are overruled by the will and disposal of God. Moses saith that the heart of Pharaoh was hardened by the Lord Himself. It is in vain here to flee to the common refuge of God's permission, as if God could be said to have done that which He only permitted to be done! And Moses positively affirms that the hardening of Pharaoh's heart was the work of God. Nor, indeed, is the cruelty of the heart of Pharaoh ascribed to the counsel of God in any other

sense than when, elsewhere, He is said to have given unto His people favour in the eyes of the Egyptians. For who does not see that savage and ferocious beasts were tamed and made gentle by the power of God, when such men as the Egyptians were turned, on a sudden, to clemency? From what cause and to what end, then, can we say that Pharaoh evinced such inhuman cruelty, but *because it pleased the Lord*; partly, that He might thereby prove the patience of His people; and partly, that He might shew forth His own almighty power? In this same manner God is said to have "turned the heart of their enemies to hate His people" (Ps. cv. 25). Nor does that passage at all alter the case, where it is said, that " Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also" (Exod. viii. 32), because we do not make it appear that the minds of men are impelled by any outward influence to do violently, nor do we impute to God the cause of their being hardened; as if cruel and hardhearted persons did not act spontaneously from their own malice, and become of themselves excited to obstinacy and presumption! What we maintain is, that when men act perversely, they do so (according to the testimony of the Scripture) by the ordaining purpose of God. This is also set forth in another part of the Scripture, where it is said that when the inhabitants of Gibeon set themselves in opposition to Israel, they did so *according to the decree and purpose of God*, who hardened their heart, as it is said, Josh. xi. 20: "For it was of the Lord to harden their hearts, that they should come against Israel in battle, that He might destroy them utterly."

The very manner in which God thus works is also set forth in the Scripture. For in one place it testifies that God, being angry with the people, moved the heart of David to number the people (2 Sam. xxiv. 1); but, in another place, it is said concerning this very same act of David, that the instigator of this pride in David was Satan, and that it was he who moved David to number the people (1 Chron. xxi. 1). From which we see that Satan was the rod of God's wrath, and that God, by such means of devils and of men, impels the hearts of men whithersoever He will. This is still more expressly set forth in another part of the Word of God, where it is said that "an evil spirit from the Lord came upon Saul" (1 Sam. xvi. 24; xvi. 23). Now Saul acted, indeed, from his own wickedness. He exercised the malice concealed within by a voluntary action. Nevertheless, it was Satan that urged him on; and that, not while God was a mere inactive

observer, but while God willed it. Indeed, the evil spirit could not, with propriety, have been said to be "from the Lord," unless he had been the Lord's ordained minister, to execute His vengeance and to be, as it were, His executioner. Nor is Satan merely the minister of God's wrath by his instigating men's minds to evil passions and acts, but by effectually dragging them and leading them captive, at his will, into wicked actions.

It is in this same momentous sense that Paul speaks when he testifies that effectual error and "strong delusions" are sent on men, that they might believe a lie; because they would not obey the truth." Hence you see that Satan is not only "a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets," at the express command of God, but also that his impostures so ensnare the reprobate, that, being utterly deprived of their reason, they are, of necessity, dragged headlong into error. In this same manner also must we understand the apostle, when he says that those who were ungrateful to God "were delivered over to a reprobate mind," and "given up to vile and foul affections," that they should work "that which is unseemly, and defile their own natural bodies one among another." Upon which Scripture Augustine remarks that these reprobate characters were not given up to the corrupt affections of their hearts by the mere permission of God as an unconcerned spectator, but by His righteous decree, because they had basely profaned His glory. In what manner this was done that same passage of the Scripture (2 Thess. ii. 11) plainly declares: "God sent upon them strong delusion." Whence that which I have just stated is perfectly plain: that the internal affections of men are not less ruled by the hand of God than their external actions are preceded by His eternal decree; and, moreover, that God performs not by the hands of men the things which He has decreed. without first working in their hearts the very will which precedes the acts they are to perform. Wherefore, the sentiments of Augustine on these momentous points are to be fully received and maintained. "When God (says he) willeth that to be done which cannot be effected, in the course of the things of this world, without the wills of men. He at the same time inclines their hearts to will to do it, and also Himself does it, not only by aiding their hearts to desire to do it, but also by decreeing it, that they cannot but do it. Whereas these same persons had in their own minds no such purpose as 'to do that which the hand and the counsel of God had afore decreed to be done.'" Augustine,

moreover, most wisely proposes that to be considered concerning the very seeds and principles of nature, upon the consideration of which so many are unwilling to enter; that that great diversity which is seen in the dispositions of men, and which is evidently implanted in them of God, affords a manifest evidence of that His secret operation, by which He moves and rules the hearts of all mankind.

From all that has been said, we can at once gather how vain and fluctuating is that flimsy defence of the Divine justice which desires to make it appear that the evil things that are done, are so done, not by the will of God, but by His permission only. As far, indeed, as those evil things which men perpetrate with an evil mind are, in themselves, evil, I willingly confess (as I will immediately more fully explain) that they by no means please God. But for men to represent God as sitting unconcerned, and merely permitting those things to be done which the Scripture plainly declares to be done, not only by His will, but by His authority, is a mere way of escape from the truth, utterly frivolous and vain. Augustine did, indeed, sometimes give way to this popular method of speaking; but where he devotes himself more closely to the consideration of the matter, and examines it more thoroughly, he by no means suffers the permission to be substituted for the act of God. I will not cite *verbatim* all that the holy father says upon this subject in the Fifth Book of his Discussion of it, written against Julian. Let the production of one passage from it suffice on this occasion: "He who knoweth His own just judgments, doeth all these things by working in a marvellous and inexpressible manner, not only in the bodies, but in the hearts of men. He doth not make wills evil, but useth the wills of men already evil as He pleaseth; nor can He, of Himself, will anything that is evil." "Just in this same manner (continues Augustine) does the Scripture, if diligently considered, shew that not only the good wills of men, which God Himself has made good out of evil wills, but also the wills which He has made good by His grace are directed by Him to good actions and to the attainment of eternal life; and, moreover, that those wills of men which preserve the good order of things in the world, from age to age, as kings, and princes, and rulers, etc., are so under the power of God, that He inclines them whithersoever He will, either to confer kindnesses on these, or to inflict punishments on those, according to His will and pleasure." The holy father then adds: "Who does

not tremble before these stupendous judgments of God, by which He does whatsoever He will even in the hearts of men, rendering unto them all the while according to their works!" And again: "It is fully evident, from the testimonies of the Scripture, that God works in the hearts of men to incline their wills whithersoever He pleases, whether it be to confer good according to His mercy, or to inflict evil according to their deserts, and all according to His purpose and decree, which is sometimes manifest and sometimes hidden, but always just! For it ought ever to be deeply fixed in our hearts that there is no iniquity in God." But the reason why the decree of God is sometimes utterly hidden may be seen in the former part of his book, where, after he had frequently testified that the sins of men are often in themselves punishments which God justly inflicts upon them, on account of former sins which they have committed, he at length carries up his contemplation to that higher and still more hidden secret of God, namely, that God finds just materials in all men (except those whom He has chosen by His grace) for making them the executors of His wrath!

"As to all mortals beside (saith Augustine) who are not of this number of God's elect, but are of the common mass of mankind (from which mass these were also chosen), they are made the 'vessels of God's wrath,' and are born for the use and service of God's chosen! For God doth not create one of these 'vessels of His wrath' at random or by chance. And He knows full well every particle of good which He works by their means. One part of which good is that He creates in them the excellency of human nature, and adorns by their means, as kings, princes and magistrates, etc., the order of things in the world. But why God sometimes paralyzes the hearts of men with fear and dread, and sometimes enspirits them with courage; why He takes away the spirit of princes, and turns the counsels of the wise into foolishness; why He gifts some with the spirit of temperance, and makes others drunk with the spirit of confusion and madness; for these His marvellous judgments He sometimes manifests a plain and conspicuous reason. While it is equally evident that His secret counsel so rules over all men, that He turns the wills of whomsoever He pleases wheresoever He pleases." For human nature is common to all men, but not so Divine grace (as the same holy father in another part of his works also strikingly observes).

Taking, then, an honest and sober review of the whole of this high and Divine matter, the plain and indubitable conclusion will be that *the will of God* is the one principal and all-high *cause* of all things in heaven and earth! Our minds, therefore, ought ever to be bridled with the knowledge of this mighty fact, that they may not intemperately and unlawfully indulge in searching into the causes of things. That saying of Augustine, "The will of God is the necessity of all things," seems harsh when first heard. As does also that which he immediately adds by way of explanation; that "God so ordained all secondary causes, that by their means that might be effected for the sake of which they were ordained, but not necessarily so effected."

But that "God ordained all primary and remote causes, that by them that might of necessity be effected which He had purposed to be effected by their causation." When the whole argument, however, is attentively investigated, its asperity soon vanishes. For that which the holy father elsewhere says, though expressed in different terms, is precisely the same in sentiment; nor does his argument contain anything which ought to offend: "God retains (saith he), hidden in Himself, the causes of some of His actions, which He has not intermingled with His created things. These causes He brings out to their effects, not by that operation of His Providence, by which He has appointed certain natures and their powers to be and to act, but by that operation by which He rules and directs as He will the creatures that He has made."

Herein, indeed, lies the grace by which those are saved who were lost. For what can be more true than that God, in the government of His creatures, retains hidden in Himself something more than He has made visible in their nature? But of all the things that are done, *the will of God* is therefore rightly considered to be the *first cause*, because He so rules at His pleasure the natures of all things created by Him, that He directs all the counsels and actions of men to the end which He had Himself preordained. By this doctrine, as I have before justly observed, a rein is put upon our minds and spirits which ought to hold us within the bounds of modesty. For it is absurd, in the last degree, not to yield ourselves to that will of God which is high above all other causes, unless we can see (as we think) a plain reason for our so doing.

We should ever, indeed, bear in mind that which I have before said, that God doth nothing without the highest of reasons. But as the will of God is the surest rule of all righteousness, that will ought ever to be to us the principal reason, yea? if I may so speak? the reason of all reasons! For that humility of faith, which is the offspring of reverence for the Divine justice, is by no means a stupid thing, as many imagine. For who but the man that hath the persuasion deeply forced on his heart that God is just, and all His works righteous, will rest satisfied with His good pleasure alone? That Sarbonic dogma, therefore, in the promulgation of which the Papal theologians so much pride themselves, "that the power of God is absolute and tyrannical," I utterly abhor. For it would be easier to force away the light of the sun from his heat, or his heat from his fire, than to separate the power of God from His justice. Away, then, with all such monstrous speculations from godly minds, as that God can possibly do more, or otherwise, than He has done, or that He can do anything without the highest order and reason. For I do not receive that other dogma, "that God, as being free from all law Himself, may do anything without being subject to any blame for so doing." For whosoever makes God without law, robs Him of the greatest part of His glory, because he spoils Him of His rectitude and justice. Not that God is, indeed, subject to any law, excepting in as far as He is a law to Himself. But there is that inseparable connection and harmony between the power of God and His justice, that nothing can possibly be done by Him but what is moderate, legitimate, and according to the strictest rule of right. And most certainly, when the faithful speak of God as omnipotent, they acknowledge Him at the same time to be the Judge of the world, and always hold His power to be righteously tempered with equity and justice.

We have not yet, however, met the great objection of our adversaries: "If all things are done (say they) according to the will of God, and men can do or design nothing, but as He wills or ordains, God must be the author of all evils." That distinction which formerly prevailed in the schools, and is now everywhere current, is perfectly true, provided it be rightly understood? "that the evil of the punishment, but not the evil of the fault, proceeds from God." But some inexperienced ones, imagining that the matter in question can be settled in one short word, pass by in security the very point at issue, namely, "How God can be free from blame in that

very deed which He Himself condemns in Satan and in the reprobate, and which He declares that men condemn in their fellow-men." For both evils are often seen in the same work, not in different works, namely, that the praise of the punishment must, of necessity, be ascribed to God, and the fault of the act to man. For instance, robbers carry off the cattle of the holy Job. The deed is cruel and disgraceful. Satan by this means drives the patriarch to desperation; a machination still more detestable. But Job declares another to be the author of it all! "The Lord gave (saith he), and the Lord hath taken away." Nor is Job wrong in attributing that to God which, in another sense, could be imputed to the robbers only. For the patriarch, as if beholding with uplift eyes the things that are decreed on the throne of God in heaven, confesses that the Lord took away by the hands of the robbers those things which they could not have touched but by His authority and command. All this Job explains in the words which follow: "The Lord hath done whatsoever pleased Him." We hear that in this instance, the work of Satan was in common with that of God. We hear that nothing was done but by God's good pleasure. It may here be said, "How shall God be exempted from that fault of which Satan and his instruments are guilty?" Why, if a distinction be made between the works of men, derived from a consideration of their purpose and end in each particular case; and if the cruelty of that man is condemned who pierces the eyes of a crow or kills a crane, while the virtue of the judge is praised who cleanses his hands by the execution of the wicked person; shall the condition of God Himself be worse than that of man? Shall not His justice keep Him separate from the wicked actions of human or Satanic offenders?

But let us adopt a similitude somewhat more close and applicable. That prince will ever be praised among men who shall, by a just and legitimate war, repel from his dominions violence, rapine and plunder. For this end he will hasten to arm thousands of soldiers, who will rush forward with cupidity to shed blood, to despoil the poor and helpless of their property, and to commit every act of licentiousness and violence, for which deeds of wickedness they certainly will not deserve praise. Two armies, in another part of the world, enter into the mighty battle. If you behold a prosperous issue of the skill of the general, under whose conduct and command the battle is fought, you absolve him from all blame, though he be but a



mortal man, while you nevertheless condemn the soldiers who lend out their hands to murder their fellow-men for nefarious hire. Will you, then, rob God of the glory of His justice, because He sometimes doth His works by means of Satan? Yet so it is. And as the mists which the earth exhales sometimes obscure the brightness of the sun, and intercept its view from the sight of men, while the sun still really remains the same in all its brightness; so the vanity of men creates many vaporous impediments, as it were, which obstruct their sight of the equity of God, while that equity remains, nevertheless, as pure and perfect as ever! Yet these ignorant reasoners would involve God and the wicked in the same guilt, where the act of God, working by the wicked, is in such sense common to Him and them. But not so did David. When Shimei assaulted him with reproaches and stones, he did not stop at the man, but looked at the command of God: "Let him curse (said he), for God hath bidden him" (2 Sam. xvi. 6). And yet he does not rise up against God, but with all humility offers his back to the stripes, and says, "Who shall then say, Wherefore hast Thou done so?" (ver. 10). As he speaks also in the Psalms, "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, because Thou didst it" (Ps. xxxix. 9). For what one of the godly will not the majesty of God in a moment reduce to silence? And from what one of them will not the justice of God force the expression of praise and constrain him to break forth into that devoted exclamation of David) "So let him curse; because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. It may be that the Lord will look on mine affliction, and that the Lord will requite me good for His cursing this day" (2 Sam. xvi. 11, 12).

Wherefore, when the wickedness of men proceeds thus from the Lord, and from a just cause, but from a cause unknown to us, although the first cause of all things be His will, that He is therefore the author of sin I most solemnly deny. Nevertheless, that difference of causes, on which I have before dwelt, is by no means to be forgotten? that one cause is proximate, another remote. The careful observance of this distinction is indispensable, that we may clearly understand how wide a difference there is, and how momentous a distinction between the just and equal Providence of God and turbulent impetuositities of men. Our adversaries load us with illiberal and disgraceful calumny, when they cast it in our teeth that we make God the author of sin, by maintaining that His will is

the cause of all things that are done. For when a man perpetrates anything unjustly, incited by ambition, or avarice, or lust, or any other depraved passion; if God, by His just but secret judgment, perform His works by means of such an one's hands, the mention of sin cannot be made with reference to God in those His righteous acts. It is perfidy, pride, cruelty, intemperance, envy, self-conceit, or some like depraved desire that constitutes sin in man. But no such desire can be found in God. Shimei attacks his king with brutal insolence. The sin is at once manifest. God uses such an instrument to effect the righteous humiliation of David. Such a rod it pleases God to use. But who will dare to charge God with sin in so doing? The Arabians and the Saboceans carry off their plunder from another man's substance. The sin of robbery is evident. God exercises the patience of His servant by the violence of the plunderers. Let the heroic confession of the patriarch, "Blessed be the name of the Lord," he heard rising from out the midst of these ravages, rather than the profane revilings of the wicked and the ignorant. In a word, such is God's manner of working by the sins of men, that when we come to deal with Him in the matter of His righteous judgments, His eternal purity wipes off in a moment every spot that the wicked reasoning of men may attempt to cast upon His glorious Majesty.

And here the admonition of Augustine may be listened to with profit: "In point of oneness or agreement, there is sometimes a mighty difference between men and God in the matters of His righteous acts and judgments. As when, for instance, God wills righteously that which men will evilly, and when God righteously willeth not that which men evilly will not. And so again, in point of difference or contrariety, God and men do not ill agree. As when men will well that which God righteously doth not will, and when, also, men righteously do not will that which God righteously doth will; for example, the son may wish for the death of his father, that he may rush upon the inheritance. God also may will that this same father should die. God willed that Jerusalem should be utterly destroyed, that the temple should be profaned and demolished, and that the Jews should suffer every extreme of torment. The Idumaens were all the while longing for the same. In order that the same measure might be measured to a dire and ruthless man, who had spared no one, God wills that no help whatever should be brought to him; when pressed to

destruction on every side, by inevitable necessity. His own son shall refuse him every duty of affection, nor shall he have the least desire to aid him in his desperate need. God willed that the sons of Eli should not listen to the counsels of their father, because He had determined to destroy them. The sons, on their part also, would not hear their father. Now there appears herein, at first sight a certain kind of harmony and agreement; but when we consider abstractedly the evil and the good involved, there is as much disagreement and contrariety as between fire and water. A husband shall wish for a longer life of a beloved wife whom God calls out of this world. Christ shuddered at, and prayed against, that death, which was a sacrifice of the sweetest odour unto God. Now the will of each, both of the husband and of Christ, although diverse from the will of God, at first appearance, was equally without blame. Wherefore, far be it from any man to drag God into a participation of sin, or guilt, or blame, whenever any apparent similitude between the plainly depraved passions of men and His secret counsel may present itself. Let that sentiment of Augustine be ever present to our minds: "Wherefore, by the mighty and marvellous working of God (which is so exquisitely perfect in the accomplishment of every purpose and bent of His will), that, in a wonderful and ineffable way, is not done without His will which is even done contrary to His will, because it could not have been done had He not permitted it to be done; and yet, He did not permit it without His will, but according to His will."

And hereby is refuted either the ignorance or the wickedness of those who deny that the nature of the will of God can be one and simple, if there be any other will ascribed to Him than that which is plainly and manifestly revealed by Him in His own law. Some also ask in derision. "If there be any will of God which is not revealed in His law, by what name is that will called? " But those men must be deprived of their senses, in whose opinion all those Scriptures signify nothing which speak with so much wonder and admiration of the profound "depth" of the judgments of God! When Paul exclaims, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments!" he most certainly teaches us, in all plainness, that the judgment of God was something more and deeper than that which is expressed by the simple words of Christ in that memorable ejaculation, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,

how often would I have gathered thy children. together as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not" (Matt. xxiii. 37). And whereas God willed that the sons of Eli should not be obedient to their father, that Divine will differed, in appearance, from the precept of the law, which commands children to obey their parents. In a word, wherever the apostle sets forth the wonderful judgments of God, and the depth of His thoughts and ways, which are "past finding out," he is not speaking at all of the works of the law, which stand always plain before our eyes; he is rather magnifying that inaccessible light in which is hidden *God's secret counsel*, which, being exalted far above the utmost stretch of the human mind, we are compelled to gaze upon with uplift eyes and to adore!

