

ΘΕΟΜΑΧΙΑ ΑΥΤΕΞΟΥΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗ

OR,

## A DISPLAY OF ARMINIANISM:

BEING

A DISCOVERY OF THE OLD PELAGIAN IDOL *FREE-WILL*, WITH THE  
NEW GODDESS, *CONTINGENCY*.

ADVANCING THEMSELVES INTO THE THRONE OF THE GOD OF HEAVEN, TO THE  
PREJUDICE OF HIS GRACE, PROVIDENCE, AND SUPREME  
DOMINION OVER THE CHILDREN OF MEN;

In which

THE MAIN ERRORS BY WHICH THEY HAVE FALLEN FROM THE RECEIVED DOCTRINE OF ALL  
THE REFORMED CHURCHES, WITH THEIR OPPOSITION IN VARIOUS PARTICULARS  
TO THE DOCTRINE ESTABLISHED IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND,  
ARE DISCOVERED AND LAID OPEN OUT OF THEIR OWN  
WRITINGS AND CONFESSIONS, AND CONFUTED  
BY THE WORD OF GOD.

**March 1642**

*Produce your cause, says the LORD: bring forth your strong reasons, says  
the King of Jacob. –*  
**Isaiah 41:21.**

*Woe to him that strives with his Maker! Let the potsherd strive with the  
potsherds of the earth. –*  
**Isaiah 45:9.**

Θές ὃ Ακέσίλαι κλίμακα καὶ ἄνθρωπος εἰς τὸν οὐρανόν. –  
Constant., apud Socrat., lib. 1. cap. 10.

*Modernized, corrected, formatted, and annotated by*

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## MODERN PREFACE

This is a modernized version of Owen’s original work. You may reproduce the text so long as you do not change it and you do not sell it to anyone. This restriction is placed on it so that the propagation of any errors in the updated language is limited. Let any errors remain mine.

The old English wording has been updated, so that “thee” and “thou” are now “you” and “yours.” American spelling has been employed. Scripture references have been shortened. The difficult structure and syntax have been simplified. Little-used words have been replaced with simpler ones or footnoted. Referenced but unquoted scriptures are <sup>footnoted</sup> or <sup>superscripted</sup> for your convenience. The original editor notes are in **black**; added explanatory notes are in **blue**. Extra phrases have been removed. Sentences have been shortened, and in many cases split into several sentences for clarity. Footnote numbers were moved to the end of each quote. Parallelism has been used to maintain rhythm and clarity. Unreferenced pronouns are now referenced; missing words which were understood, are made explicit. The passive voice has been changed to active in some places. This is not a synopsis, but the entire treatise presented in the original work.

Arminianism won the battle for the hearts and minds of Americans in the Old West, riding on the back of John Wesley’s Methodism. The democratic nature of Arminianism (one man, one vote) fit nicely with the democratic ideals of the new nation.<sup>1</sup> It provides common ground between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics (as evidenced by ECT), and from there flows a penchant for political power. Yet in Owen’s day, that combination of church and state was deadly. The Great Ejection of 1662 erupted from the *Act of Uniformity*. It forced our Puritan forebears to seek religious freedom in the American colonies. We have forgotten our roots, and the danger which *any* government poses to our religious convictions whenever the limiting *Rule of Law* is replaced by the arbitrary *Rule of Men*. Arminianism is driven by a fleshly desire to be free of God’s sovereignty, and to rule our own destiny. But Arminianism merely returns us to the Garden, where we are worse off than weak Adam, for our corruption replaces his innocence. What better time to recall Owen’s ancient warnings than with this, his first major treatise?

Arminianism today has a firm hold on Evangelicalism. It is considered an “alternative” gospel rather than “another” gospel. *That’s because in its Wesleyan form, it is three-point Calvinism*, which is a confused mixture at best.<sup>2</sup> But its fleshly lust for independence hasn’t changed. Owen saw it as a lie of Satan – as tasty bait set forth by the Arminian Roman Catholics to draw those wayward Protestants back into the Roman fold. Perhaps not much has changed since his day.

As with other works of Owen which I’ve modernized, I make no apologies for altering his text. My purpose is not to preserve Owen’s original wording as if it were Scripture, but to preserve his teaching and wisdom, simplified and annotated. It would be a shame not to benefit from his labors, just because his language is too complex or outdated to readily comprehend.