Someone will perhaps say, " If that light is inaccessible, why do you approach it?" I do not so approach it as to wish, by an insolent curiosity, to search into those things which God wills to keep deeply hidden in Himself; but that which the Scripture openly declares, I embrace with a sure faith and look upon with reverence. But you will say, "How can it be that God, who is ever consistent with Himself, and unchangeable even in the shadow of a turn, should yet will that which is contrary to that which He seems to be?" I reply, It is no matter of wonder that God, when speaking with men, should accommodate Himself to the limits of their comprehension. Who will affirm that God ever appeared to His servants, even in visions, such as He really is? For the brightness of His glory is such, that the sight of Him as He is, by our naked vision, would absorb and overwhelm all our senses in a moment. He has, therefore, ever so revealed Himself as men were able to bear the revelation. But whether God talks with us in the language of a child, or whether He conceals that which He knows to be beyond our comprehension? that there is anything in what He pleased to say, feigned or dissembled, I solemnly deny. Most true is that which the Psalm affirms, "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity (Psalm v; 5). Nor, indeed, does God there testify, by the mouth of David, anything else than that which He exemplifies in reality every day when He punishes men for their transgressions. Nor would He punish their sins if He did not hate those sins. You here see, then, that God is an *avenger*, from which we are fully assured that He is not an *approver*. But many are deceived in these sacred matters, not rightly considering that God willeth righteously those things which men do wickedly. "How will

you explain this?" you may say. I reply, God abominates all adulterous and incestuous intercourse. Absalom defiles his father's concubines in the sight of the people. Was this done, in every sense, contrary to the will of God? No! God had predicted, by His servant Nathan, that Absalom should do this (2 Sam. xii. 11, 12): "I will 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 will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun."

The Scripture is replete with examples of the same, nature and tendency. Shall we, then, on that account either impute the cause or fault of sin to God, or represent Him as having a double or twofold will, and thus make Him inconsistent with Himself? But as I have already shown that He wills the same thing in certain cases, as the wicked and profane, but in a different manner; so we must, on the other hand, hold that He wills in the same manner with the wicked and reprobate that which is in appearance different; so that, in those things which are presented to our minds, the apparent diversity is tempered with the utmost oneness and harmony. Thus, inasmuch as Absalom's monstrous impiety towards his father was a perfidious violation of the law of marriage and a gross profanation of the order of nature, it is most certain that his atrocious wickedness was highly offensive to God, who can be pleased with nothing but honesty, modesty, fidelity and chastity, and who wills that the lawful order which He has established among men should be preserved sacred and inviolate. And yet, it pleased Him to punish in this manner the adultery of David. And thus He wills in the same manner with men things which seem to us quite diverse. For that will of God by which He commands what shall be done, and by which He punishes all transgressions of His law, is one and simple.

We have before observed that sins are frequently punishments by which God retributively avenges men's former transgressions. In all such dispensations of His Providence, there are two things which claim our deep consideration: the just judgment of God, by which He testifies that He hates the sin, which He thus visits with its due punishment; and the wickedness of man, which stands directly opposed to the will of God. If such infinite brightness should dazzle our mental vision, what wonder

when the eyes of our body cannot endure the sight of the natural sun! For is the vision of the body stronger than that of the mind? Or is the brightness of the majesty of God less than that of the natural sun? Wherefore, it behoves us not to be too acute in our penetration into the splendour of the Divine Majesty! Lest, in the meantime, we either deny that to be true which the Scripture plainly teaches and confirms by experience, or lest we dare consider this or that to be, as we think, not quite consistent with the character of God. "When the last day (says Augustine) shall have come, then will be seen in the brightest light of understanding that which the godly now hold in faith, until it shall be then understood by the fullest comprehension. How sure, immutable and all-efficacious is the will of God! and also, how many things He can do, and yet not will! But that He wills nothing that He cannot do!"

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\* To silence whose clamorous opposition to the doctrine of "the eternal election of God," Calvin wrote the preceding Treatise.

\* Such. for instance, as the present "certain worthless Calumniator."

CALUMNIATOR'S  
PREFACE  
TO  
CERTAIN ARTICLES (THAT IS, CALUMNIES)  
PURPORTING TO BE EXTRACTED FROM THE WRITINGS  
OF JOHN CALVIN.

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**YOU** are a man, John Calvin, now known throughout almost the whole world. Your doctrine has many favourers and supporters, but it has also many enemies and opponents. For myself, being one who earnestly wishes that there were but one doctrine, as there is but one truth, and who greatly desires to see all men agree, if it were possible, in that one doctrine, I have thought that you ought to be informed, in a friendly manner, of those things which are everywhere spoken against your doctrine; that if false, you might refute them and might have an opportunity of sending your refutation to me; that I might be able to make a stand against your adversaries. And I pray that you would frame your refutation of such arguments as may be plainly understood by the people.

There are indeed many who differ from you, and that, too, in many things. For the present, however, I will leave all other questions to other times, and I will deal with you upon that one great subject—the doctrine of *Fate*, or *Predestination*. For this one question is exciting vast disturbances in the Church, all which I should be glad to see quieted; and the arguments of your opponents on this mighty matter are so forcible, that they cannot be refuted out of any of your books which you have hitherto published.

Certain Articles connected with this vast question have been extracted from your books and spread abroad in all directions. These Articles I will now place before you without any regularity of order, and to each Article I will subjoin the arguments which your opponents advance against it. By this arrangement you will at once see what reply you are called upon to make.

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REPLY  
OF JOHN CALVIN  
TO THE  
CALUMNIATOR'S PREFACE.

**THAT** there are many adversaries to my doctrine I know full well and wonder not. For it is no new thing that brawlers on every side should open their mouths against Christ, under whose banner I fight. My only grief in the sacred matter is, that through my feeble side the solemn and eternal truth of God is stabbed, which ought to be looked upon with reverence and adoration by the whole world. But since I see that this same truth of God has ever, from the beginning, been exposed to the calumnies of the wicked, and that Christ Himself, by the decree of His heavenly Father, must ever be a "rock of offence" and of contradiction (Rom. ix. 33; Isa viii. 14, 15), I consider that the defenders of the truth must bear this offence with all patience. No fierce bites of the wicked, however, will at any time cause me to repent of the doctrine which I have taught, because I feel fully assured that God is its origin and author. Nor have I profited so little by those numerous conflicts in which God Himself has caused me to be engaged, as now to be alarmed by your empty and futile noises.

Nay, as far as you yourself are concerned, poor masked monitor, I derive some consolation from the thought that you cannot be ungrateful towards the man who has treated you with much greater kindness than you deserved at his hands, without betraying at the same time your foul wickedness against God. I know quite well that there is no sport more grateful to you Academics than the rooting out of all faith from the hearts of the godly by casting a shade of doubt over all that they hold dear. And how sweet you feel in yourself all those revilings to be which you direct against the "Secret Providence of God," is apparent from the very point of your pen, how much soever you strive to hide your base gratification. But I cite you and all your fellows before that tribunal on which the Judge of heaven sits, from whose mouth the blast and the bolt shall one day fall upon you all, and lay you prostrate. I trust, however, that I myself, before I have done, shall make your insolent speaking against God to be as loathsome to the feelings of all good and godly men, as they are inwardly gratifying to your own heart.

You demand of me a refutation of that vain scribble of yours, which you sent secretly to Paris from a town in Switzerland, that poison might be poured upon my name far and wide without my knowing it, and without



the possibility of the application of a remedy. You feign, nevertheless, the desire of learning the truth, and yet you concealed your name; for what end I know not, unless it be that you well knew that I had it in my power at once to destroy any credit that men might be disposed to give either to yourself or to your fellows. I could conjecture, or rather determine, in a moment who you were, from many evidences furnished by your book. But whether you wrote it with your own hand, or dictated it to Scotus, the trumpeter employed by your band of madmen, that he might carry to Paris things that you dared not utter here, is a matter of utter unconcern to me. I would, indeed, that some other were the author of the book, or that you yourself were another man from what you are. But that will never be until you shall have once tasted what true virtue and honesty are. For although you have ever spoken respectfully to me, yet, how great your natural propensity to cavilling is I have never any difficulty in discovering and being fully assured. This evil inclination which you have indulged in so many puerile and futile exhibitions of it I have endeavoured to correct, but in vain; because, to that natural propensity, there was always appended a depraved affectation, which led you to hunt after the praise for learning and wit, even by the most frigid and more than insipid attempts at jesting on Divine subjects. Nor can you by any means cover these your vain attempts under the shadow of the authority of Socrates, who (you say) was accustomed to attack many things that were said against his doctrine with sharp sarcasm in return. That excellent man was one endowed with many and eminent virtues, of all which, however, he marred the brightness by this one frailty and defect, which you thus, with as much failure as anxiety, attempt to imitate.

You, moreover, ask me to send you "such a refutation of your vain script as shall be understood by the people." I have never done otherwise than study to accommodate myself to the capacity of the most humble and unlettered reader, by adopting the purest and simplest language of instruction. But if you will acknowledge none other mode of reasoning than that which the natural mind of an earthly mortal can receive, you at once shut up against yourself, by pride and disdain, the only way of approach to the comprehension of that doctrine, to the knowledge of which the first step is reverence. I am by no means ignorant of the sarcastic sneers of yourself and of all like you, who treat the deep

mysteries of God with a contempt, which indicates that, in your estimation, everything loses its grace and its authority which does not at once meet your opinion and approbation. For what, pray, is the meaning of all this, that the moment anyone chooses to open his mouth against me, I must be called upon to furnish a refutation of his slanders? Now Socrates, whose name you thus brandish before you, would not have suffered himself to be put in such a position. He would not have yielded to the dictation of such a law to him. Not that I would follow any man in everything. But if anyone, not only in this, but in any other age, was ever permitted constantly to set himself, with indignation, against the wicked, and to refute their calumnies against him as Socrates did, surely even the most malevolent and iniquitous will grant me also a fair opportunity of exercising the same kind of diligence in my defence. Your barking, therefore, is the more intolerable. For you trample with blind ignorance on my numerous books of self-defence and of reply to my adversaries, and call upon me to do the same work of refutation twice or thrice over.

You affirm; however, that there is one question in particular on which the arguments of my enemies against me are too powerful to be refuted by the contents of any of my books which I have as yet written upon the subject. That question, you say, is the great subject of *predestination*, or *fate*. I would that you could resolve either to inquire into that subject modestly, or to argue upon it honestly, rather than thus to cast off all shame and to confound in one things the most diverse from each other, in order to prevent all true light from falling upon them. *Fate* is a term given by the Stoics to their doctrine of necessity, which they had formed out of a multiplex labyrinth of contradictory reasonings; a doctrine calculated to call God Himself to order, and to set Him laws whereby to work. But *Predestination* I define to be, according to the Holy Scriptures, that free and unfettered *counsel of God* by which He rules all mankind, and all men and things, and also all parts and particles of the world by His infinite wisdom and incomprehensible justice. Now if the depravity of mind and the lust of cavilling and diabolical pride have so blinded you, that you can see nothing in the mid-day light; yet to readers who really have eyes which can see, the distinction I have laid down shows, in a moment, the great justice and equity (!) of your quarrelling with God in the profound matter of His "Secret Providence."

Add to this, had you but been willing to look into my books, you would have been convinced at once how offensive to me is the profane term *fate*; nay, you would have learned in reading my writings that this same abhorrent term was cast in the teeth of Augustine by the malignity and hatred of the wicked and the worthless of his day; and you would also have discovered in my testimony that these objections were replied to by that holy father and godly teacher in a manner which would fully answer every purpose of my own cause and defence upon the present occasion.

In the *Articles* also (purporting to be extracts from my books), which you say you will give the public in your proposed order, you will find that my manner and substance of argument are precisely the same with those of that holy father of happy memory. Malevolent ones, however, knowing that this doctrine was not well known, nor generally received, have boastingly published abroad these *Articles* (which are partly false and partly mutilated), that the ignorant and inexperienced might be fired with hatred of their contents, and might not be able to form any but the most unfavourable judgment concerning them. And though many persons thought, at the first sight of them, that the *articles* put forth in Augustine's day were really extracts from his writings; yet, the holy father bitterly complains that they were imputed to him falsely. For the compilers of them had either put together short portions of sentences, with evil industry, or else had, with wicked art, corrupted sentences which were whole and true and godly by the crafty introduction of a few words, thus wholly altering the original, that they might hereby create offence in the minds of the simple. And all honest and sincere readers (many of whom will gladly take the pains to compare my doctrine with thy base calumnies) will discover that the *articles* which you now boast you will put forth as extracted from my writings, are of precisely the same description as those which were published abroad in Augustine's day, purporting to be true extracts from his books.

And first of all I take this stand against you, that you act neither kindly nor honestly in not affixing any marks of designation or reference to the passages purporting to be extracts from my books, so that readers might refer to the originals and assure themselves that I really had written as the extracts represent. And what can be more iniquitous than confusedly

to state, that in the course of fifty or more volumes written by me, some fourteen articles were found of such and such a description? Now had you possessed one drop of common honesty, you would have cited, as a matter of course, my sentences *verbatim*; or, if you had met with any doubt or danger in so doing, from want of the realities and originals, you would have warned your readers against the *doubtfulness* of the text in such cases; whereas now you cast a shade of doubt over all my writings together, hoping thereby to destroy all good memory of them from the earth. And thus, that in my books, which might have been read without any offence at all, you have, for your own convenience, malignantly corrupted and exposed to hatred and contempt. And though I do not altogether condemn Augustine for his prudence, where, wishing to meet the craft and iniquity of his enemies, he tempers his modes of reply to them so as to escape odium; yet, according to my views, my reply to you will be more generally useful if I refute in this great cause your revilings freely, openly and unreservedly, than if I so write as to convey the least idea whatever of retreat or tergiversation.

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## ARTICLES

*Extracted from the Latin, as well as the French,  
Books of John Calvin on*

### PREDESTINATION.

#### ARTICLE I.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY I.)

**"GOD OF HIS PURE AND MERE WILL CREATED THE  
GREATEST PART OF THE WORLD TO PERDITION."**

This is the FIRST ARTICLE I shall produce. And now hear what arguments are brought by your adversaries against it.

CALUMNIATOR'S

## STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

Your opponents maintain that this *article* is contrary to nature, and contrary to the Scripture. With respect to nature, they affirm that every animal loves its own offspring. Now this nature is given of God, whence it follows that God also loves His own offspring; for God would not cause all animals to love their own offspring, unless He Himself loved His own offspring. And this position they prove in the following manner from Isaiah lxvi. 9: "Shall I bring to the birth, and not cause to bring forth?" As if He had said, "That which I cause others to do, I also do myself. Now I cause others to bring forth; therefore I also bring forth." By a parity of reasoning, therefore, they derive this argument and its conclusion: God causes all animals to love their own offspring. Therefore He Himself also loves His own offspring. Now all men are the offspring of God. For God is the Father of Adam, from whom all men sprung. But to create men to perdition is not an act of love, but of hatred. Therefore, God did not create anyone to perdition. And, again, they argue: "Creation is a work of love, not of hatred. Therefore, God created all men in love, not in hatred." And again, "No beast is so cruel (to say nothing of man) that it would desire to create its young to misery. How much less, then, shall such a desire be found in God! Would not God in such a case of creation be less kind and merciful than the wolf which He has created?" Christ argues in this way: "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall God?" (Matt. vii. 11.) It is just thus that your adversaries argue. They say, If Calvin, though an evil man, yet would not wish to beget a child unto misery, how much less shall God desire to do so? These and like arguments your opponents bring forward with respect to nature.

But with reference to the Scripture they reason thus: God saw that "all things" which He had made were "very good." Such therefore was man, whom also He had made "very good." But what if God created him to destruction? If such be the case, God created that which "was very good" to destruction and perdition, and therefore He must love to destroy! But that is a thing impious, even in thought. And again, they argue: God created one man and placed him in Paradise, which is a life of happiness. Therefore God created all men for a happy life, for all men were created

in the one man. And if all men fell in Adam, it follows that all men stood in Adam, and also in the very condition in which Adam stood. And further, God says, "I would not the death of a sinner;" and again, it is written that God "willeth not that any should perish, but that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4). Farther, if God created the greatest part of the world to perdition, it follows that His anger is greater than His mercy, and it consequently follows also that His anger is shewn "unto the third and fourth generation." Whereas, "it is evident, on the contrary, that His mercy extends "even unto the thousandth generation!"

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE I

(THAT IS, CALUMNY I.)

AND TO THE CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS  
THEREON.

That on which you seize as your FIRST ARTICLE is, "that God, by His pure and mere will, created the greatest part of the world to perdition." Now, all this "the greatest part of the world unto perdition" and "by His own pure and mere will" is a perfect fiction, and a production from the workshop of your own brain. For although God did certainly decree from the beginning everything which should befall the race of man, yet such a manner of speech as the saying that the end or object of God's work of creation was destruction or perdition, is nowhere to be found in my writings. Just like an unclean hog, therefore, you root up with your foul snout all doctrine that is of sweet odour, hoping to find in it something filthy and offensive.

In the next place, although my doctrine is that the will of God is the first and supreme cause of all things, yet I everywhere teach that wheresoever

in His counsels and works the cause does not plainly appear, yet that there is a cause which lies hidden in Himself, and that according to it He has decreed nothing but that which is wise and holy and just. Therefore, with reference to the sentiments of the schoolmen concerning the absolute, or tyrannical, will of God, I not only repudiate, but abhor them all, because **they** separate the justice of God from His ruling power. Now see, then, thou unclean dog, how much thou hast gained, and how far thou hast advanced thy cause by this thy impudent barking. For myself, while I subject the whole human race to the will of God, I at the same time ever affirm that God never decrees anything but with the most righteous reason, which reason (though it may at the present time be unknown to us) will assuredly be revealed to us at the last day in all its infinite righteousness and Divine perfection.

You thrust in my face, and impudently upbraid me with, the "pure and mere will of God," which idea I, in a hundred or more passages of my books, utterly repudiate. Meantime, I freely acknowledge my doctrine to be this: that Adam fell, not only by the permission of God, but by His very secret counsel and decree; and that Adam drew all his posterity with himself, by his Fall, into eternal destruction. Both these positions, it seems, give you great offence, as being (according to your account) "contrary to nature, and to the Scripture." You attempt to prove it to be contrary to nature, because every animal naturally loves its own offspring; whence you argue that, therefore, God, who gave such a natural affection to brute beasts, ought not, certainly, less to love all men, seeing that they are His offspring. Your argument and thought are infinitely too coarse and low, and infinitely beneath the mightiness of the matter, when you demand of God, the eternal Author of nature, just what He right fully demands of the ox and the ass: which He has created. As if God Himself ought to be bound by the same laws as those which He has appointed for the creatures which He has made! That every animal might propagate its own kind, He has implanted in each animal the desire of that propagation. Go thou, then, and expostulate with God, and ask Him how it is that from all eternity He has remained content with Himself, and has retained His own native excellency and glory barren, as it were, and unpropagated! God ought certainly ever to be consistent with Himself. If thou, therefore, art to be our judge in the mighty and stupendous matter,

God has violated the order by choosing rather to be without all offspring, than to exercise His fruitfulness!

Moreover, as all brute beasts fight for their offspring, even unto death, how is it (according to your doctrine) that God permits His helpless offspring to be torn in pieces and devoured by tigers, and bears, and lions, and wolves? Is it because His hand is too short, so that He cannot stretch it down out of heaven for their defence! See you not how wide a field lies open to me, if I were inclined to expose and condemn all your idle and absurd reasonings! But I will content myself with dwelling on one point only, and let that suffice. Proofs of the love of God towards the whole human race exist innumerable, all which demonstrate the ingratitude of those who perish or come "to perdition." This fact, however, forms no reason whatever why God should not confine His especial or peculiar love to a few, whom He has, in infinite condescension, been pleased to choose out of the rest!

When God was pleased to adopt unto Himself the family of Abraham, He thereby most plainly testified that He did not embrace the whole of mankind with an equal love. When, again, God rejected Esau, the elder, and chose Jacob, the younger brother, He gave a manifest and signal proof of His free love, of that love with which He loves none others than those whom He will! Moses declares aloud that one certain nation was beloved of God, while all nations beside were passed by and disregarded as to any peculiar love of God for them. The prophets everywhere testify that the Jews exceeded and surpassed all other nations in excellency and importance, for no other reason than because God freely loved them.

Again, Christ is not addressing the whole human race, nor indeed the whole Jewish nation, but God's little chosen flock alone, when He says, and not in vain, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke xii. 32) By which Christ intimates that none experience the favour of God unto the hope of eternal life but those whom He has rendered acceptable and well-pleasing unto Himself by His only-begotten Son! But if you are determined to make God subject to the laws of nature, you must necessarily accuse and condemn Him of injustice, because, on account of the fault of one man we are all involved in the guilt and desert of eternal death. One man sinned, and we are all



dragged to punishment. And not that only, but by the pollution of one we are all drawn into the contagion, and are born corrupt and infected with a deadly disease. What have you to say to this noble Teacher and Judge? Will you accuse the blessed God of cruelty, because He has thus precipitated all His offspring into ruin by the Fall of one man? For although Adam destroyed both himself and all his offspring, yet the corruption and the guilt of that Fall of one man must necessarily be ascribed to the secret counsel and decree of God! For the fault of one man could have had nothing to do with us, had not our heavenly *Judge* been pleased to consign us to eternal destruction on the account!

Now only reflect, for a moment, how craftily you apply those passages of the prophet Isaiah as a covering for your error (Isa. liv. 1; xlix. 19-21, etc.). As it seemed beyond all belief that the Church of God, in her Babylonish captivity, being not only bereft of her children, but also barren in her power to produce more, should, by the recovery of her strength, become even more fruitful than she was before, God in these passages speaks, as it were, thus to her: "Am not I, by whose power women conceive and bring forth, able to raise up an offspring to thee also?" Because God speaks thus to His Church, you, under this pretext, would force Him to assume the affections of any kind of animal. And you daringly reason that, because God causes all animals to love their own offspring, He also loves all His own offspring, namely, the whole race of mankind. And suppose, for a moment, that I grant you this; it will not, therefore, at once follow that God loves His own in the same manner as beasts love their own. And, in the next place, if God does love His own, it does not the less follow that He has a right to reject, as a just Judge, those to whom He had in vain shown His love and indulgence throughout their whole lives as the kindest Father.

But you are ready to reply next, that "to create is a work of love, not of hatred; and that God therefore created in love, not in hatred." But you perceive not, that though all men are hateful to God in fallen Adam, yet that in their original creation the love of God shines in all its brightness. That argument, therefore, which you think is so very plausible, any other person, endowed with the most moderate judgment, and with common equity, acknowledges in a moment to be frivolous and vain. That which

you next add, I do not consider it my duty so much to refute, as to cut down at once with the stroke of the sword. It is indeed evident that men are born to misery. But is the cause of this to be imputed to my writings? Whence arises this miserable condition of us all, that we are subject not only to temporal evils, but to eternal death? Does it not arise from the solemn fact that, by the Fall and fault of one man, God was pleased to cast us all under the common guilt? In this miserable ruin of the whole human race, therefore, it is not my opinion only that is plainly seen, but it is the work of God Himself that is so openly undeniably manifest.

Meantime, you hesitate not to vomit forth your profane and abhorrent opinion that God is worse than any wolf, who thus wills to create men to misery. Some men, be it remembered, are born blind, some deaf, some dumb, some of monstrous deformity. Now, if we are to go by your opinion as the judge in these sacred and deep matters, God is also cruel, because He afflicts His offspring with such evils as these, and that, too, before they have seen the light. But the day, be thou assured, will come when thou wilt heartily wish that thou hadst been blind, rather than thou hadst ever been so wonderfully sharp-sighted in thus penetrating into these *secrets* of the eternal God!

You accuse God of injustice; nay, you declare Him to be nothing above a monster, if He dares to decree anything, concerning men otherwise than we ourselves should determine concerning our own children. If so, how shall we account for God's creating some dull of comprehension, others of greater incapacity, others quite idiots? Do you really think that the work of God's creation, with reference to such imperfect mortals, was really according to the fables of some Jews about the Fauns and Satyrs? For they say that God was prevented from completing the form of these latter monsters by the intervention of the Sabbath, and therefore that they fell, half-made, from His hands. No! It rather becomes us to receive a deep and humbling lesson from such sad spectacles as these defective human beings, and not to commence a quarrel with the Maker of heaven and earth, from the conceptions of our own brain, concerning His works, or what, in our opinion, they ought to have been. When any idiot happens to meet me; I am admonished to reflect upon what God might have made me, had He been so pleased As many dull of comprehension and idiots as

there are in the world, so many spectacles does God set before me in which to behold His power; not less a subject of awe than a subject of wonder.

But as for you, you brawl against God Himself with all impiety and profanity, as "being less merciful than a wolf," because (according to your opinion) He has so little considered the good and happiness of His offspring! Now, before the saying of Christ?"that God, because He is good, acts more kindly towards His children than men do, who are evil" (Matt. vii. 11)?can be called in to favour your opinions and arguments, you must prove that all men are equally the children of God. But it is evident that all men lost in Adam eternal life, and that, therefore, the adoption of God is an act of special grace; whence it will follow that all those are the rather hated of God who are thus estranged and alienated from Him. All the testimonies of the Scripture which you cite are mere javelins, hurled at random by the hand of a madman, as where you quote that word, "And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen. 1. 31). For from this text you conclude that man was also "very good." And from this you next infer that God was unjust in creating that which was "good" to perdition.

In what sense, however, man was created upright by nature I have explained in many parts of my writings. Man certainly was not better than the devil was, before the latter lost his angelic uprightness. And now, suppose I were to cede to you for a moment that both men and apostate angels were created unto salvation, and yet that God, having respect to their future Fall, condemned both to eternal destruction, what would you gain from this concession to help you in supporting your arguments? God most certainly knew what would take place, both in men and in apostate angels, and He also decreed at the same time what He Himself would do.

With reference to the doctrine of permission, we will speak of that hereafter in its place. But for the present, if you should be disposed to reply that the foreknowledge of God is not the cause of evils, I would only ask you this one question: If God foresaw the destruction both of man and of the devil before He created them, and did not, at the same time, decree their destruction, why did He not apply, betimes, an adequate remedy, which should prevent their Fall and their liability thereto? The

devil, from the very beginning of the world, alienated himself from the hope of salvation. And man, as soon as he was created, destroyed both himself and his posterity with a deadly destruction. If, therefore, the preservation of both was in the hand of God, how was it that (if He had not decreed their destruction) He permitted their ruin? Nay, why did He not furnish each with at least some small degree of ability to stand? To what circuitous reasonings soever, therefore, you have recourse I shall be able to hold you fast to this principle, that although man was created weak and liable to fall, yet that this weakness contained in it a great blessing, because man's Fall immediately afterwards taught him that nothing out of God is either safe, or secure, or enduring. Hence, therefore, it is made evident that all which you prate about men having been created unto salvation, is an argument mutilated and halt, and laid down without adequate consideration. For the truth is, that when I am confessing that there was nothing in man, when created, contrary to salvation, I am thereby and therein proving that salvation was predestinated for all men.

Let me repeat this same argument very briefly in other words. What I mean is, that if we argue on that perfection of nature with which Adam was gifted at his first creation, we may say that he was created unto salvation, because in that perfectness of his first created state there was found no cause of death. But if we carry the question up to God's *secret predestination*, we are met by that deep abyss which ought at once to transport us into wonder and admiration. The fact is, that had you but been gifted with the least feeling of godly reverence, you would, in a moment, acknowledge that this is not a question concerning the completeness of man's original perfection, but concerning the will of God and the decree of God. The state of the sacred case is as if the Holy Spirit had said to you, "Nothing of excellency was wanting in any of the creatures at their creation; but rather, all occasion was taken away from you, and from all like you, of contending against God." For how loudly soever you and yours may deny that there was any "good" in man being so created and conditioned, as that he should, by his immediate Fall, destroy himself and the whole world, yet God Himself declares that such a condition of things pleased Him! Therefore, it was most just and righteous.

And that you may the more correctly understand Moses, he does not (remember!) declare how upright and perfect man was, but that he might stop the barkings of all dogs, like yourself, he teaches that the whole order of the Creation was so tempered of God, that nothing more just or more perfect can be imagined. Wherefore, when Moses comes to speak of all the several works of God collectively, he says that "God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). But Moses affirms no such thing concerning man, individually, specially and absolutely, in every sense. Having narrated man's creation also, the sacred historian concludes by saying, in words which apply generally to the whole creation, that all the things which God had made were "very good" in which words are doubtlessly to be comprehended, as in harmony with them, the words of Solomon also, where he affirms that the wicked were created "for the day of evil." "The Lord hath made all things for Himself; yea. even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. xvi. 4).

Take, then, the sum of the whole matter to be this: though man, at his first creation, was in his newly created nature "good," yet this rectitude, which was weak, frail and liable to fall, militates not against, nor stands in contrariety with, the *predestination of God*, by which predestination it was that man perished by his sin and fault, though his nature was by creation pure. Nay, looking at, and arguing from, his primitive natural excellency, man was created in this view and sense to salvation. And yet, from this very line of argument, you vainly, absurdly and preposterously infer that man was created "good" that he might perish, though "good" or as a good man. Whereas, it is openly and undeniably manifest that he perished by his infirmity and sin; and, therefore, that he perished as one liable to righteous condemnation and destruction. And how these two propositions and positions agree and harmonise with each other we will show hereafter, as we have indeed shown again and again before.

Here you throw in the common objection "that God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner," as declared by the prophet Ezekiel (Ezek. xxxiii. 11). But listen, I pray you, to that which, in the prophet, immediately follows, "Because God inviteth all men to repentance" (Ezek. xviii. 30~32). To all such, therefore, as return into the way of life pardon is freely offered. But the next and principal thing to be considered herein is,

whether or not that conversion or "returning" which God requires (ver. 30) is in the power of man's free-will, or whether it be a peculiar and sovereign gift of God! Inasmuch, therefore, as all men are invited and exhorted by God to repentance, the prophet, on that ground, justly declareth that God "hath no pleasure in the death of a sinner." But *why*, it is that God doth not turn or convert *all* and alike men to Himself, equally, is a question the reply to which lies hidden in Himself. And as to your usual way of citing that passage of the apostle Paul, "That God would have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. ii. 4), How vain a prop that is to put under your error to support it. I think I have shown with sufficient plainness already, and that repeatedly. For it is (so to speak) more certain than certainty itself that the apostle is not, in that passage, speaking of individuals at all, but of orders of men in their various civil and national vocations. He had just before commanded that the public prayers of the Church should be offered up for kings and others in authority, and for all who held magisterial offices, of what kind and degree soever they may be. But as nearly all those who were then armed with the sword of public justice were open and professed enemies to the Church, and as it might therefore seem to the Church singular or absurd that public prayers should be offered up for them, the apostle meets all objections, so very natural, by admonishing the Church to pray even for them also, and to supplicate God to extend His grace and favour even to them, for the Church's quiet, peace and safety.

There is, perhaps, a stronger colour in some of the words of Peter, which might have better suited your purposes, where he says that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Pet. iii. 9). And if there be anything in the first member of the passage that seems difficult of comprehension at first sight, it is made perfectly plain by the explanation which follows. For, in as far as God "willeth that all should come unto repentance," in so far He willeth that no one should perish; but, in order that they may thus be received of God, they must "come." But the Scripture everywhere affirms, that in order that they may "come," they must be prevented of God; that is, God must come first to them to draw them; for until they are drawn of God, they will remain where they are, given up to the obstinacy of the flesh. Now if there were one single particle of right judgment in you, you would, in a moment,

acknowledge that there is a wide and wonderful difference between these two things?that the hearts of men are made of God "fleshly" out of "stony" hearts, and that it is thus that they are made to be displeased and dissatisfied with themselves, and are brought, as suppliants, to beg of God mercy and pardon; and that after they are thus changed, they are received into all grace.

Now God declares that both these things are of His pure goodness and mercy; that He gives us hearts that we may repent, and then pardons us graciously upon our repentance and supplication. For if God were not ready to receive us when we do truly implore His mercy, He would not say, "Turn ye unto Me, and I will turn unto you" (Zech. i. 3). But if repentance were in the power of the free-will of man, Paul would not say, "If peradventure God will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Tim. ii. 26). Nay, if God Himself, who exhorts all men to repentance by His voice?if God Himself, I repeat, who thus exhorts, did not draw His elect by the secret operation of His Spirit, Jeremiah would not thus describe those who do return: "Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned; for Thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented" (Jer. xxxi. 19). This solution of the matter (I repeat,) if there were any shame or modesty in so impudent a dog as thyself, ought to have been known to thee as existing in my writings in a hundred different places. And although thou mayest take it upon thyself to reject such a solution, it nevertheless stands supported and confirmed both by the apostle Paul and by the prophet Ezekiel.

But how, and in what sense it is, that God willeth all men to be saved is a matter not here to be inquisitively discussed. One thing is certain, that these two things?salvation and the knowledge of the truth?are always *inseparably joined together*. Now, then, answer me, If God had willed that His truth should be known unto all men, how is it that, from the first preaching of the Gospel until now, so many nations exist unto whom His pure truth has never been sent by Him at all, and unto whom, therefore, it has never come? And, again, if such had been the will of God concerning all men, how is it that He never opened the eyes of all? For the internal illumination of the Spirit, with which God has condescended to bless so few, is indispensably necessary unto faith. And there is also

another knot for thee to untie. Since no one but he who is drawn by the secret influence of the Spirit can approach unto God, how is it that God does not draw all men indiscriminately to Himself, if He really "willeth all men to be saved" (in the common meaning of the expression)?

It is, therefore, an evident conclusion, flowing from this discrimination which God makes, that there is, with Him, a secret reason why He shuts so many out from salvation. How it is, therefore, that the mercy of God is shown unto the thousandth generation thou wilt never (as long as the pride by which thou art inflated shall blind and blunt thy faculties) acknowledge. For no such mercy is promised as that which shall utterly abolish the curse under which the whole race of Adam lieth; but such a mercy is promised as shall (where all naturally existing obstacles are removed) break forth and endure for ever, upon the most unworthy.

In this manner it was that God passed by many of the children of Abraham when He chose the one of them, Isaac. So also, when the twin sons of Isaac were born, the same God willed that His mercy should rest on one of them only, namely, on Jacob. And again, although God shows forth proofs of His wrath in many, it nevertheless remaineth eternally true that He is "abundant in goodness" and "slow to anger"; and hence, in that very longsuffering with which He endures the reprobate, there shineth forth no dim refulgence of His great goodness. Only observe, therefore in what an effectual manner thy frivolous and captious objections, from which I can disengage myself in a moment, entangle, ensnare and imprison thyself!

In order to make the mercy of God greater than His anger, you will have more to be chosen to salvation than to destruction. And suppose I should for a moment cede this to you, what greater glory will thereby be secured to God? None whatever. God will nevertheless be as unjust as ever to those few who are lost (if your calumnies are to be received and believed). Unless God love all His created offspring alike, you will still profanely and awfully pronounce Him to be less kind and merciful than a wolf! Nay, let there be but one only against whom God shall righteously exercise His wrath, how shall He escape or avoid the accusation of cruelty in your blind and unholy judgment! Farther still, you will not even allow, as exceptions from the impious and profane charges of cruelty in God, that



there are gross provocations of His Divine wrath in the men themselves! But, comparing alone wrath with mercy, you merely contend for the magnitude of the one or the other. Just as if God, by choosing more to salvation than to destruction, would thereby, and thereby alone, prove Himself to be a merciful God! God, however, commends the greatness of His grace to us in a manner far different from this. He not only pardons so many, and such various sins, in His elect, but even contends with, and bears with, the obstinate malice of the reprobate, until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity (Matt. xxiii. 32).

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## **ARTICLE II.**

(THAT IS, CALUMNY II.)

GOD NOT ONLY PREDESTINATED EVEN ADAM TO DAMNATION,  
BUT TO THE CAUSES  
OF THAT DAMNATION ALSO, WHOSE FALL HE NOT ONLY  
FORESAW, BUT HE ALSO  
WILLED BY HIS SECRET AND ETERNAL DECREE AND ORDAINED  
THAT HE SHOULD  
FALL, WHICH FALL, THAT IT MIGHT, IN ITS TIME, TAKE PLACE,  
GOD PLACED  
BEFORE HIM THE APPLE, WHICH SHOULD CAUSE THAT FALL.

CALUMNIATOR'S

OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON

ARTICLE II.

Your opponents say that this **SECOND ARTICLE** is the doctrine of the devil, and they demand of me, Calvin, that I would tell

them where, in the Divine Scriptures, the substance contained in this Article is written?

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REPLY  
OF JOHN CALVIN TO  
ARTICLE II.,  
&c., &c.

Under this SECOND ARTICLE you appear again exactly the same man as before. Now just produce the passage from my writings wherein I teach "that the apple was placed by God before Adam, that it might be the cause of his fall." This, in fact, is the very source of all your popularity?the drawing of a cloud of obscurity across the minds of the inexperienced, to prevent them from rising to the height of that truth which is removed out of the reach of the common understanding of the flesh and of the carnal mind.

But not to wrangle about words, I willingly, and in a moment, confess that what I have written is this: "That the Fall of Adam was not by accident, nor by chance; but was *ordained* by the *secret counsel* of God." And this is the doctrine which you positively pronounce to be "the doctrine of the devil." You are, in your own eyes, I know, a judge of the highest authority, and therefore it is that, in your self-conceit, you imagine that you can, by five words of the foulest abuse, knock down that firm fabric of truth which I have erected, after which I have supported by the most impregnable arguments. You call upon me to produce a testimony from the Scriptures, from which it is manifest that Adam fell not, but by the secret decree of God. But had you read even a few pages of my writings with any attention,

that sentiment of mine could not have escaped you which everywhere occurs in my books?that God governs all things by His secret counsel and decree. You ascribe a prescience to God after your own fashion, representing Him as sitting in heaven as an idle, inactive, unconcerned spectator of all things in the life of men. Whereas, God Himself, ever vindicating to Himself the right and the act of holding the helm of all things which are done in the whole world, never permits a separation of His prescience from His, power! Nor is this manner of reasoning mine only, but most certainly Augustine's also. "If (says that holy father) God foresaw that which He did not will to be done, God holds not the supreme rule over all things. God, therefore, ordained that which should come to pass, because nothing could have been done had He not willed it to be done."

If you judge this to be absurd, you will be just as far off as before, and will fall back into the same confusion into which you fell by making my doctrine to be "the doctrine of the devil." For you ought to have applied that remedy for your evil case, which might have been ready at your hand. But that you did not this, nor could do it, is perfectly plain. You might have thought thus, "God foresaw the Fall of Adam. It was in His power to have prevented it if He would. But He did not will to do so. Why did He not will to do so? No other reason can be assigned for His not willing to do so than that His *will* had quite another bent, or inclination." But, if you will permit yourself to enter into a contention with God, you had better profanely accuse Him at once and condemn Him, for having so made man of constitutional frailty as to leave him liable to fall, and that into eternal ruin on the account! But you will reply that Adam fell by his own free-will. My reply to you in return is, that Adam had need of being gifted with that fortitude and constancy with which the elect of God are gifted whom God warns to "keep" sound and safe "from falling" (Jude 24).