**William H. Gross**

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<sup>1</sup> See David F. Wells, *No Place for Truth* (Eerdmans, 1993).

<sup>2</sup> see the Appendix – Simeon and Wesley

## PREFATORY NOTE.

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The relation of man to his Creator has engaged the attention of earnest and thoughtful minds from the days of the patriarch of Uz to the most recent controversies of modern times. The entrance of sin into the world has vastly complicated this relationship so that, considered in its various bearings, it involves some of the most difficult problems with which the human intellect has ever attempted to grapple. The extent to which the intellect itself has been weakened and clouded by the corruption of our nature, renders us less able to penetrate into the deep mysteries of human duty and destiny. Does man now sin because he is essentially affected with the taint of the first sin, and is he involved in the responsibilities of the first sinner? Or does he sin wholly on his own account, and by his own free act, without the bias of his connection with Adam – except for whatever connection remains between example on the one hand and imitation on the other? Supposing there *is* a scheme of saving grace; is grace simply a divine and external aid to the will of man, which already operates freely in the direction of what is good – thus establishing a meritorious claim upon God to bestow such aid? Or is grace a supernatural influence, creating in man the very liberty itself to will and to do what is good? In the latter view of divine grace, as bestowed in divine sovereignty, and therefore according to a divine purpose, can [that grace] be reconciled with human responsibility? These are the questions which produced the sharp encounter of keen and conflicting wits between Pelagius and Augustine of old.

Towards the middle of the ninth century, these questions again assumed distinctive prominence in the history of theological speculation. Gottschalc, a monk of Orbais, distinguished himself by his advocacy of the doctrines of Augustine. It was the doctrine of predestination on which he chiefly insisted. And the controversy in his hands assumed this peculiar modification: it was not merely the application of *gracious influence*, but the reference of the *atonement*, that was exhibited under the limit and the regulation of divine sovereignty and purpose. Not that in this respect he was at variance with Augustine, but the point seems to have been specially and formally mooted in the discussions of this age. His view of predestination embraced an element which may be reckoned an advance on the Augustinian doctrine; for according to him, predestination was twofold: comprehending the punishment of the *reprobate*, as well as the salvation of the *elect*. But while he held that the predestination of men applied to the *punishment* for their sin, he was far from holding, as his opponents alleged, that men were predestined to the *commission* of sin. Council warred with council in the case of Gottschalc. Gottschalc himself expiated (by a death in prison) his audacious anticipation of the rights of private judgment and free inquiry in a dark age.

The next revival of the same controversy in substance, though under certain modifications, took place after the Reformation. It is remarkable that, at this period, discussion on these weighty questions sprang up almost simultaneously in three different parts of Europe, and in three schools of theology, among which a wide diversity existed. The shackles of mediæval ignorance were burst asunder by the awakening intelligence of Europe; and if we except the controversy between Protestantism and Popery (on which the Reformation hinged), no point could more naturally engage the mind in the infancy of its freedom, than the compatibility of the divine purpose with human responsibility. The nature of redemption seemed to depend on the solution of this problem, and human speculation in all ages had revolved around it by the spell of the very

mystery attached to it. When an interdict<sup>1</sup> still lay on theological inquiry, Thomists and Scotists<sup>2</sup> had discussed it in its metaphysical form and under a cloud of scholastic subtleties, lest the jealousies of a dominant church be awakened. But now, when a measure of intellectual freedom had been acquired, and the dispute between free-will on the one hand and efficacious grace on the other involved a practical issue between Rome and Geneva, the question received a treatment almost exclusively theological.

First, perhaps, in the order of time, this discussion was revived in Poland, and in connection with the heresies of Socinus. The divinity of Christ, the nature of the atonement, and the corruption of human nature, are all doctrines essentially connected. It is because Christ is divine that an adequate satisfaction has been rendered in his sufferings, to the claims of divine justice. And such an atonement is indispensable for our salvation, if man, because [he is] dead in sin, has no power to achieve salvation by any merit of his own. A denial of the total corruption of our nature seems essential to the Unitarian system; to this extent, there is common ground between the systems of Pelagius and Socinus. It is no wonder that this measure of identity should develop consequences affecting the doctrine of the divine purposes and of predestination – though it is beyond our limits to trace either the necessary or the historical evolution of these consequences. Spanheim, in his “Elenchus Controversiarum,” p. 237, ascribes the origin of the Arminian controversy in Holland to certain emissaries (Ostorodius and Voidovius) who were dispatched by the Polish Socinians into the Low Countries for the purpose of propagating the tenets of their sect. Their tenets respecting the Trinity and the atonement took no root in these countries. But Spanheim affirms that it was otherwise in regard to certain opinions of Socinus, “quae ille recoxit ex Pelagii disciplinâ,” on predestination, free-will, and the ground of justification before God.