Most certain it is that if fresh strength were not supplied to us from heaven every moment, such is our liability to fall, that we

should perish a thousand times over. But God supplies all those whom He hath chosen with an invincible fortitude, by which they are so holden up as to "persevere unto the end." How was it, then, I again ask, that God did not bestow this same fortitude and perseverance on Adam, if He had willed that he should stand fast and in safety? Here, most assuredly, every mouth must be silent and dumb; or, all must confess with Solomon, that "God hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. xvi. 4). If this offend you as being an absurdity, think within yourself whether the Scriptures declare so often in vain that the judgments of God are "a great deep." If it were possible for us to measure the incomprehensible counsel of God by the standard of our own human capacity, Moses would have said in vain: "Secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever" (Deut. xxix. 29).

You demand of me to cite the place in the Holy Scriptures by which I prove that God did not prevent the Fall of Adam, because His will was not to prevent it. Just as if that memorable reply of God to all such inquiries and inquirers did not contain in itself an all-sufficient proof: "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." From which the apostle Paul at once concludes, and justly so, that God hath not mercy upon all, because He wills not to have mercy upon all. And most certainly these words, without the aid of any interpreter, plainly and loudly declare that God is not bound by any law that should compel Him to show mercy unto all men indiscriminately and alike; but that He is the Lord of His own will, to impart pardon to whom He will and to pass by others as He will. It is, moreover, certain that God was the same then as now, when the prophet said of Him, "He doeth according to His will" (Dan. iv. 35). If, therefore, God permitted the Fall of Adam against His will (as you would have it), you will next say that He was overcome by Satan in the conflict; and thus you will make, like the Manichees, two ruling principles. But Paul, pleading also this great cause of God, compares Him (and that soberly and solemnly) to a potter, who

could of his own will form of the same mass vessels of different kinds as he pleased. Now the apostle might have begun his argument had he been so led from sin. But he does not so. He commences the mighty subject by defending the *free right* of God from the very beginning of His glorious workmanship, even from His *secret eternal and sovereign will*. And where he afterwards adds, :That all were concluded under unbelief," does he teach that this took place contrary to, or without, the will of God? Does he not, on the contrary, teach that God was the author of that state of unbelief? If you reply that all were condemned to unbelief as they deserved, the context will not admit even that interpretation, because Paul is there speaking of the secret judgments of God. And that solemn exclamation of his directly militates against such an interpretation, "O the depth!" etc. Wherefore, as God, from the beginning, predestinated Christ to succour those who were lost, so by His inconceivable and inestimable *counsel* He decreed a way by which He might manifest forth His glory by the Fall of Adam.

I willingly confess that where God is vindicating the free course of His mercy, He speaks of the whole human race generally, which had already perished in Adam; but this same view and consideration held good before Adam fell, that His will was then all-sufficient to show mercy when and as He pleased. Moreover, this His eternal will, though it depends on none and on nothing but Himself, nor has any prior cause to influence it, is nevertheless founded in the highest reason and in the highest equity. For though in the case of men they require a law to rein and restrain their intemperateness it is far otherwise with God. He is His own law? a law unto Himself! And His will is the highest rule of the highest equity.

### **ARTICLE III.**

## **(THAT IS, CALUMNY III.)**

THE SINS WHICH ARE COMMITTED, ARE COMMITTED NOT ONLY BY THE PERMISSION, BUT EVEN BY THE WILL OF GOD. FOR IT IS FRIVOLOUS TO MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PERMISSION OF GOD AND THE WILL OF GOD, AS FAR AS SIN IS CONCERNED. THEY WHO ATTEMPT TO MAKE THIS DIFFERENCE MERELY ATTEMPT TO GAIN GOD OVER BY FLATTERY.

CALUMNIATOR'S

OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON

ARTICLE III.

Concerning the difference between the will and the permission of God the arguments of your opponents are these: Calvin (they say) professes that he is a prophet of God; but we say that Calvin is a prophet of the devil. Now one of these assertions must be false; both parties cannot speak the truth. If Calvin is a prophet of God, we lie; but if Calvin is a prophet of the devil, then he lies, for he asserts that he is a prophet of God. But suppose (by the will of God!) that both positions are true; that is, if God wills that Calvin should say that he is a prophet of God, while we say that Calvin is a prophet of the devil; it follows that contradiction is a will which is impossible. For if God wills that which is false He does not will that which is true. And again, if God wills that which is true, He does not will that which is false. From which it will follow that if God wills that the one party should speak the truth, it must be contrary to His will that the other party should lie. But the one party certainly does lie. Therefore, the one party lies by the permission, but not by the will, of God. Hence, the next consequence is that there is a difference even in God Himself, for there is a discrepancy between His permission and His will.

Your adversaries adduce, moreover, many conspicuous examples of this discrepancy between the will of God and His permission, especially from Ezekiel xx., where God, after He had reproved His people very fully and severely for not obeying His commandments, at last concludes with these words: "Go ye; serve ye every one his idols, and hereafter also, if ye will not hearken unto Me" (Ezek. xx. 39). As if God had said, "I permit you to serve your own lusts, since ye will not obey My, precepts." And this, indeed, seems to be exactly the same as that which He had said in the former part of the same chapter: "Because they despise My statutes, therefore I gave them also statutes that were not good" (vers. 24, 25). Now God did not in reality, we are assured, give unto the Israelites statutes that were not, in themselves, good, for all the statutes of God are good. But because they despised the good precepts of God, He forsook them; and they being thus forsaken of God, fell away into evil statutes, just as that prodigal son, being forsaken by his father, or rather having forsaken his father, fell into luxury and every evil. Thus also Paul teaches that because men did not love the truth, God sent upon them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie. Of the same description also seems to be that passage of Amos iv.: "Go ye to Bethel, and transgress, for this liketh you" (vers. 4, 5). So it is also in the present day (as in the case of thyself and thy disciples). As men would not obey God, who saith that He hateth sin, therefore God hath permitted spirits of delusion such as yours to exist, who teach that God willeth sin, that they who would not obey the truth might be left to obey a lie.

Your opponents adduce that passage from Zechariah, where God says He was angry with the nations that were at ease, because, when He was lightly angry with the Israelites, they helped forward the calamity; that is, they afflicted the Israelites more grievously than the anger of the Lord against them required or could endure. This was, therefore, done by the permission, not by the will, of God. They produce also a similar example from the prophet Obed, who reproves the people of Israel because

they oppressed the people of Judah more heavily than the anger of the Lord required. They bring forward also the example of the prodigal son, concerning whom, if thou sayest that he ran into riotous living by the will of his father, it will be the greatest possible absurdity. The son, therefore, thus acted by the permission of the father. In the same way also thy opponents affirm that the wicked are prodigal sons of God, and that they sin, not by the will, but by the permission of God. They refer, moreover, to that saying of Christ, "And ye, will ye also go away?"

Christ most certainly did not will that they should go away, but He permitted them so to do. They argue, finally, from the nature of common sense, which dictates that there must be a difference between willing and permitting. And they affirm that it was according to common sense that Christ taught Divine things; and that if thou take away common sense from His teaching all His parables must fall at once, for it is by common sense that those parables are to be judged of and understood.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE III.,

AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S STATEMENTS. &C.

This THIRD ARTICLE shows, equally with the preceding, how greedily and to what extent you feed on calumnies. If you did wish thus fiercely to gnaw my doctrine, why did you not, at least, cite my words honestly? In the vast cause now before us, I affirm that to make a difference between the permission and the will of God is, indeed, "frivolous." But you interpose a witty and clever argument as you imagine, though it is an empty sophism. If all things are done by the will of God, God (you assert) wills things



which are contrary in nature and in principle, which is proved (you maintain) by saying that I really am a prophet of the devil, while I affirm that I am a true servant of God. This appearance of contradiction is that which dazzles and blinds your eyes. But God Himself, who well knoweth in Himself how it is that He willeth that same thing in one sense which is contrary to His will in another, pays no regard whatever to your dullness of understanding and stupidity. As of ten as God called forth the true prophets, He most certainly willed that they should contend zealously and earnestly in declaring the doctrine of the law. Upon this there secretly rose up false prophets, who strove to overthrow that doctrine. That there should be a conflict, therefore, between the true and false prophets was inevitable. But God did not therefore contend with or contradict Himself, though He willed that both these true and these false prophets should come forth. You obtrude upon me the long-suffering of God. But God, on the other hand, declares that no false prophets arise, but those whom He ordains to be such, either to prove the faith of His own people, or to blind the unbelieving. "If there arise among you a false prophet (saith Moses), your God proveth you by that prophet" (Deut. xii. 1, 3). Now you, by a most perverse and preposterous comment, transfer to some other that which Moses ascribes expressly to God. Therefore, either deny at once that God searches the hearts of His people, or else admit that which is the evident and indubitable truth: that false prophets are instruments of God, by which He proves, as by a touchstone, that of which He will have Himself acknowledged to be the author. But Ezekiel sets this forth still more clearly and remarkably: "And if the prophet be deceived when he hath spoken a thing, I the Lord have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out My hand upon him, and will destroy him from the midst of My people Israel " (Ezek. xiv. 9).

You would have us to rest content with the permission of God only. But God, by His prophet, asserts that His will and His hand are in the whole matter as the moving cause. Now just consider, then, which of the two is the more worthy to be

believed, God, who by His Spirit, the only fountain of truth, thus, speaks concerning Himself; or you, prating about His hidden and unsearchable mysteries out of the worthless knowledge of your own carnal brain? What! when God calls in Satan for His purposes, as the instrument of His vengeance, and openly gives him commandment to go and deceive the prophets of Ahab, does this positive command differ nothing from a mere permission? The voice of God contains in it no ambiguity whatever, "Who (saith God) will go and deceive Ahab for me?" Nor does God command Satan in any obscure manner "Go thou and be a lying spirit in the mouths of all his prophets" (1 Kings xxii.). Now I wish to know from you whether the doing a thing is the same as the permitting it to be done? When David had secretly abused the wife of another man, God declares that He will cause all David's wives to be dragged forth, to make an example of the same disgraceful sin openly in the sight of the sun. God does not say, "I will permit it to be done," but "I will do it." But you, in your wondrous defence of God (as you think), would aid Him by your fallacious help in thrusting forward your imaginary permission! How very differently does David think and act! He, while revolving in his mind the fearful judgment of God, exclaims. "I was dumb, because Thou didst it!" In like manner Job blesses God, and confesses that he was plundered by the robbers, not only through the permission, but by the will and act of God; for he plainly affirms "that it was the Lord who gave, and that it was the Lord who took away," what He had Himself given. If, upon your authority, giving and receiving are to be understood in the same way as willing and permitting, riches so considered are not blessings actually bestowed of God, but they fall into our hands at random by the permission of God. But if you and your foul band should continue thus to cry out against God until dooms-day, He will nevertheless, in due time, fully justify and vindicate Himself. But as for us, we will adore with all reverence those mysteries which so far surpass our comprehension, until the brightness of their full knowledge shall shine forth upon us in that day when He, who is now seen "through a glass darkly," shall be seen by us "face to face." "Then

(saith Augustine) shall He be seen in the brightest light of understanding that which the godly now hold fast in faith. How sure, certain, immutable and all-efficacious, is the will of God! How many things He can do which He yet wills not to be done; but that He wills nothing which He cannot do!"

With reference, however, to the present ARTICLE, I will answer you from the mouth of the same godly writer. "These (saith he) are the mighty works of the Lord; exquisitely perfect according to every bent of His will. And so perfect in exquisite wisdom, that when both the angelic and the human natures had sinned? that is, had done, not what God willed, but what each nature willed, even by a like will, in each creature? it came to pass that what God, as the Creator, willed not, He Himself accomplished according as He had willed; thus blessedly using, as the God of perfect goodness even evils to the damnation of those whom He had righteously predestinated unto punishment, and to the salvation of those whom He had mercifully predestinated unto grace. For, as far as these transgressing natures were themselves concerned, they did that which God willed not but with respect to the Omnipotence of God, they could by no means have done what they did without it, nor without its concernment therein. For by the very act of their doing that which was contrary to the will of God, they were themselves thereby fulfilling the will of God. Wherefore. these mighty works of God, exquisitely perfect, according to every bent of His will, are such that, in a wonderful and ineffable way, that is not done without the will of God which is even done contrary to His will, because it could not be done at all, unless He permitted it to be done; and yet, He does not permit unwillingly, but willingly. Nor, as the God of goodness, would He permit a thing to be done evilly, unless, as the God of Omnipotence, He could work good even out of the evil done."

As to the testimonies of the Scripture which you adduce, they have no more to do with the present mighty question and cause, than oil has to do with wine to make a mixture, or to dilute the one with the other. God, speaking to the Jews by the prophet

Ezekiel, and addressing them as disobedient, says: "Go ye; worship every man his own idols." This, I openly profess, is not the voice of God commanding or exhorting, but of God rejecting an impious mixture of worship—a worship by which the Jews had profaned His sanctuary. Now what else can you conclude from this passage, but that God sometimes permits that to be which He disapproves and condemns? As if it were not evident to all that God sometimes commands and sometimes permits by the same forms of expression. God says in the Law, "Six days shalt thou labour." Here is a permission. For sanctifying every seventh day to Himself He leaves the other six free to men. In a manner somewhat different also He permitted of old divorce to the Jews, which He nevertheless by no means approved. In the present case, recorded by the prophet Ezekiel. He gives up the double-minded and the pertidious to idols, because He will not suffer His name to be polluted. But how is it that you have forgotten, here, that all this is wrought by the "Secret Providence of God," by which He ordains and turns to the accomplishment of His own purposes all the movements and tumults of the world, according to His own will? Moreover, corrupting vainly and ignorantly as you do that other passage (Ezekiel xx. 24, 25), you evince how everything sacred is disregarded by an impure and profane person like yourself. The words of God are, "Because they despised My statutes. I gave them precepts that were not good." Here you trifle by observing that when they were forsaken of God they fell into idolatry. But God undoubtedly means that the Jews were given over to the Chaldeans into slavery, and that the Chaldeans, who were idolaters, were oppressing them by their tyrannical laws.

But our question now is, whether God merely permitted the Jews to be thus dragged into exile by the Chaldeans, or whether He used the latter as rods, chosen by Himself, wherewith to scourge the Jews for their sins? For if you will still make the doctrine of mere permission a pretext, you might as well commit all the prophets to the flames at once, who at one time declare that Satan was sent by God to deceive, and at another that the

Chaldeans or Assyrians were sent by God to destroy; and who, at the same time, assert that God "hissed for" the Egyptians, that He might use their might in punishing His people, and at another that the Assyrians were His hired soldiers; that Nebuchadnezzar was His servant in plundering Egypt, and that the Assyrians were the "axe" in His hand and the "rods" of His anger in utterly devastating Judaea. I do not multiply, as I might do, kindred examples, lest I should exceed all moderate bounds of proof (Isa. x. 5.).

Nor is your inebriated audacity the less manifest, where you would vainly make it appear that God's sending "strong delusions" on the unbelieving, that they might believe a lie, means that He permits false teachers to exist; and that, as He permitted the prodigal son to fall into riotous living when he had deserted his father, so He permits His prodigals to fall into error and delusion when they forsake Him. And when you spout forth all this folly, you imagine that your readers are so blind that they do not see things to be quite otherwise in the words of Paul, where he says, "God shall send upon them strong delusions, that they might believe a lie" (2 Thess. ii. 11). But it is no marvel whatever that he should prate thus, at will and at random, who imagines that there are no judgments of God at all, or who does not know what the judgment means, or holds it in perfect contempt if he does. For no man who is not insane would say that a judge had no hand in the judgment of the wicked, or that he would sit down in unconcern and leave others to perform that duty which belonged properly to himself alone.

You attempt, however, by your barking, either to frighten me or to provoke me, when you say that by the permission of God spirits of error and delusion exist, who teach that God wills sin. But as this same reproach was cast in the teeth of the apostle Paul himself, why should I grieve or complain at being a partaker of the same reproach with him? You adduce a passage from the prophet Zechariah, where the nations are described as punishing God's people beyond the extent which His wrath

required Are you, then, really such a simpleton as not to believe that there was protection enough in God to prevent this excess of His people's affliction by their enemies, and to have made their punishment less, had He been pleased, or had He willed so to do? You reply that the words of the prophet intimate this excess of punishment. But you must be twice or thrice dipped in stupidity, if you perceive not that God tries the patience of His people in a marvellous manner by the severest proofs, sometimes in one way and sometimes in another, and that He is often, at the same time, offended by the insolence of their enemies, where He sees them become too much elated with their victories, and when they insult and cruelly use the conquered. Nay, your foolish comments and reasonings fall to the ground of their own accord, directly militating against and mutually destroying each other. For the truth and fact must be, either that God positively commanded those profane nations, or He merely permitted them, to gently chastise His people. If you reply that He commanded them to do so, I then obtain the conclusion that, though these neighbouring enemies were, without cause, afflictive to the miserable exiles who dwelt with them, yet, that they would have been without blame if they had not exceeded due bounds in their cruel treatment of them as the conquered and as captives. For who would attribute that to them as iniquity which they had done at God's command?

But you are labouring all the time to establish a difference between the permission of God and His command, thus making it appear that though God commanded their enemies to inflict punishment on His people, yet it was by His permission only that they exceeded all due bounds in the punishment they inflicted. In this same way of reasoning the Israelites also were deserving of censure, for they also afflicted their brethren of Judah more severely than the wrath of God against them (according to your reasoning) required. But your insanity blinds you so far as to cause you to assert that they would have been free from all guilt and blame if they had been moderate in their vexation of their brethren. For I have to bring you back again

and again to this point: that the Israelites sinned, not only because (by the permission of God as thou imaginest) they exercised too great severity towards their brethren, but because they took up arms against them at all. You, however, hesitate not to declare that there was no sin in their commencing war against their brethren, because God was angry with the people of Judah, and Himself armed the Israelites, that they might execute His vengeance upon them at His own command. Whereas I maintain that the Israelites sinned in a twofold sense: first, because they had themselves no intent or desire to do the will of God, although they were really the instruments of His vengeance; and secondly, because their atrocity itself proves that they were destitute of all sense of equity. Nay, at the very outset you betray your shameless ignorance in your pretending that men, as far as they are themselves concerned, err and fall by the permission of God. Whereas, such a representation of the sacred matter is impious and profane. It is making God to give permission to men to do evil in reference to their own actions, as considered in themselves; while the reality and truth are, that God severely prohibits and solemnly forbids the doing of anything that is contrary to His commands. But why God of His will permits men to do wrong; nay, why God by His secret decree gives men over to evil, whom He nevertheless commands to continue in the right way; it becomes our sobriety and modesty of mind to remain willingly ignorant. To search into this profound secret insolently as you do is rashness, audacity and madness!

How cleverly and appropriately you interpret that passage where Christ (as you make it appear) permits His disciples to go away (John vi. 67), learn from the following reality of the case. When Christ, referring to those who had gone away, turns to His disciples and says to them, "Will ye also go away?" He is positively exhorting them to persevere and continue with Him. For, asking them in grief whether they also would go away, He puts, as it were, a gentle rein upon them to prevent them from falling away with apostates. And is this, I pray you, the manner

in which you convert all such forms of speech as these into permissions? Common sense does, I acknowledge, at first sight, take to command to be one thing, and to permit to be another. But the fact is, that this difference, or this sameness, is not the real question at issue. The question between us is, whether God, in unconcern and inactivity, merely observes, as an uninterested, unconcerned and idle spectator, all the things that are done upon earth; or whether, from His all-high throne, He rules, overrules and governs by His Divine command, every single action of the sons of men? Or, if the term permission gives you so much satisfaction and pleasure, answer me this question: Does God permit things to be done willingly or unwillingly? That God permits unwillingly is positively denied by Psalm cxv. 3: "The Lord hath done whatsoever He willed" (or, "whatsoever He hath pleased"). If, therefore, God permits willingly, to represent Him as sitting on His throne as a mere unconcerned and unengaged spectator, is utterly profane. Wherefore it follows that God determines and rules by His counsel whatsoever He wills to be done. But you are for bringing, with child's talk, this sublime mystery of God down to the rule and measure of common sense!

And as to your objecting and arguing, on the other hand, that Christ so taught all the Divine lessons of His teaching, as to accommodate Himself to the capacity of people of common sense; Christ Himself flatly denies this, and convicts you at once both of lying and of impudence in the matter. Hear you not Christ Himself declaring that He spoke in "parables," to the very end, that the common people, or people in general, "might hear, and yet not understand"? It is, indeed, quite true that the Holy Spirit does, for our sakes, everywhere speak in a certain manner, as a nurse would speak to children; but this is a widely different matter from representing, as you do, that common sense is a capable and competent judge of those profound doctrines, which exceed in their incomprehensibility the capacity of angels. Paul proclaims aloud that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them (1 Cor. ii. 14). He



therefore admonishes all those to become fools, and to resign all their own wisdom, who would profit in the heavenly school. In a word, God everywhere vindicates to Himself as His own all true light of understanding. Indeed, both days and volumes would fail me, if I were to attempt the accumulation of those testimonies of Scripture which condemn common sense as perfect darkness, for they are numberless, and they all declare that light can be obtained from heaven alone, and that whosoever would be wise in the things of God, and of his own salvation, must renounce all his own wisdom, how much human light soever it may contain. I will content myself, therefore, with one example only. God willed not that the doctrine of the Gospel should be preached unto the Gentiles, and He withheld it from them even until the coming of Christ. And therefore it is, that the apostle calls the Gospel "the mystery that was hidden from ages;" nay, that was unknown to the angels themselves in heaven (Col. i. 26; 1 Peter i. 12).

Notwithstanding such testimonies as these, however, you will persist in thrusting upon us the sufficiency of common sense, which, by its own natural will and judgment, subverts this very doctrine of the apostle altogether. For you will grant nothing to be even probable, but that of which common sense may be the estimator, arbiter and judge. Whereas the prophet, when speaking of the secret Providence of God, exclaims, "O Lord, how great are Thy works! and Thy thoughts are very deep " (Psalm xcii. 5) But you, on the contrary, deny that anything is divine but that which you can measure by the rule of your own reason. What becomes, then, of the remonstrance of the apostle, when he is discussing the mighty question now before us? Why doth he make the appeal, "Nay but who art thou, O man?" And again, what meaneth his wonder and admiration, "O the depth!" "How unsearchable," etc., etc.? The apostle commands us to wonder and be astonished, because, whenever we come to the incomprehensible counsel of God, all mortal senses and powers fail before it. Whilst you, all the time, will admit nothing that you cannot see with your own natural eyes!

## **ARTICLE IV.**

## (THAT IS, CALUMNY IV.)

"ALL THE CRIMES THAT ARE COMMITTED BY ANY MAN WHATSOEVER ARE, BY THE OPERATION OF GOD, GOOD AND JUST."

CALUMNIATOR'S

OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON

ARTICLE IV.

Against this FOURTH ARTICLE all your opponents utter aloud that passage of Isaiah V. 20: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil." Now, if sin is a good and righteous work of God, it follows that righteousness is an evil and unrighteous work of God, for righteousness is altogether contrary to sin. Again, if sin is righteous, it follows that unrighteousness is righteous, for sin is unrighteousness. Farther, if sin is a work of God, it must follow (your opponents argue) that God doeth that which is sinful.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE IV.,

AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, STATEMENTS,

&c., &c.

In the case of this FOURTH ARTICLE, also, you go on grossly lying as before, of which fact I would, at the outset, cautiously warn my readers, and for this reason, that they may form their

judgments from the reality of the case rather than from your foul calumnies. Nor do I so much condemn your objections in themselves, as indignantly complain that by altering and perverting my words, you malignantly wrest what I did say, for the purpose of fanning the flame of hatred against my doctrine, which doctrine is far different from your false representations of it. You enter into a quarrel with me, as if I had said, "that sin was a just, or righteous, work of God," which doctrine, and the idea of it, I hold throughout my writings in the utmost detestation. Wherefore, the greater the cleverity of argument you imagine yourself to possess, the greater is your real puerility. You arrive in your argument on this mendaciously stated FOURTH ARTICLE, at the conclusion that righteousness is evil, and that unrighteousness is good; and that God, as the author and (as you awfully state) the doer of sin, is unjust in punishing that which is His own work. Whereas, all these monstrous profanities are the fabrications of your own brain! And all such enormities of profaneness I have ever most carefully, and with abhorrence, condemned and refuted in all my writings.

You yourself, however, will one day find, to your sorrow, how abhorrent a crime it is to trifle and lie in this manner concerning the secret mysteries of God! And that you may clearly understand that you are not dealing with me in this your war against the truth, but with the supreme judge of heaven Himself, whose tribunal, you may be assured, you can never escape, listen to that which Job testifies?and certainly under none other influence than the inspiration of the Holy Spirit?that the doings of Satan, and of the robbers who plundered him, were the works of God Himself. And yet Job never, in the extremest idea, charges God with sin. No such most distant intimation is found in the patriarch. On the contrary, he blesses God's holy name for what He had done by Satan and by these robbers (Job i. 21). So also when the brethren of the innocent Joseph sold him to the Ishmaelites, the deed was evidently a most wicked one. But when Joseph ascribes this to God as His work, so far is he from imputing sin to God, that he considers and lauds His infinite

goodness, because that, by this very means, He had given nourishment to his father's whole family (Gen. xlv.). Again, when Isaiah declares that the Assyrian is the "staff of God's wrath" in His righteous hand, by which He was about to work that terrible slaughter by means of the same Assyrian (Isa. x. 15), the prophet thereby makes God the author of that awful destruction, yet without the least imputation of sin to God, or the most distant idea of it. In like manner, when Jeremiah curses those who do the work of God negligently (Jer. xlvi. 10), the prophet, by "the work of the Lord," means all that cruel destruction which their enemies wrought upon the Jews. Go then, therefore, and expostulate with the prophet, and declare to him that he has made God to commit sin. In a word, all who are in the least acquainted with the Scripture, know full well that a whole volume might be made of like passages of the Holy Scriptures, where God is made the author, as commander, of the evil and cruel deeds done by men and nations. But it is utterly vain to spend more words upon a subject so well known and self-evident.

Was it not a signal manifestation of the grace of God when He spared not His own Son? Was it not an equally marvellous exhibition of grace in Christ when He delivered up Himself? Now wilt thou really here affirm, with thy foul and profane mouth, that God sinned in thus ordaining the deed of this crucifixion of His Son and in ordaining the men also who should do the deed? (Acts iv. 28.) Was God's work of the offering up of His only begotten Son a sin in Him? O no! All godly persons very easily untie this knot, as Augustine does in the following clear and striking manner: ?

"When the Father gave up the Son, when the Lord gave up His own body, when Judas delivered up the Lord, how was it that, in this one same 'delivering up,' God was righteous and man guilty? The reason was that, in this one same thing which God and man did, the motive was not the same from which God and man acted. Hence it is that Peter without hesitation declares

that Pontius Pilate and Judas, and the other wicked people of the Jews, had done 'what God's hand and His counsel had afore determined to be done' (Acts iv. 28), as Peter had just before said, 'Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God' (chap. ii. 23)." Now if you turn your back on the term "foreknowledge," the definitiveness of the terms, "determinate counse1," will floor you at once. Nor indeed does the former passage leave the least degree of ambiguity behind it, namely, that Pontius Pilate and the Jews, and the wicked people, did "whatsoever God's hand and His counsel had before determined to be done." Now if your understanding cannot hold a mystery and a secret so deep as these, why do you not wonder and exclaim with the apostle Paul, "O the depth!" why do you daringly trample upon them as an infuriated madman? Had you been of a teachable mind, you would have found in my writings explications of this deep matter far more copious than I can here repeat. My present object is only to blunt the edge of your impudence, that it might not disturb the minds of the weak.

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#### ARTICLE V.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY V.)

NO ADULTERY, THEFT, OR MURDER, IS COMMITTED WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF THE WILL OF GOD.

(" Institutes," chap. xiv. 44.)

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#### **ARTICLE VI.**

(THAT IS, CALUMNY VI.)

THE SCRIPTURE OPENLY TESTIFIES THAT EVIL DOINGS

ARE DESIGNED, NOT ONLY BY THE WILL, BUT BY THE AUTHORITY, OF GOD.

CALUMNIATOR'S

STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

Against this FIFTH and SIXTH ARTICLE your opponents bring these and many other arguments. If (they say) God wills sin, God is the author of sin. And again, if God wills sin (they argue), it is not the devil that wills sin, for the devil is the mere servant of God. And they affirm that if God wills sin, He must be inferior to many men, for many men are unwilling to sin. Nay, the nearer any man approaches to the very law of nature, the less he will sin. Else, how is it that Paul says, "The good that I would, I do not; but the evil that I would not, that I do." If Paul wills sin by nature (as Calvin saith), how is it that Paul does not will what God wills? And how is it that Paul wills that good which God (according to Calvin) does not will? Finally, your opponents ask of you, what Scripture testifies that evil doings are designed of God, not only by His will, but by His authority?

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLES V. AND VI.,

AND TO THE

CALUMNIATOR'S

STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS THEREON.

In the case of this FIFTH ARTICLE, it is not without the peculiar intervention of the providence of God that you have pretended to give the reference to the passage in my "Institutes," from

which you falsely assert it is extracted. In this instance, readers will see that I state these things in these articles (that is, calumnies), which my adversaries bring against my doctrines, just as, and as faithfully as, if they themselves stated them.

Now seizing, as you do, upon this mutilated passage, do you not deserve that everyone who passes you should spit in your face? And though you do not attempt to offer any reference in the case of the SIXTH ARTICLE, yet your real audacity takes a wider leap still. Now tell me, did I, who in all my writings so reverently and solemnly declare that whenever and wherever sin is mentioned the Name of God should be kept in all solemnity wide out of the way; did I ever, or anywhere, assert that evil doings were perpetrated, not only by the design, but by the authority of God? Most certainly nothing can be uttered too powerful or too severe in condemnation of such monstrous blasphemy. I am willing to hear all that you or any men can say in its abhorrence. Let not my name, therefore, ever be associated with its horrible profanity.

How successful you are in deceiving fools I know not, but of one thing I am certain: that if anyone will just take the pains to compare your foul inventions with my genuine writings, your dishonesty and wickedness will leave you painted in your true and execrable colours. You profanely contend that if God loves sin, He must hate righteousness; and you utter many things in the same line of profanity. And why do you utter them, but that you might be forced at last to subscribe, under your own convictions, to my written doctrines? For not yesterday only, nor the day before yesterday, but for these many years past, I have written and spoken concerning Job thus: If in the spoliation of that patriarch by robbers, the work of God, and of Satan, and of the plunderers, were one and the same in the act abstractedly considered, how is it that God is clear of all that fault (as He sacredly is), of which fault Satan and the robbers are guilty? Why, it is thus: If, in the actions of men, an entire difference exists when the motives and ends of those actions are duly



considered, so that the cruelty of that man is condemned who barbarously pierces the eyes of a crow, or the sacrilege of him who kills a crane (a bird held in so much religious veneration among the ancients), while the sentence of that judge is lauded who sanctifies his hands by putting to death a murderer; why should the position of God be held inferior to that of man? Why should not His infinite righteousness vindicate Him, and hold Him separate from a participation in the guilt of evil-doing men? Only let readers cursorily observe what I am now about to subjoin. Nay, let them carefully read the whole of that part of my "Institutes" where I am discoursing on the Providence of God, and he will, in a moment, see all thy cloudy-minded objections discussed, exposed, answered and refuted.

Let readers consider also, if they please, what I have written in my Commentary on the Second Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. Men (I have there shown), when they commit theft or murder, sin against God because they are thieves and murderers, and because, in their theft and in their murder, there is wicked design. But God, who makes sovereign use of their wickedness, stands in an infinitely different, and in an all-high position above all men, and acts, and things. And the objects and ends of God are infinitely different from, and higher than, those of men. God's purpose is, by the wicked acts of men, to chastise some and to exercise the patience of others. Hence, in all these His uses of the evil doings of men, God never deviates in the remotest degree from His own nature; that is, from His own infinitely perfect rectitude. If, then, an evil deed is thus to be estimated according to its end and object, it is fully manifest that God is not, nor can be, the author of sin!

The sum of the whole great matter is this: Since an evil will, in men, is the cause of all and every sin, God, in performing His righteous counsels by the hands of men, is so far from being involved in the same sin and fault with men, that in a marvellous manner He causes, by their means, the light of His glory to shine forth out of darkness. And, indeed, in that very book of mine,

"On the Providence of God," which lighted up all these very flames of the deepest pits of hell against me, there will be found continually occurring the distinctive declaration that nothing is more impious or more preposterous than to drag God into a participation of sin or guilt with man, while He is performing His secret judgments by means of the hands of men and of the devil, because there is no affinity whatever between the motives and ends of God and those of men and devils. But there was published by me, more than twelve years ago, a book which clearly vindicates both me and my doctrine from all these foul calumnies, and which ought to preserve me free from all this present trouble also, if there were but one spark of honesty or humanity either in yourself or your fellows. But with reference to that mad and impious dream of the Libertines, concerning God being the author of sin, which fascinated so many, how fully I have refuted that horrible idea I will not now boast. Most certainly I undertook to defend the cause of God therein purposely, and I proved with all possible clearness that God was not, in any sense, or degree, or manner whatever, the author of sin.

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## **ARTICLE VII.**

### **(THAT IS, CALUMNY VII.)**

WHATSOEVER MEN DO WHEN AND WHILE THEY SIN,  
THEY DO ACCORDING  
TO THE WILL OF GOD, SEEING THAT THE WILL OF GOD  
OFTEN CONFLICTS  
WITH HIS PRECEPT.

CALUMNIATOR'S

OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS.

On this SEVENTH ARTICLE your opponents ask you this question: If the will of God is often at variance with His precept, in what way can it be known when God wills, and when He does not will, that which He commands? For (say they) if Calvin asserts that what God commands ought always to be done, whether God wills it or does not will it, it will follow that God wills in order that His will might sometimes be resisted. For if God commands me not to commit adultery, and yet wills that I should commit adultery, and yet I ought not to commit adultery, it follows that I ought to do that which is contrary to His will. For when God commands the people of Israel generally, "Thou shalt not commit adultery;" does He mean that none of them should commit adultery, or that some should commit adultery, but that others should not? On this point, Calvin, your adversaries ask of you some direct answer. If you reply that God wills that some should commit adultery, but that He at the same time wills that others should not, you will make God inconsistent with Himself in the one same precept.

If you reply to these arguments of your adversaries by asserting that God has a twofold will?the one open and manifest, the other secret?they next inquire: Who was it, then, that made this secret will known to Calvin? For if Calvin and his followers know this secret will, it cannot be secret; and if they know it not, how dare they affirm that which they know not?

Your opponents again inquire whether God commands according to His will when He enjoins His people to pray, "Thy will be done;" and where Christ also saith, "He that doeth the will of My Father which is in heaven, the same is My brother and sister and mother" (Mark iii. 35)? There is also that passage of Paul, "Behold, thou art called a Jew, and restest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest His will, and approvest that which is excellent, and art a teacher of the law" (Rom. ii. 17). Surely we have here the will of God, and that which is commanded in the law, which will, if it be good (which it certainly is), it must necessarily follow that that which is

contrary thereto is evil; for whatsoever is contrary to good must be evil. There is, moreover, that memorable ejaculation of Christ, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, . . . but thou wouldest not." Christ most certainly speaks here of the open or manifest will of God, namely, that will which He (Christ) Himself had explained in so many ways. Now, if Christ had in His mind another will of God contrary to this will, His whole life must have been a contradiction.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE VII.,

AND TO THE

CALUMNIATOR'S

OBSERVATIONS, STATEMENTS, &C., &C.

I am utterly unconcerned to make to this SEVENTH ARTICLE any reply at all. Produce me the place in my writings where I have asserted that "the will of God is frequently at variance with, or conflicts with, His precept." Such an idea never entered my mind; no, not even as a dream. Nay, on the entire contrary, among many other kindred explanations, I have faithfully expounded and set forth how simple and uniform, and one, the will of God is; although, between the secret counsel of God and His general doctrine, there is, to ignorant and inexperienced persons, at first sight, a certain appearance of difference. But whosoever modestly and soberly and reverently submits and commits himself to God and His teaching will, in a moment, see and acknowledge (as far as the human mind's capacity can see and acknowledge it) how it is that God, who forbids adultery and fornication, punishes by the incestuous intercourse of Absalom

with the wives of David, David's sin of adultery with the wife of Uriah. God ever wills one and the same thing, but frequently in different forms. Wherefore, that the foulness of your lies may not cast any filth on me or my doctrine, let my readers receive in one word this solemn declaration: that that which you cast in my teeth, as promulgated by me concerning the two wills of God, is an entire fiction of your own. For, as to myself, I have ever proclaimed that there is between the secret or hidden counsel of God and the openly revealed voice of His doctrine, the most perfect, divine and consummate harmony.

Augustine did, indeed, by way of concession and explanation to his adversaries, make mention of a twofold will, or of different wills of God? a secret will, and an open or revealed will? but he so represented that twofold will as to show that they are in such consummate harmony with each other, that the "last day" will make it most gloriously manifest that there never was, nor is, in this multiform way of God's workings and doings, the least variance, conflict or contradiction, but the most divine and infinite harmony and oneness.

Having laid down this solemn principle and taken this immovable stand, I will now, if thou wilt have it so, draw swords with thee in battle for the truth. Thou arguest thus: "If God forbids a man to do that which He really wills him to do all the time, or if He commands men to do that which He really wills not, He must command for the very purpose that His will might be resisted." Now, in none of all this filth of argumentation are either myself or my doctrines the least concerned. I acknowledge nothing whatever of the profane sentiments to which it refers to be mine. On the contrary, the sum of my doctrine is this: that that will of God, which is set forth in His Law, clearly demonstrates that righteousness is His delight, and that iniquity is His hatred; and also, that it is most certain that He would not denounce punishment against evil doers, if their evil doings pleased Him. This, however, by no means prevents God from willing, by His secret and unexplicable counsel, that those things

should be done, in a certain sense and manner, which He yet wills not to be done, and which He forbids to be done.

If you will here raise the objection, that I make God inconsistent with Himself, I, in return, would ask you whether it belongs to you to prescribe a law or a bound for God, forbidding Him to do anything that surpasses your judgment and comprehension? Moses declares aloud that "the secret things of God belong unto Himself alone; but that whatsoever things are useful for man to know are revealed in the Law" (Deut. xxix. 29). Will you, therefore, deny God the right of doing anything but that, the reason of which you can fully comprehend and explain? After the depth of the counsel of God, which engulfs all human capacities of comprehension, has been fully declared in the Book of Job, the sublime description closes with this significant intimation, "Lo! these are parts of His ways; but how little is heard of Him!" (Job xxvi. 14). But as for you, you will not permit God to have any counsel to Himself, but that which you can as plainly see as a thing which you behold with your natural eyes. You are more than blind, however, if you cannot see that when God, by His voice, forbids you to commit adultery, His will is that you should not be an adulterer; and yet, that He, the same great God, exercises His righteous judgments in those same adulteries which He condemns, which righteous judgments He most certainly exercises not but with His full knowledge and will.