About the same time, the Church of Rome was shaken to its center by the same controversy. The Jesuits always had Pelagian leanings, and their influence was triumphant in the Council of Trent. So far as its decrees stereotyped the Romish creed, they sealed the doom of the waning authority of Augustine. In 1588, Louis Molina made an attempt in his lectures on “The Concord of Grace and Free-will,” to unite the conflicting theories. The Jesuits did not regard his attempt with favor. A lengthened controversy arose. Molinism, partly as a deviation from, and partly as a compromise of, the fundamental principles of the Augustinian system, was effectually assailed (1) by the piety of Jansen, (2) by the learning of Arnauld, and (3) by the genius of Pascal – till the bull *Unigenitus* secured a lasting triumph for Jesuitism. It authoritatively condemned the doctrines of Augustine, as declared in the collection of extracts from his writings which Jansen had published under the title “Augustinus.”

But it was in Holland that the controversy on this point arose, which had the chief influence on British theology, and which reduced the questions at issue to the shape under which they are discussed by Owen in his “Display of Arminianism.” On the death of an eminent theologian by the name of Junius, Arminius was called to the vacant chair in the University of Leyden. Gomar, a professor in the same university, and also the Presbytery of Amsterdam, opposed his appointment on the ground of his erroneous principles. On giving a pledge that he would teach nothing at variance with the *Belgic Confession* and *Catechism*, he was allowed to enter his office as professor in 1603. Gomar and Arminius again fell into a dispute on the subject of

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<sup>1</sup> An ecclesiastical censure by the Roman Catholic Church withdrawing certain sacraments and Christian burial from a person or from all persons in a particular district.

<sup>2</sup> Followers of Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus, part of a group known as “the Scholastics.” – WHG

predestination – the origin of prolonged troubles and controversies in the Church of Holland. Gomar and his party were supported by the majority of the clergy in the *church*. Arminius depended upon the political support of the *state*. The former sought a national synod to adjudicate on the prevailing controversy. The latter, having the ear of the state, contrived to prevent it. Stormy scenes ensued, amid which Arminius died. Episcopius became the leader of the Remonstrants (as his followers were called) from a remonstrance which they submitted in 1610 to the States of Holland and West Friesland. The Remonstrants levied soldiers to sustain their cause, and the provinces resounded with military preparations. At last, profiting by the confusion, Maurice (the head of the house of Orange), by a series of daring and reckless movements, seized upon the government of the States. In deference to Gomar and his party, he convened a general synod on November 13, 1618.

### *The Five Points of Calvinism – a refutation of the Remonstrance Articles*

The doctrines of Arminius were condemned, and five articles were drawn up and published as the judgment of the synod on the points in dispute. The *first* asserts election by grace, in opposition to election on the ground of foreseen excellence; in the *second*, God is declared to have willed that Christ should *efficaciously* redeem all those, and those only, who from eternity were chosen to salvation; the *third* and *fourth* relate to the moral impotence of man, and the work of the Spirit in conversion; and the *fifth* affirms the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. The Church of France embodied these articles among her own standards. The Church of Geneva cordially acquiesced in them.

Four English deputies, Drs. Carleton, Hall, Davenant, and Ward, together with Dr. Balcanquhal from Scotland, by the command of James VI, repaired to Holland, and took their place in the Synod of Dort.<sup>3</sup> This was in accordance with a request of the Dutch Church to be favored with the aid and countenance of some delegates from the British Churches. The proceedings of the Synod of Dort had the sanction of these British divines. No doubt can be entertained that the *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England were not Arminian; but upon the elevation of Laud to the *see* of Canterbury, Arminianism grew strong within its pale. A royal prohibition was issued against all discussion of the controverted points in the pulpit. All ecclesiastical preferments at the disposal of the Crown were bestowed on those who leaned to Arminian views. “The fates of our church,” says Owen, in the note to the reader prefixed to the following treatise, “having of late devolved the government thereof into the hands of men tainted with this poison, Arminianism became backed with the powerful arguments of praise and preferment, and quickly prevailed to beat poor naked truth into a corner.” It would, however, be neither fair nor correct if the statement of these facts left an impression that Arminianism made progress solely through the help of royal and prelatial favor. It was embraced and supported by some authors to whom no sinister motives can be imputed. And the cause has never found an abler advocate than John Goodwin, whose name (for his publications against the royal interest) was associated with that of Milton in the legal proceedings instituted against them both at the Restoration.