Take the matter more briefly and condensedly thus: God wills that adultery should not be committed, in as far as it is a pollution and violation of the holy bond of matrimony, and a great transgression of His righteous law. But, in as far as God uses adulteries, as well as other wicked doings of men, to execute His own acts of vengeance on the sins of men, He certainly executes the office and performs the sacred duty of a Judge, not unwillingly, but willingly! Wherefore, in what instances soever either the Chaldeans or Assyrians acted cruelly in their terrible victories and horrible slaughters, for such awful

barbarities we by no means praise them. Nay, farther, God Himself declares that He will be the avenger of the afflicted and inhumanly treated; and yet, the same righteous God elsewhere declares that these slaughters are sacrifices which He has in this way prepared for Himself! (Isa. xxix.; xxxiv. 6; Jer. xlvi. 10; Ezek. xxxix.) And will you deny that God wills that which He thus dignifies with the honoured designation of "a sacrifice"? Awake, then, from thy slumber, open thine eyes from thy blindness, and at length acknowledge that God, by secret and inexplicable ways, rules and overrules His righteous judgments.

You, however, by a subtlety of argument, which you deem marvellously wise, inquire whether God, from the time that He first forbade men to commit adultery, willed that all should be adulterers, or only a part of them. Take this as a sure and certain reply: God demands of all men chastity, because God loveth chastity in all men. Experience itself, however, manifests (without our entering into any proof or mention of the important facts themselves) that there are in God different reasons, motives and manners, of His willing. For if He equally and effectually willed that all men should be chaste, He would, without all doubt, make and render all men chaste. Wherefore, since chastity is a singular gift of God, the prompt and evident conclusion is, that He wills that which He commands in His Word differently from that which He effectually works and fulfils by His regenerating Spirit. Hence your impure and profane tongue has no ground whatever for charging God with inconsistency. God is neither dubious nor ambiguous in anything which He commands or forbids, but He plainly discovers His pure and holy nature in both. Neither will you find anything contrary to this, His purity, holiness and righteousness, in that secret and hidden will of His, by which He rules and overrules all the actions of the sons of men.

Whoredom is highly displeasing to God as the author of all chastity. Yet the same holy God's will was to punish the adultery of David by the incestuous lust of Absalom. God forbids man's

blood to be shed. For as He greatly loves His own image, so He defends it by His own protection. And yet He raised up out of the wicked nations slaughterers of the sons of Eli, because it was His will that they should be killed; for so the Sacred History plainly and literally teaches us. If your blindness is as a stone-wall in your way, yet all who really have eyes see a perfectly holy and harmonious consistency in God, when He, the same Divine Being who hates whoredom and slaughter in as far as they are sins, or (which is the same thing) who hates the sins of whoredom and of murder because they are transgressions of His righteous law, yet exercises His secret and righteous judgments in justly punishing the wickednesses of nations and of men by means of the cruelties and sins of other nations and other men. And as to your own conceit of your acute wisdom when you ask the question, "If there be any secret will of God, when and how will that will be revealed to me?" the answer to your impious question will contain no difficulty when you have granted to me the acknowledgment that we are to follow the Holy Spirit alone as our teacher. For if God, according to the testimony of Paul, "dwelleth in the light that no man can approach unto," and if the same apostle reverentially declares that "His ways are past finding out," why am I not freely permitted to wonder at, and adore, that secret will of His which is hidden from my comprehension? The wisdom of God is exalted in the Book of Job with the highest praises, that mortals may know and confess that it cannot be spanned by any human intellect. Are you, then, purposed to laugh at everything which is said concerning a matter so sublimely secret? Will you upbraid David with folly for solemnly proclaiming and adoring those judgments of God which he confessed to be a "great deep"? I hear from all the prophets, and from all the apostles, that the counsels of God are incomprehensible. What they all declare I embrace with a firm and unhesitating faith, and what I believe I freely and undoubtingly profess and teach. Why, then, is this my reverence for God's secret will charged upon me as a fault and a crime?

And that you may not turn round upon me, and say that I



adduce from the Scriptures examples and proofs wholly irrelevant, Paul's case and mine are surely one and the same, who, when speaking of the secret election or reprobation of God and adoring the riches and profundity of His wisdom, the incomprehensibility of His judgments and the unsearchableness of His ways, yet ceases not openly to affirm that God hath mercy on whom He will, and consigns whom He will to eternal destruction. In a word, exult, I pray you, no more in the irreconcilable inconsistency which you imagine you have discovered in my doctrines. For the Scriptures furnish an abundance of testimonies concerning the secret and hidden will of God. What I have from them learned, I fearlessly assert and speak of as a thing sure and certain. But as my human intellect cannot soar to a height so stupendous, I adore with reverence, fear and trembling, that mystery which is too high and too deep for the angels themselves to penetrate. And this is my reason for offering so frequently in my writings the admonitory warning, that nothing is better or safer in these solemn matters than wise ignorance! because the folly of those who suffer themselves to be, or who wish to be, wise above what is written or permitted of God, is worse than the frenzy of madmen.

By this time you must see how sure and certain I hold that will of God to be, concerning which the Scriptures so clearly and fully testify, which same will is, nevertheless, so secret and incomprehensible with reference to the reasons why God wills this or that, or how He wills this or that, that the angelic intellects cannot grasp the comprehension. The fact is, that the pride and presumption of yourself, and of all like you, so madden ye all, that whatever ye cannot comprehend, but are compelled to relinquish as beyond your capacity, ye labour with all your might to make out to be nothing at all! As to your continuing to cast in my teeth inconsistencies, contrarieties and contradictions, I have settled all those a hundred times over. And as to your scurrility, by which you attempt to overwhelm me, all that being insipid and pointless penetrates me not. And as to your charge against me, that I am an imitator of God, you,

on account of your presumptuous and devil-like imitation of His wisdom, will one day find, to your eternal cost, what it is to exalt your own wisdom and to make yourself therein equal unto the Most High. The only pain and agony I feel are caused by your frenzied blasphemies, by which you profane the sacred Majesty of God, of which profanation He will Himself be, in His appointed time, the sure and certain Avenger.

As the will of God, which He has revealed in His Law, is good, whatsoever is contrary to that Law and that will I acknowledge to be evil. But when you brawl that that secret and hidden will of God, by which He separates the "vessels of mercy" from the "vessels of wrath," according to "His good pleasure," and by which He makes use of both "vessels," as He will, is contrary to His Law; when you utter this, you breathe forth from the foul sink of your ignorance a detestable fiction of your own brain and a horrible lie.

I freely acknowledge that Christ is speaking of the revealed will of God, when He says, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together, and ye would not." For He is upbraiding the Jews with the same ingratitude and hardness of heart as He had before done in the song of Moses (Exod. xv. 17, etc.). And we know full well that God did in reality bestow on the Jewish nation all the blessings which the words of that song expresses, seeing that, by giving them His law, by the ordinances of His worship, and by the many benefits which He conferred on that people, and by which He bound them to Himself, He protected them, as it were, by the overshadowing of His wings; and He would still have done so, had not their indomitable obstinacy and obduracy carried them away from Him. After, therefore, Christ had testified His will so often and in so many different ways, spoken in order to win a perverse nation to their obedience, but all in vain; it is with the utmost justice that He complains of their ingratitude. For, as to your restricting all these things to the lifetime of Christ, this you do with your usual ignorance of these divine things. Just as if Christ

were not the true God, who, from the beginning, had not ceased to spread the wings of grace over His own elect people! But here you, in a moment, conclude that, if there were another and secret will in Christ, while He thus addressed Jerusalem, the whole life of Christ must have been an inconsistency. Just as if, to allure by the voice and by kindnesses, and yet to leave the heart untouched by the inspiration of His secret Spirit, were in Christ diverse and contrary acts!

But, that the absurdity and futility of your calumny may the more plainly appear, answer me, I pray you, this question: Where does Christ complain that He was mistaken or deceived by the event, that the vine, from which He had expected grapes, brought forth wild grapes? What answer have you to give, noble teacher and skilful rhetorician? Will you impute ignorance to Christ, to avoid making Him speak falsely? What! did the Jews entirely prevent and defeat the purposes of God? Why, according to you, the blessed God was sitting in doubt all the time as to what the event would be, and that event quite deceived and surprised Him at last. No! nor will it at all alter the state of the case if you make the saying of Christ, which He speaks to the fact and to the state of Jerusalem, refer to the secret foreknowledge of God. God had elsewhere said, "Surely they will fear My Name" (Zeph. iii. 7), but they hastened to corrupt themselves more and more. God had expected some profit from His great punishments inflicted, but He afterwards complains that He was disappointed. Can you, then, disentangle yourself from this divine set of truth in no other way than by reducing God to order, and making Him depend for the accomplishment of His eternal purposes upon the free will of men? Surely it is plain and evident to the meanest capacity, that God, in order to set forth the greatness of the wickedness of His people, speaks as in the person and after the manner of men, when they complain that all their labour is lost, because they are quite disappointed in their expected success.

It is most certain that those whom God wills to gather unto

Himself effectually He "draws" by His Spirit, and that that which it is in His hand and purpose to do, He will, according to His promises, perform. Wherefore, when many who are called follow Him not, it is openly manifest that that manner of gathering together, of which Christ complains as having been unfruitful and inefficacious, was not attended with that efficacious influence of His Spirit, of which He elsewhere makes frequent mention, as, for instance, by the prophet Isaiah: "He shall gather together the dispersed of Judah" (Isa. xi. 12). Again, "The glory of the Lord shall gather thee" (Isa. lviii. 8). Again, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west" (Isa. xliii. 5). Again, "Your God will be your reward" (or will gather you) (Isa. lii. 12). For the prophet had just before said, "The Lord hath made bare His holy arm," that His power might be displayed "before the eyes of all the nations" (Isa. lii. 10). Hence it is that the prophet a little afterwards repeats, "For a small moment have I forsaken thee, but with great mercies will I gather thee (Isa. liv. 7). But what I have before advanced concerning the precepts of God, is sufficient and abundant, I hope, to stop the mouth of all your blasphemies. Although, therefore, God commands nothing feignedly, or ambiguously, or fictitiously, but plainly and solemnly declares what He wills and approves; yet His mind and will are that a different kind of obedience should be rendered to Him by His elect (whom He effectually bends and turns to His obedience), from that which is offered to Him by the reprobate, whom, indeed, He also calls to Himself by the outward voice of His Word, but whom He condescends not effectually "to draw" by His Spirit.

The natural obstinacy and depravity of all men are alike; so that no man will take upon himself the yoke of obedience to God voluntarily and willingly. To some God promises the Spirit of obedience; others He leaves in their depravity. For notwithstanding all your vain talk about it, the truth is that "a heart of flesh" and "a new heart" are not promised to all men promiscuously, but to the elect peculiarly, that they might walk in the commandments of God. What have you to reply to these

things, noble teacher and judge of the truth? And what if God invites the whole mass of mankind to come unto Him; and yet knowingly, and of His own will, denies His Spirit to the greater part, "drawing" a few only into obedience to Himself by His Spirit's secret inspiration and operation? Is the adorable God to be charged, on that account, with inconsistency?

## **ARTICLE VIII.**

### **(THAT IS, CALUMNY VIII.)**

THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH, AND SO HIS OBSTINACY OF MIND AND REBELLION, WAS THE WORK OF GOD, EVEN ON THE TESTIMONY OF MOSES HIMSELF, WHO ASCRIBES ALL THE REBELLION OF PHARAOH TO GOD.

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## **ARTICLE IX.**

(THAT IS, CALUMNY IX.)

THE WILL OF GOD IS THE SUPREME CAUSE OF ALL THE HARDNESS OF HEART IN MEN.

CALUMNIATOR'S

STATEMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS.

Under the EIGHTH and NINTH ARTICLES your adversaries ask this question: What, then, does Moses mean when he writes, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart"? Are we to interpret the

words, "And Pharaoh hardened his heart," thus; that is, "And God hardened the heart of Pharaoh"? Now surely this must be a far more violent manner of speaking than to say, "God hardened the heart of Pharaoh;" that is, God knew Pharaoh as to the natural hardness of his heart, because Pharaoh had refused to obey Him. Another like question they ask concerning the words, "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." Now, if you should interpret this passage by rendering it, "God would not have you harden your hearts," such explanation would involve the greatest absurdity, for it would be making God command men to do that which is the prerogative of Himself alone. For if the hardening of hearts is the work of God, it is absurd to command men to harden their own hearts or not to harden their own hearts; for they could no more do it than they could add one cubit to their stature, or take one cubit from it.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLES VIII. AND IX.,

&c., &c.

Here again do I beg of my readers, thou unholy calumniator of the Truth, to give me their confidence, and to compare my writings and my whole "line" of teaching with your perverted and mutilated articles. If they will kindly do this, your slanders will at once be detected, and all the flame of animosity which you thus light up against me will soon go out of itself. Meanwhile, I deny not that I have taught, as Moses and Paul teach, that the heart of Pharaoh "was hardened" of God. Hereupon, however, despising both Moses and Paul, and considering all that is read in them as nought, you take upon yourself to expostulate with me, and to ask me whether, since we read in one place that "Pharaoh hardened his heart," there is any

necessity for giving a more violent interpretation of the passage, and to say that "God hardened the heart of Pharaoh"? Now I need no farther reply to this your question than that which you furnish in the words of this lying article yourself, which you pretending to quote from my writings, or corrupting, or not comprehending them, make to say that, as the will of God is the supreme or remote cause of the induration, man himself, who hardens his own heart, is, and must be, the proximate cause of the hardening. Now, I have everywhere most distinctly shown the difference between the supreme or remote cause, and all mediate and proximate causes. For while a sinner can find the root of every evil affection in himself, what ground can there be for charging God with any fault of such sinner's transgressions? Such an accuser of God acts, as I have elsewhere said, just like the nurse of Medea, as represented by the ancient poet, who preposterously exclaims, "O that the planks that formed the ship Argo had never been cut down by the axe on Mount Pelion!" For, all the while the impure princess, her mistress, was burning with her own depraved lust, and felt herself driven headlong by its force to betray and ruin her father's kingdom, this foolish nurse blames neither her mistress's corrupt passion, nor the deep enticements of Jason, nor sees those immediate causes at all; but goes on complaining of the ship that brought Jason to Colchis, and laments that such a ship was ever built in Greece. Exactly in the same manner does the man who, being conscious of his own sin and fault, fetches a remote cause of his iniquity from afar, even from God Himself; utterly and ridiculously forget what he himself is.

Surely, then, you must now see that although God does, in His own secret and sovereign way, harden men's hearts, yet that no fault can possibly be imputed to Him, because every man hardens his own heart by the essential evil and wickedness of his own nature.

But when God turns the hearts of men to the obedience and worship of Himself, that is another form of His working

altogether. For as we are all, by nature, bent on obstinacy and resistance no man will desire to do good unless he be acted upon of God and led so to do. And though the Scripture saith that "the preparations of the heart in man are from the Lord," and that the faithful prepare their hearts to seek God, and to render Him a voluntary worship, the Scripture by no means contradicts itself herein, but it distinctly shows that all the true worshippers of God render Him their service willingly and from an affection and holy freedom of soul. And yet, again, this by no means stands in contradiction, or in the way, of the fact that God all the while performs His part by the operations and influences of His secret Spirit.

But with reference to His hardening men's hearts, that is a different way of God's working, as I have just observed. Because God does not govern the reprobate by His regenerating Spirit; but He gives them over to the devil, and leaves them to be his slaves; and He so overrules their depraved wills by His secret judgment and counsel, that they can do nothing but that which He has decreed. Hence, such is the Divine harmony and marvellous consistency of these things, that though God hardens whomsoever He will, yet everyone so hardened is the cause and author of his own induration. But that I may not extend my observations to too great a length in replying to this article, let me be permitted to impress on the minds and memories of godly and upright readers the following admonition of Augustine: "When the apostle says that God 'gave' certain characters 'over to vile affections,' it is preposterous ignorance to refer this to the longsuffering of God. For the same apostle elsewhere connects the longsuffering of God with His power, as where he says, 'What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction?' (Rom. ix. 22)," etc. Indeed, even if this learned and pious father and teacher had never written or spoken on this great matter, the authority of God alone ought to be enough, and more than sufficient, for our understanding and faith. It is not I that said that "God taketh away the hearts of



princes, and causeth them to err," or "that God held the heart of Pharaoh, that he might not incline to humanity and mercy." It is not I that said "that God turned the hearts of the nations, and hardened them to hate His people;" or, "that He hissed for the Egyptians, and used them as His servants" It was not I that said "that Sennacherib was God's rod in His hand, to punish His people." I did not say all these things. They are all the declarations of the Spirit of God Himself.

What! when the Scripture itself affirms that Saul was carried away by an evil spirit from God, will you ascribe this to the sole patience or mere permission of God? How much nearer the truth is Augustine in his admonitory instruction, when he observes: "The sins which Satan and the wicked commit are their own; but that which is accomplished by their sins is effected by the power of God, who divides the darkness from the light as He will." Now you charge me with saying that which God Himself asserts all the while in His own words. In this matter, let the same Augustine reply to you in my stead, where he says: "If the Scripture be carefully examined, it shows that God not only directs those good wills of men (which wills He has made good out of evil wills) unto good actions and unto eternal life, but that those wills also which remain in their natural corruption are so under the power of God, that He turns and inclines them whensoever and whithersoever He will, either to confer blessings, or to inflict punishments; and that He does this by judgments the most secret, but at the same time most just."

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## **ARTICLE X.**

(THAT IS, CALUMNY X.)

SATAN IS A LIAR, AT THE COMMAND OF GOD.

Against this TENTH ARTICLE, Calvin, which is a part of your

doctrine, your adversaries argue thus: If Satan is a liar at the command of God, to be a liar is just, and therefore Satan is just. For if it is just to command a lie (and, if Calvin speak the truth, it is), then to obey a lie is also to be considered just from the justice of the precept. And again, as to obey an unjust precept is unjust, so to obey a just precept is just. If Calvin hereupon reply that Satan is not a liar obediently?that is, out of mere obedience to God?we reply, according to Calvin's own sentiments, that Satan's being a liar, but not out of obedience to God, is also at the command of God.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE X.

AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, ETC.,  
THEREON.

Now only reflect at what kind of a man it is that you are hurling your shafts! For that assertion at which you aim your weapon is not mine; it proceeds from the Spirit of God Himself. The very words of the Scripture are these, "Whom shall I send? and who will go for Us?" Immediately upon which God calls Satan; and commands him to go and to be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets, in order that he might deceive Ahab (1 Kings xxii. 2-22). Now, then, bark, dog as you are, as loud as you will. You will no more obscure the glory of God by your revilings, than you can obscure the brightness of the sun by spitting in his blazing face. But here again let me use the words of Augustine rather than my own, "When God testifies that false prophets are sent by Him, and that His hand is upon them, to cause them to deceive men or kings, this is not an act of His mere patience or permission, but an exercise of His effectual power." As to your prating that Satan is not a liar by the command of God, out of

obedience to that command, it is no marvel that you entangle yourself in knots and nets without number whilst you refuse to acknowledge that God uses the workings of Satan in an inexplicable manner, according to His sovereign will, that He may thereby manifest the justice and equity of His supreme dominion. Yet He never liberates the wicked instruments which He uses from the sin and the guilt, which are theirs, which instruments His power compels to execute His decrees, and in some sense, even against their own wills. Though, therefore, your bitter malice may howl an hundred times over, what I utter is not the voice of Calvin, but the voice of God, who saith, "I have given commandment unto My saints." Wherefore, if you imagine that God assumes to Himself more than He ought, He will sooner or later find a way to clear and vindicate Himself from all such accusations as thine, and to take vengeance on all such accusers as thee.

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## **ARTICLE XI.**

(THAT IS, CALUMNY XI.)

GOD GIVES THE WILL TO THOSE WHO DO EVIL. HE ALSO SUGGESTS DEPRAVED AND DISHONEST AFFECTIONS NOT ONLY PERMISSIVELY, BUT EFFECTIVELY, AND THAT, TOO, FOR HIS OWN GLORY.

Against this ELEVENTH ARTICLE your opponents argue thus: Calvin actually attributes to God that which evidently belongs to the devil, as is manifest from the united testimony of the whole of Scripture. Moreover, if God suggests depraved and dishonest affections, and yet commands us to resist depraved affections, He must positively command us to resist Himself, and is therefore inconsistent with Himself. "Every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights " (the Scripture saith). Are, then, even depraved affections to be

considered good gifts? Do they also come down from the Father of lights? James plainly asserts "that no one is tempted of God, but that every man is tempted by his own heart's lust." And whereas you add that God doeth this for His own glory, your opponents maintain that such an idea is absurd. Nebuchadnezzar did indeed experience the justice and the power of God when, on account of his own pride, he was changed into the nature and habits of a brute; and he gave glory to God for the same, because he judged and plainly saw that God therein was just as well as mighty.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE XI.

AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, ETC.,  
THEREON,

Here again you go on, as before, to fabricate monsters out of your own brain, and to slaughter them in your own imagination, glorying to yourself in a mighty triumph, which you vainly think you had gained over a harmless servant of God. But, as to the places in my works wherein I have spoken or taught the doctrines contained in this article, those places you are, and ever will be, wholly unable to find. Wherefore, without my saying one word, your futility and your impudence also fall to the ground together. As to the murders, the adulteries, the rapines, and the frauds, etc., with which the wicked pollute themselves, my teaching is that all these wickednesses proceed from the desperate evil of their own natures; but I teach that God, who bringeth light out of darkness, so rules in these wicked men, and by them, that, by His secret, incomprehensible judgment, He executes by the wickedness of these men His own eternal decrees. Now, if you will fight against these solemn truths,

prepare at once to enter into battle with God Himself. He is quite prepared to receive your insane onset.

If there were but in you one drop or spark of modesty or docility, that distinction which I ever make, and which continually occurs in my writings, must at once undoubtedly satisfy your mind. If the wicked who discover the root of all evil in themselves would but ask their own consciences where all the fault lies, those consciences would testify that the whole fault of all their wickedness is found in that root of all iniquity within them. Nor could they fail to see that God, by righteously turning their depraved wills whithersoever He pleases, uses those evil affections for the working of various good. As to quarrelling with this, I tell you again, you are not contending against me, but against God Himself. O that you could from your heart acknowledge God to be indeed the Father of lights! Then you would not, as Paul descriptively expresses it, force yourself, by your audacity, into "that light which no man can approach unto;" you would not thus turn, by your profane insolence, that light into darkness.

Moreover, you disclose your ignorance and folly when you conclude that because every good thing cometh down from the Father of lights, therefore, those terrible acts of righteous vengeance at which the wicked fear and tremble do not proceed from the same glorious Being. Still greater is your folly and stupidity when you ask me whether I consider depraved and perverse affections to be among the good and perfect gifts which come down from the Father of lights. O yes! you are yourself a solemn proof that there is a wonderful difference between the Spirit of wisdom and of judgment and of knowledge, and the spirit of slumber and of delusion, though both are sent of God; the one in mercy, the other in judgment. Yes! There is a marvellous difference between the Spirit of regeneration, who creates the faithful anew in the image of God, and an evil spirit from God, who drives the reprobate into madness, as in the case of Saul.

With equal impudence it is that you attack me when I teach that God executes His decrees by means of Satan and the reprobate, to the manifestation of His own glory. That Satan is an instrument of His wrath God plainly testifies both in His Word and by universal experience. And to what end do we say that God works by the hand of Satan, unless we mean thereby that God, by means of Satan and his malice and doings, works His own glory and the manifestation of it? By this clever cavil of yours respecting Satan, you think you have eluded the net of the Divine matter. Why! you cannot hinder God from working His own glory by all these your iniquitous contendings against the truth. No! No more than Pharaoh could, by his madness of pride, prevent God from showing forth the brightness of His glory, because God "for that very deed raised him up," that by him He might manifest forth the glory of His "power." You would meet me by saying that Nebuchadnezzar gave glory to God when he confessed the justice of God in His terrible judgments. But that you might know in what contempt I hold all your pointless and ineffectual shafts, I will myself willingly aid you in this your argument, and will put that into your mind which otherwise never would have entered there. For what end did Joshua call upon Achan to give glory to God? His object was to show that God would be glorified by the detection of Achan's profane theft and lie.

But the essential question is now, whether there is but one way in which God can show forth His glory. For if the glory of God did not continually shine forth out of the lies, as well as out of other wickednesses, of men, Paul speaks in vain when he says that God alone is true, but all men are liars; and he speaks equally in vain when he immediately adds, "But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say, Is God unrighteous?" (Rom. iii. 5.)

When you argue that God's will is that He should be praised by all nations for the blessings which He confers, what you assert is true, provided you grant also that there is a mighty wood of

circumstances out of which God, by His wonderful workings, secures praises and glory to Himself. And by your ignorance of this you bring on yourself the just punishments of your pride. For, professedly laughing at all sound logic and legitimate reasoning, you perpetually argue from the species to the genus negatively.

Nor will I deem your profane and blasphemous jest worthy of any lengthened reply, when you intimate that God might as well punish men for wearing the beards which Himself has created. For whoever asserted that iniquity was created of God, although it be true that God, by His secret and incomprehensible purpose ordains and overrules the working of that iniquity to righteous, good and glorious ends? Away, therefore, with your stupid and insipid insolence, when you ignorantly confound the beard of men, which grows naturally and imperceptibly even while they are asleep, with their acts of wickedness, which are voluntary, perceptible and conscious. Rage against me as rabidly as you will, this I nevertheless hold fast and that although God does indeed decree and overrule the depraved affections of men to the accomplishment of His own eternal purposes, yet He nevertheless righteously punishes the depraved agents and instruments themselves, and makes them to stand condemned in their own consciences.

Only observe how you again entangle yourself in a net of your own creation, when you pretend to confess that the secrets of God are unknown to us, and yet would maintain that His justice, like the justice of man, is clearly comprehensible by us. Now suppose anyone should ask you whether there is any justice contained in the secrets of God, would you deny that there is? Would you, then, pretend or assert that that justice of God, in His secret acts which David and Paul contemplate with wonder and adoration, because it surpasses the utmost stretch of their mental comprehension, is easily intelligible and plainly known? Do not the profundity of the depth and the riches of the height of the wisdom of God in His marvellous judgments contain in

them justice? Why, then will you deny that God is just whensoever the reason of His works surpasses your comprehension? There is in the Book of Job a Divine and remarkable distinction made between that wisdom of God which is unsearchable and the brightness of which holds all human nature at an immeasurable distance, and that wisdom which is made manifest to us in His revealed and written law. In the same manner, you, if you did not thus confound all things, ought to have made a distinction between that wonderful and profound justice of God, which no human capacity can comprehend, and that rule of justice which God has prescribed for the regulation of the lives of men in His revealed Law. I at once confess that it is by the openly revealed doctrine of the Gospel that God will assuredly judge the world. But He will as assuredly vindicate, at the same time, the righteousness of His secret providence against all profane brawlers!

Indeed, were you but acquainted, even in the least degree, with that Gospel, concerning which you thus vainly prate, you would easily understand how it is that God richly rewards that righteousness which He sets forth in His glorious law, nor ever deprives of their promised crown those who from the heart obey His commandments, and yet righteously punishes all those who refuse their obedience. These latter, nevertheless, He calls His servants, because He holds their hearts in His hands for the accomplishment of His eternal purposes. Hence Nebuchadnezzar, that furious plunderer of nations and slave of Satan, is called by Jeremiah, and with peculiar significance, "the servant" of God. And if I have taught that God, as is manifest by His judgments on every side, inclines the hearts of men hither and thither for the execution of His purposes and decrees, when the prophets of God declare these same things in the same words, and when I cite their own words, why impute you such citations as awful crimes committed by me? Are not these the very words of the Divine history? "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and He moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah" (2 Sam. xxiv. 1).



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## ARTICLE XII.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY XII.)

THE WICKED, BY THEIR ACTS OF WICKEDNESS, DO  
RATHER GOD'S WORK THAN THEIR OWN.

CALUMNIATOR'S

OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON

ARTICLE XII.

With reference to this TWELFTH ARTICLE, Calvin, which is your doctrine, your opponents argue thus: If this really be the case, then, God is often angry at that which is good. For if wickedness is the work of God, wickedness itself is good; for all the works of God are good. And again, if wickedness is good, it follows of necessity that godliness is evil, because it is the direct contrary to wickedness. Hence, it will again follow, that when the Holy Scriptures command us to hate evil and love that which is good, they command us to love wickedness and hate godliness. Your opponents, moreover, affirm that this article of your doctrine really savours of libertinism, and they consequently marvel that you should be so determined a foe to the libertines.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE XII.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY XII.)

AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, ETC.,  
THEREON.

Before God, and the angels, and the whole world, I here again testify that what I did truly teach upon this subject, you have by the basest and most wicked calumny, utterly perverted. If it really seems to you an absurdity to teach that the wicked do the work of God, enter the battle at once with Jeremiah, the prophet of God, whose words are these, "Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently, and that keepeth back his sword from blood" (Jer. xlviii. 10). Now, by the work of the Lord, the prophet evidently and undeniably means hostile slaughters and desolations, which you surely must call wickedness, seeing that they proceed from pure avarice, cruelty and pride. The Chaldeans were urged on to make war upon Moab by their own ambition and thirst for plunder, so that, regardless of all justice, they forced on their way by rapine and slaughter to accomplish their inhuman purposes. But since it pleased God to punish, by their hands, the idolatry and defiance of the Moabites, their depravity did not alter the fact of their executing the judgments of God upon the Moabites by their wicked hands. What availeth, then, your barking and growling? What availeth your profane logic and argument "that, therefore, wickedness is good"? As if wickedness could be imputed unto God because, by His wonderful working, He turns the wickednesses of men to an end and a purpose entirely different to those which the wicked themselves designed. Nay, you would even class me with the libertines, the mad delusions of which sect I have laboured to expose and confute beyond all other men; so that I need no new defence of myself on the present occasion.

**ARTICLE XIII.**  
**(THAT IS, CALUMNY XIII.)**

WE SIN OF NECESSITY (WITH RESPECT TO GOD),  
WHETHER  
WE SIN OF OUR OWN PURPOSE OR ACCIDENTALLY.

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**ARTICLE XIV.**  
**(THAT IS, CALUMNY XIV.)**

WHAT WICKEDNESSES SOEVER MEN COMMIT OF THEIR  
OWN WILL, THOSE WICKEDNESSES PROCEED ALSO FROM  
THE WILL OF GOD.

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**CALUMNIATOR'S**  
**OBSERVATIONS AND STATEMENTS ON**  
**ARTICLES XIII. AND XIV.**

Against these two articles your opponents urge the following arguments: If we sin of necessity all admonitions are evidently vain, and the prophet Jeremiah therefore speaks these words to the people in vain, "Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I set before you the way of life, and the way of death. He that abideth in the city shall die by the sword, and by the famine, and by the pestilence: but he that goeth out, and falleth to the Chaldeans that besiege you, he shall live, and his life shall be unto him for a prey" (Jer. xxi. 8, 9). All this warning and admonition is utterly vain, I repeat, if, from the state and necessity of things, to flee unto the Chaldeans was as great an impossibility as to swallow a

mountain.

If Calvin here reply that the commandments of God are set before men to render them inexcusable, we rejoin that this also is positively vain. For if any father should command his son to eat up a mountain, and the son did it not, that son would be no more inexcusable after such commandment of his father than he was before. Just in the same manner, if God should command me not to steal, and yet I must steal of necessity imposed on me by Him; and if I can no more abstain from stealing, on account of that necessity, than I can eat up a mountain; I am no more inexcusable after such a commandment than I was before, nor am I more excusable before such commandment than I was after. In a word, the opponents of Calvin argue that, if this his doctrine be really true, a man is inexcusable even before the commandment of God is set before him. From which it will follow that all commandment, given with the intent to produce this inexcusableness in man, is altogether needless and vain.

Moreover, if the wicked is reprobated of God before he becomes wicked?that is, before he is born even from all eternity?and if, therefore, he sins of necessity, he is already inexcusable and condemned, even before any precept is given to him. And he is so condemned before he has done any evil act at all; whereas all laws, human and divine, condemn a man after the act and for the act.

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO

ARTICLE XIII.

(THAT IS, CALUMNY XIII.)

AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, ETC.,

## THEREON.

What you really mean or propose to yourself in this THIRTEENTH ARTICLE (that is, *calumny*), I cannot possibly catch or comprehend. You seem to me like one endeavouring to spell-bind the senses of men by a buzz of magic whispers. For what are *accidental sins*? Who, beside yourself, ever fabricated such unheard of creatures as these in the workshop of the human brain? I have elsewhere in my writings and ever taught that all those things which seem to happen accidentally are ruled and overruled by the *secret Providence of God*. Who was it that gave you the license to gather from thence the idea of an *accidental sin*? And was this doctrine which I have taught my own and of my own creation? No! It has God Himself for its author. If, when a man is cutting the boughs of a tree, the axe slips from his hand and falls upon the head of one passing by, is this, think you, an *accident*? Not so thought the servant of God, Moses. The Holy Spirit declares by him that the man thus stricken was killed of God. And will you dare to say that God hurls His weapons and deals His blows on this side and on that as a man would do who was intoxicated or insane? Indeed, if, as you imagine, men sin without the purpose, understanding, or mind of God, how shall God be Judge of the world? And if the things which are done in the world, are done without God's purpose, understanding, mind, and will, in what does God exceed mortal man? In what is the adorable God higher and greater than man?

Hence, when I affirm that God knows, and has His mind concerned in, every sin of man, are you driven thereby into such madness and hatred of the doctrine as to denounce me the maker of a false God? Now suppose I were to concede to you that men sinned without God's knowledge, and without His mind being at all concerned therein, what God would be left in heaven or in earth at all by such a concession? And yet you imagine and boast yourself to be a great popular teacher; whereas, by thus depriving God of a concerned mind in all

things which men do, whether sins or not, and merely dignifying Him with the title of God, as Lucretius did his dreams, you make the adorable God nothing more than a lifeless, unconcerned idol.

As to your arguments, that if men sin of necessity all doctrine is superfluous, all precepts useless, all admonitions vain, and all rebukes and threats absurd; if Augustine's book to Valentinus "concerning compulsion and grace" suffices not to wash these frivolous objections out of your brain (to the discussion of which subject Augustine was especially appointed of God), you are not worth the hearing of one word farther from me on the sacred matter. Moreover, I have so beaten off Pighius and your favourite master, Servetus, from their hold of this calumny, that teachable and candid readers require not another word of defence from me on this point of my testimony. I will only offer this one brief word to your boasting calumnies directed against me on the momentous doctrine of truth now in question. If you will not permit God to command anything which is beyond the natural comprehension of men, when God shall bring you to stand before His tribunal, He will make you to see with awful plainness that which He hath declared, and not in vain, by the mouth of His apostle; that He hath accomplished by His grace that which was impossible by the Law (Rom. viii. 3). It is plain and certain that in the Law is set forth that perfect righteousness which God required, in order that it might be ready at hand and plainly presented before the eyes of all men, if men had but strength to do what God commands. But the apostle openly declares that to attain unto the righteousness commanded in the Law is, on our part, impossible. What ground have you, then, for contending with and reviling Calvin respecting his doctrine on this Divine point?

If you steal of necessity (according to your own argument), think you not that you are less excusable after the Law has been given than you were before it was given? How widely different is the apostle Paul's opinion of himself, where he confesses that he was

"sold under sin," but where, at the same time, he freely and loudly testifies that the Law "worketh wrath"? showing thereby that it is in vain to stretch forth in our defence the shield of necessity, when every man's own conscience condemns him of voluntary and wilful wickedness.

Now I would just ask you this question: When, a year ago, you had your own hook in your hand, by which you might have pulled down firewood to warm your own house, was it not your *own will* that drove you to steal wood from your neighbour? If, then, this one act suffices for your own righteous condemnation, that you willingly made a base and wicked gain to your neighbour's loss, what noise soever you may make about necessity, necessity did not acquit you on that occasion. And as to your farther noisy argument: that no one can be justly condemned, excepting on account of his crime and after his crime; concerning the former there exists no strife nor cause of strife (or ought not to exist) between me and you, because I everywhere teach that no one perishes but by the just judgment of God. But I cannot withhold my testimony that there lies concealed under your words a great depth of poison. For if your statement of the Divine matter and your figure of speech are to be received, God will appear unjust who righteously includes the whole race of Abraham under the guilt of original sin.

You deny that it is lawful and right in God to condemn any one of mortals, unless it be on account of sin committed. Now numberless mortals are taken out of life while yet perfect infants. You had better then commence your virulent war with God Himself, Who casts innocent babes, just taken from the wombs of their mothers, under the guilt of original sin, and subjects them to His wrath and the desert of eternal death. Who, I pray you, must not detest the blasphemy of thus contending against God, when it is exposed to view, either by the voice or by pen of truth? Curse me as long as you will, but blaspheme not the adorable God. For, as to myself, I can never expect to be free or exempt from the reproaches of those who spare not the ever

blessed God Himself.

With respect to the second member of your argument, that no one can justly be condemned until after his crime, just weigh in your own balance the lightness and emptiness of your loquacity herein. Why, your own masters, Pighius, Servetus, and all like barking unclean dogs, will at least confess that all those whom God foreknew to be worthy of eternal destruction were condemned by Him before the foundation of the world; whereas you will not grant unto God the right to condemn any to eternal death, but those who have first been brought before earthly judges for their actually perpetrated crimes. From such arguments as these, readers may at once gather the marvellous extent of your insanity, who hesitate not to root out, in absolute sport or jest, all the solemn order of the Divine justice!

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## CALUMNIATOR'S

### DESCRIPTION OF THE FALSE GOD.

The false God is slow to mercy and swift to anger; Who has created the greatest part of the world to perdition, and has predestinated them not only to damnation, but also to the cause of their damnation; and has, therefore, decreed, from all eternity, and wills and causes their sins, which sins are consequently of necessity so that neither thefts, nor adulteries, nor murders are committed, but by His will and instigation. For He suggests in men depraved and evil affections, not only permissively, but effectively, and hardens men's hearts. Wherefore, while men are living wickedly, they are rather doing the work of God than their own work, and cannot do otherwise. This God makes Satan a liar; so that Satan is not the cause of his own lies, but Calvin's God is.

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## CALUMNIATOR'S

### DESCRIPTION OF THE TRUE GOD.

But that God which nature, reason, and the Holy Scriptures teach, is plainly the contrary to this God of Calvin, for He is inclined to mercy and slow to anger. And He created the first man from whom all men arose in His own image, that He might place him in Paradise and bestow upon him eternal life. This God wills that all men should be saved, and that no one man should perish. And for this very end He sent His Son into the world, that His righteousness might abound wherever the sin of man had abounded. The light of this righteousness "lightens every man that cometh into the world," and this Son of God, the Saviour of the world, calls aloud to all, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." This God suggests good affections and honourable, and delivers men from the necessity of sinning (into which they precipitate themselves by their disobedience); and He heals all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. Nay, so merciful is He, that He never denies His mercy and help unto anyone that prays to Him for them. In fact, this true God comes for the very end that He might destroy the works of that God of Calvin, and thrust Him out of doors.

Now these two Gods, as they are by nature contrary to each other, so do they beget children the direct contraries to each other. The children of that false merciless God are ever proud, unmerciful, envious, bloodthirsty, calumnious, feigned, carrying one thing in their countenance and another in their heart, impatient, rash, malicious, seditious, contentious, ambitious, avaricious, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; in a word, filled with depraved and evil affections with which their God Himself had inspired them. But the other God begets men merciful, modest, gentle, benevolent, beneficent, abhorring the shedding of blood, open, candid, speaking the truth out of the abundance of the heart, benignant, quiet, peaceful, detesting broils and strifes, despisers of honours, liberal, lovers of God

more than lovers of pleasure; in a word, full of all pure and honest affections, with which they are inspired of their Father.