At this juncture, Owen felt it his duty to oppose the innovations on the received doctrine of the church, by the publication of a work in which the views of the Arminians are exhibited on all the

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<sup>3</sup> A National Synod held in Dordrecht (1618–1619), by the Dutch Reformed Church, to settle a controversy prompted by the Remonstrance Articles, which promoted the views of the late Jacobus Arminius. The Synod rejected these Arminian views, and set forth Reformed doctrine, point by point, in a refutation that came to be called the Five points of Calvinism.

leading topics of the controversy, with the exception of three points, relating to universal grace, justification, and the perseverance of the saints. He substantiates his statements regarding the Arminian tenets by copious quotations from the works of the Dutch Remonstrants. And he contrasts them, at the close of each chapter, with passages from Scripture. Exception may be taken to this course, as the sentence of any author, detached from the context, may convey a meaning which is essentially modified by it. Some of these quotations are so far accommodated by Owen as to present a full statement of a particular opinion, instead of appearing in the parenthetic and incidental form in which they present themselves in the original works –merely as parts of a sentence. We did not feel it needful to interfere with them in this shape; for, so far as we can judge, our author evinces perfect integrity in all the quotations to which he has recourse. And the slight alterations occasionally made on them never superinduce a dishonest or mistaken gloss on the views of the authors from whom the passages are selected.

It may be questioned whether Owen sufficiently discriminates the doctrine of Arminius from the full development which his system received at the hands of his followers after his death. Moreover, sometimes opinions possessing the distinctive features of Pelagianism are confounded with Arminianism, strictly so-called. Our author, perhaps, may be vindicated on the ground that it was his object to exhibit Arminianism *as current and common in his day*. His quotations seem to prove that his Display of it was not far from the truth. Though, from the refinement of modern discrimination on some of the points, many an Arminian would hardly subscribe to some of the statements as a correct representation of his creed. And a Calvinistic author is under an obvious temptation to run up Arminian views into what he may esteem their legitimate consequences in the extravagance of the Pelagian theory. The style is simple; some polish appears in the composition; and occasionally a degree of ornament and pleasantry is employed (as when he enters on the question of Free-will, chap. 12.). This is rare with Owen, who perhaps prided himself on the studious rejection of literary elegance. It could be wished that he had risen superior to the vice of the age in such discussions, by manifesting less acerbity of temper<sup>4</sup> and diction in the refutation of the views which he combats in this work. It was Owen's first publication (1642), and it immediately brought him into notice. The living of Fordham in Essex was conferred upon him by the *Committee of Religion*, to whom the work is dedicated. – ED. [Wm. Gould]

**2 Martii, anno Domini 1642.**

*IT is this day ordered, by the Committee of the House of Commons in Parliament for the Regulating of Printing and Publishing of Books, that this book, entitled "A Display of Arminianism," be printed.*

**JOHN WHITE.**

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<sup>4</sup> Acerbity refers to the bitterness or harshness of Owen's condemnation of Arminian arguments, and their blatant rejection of Reformation doctrine. But it is mild compared with William Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian Man* – 1528. What you hear is Owen's indignation, not his bitterness – his outrage, not his hatred – that the merit of Christ and the sovereignty of God should be so abused by the Arminian misportrayals of them. – WHG

## ADDRESS

*TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE  
THE LORDS AND GENTLEMEN OF THE  
COMMITTEE FOR RELIGION*<sup>1</sup>