These are the views and arguments which your adversaries entertain concerning your doctrine, Calvin. And they advise all men to judge of your doctrine by its fruits. They, moreover, affirm that both you and your disciples bear abundant fruits of your God; that they are, for the most part, contentious, thirsty after revenge, ever tenacious and mindful of an injury received and filled with numberless other vices, which your God begets in them.

If anyone reply to these assertions of your adversaries, and allege that these are not faults caused by your doctrine, your opponents rejoin that your doctrine does evidently beget such men, and that such is the case is manifest from the fact that many, after they have embraced and followed your doctrine, become such characters, who were before far from being persons of that evil description; while, on the other hand, those who have believed the doctrine of Christ have always been rendered better men, but they affirm that men ever become manifestly worse by your doctrine. They also assert that when you and your followers profess that you hold a sound doctrine, you are not to be believed.

The truth is, that I myself once favoured your doctrine, and even defended it, though I really did not clearly understand it. For I thought so much of the weight of your authority, that I considered the mere entertaining one thought contrary to it was quite a crime. But now, having heard the arguments of your opponents, I have nothing to say in reply to their conclusions and proofs. Your disciples indeed do attempt a reply in your defence, and among those whom they can find to be favourers of your doctrine they boldly boast of having the truth on their side. But when they come to deal with your opponents, they vacillate and run to your books for protection; but that which they there find is too weak to support them. For your reasonings are so weak and, for the most part, so unsound, that as soon as your

book drops from their hands, your reasonings drop from their memories, and therefore they fail to convince your adversaries. On the other hand, the arguments of your opponents are manifest, powerful and easily committed to memory, and are therefore at once understood by the illiterate (of which description were most of those who followed Christ); whence it results that the generality of your disciples depend more upon your authority than upon sound reason; and finding that they cannot vanquish their adversaries by argument, they hold them as heretics and bigots, shun their society, and warn all on every side to do the same. On the contrary, I, who am always of opinion that what is said, not the person who speaks, ought to be the subject of consideration, judge that all men ought to be heard, and all things that, are said duly proved, and that what is good ought to be received and retained.

Wherefore, Calvin, if you have any arguments to produce which are true, plain and sound, and by which your adversaries can be refuted, bring them forth, I pray you, before us all, and thus prove yourself, in reality, a defender of the truth. You know what is written, "I will give you a mouth and wisdom which none of your adversaries shall be able to gainsay or resist" (Luke xxi. 15). As to myself, wheresoever I can find the truth, I am prepared to follow it, and to exhort others to adopt the same course. If you have, perchance, erred (for we are all men), I entreat you, Calvin, give glory to God by a full confession. Your so doing will be more noble, and will bring you more fame than the persevering in error. But be not, I pray you, angry with me on account of this my letter. If you are just and true, you have nothing to fear from it. First, because it is to your own advantage to be admonished by its arguments; and secondly, as you believe, as you say, that all things are done of necessity, you must believe that this letter also was written by me of necessity. Farewell!

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REPLY

OF JOHN CALVIN TO  
ARTICLES XIII. AND XIV.

(THAT IS, CALUMNIES XIII. AND XIV.)

AND TO CALUMNIATOR'S OBSERVATIONS, ETC.,  
THEREON.

It now only remains that I vindicate the glory of the true and eternal God from your profane maledictions and blasphemies.

You boastingly assert that I place before men the devil in the place of the true God. My defence needs only to be brief and comprehensive, because all my writings openly testify that I never had before me any other end, or purpose or prayer, than that the whole world should dedicate itself to God with all fear, reverence and holiness; and that all men should cultivate equity with a good conscience among and towards each other; and also, that my own life might not be inconsistent with my doctrine. I will not so disregard and dishonour the grace of God as to compare myself with you or your fellows, whose professed blamelessness of life consists in a mere fawning external appearance. I will only observe that if any unprejudiced and upright arbitrator should sit to judge between us, he would at once acknowledge that holy reverence of God was conspicuous both in my speech and in the actions of my life; and he would, with equal readiness, confess that whatsoever proceeded from you breathed fear and dread, which all the godly despise and laugh at.

But that I may examine as briefly as possible your base calumnies?who or what can be more profane than yourself, when you contend that God proves Himself to be slow to mercy and quick to anger in predestinating the greater part of the world to eternal death??one thing is certain, that what kind of God soever you might fabricate or imagine for yourself, that One

adorable God is to be worshipped and is worshipped by all the godly, who for more than 2,000 years left the whole human race, except the one family of Abraham, to wander in total darkness, to the destruction of their souls. Now, if you are prepared to charge God with cruelty, because He condescended to bless one family of the earth only with the light of life, while He willed that numberless nations should still lie for the same 2,000 years sunk in the darkness of their soul's death, one question will furnish a solemn reply to every inquiry into the deep mystery: How was it that whole nations were not utterly destroyed daily, until no more peoples existed? How was it that the whole world was not destroyed, if such a thing were possible, a hundred times a year? How was it that during those same 2,000 years so many glorious proofs of God's patience and mercy towards men were manifested? Even Paul the apostle himself, after having asserted that the "vessels of wrath" were "fitted to destruction" by God's secret and eternal decree, forgets not, nor hesitates to praise His patience and longsuffering therein. If, then, the testimony of the apostle does not content you, I think that such an humble one as I may unconcernedly despise all your growlings at my doctrine.

God, however, needs not my feeble defence. He is now, and in the last day will be, a mighty *Avenger* of His own righteousness, even though all the foul tongues of the whole world should combine their efforts to becloud that righteousness with obscurity and confusion. Wherefore, go you on, with your band of like spirits, to hurl your blasphemies up to the very heavens. They shall all assuredly fall back on your own heads. As to your base revilings, I can bear them with patience and without trouble, provided they touch not the ever-blessed God, Whose servant I am. I challenge you to stand (where you must one day stand) before His tribunal, that He may show Himself, as He one day will show Himself, the righteous Avenger of His own doctrine, which doctrine you thus furiously assail in my feeble person.

As to your description of the nature of the true God, how appropriately you argue concerning the Divine Being, let readers judge from the absurd fact that you make the beginning of all true knowledge of Him to proceed from *common sense*: That there is a God is a truth received by the one consent of all nations and all ages, because the seed and principle of this knowledge is imparted by nature in every human mind. But what God is, how shall *reason* define? which, by its own power of sight, can do nothing but turn the truth into a lie, and adulterate whatever of light and understanding true religion and faith possess. The Holy Spirit commands us to become fools, if we would be the true learners of heavenly doctrine, because the animal man himself can neither receive nor taste anything of wisdom divine. On the direct contrary, you would have human reason and common sense to form a judgment of the great and adorable God. And you would not only set up reason, which, by its blindness, ever extinguishes God's glory as a leader and guide, but would exalt that blind reason above the Scripture itself. What marvel, then, if you should unconcernedly permit all religions of all kinds to be confounded together? And that you should consider the Turk, who is enveloped in the deliriums of Mahomet, and who adores as his deity no one knows what, as much a worshipper of God as he who calls upon the Father of Christ our Redeemer, instructed by the sure word and faith of the everlasting Gospel? Though that you do not patronise infidels seriously is a fact proclaimed aloud by those sarcastic grins of yours, which show your teeth gnashing at every plainest and holiest article of our faith, while the excuses which you make for the superstitions of all nations prove your malicious purpose to be to root out of the earth every doctrine of that holy religion which the Sacred Oracles of God reveal and teach.

On the other hand, out of that very human reason, which is the mother of all errors, you form that God of yours, who wills, without any election or predestination of His own, that all men should be saved. Has, then, the word election, which occurs so frequently in the Scriptures, no meaning whatever? Is it

altogether a vain and empty term? Have the Law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, no meaning whatever, when they everywhere proclaim aloud that all those who were chosen by the eternal counsel of God before the foundation of the world are called and illuminated unto salvation? Is, we repeat, the united and harmonious testimony of the Law, the prophets and the Gospel, an utter vanity, when they pronounce, free from all ambiguity, that the source and cause of eternal life is the free love of God, by which He has loved and embraced not all mankind, but those out of mankind whom He pleased!

And what will you gain after all, I pray you, by thus roaring against this truth a hundred times over? You dazzle the sight of the ignorant and the inexperienced by setting before their eyes, as a shining cloud, your doctrine that God will have all men to be saved. But if these words of the apostle are not in perfect harmony with that election whereby God predestinated His own children unto eternal life, let me ask you this question: How is it, that if God willed all men to be saved, He did not show unto all nations and all men the way of salvation? Universally and well known is that remarkable word of God in the law, "Behold, I set before thee this day the way of life, and of death" (Jer. xxi. 8). If, therefore, God willed to gather together unto salvation all men without distinction, why did He not set before all men in common the way of life and of salvation? Whereas, the fact was, that He deemed one family or nation only worthy of this high privilege. Nor did He confer this great blessing upon that one family for any other reason than because He loved them (if the testimony of Moses is to be believed), and because He would "*choose them for a peculiar people.*"

You affirm that Christ was sent down from heaven in order that His righteousness might over-abound wherever sin had abounded; whereas, this one sentence of yours evidences that you have come forth, furnished by the devil out of the very bowels of hell itself, with this spirit and doctrine, that it might conceal every possible religious lie under the show of godliness

and truth, in order that you might hold up Christ Himself and His true religion to derision. For if, wherever sin abounded, the righteousness of Christ was designed of God to super-abound, the condition of Pilate was just as good and as safe as that of Peter or of Paul. But to say nothing of Pilate, Paul declares that the righteousness of Christ and the faith of the Gospel can never be separated. And what Gospel, I pray you, was there in France, and in other distant heathen nations, at the time when Christ was upon earth? What! Was not God the same *before* the coming of His Son, as He was when His Son did come, and as He now is, and ever will be? Why, then, was it that He withheld the treasure of salvation from the nations of the earth, except from the family "of Abraham," until the "fulness of the time was come"? (Gal. iv. 4.)

Wherefore, swell yourself with rage to the utmost, and burst into derision, if you will and must, at the apostle Paul himself, for he declares that "that mystery was made known by the preaching of the Gospel, which was before hidden in God." (Eph. iii. 9). And now that the voice of the Gospel hath sounded forth, the righteousness of Christ cometh unto none, save those who receive it by faith. And whence cometh this faith? If you reply, "By hearing," your answer is true. But remember, that it cometh not by hearing without the *especial revelation of the Holy Spirit*. Isaiah himself expresses aloud his wonder at the small number of those "to whom the arm of the Lord is revealed" (Isa. liii. 1). And Paul uses the very words of the prophet Isaiah when he confines the gift of faith to the elect alone. And will you permit and admit no distinction to be made of God in the salvation of men? Christ does indeed say aloud, "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden." But the same Redeemer of men elsewhere also exclaims, "No one *can* come unto Me except My Father which hath sent Me draw him." Nor is there any want of harmony, or oneness of truth, when the same Saviour, who invites all men unto Him without exception by His external voice, yet declares that "A man can receive nothing, except it were given him from above," and "that no one can come unto Him, but those to whom



it is given of the Father" (John xix. 11; vi. 65).

There is also another scripture which you bedaub and defile by your swine-like pollution, when you say "that the light of the righteousness of Christ lighteneth every man that cometh into the world" (John i. 9). But had not John, I pray you, just before said "that the light shineth in darkness, but the darkness comprehendeth it not"? (ver. 5). By these words John signifieth that whatsoever of human reason or understanding was given to men at the beginning, was all stifled and extinguished by sin, and that no other remedy now remains than the enlightening of the blind eyes by the Spirit of Christ. It is indeed quite true that Christ never refused His grace to anyone that asked for it. But you forget all the while that all true prayers and entreaties are dictated and directed by the Spirit of God; and you are equally ignorant that faith, which is the fruit and consequence of free election, is the key that opens the ears of God and unlocks the door of the kingdom of heaven. Now, as you are thus evidently ignorant of these first principles of the doctrines of Christ (which, if you take away, you bring down the Gospel of Christ at once to a level with the dark heathen mysteries of Proserpine or of Bacchus), it is really a marvel that persons, ensnared by such enormous errors and delusions, should ever find their way at all into the company of Christian men.

As to your foul assertion that my disciples are made of my God like unto myself?cruel, envious, proud, slanderers, carrying one thing on their tongue and another in their heart?I will come forward and refute this, your impudent reviling; prepared to do so, not so much by words, as by facts. For as I have no inclination to revile in return, let all your base calumnies, as far as I am concerned, remain dead and buried by my hands, except that I assume the permission (as in sacred duty bound) to make one solemn declaration, calling God to witness, that during the time I fed you at my house, I never saw a man more proud, more perfidious, or more devoid of human kindness. And sure I am, that those who do not confess that you are an impostor, a fellow

of impudent audacity, a religious buffoon, professedly set to brawl down all godliness; those, I say, who do not confess these to be your real principles, have no right judgment of your character. For what particular act of mine you accuse me of cruelty I am anxious to know. I myself know not that act, unless it be with reference to the death of your great master, Servetus. But that I myself earnestly entreated that he might not be put to death his judges themselves are witnesses, in the number of whom at that time two were his staunch favourers and defenders. But I have said quite enough about myself.

What are the real fruits produced by my doctrine, both in this city and far and wide throughout many nations, I leave to the consideration and reflection of all men. Out of this very school, which you so atrociously attack, and unceasingly rend in pieces, God daily chooses to Himself men of the highest principles, and of the sweetest odour of His truth, to illustrate the doctrine of His Gospel, and to be the victims of malice and cruelty. All those who really grow and make any advancement in the doctrine of the Gospel (of the number of whom neither the world nor the Church needs repent nor be ashamed), live a life supported by the slenderest means, with difficulty indeed, but with the greatest patience and with the greatest kindness towards all men; or else, bidding a spontaneous farewell to luxury of every kind, they give themselves up to frugality peacefully and freely; they all, as one man, resigning the world and self-enjoyment, aspire to the hope of a blessed immortality. Being averse to glorying in myself, or boasting of myself, I have called to witness these bright examples of His grace, which God thus sets before the world to prove the truth of, and to defend, that doctrine which you vainly endeavour to rend in sunder by your foul revilings.

But do pray tell me what you were at the time that you favoured this my doctrine. What was your state of mind at that time? You affirm that you could never clearly understand it because the weight of my authority stood in your way, inducing you to

consider it a perfect crime to entertain any judgment whatever in the least contrary to mine. Why, this is a marvellous matter. You must have been a brainless fellow indeed, if you could not comprehend, after so many years' trial, that which I had taught you in the most familiar manner, in my own house, and had so often expounded in your hearing in the public congregation. There are, however, many credible witnesses, that although I laboured long, but in vain, to correct and heal by every possible means the depravity of your nature, yet that during the time you did profess to be one of my followers, you were restrained by a somewhat effectual bridle from your evil ways. So that the real cause of your alienation from me evidently appears to be a longing desire to throw off the rein, that you might break forth with unbridled license into this your present impious course, which is your true delight and boast.

You affirm that it is a principle with you to regard not *who* it is that speaks, but *what* is spoken. I wish this had been a real principle with you long ago, so that you might have profited by the labours of others, and thus accustomed yourself to a teachable spirit. Whereas now, since audacity and loquacity are your only powers, all the favour you can procure to yourself from the evil-minded is gotten from your base despising of others. I would arrogate nothing to myself. But I really seem to myself to have so far deserved well of the Church, that if a place among the faithful servants of God be given to me by her, no man has a right to labour to bring my authority into contempt. Had you asserted that a few unlearned men looked to my nod, or hung upon my judgment, or were influenced by my fame and authority, you might have had some colour of covering for your calumny. But now, since you magnify it into a notorious disgrace to me, that my doctrine does not satisfy or please illiterate men, who, think you, will believe you, if you assert that learned and talented men alone have a taste for my books, and that they derive their wisdom from them? Nay, that they are so overawed by my authority, as not to attempt any judgment of their own? If things be so, we shall prove, upon your own authority, that

nothing can be judged to be true or right but that which seems to the ignorant multitude to be plausible.

Yes! you would drive away all men from the liberal and useful arts and sciences, and would boast among your fellows that all study and learning are useless and all the time spent in vain which is devoted to philosophy, to grammar, to logic, and even to divinity itself. You would thus cry down, I say, all useful learning for this very reason, that you might procure to yourself ignorant disciples, and make yourself great among them. And you say they that followed Christ were such. Just as if the Christian faith were a matter standing contrary to, and inconsistent with, learning! But let Christian readers here mark the difference which exists between you and me. I ever affirm that the wisest among men, until they become fools, and, bidding farewell to all their own wisdom, give them selves up humbly and meekly to the obedience of Christ, are blinded by their own pride, and remain utterly unable to taste one drop of heavenly doctrine. For all human reason is tasteless in the mysteries of God, and all human perspicacity blind. I maintain, therefore, that the beginning and essence of all divine wisdom is humility. This strips us of all the wisdom of the flesh, and prepares us to enter upon the mysteries of God with reverence and faith. You, on the contrary, bid ignorant and untaught men to come forth into public; men who, despising all learning and inflated with pride alone, rashly attempt to pass their judgment on divine things. Nor will you acknowledge any to be legitimate judges in divine matters but those who, content with the opinion of reason and commonsense, unceremoniously reject all which does not just suit their own mind and taste.

Respecting the other reproach with which you load my humble followers, that of being heretics, the testimony of the apostle Paul quite satisfies them on that point, upon whose authority they would rather turn away from such real heretics as yourself and your followers, than knowingly pollute their ears by listening to their blasphemies. You maintain, however, that such

is not your principle of action. You hold that all men ought to be heard. Think you, then, that the apostle saith in vain, "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, reject" (Titus iii. 10)? Now if anyone had denied to you the right of being heard, you would have had some cause for complaint. But when there was always granted you the liberty of prating as you liked in the public assembly of the people; nay, when after having been called and almost dragged there, you have often sat down vanquished and with nothing to say; what farther liberty of speech would you have if the ears of the godly are ever open to you, until they are satiated and nauseated unto disgust at your blasphemies against the adorable God? As to yourself, you can find gratification and delight in holding up all the first great principles of godliness to derision. But would you therefore have all the children of God to be such fools as to laugh at your audacious impudence, or to endure your profane reproaches without a word or an emotion?

With regard to the sacred cause in question, I feel confident that I have hereby given you a sufficient answer. So that all readers of a sound mind may easily perceive that I am not altogether destitute of that blessed Spirit, who giveth a mouth and wisdom, which mouth and wisdom, if you are still determined to resist, you can do nothing more thereby than sustain a disgrace and a confusion corresponding with your obstinacy. Nevertheless, I will not cease to wish and to pray that you may yet bow to the manifest truth of God, though such a thing I scarcely dare to hope.

One final word upon your remaining profane jeer: that I have no ground for being angry at your reproaches, because, according to my own doctrine, they were written of necessity. But I am here furnished by the Scriptures with a solemn and effectual exhortation to forbearance; and nothing can be more instructive and appropriate, in this my case, nor better adapted to appease my indignation, than this admonition of David, "Let him curse, for God hath bidden him" (2 Sam. xvi. 11). David knew that

Shimei on that occasion was driven on by the same rage of cursing as that with which *you* boil now. But those curses which Shimei thought he was hurling at David, under the (to him) fortuitous occurrence of the then present circumstances, David knew, by reflection, to be directed by the overruling and secret Providence of God, and therefore he restrains himself by the utterance of these memorable words. And, indeed, no man will ever bear the assaults of the devil and of wicked men with a composure and moderation, but the man who can turn away his mind and thoughts from those assaults to God alone, Who ordained them; and who can say, using the words of God Himself, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan" (Zech. iii. 2). Amen.

Geneva, January 5th, 1558.