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The many ample testimonies of zealous reverence for the *providence* of God, as well as the affectionate care for the *privileges* of men – which have been given by this honorable assembly of parliament – encourage the adorers of the one, no less than the lovers of the other, to vindicate that [doctrine] also from the encroachments of men. And doubtless it was not without divine disposition that those [parties] would be the primary agents in robbing men of their privileges, who had nefariously attempted to spoil God of his providence. So we hope the same all-ruling hand which has disposed them to be glorious instruments of re-advancing his right and supreme dominion over the hearts of men, has prepared their hearts with courage and constancy to establish men in their inviolate rights, by reducing a sweet harmony between *awful sovereignty* and a *well-moderated liberty*. Now, the first of these being relegated<sup>2</sup> to your particular care, I come to you with a bill of complaint against no small number in this kingdom. They have wickedly violated our interest in the providence of God, and have attempted to bring in the foreign power of an old idol, to the great prejudice of all the true subjects and servants of the Most High. I make good my accusation by the evidence of the facts, joined with their own confessions. And because, in order to waive the imputation of violent intrusion into the dominion of another, they lay some claim and pretend some title to it, I shall briefly show how it is contrary to the express terms of *the great charter of Heaven* to have any such power introduced among men. Your known love for truth and the gospel of Christ makes it altogether needless for me to stir you up by any motives to hearken to this just complaint, and to provide a timely remedy for this growing evil; especially since experience has so clearly taught us here, in England, that not only eternal but temporal happiness also depends on the flourishing of the truth of Christ's gospel.

*Justice* and *religion* were always conceived as the main columns and upholders of any state or commonwealth – like two pillars in a building, where one cannot stand without the other, nor the whole fabric without them both. As the philosopher spoke of logic and rhetoric, they are *artes αντίστροφαι*, mutually aiding each other; and both aim at the same end, though in different manners. So they, without repugnancy, concur and sweetly fall in one with another, for the regulation<sup>3</sup> and direction of every person in a commonwealth, to make the whole happy and blessed. And where they are both united in this way, there and *only* there is the blessing of assurance in which Hezekiah rejoiced – *truth* and *peace*. An agreement without truth is no peace. Rather, it is a covenant with death, a league with hell, a conspiracy against the kingdom of Christ, and a stout rebellion against the God of heaven. And without justice, great

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<sup>1</sup> This committee was appointed by the House of Lords, March 12, 1640. It sometimes bears the name of the Committee of Accommodation, and consisted of ten earls, ten bishops, and ten barons. To prepare the subjects of discussion, some bishops and several divines of different persuasions were appointed a sub-committee. The duty of the committee was to examine all innovations in doctrine and discipline, illegally introduced into the church since the Reformation. See Neal's History, vol. 2:395. – ED.

<sup>2</sup> Originally, “demandated to your particular care.”

<sup>3</sup> Originally, “reiglement.”

## Address to the Committee for Religion

commonwealths are but great troops of robbers. Now, the result of the one is *civil* peace; and the result of the other is *ecclesiastical* peace. Between the two there is a great sympathy, a strict connection, having a mutual dependence on each other. If there is any disturbance of the *state*, it is usually attended with schisms and factions in the *church*; and the divisions of the church are too often the subversions of the commonwealth.

Thus it has been ever since that unhappy difference between Cain and Abel. It did not concern the bounds and limits of their inheritance, nor which of them would be heir to the whole world. Rather it was about the dictates of religion: the offering of their sacrifices. This fire, also of dissension, has been more stirred up since the Prince of Peace has, by his gospel, sent the sword among us. For the preaching of it, meeting with the strongholds of Satan and the depraved corruption of human nature, must occasion a great shaking of the earth. But most especially, *distracted Christendom* has found fearful issues of this discord since the proud Romish prelates<sup>4</sup> have sought to establish their hell-broached errors, by inventing and maintaining uncharitable and destructive censures<sup>5</sup> against all who oppose them. At first they caused schisms and distractions in the church. And then, being helped forward by the blindness and cruelty of ambitious potentates,<sup>6</sup> they raised wars of nation against nation – witness the Spanish invasion of '88<sup>7</sup> – and witness peoples within themselves, as in the late civil wars of France. There, after various horrible massacres, many chose to die as soldiers rather than as martyrs.

And, oh, that this truth might not, at this day, be written with the blood of almost expiring Ireland! Indeed, it has lastly descended to dissension between private parties – witness the horrible murder of Diazius, whose brains were chopped out with an axe by his own brother Alphonsus,<sup>8</sup> for forsaking the Romish religion.<sup>9</sup> What rents in the State, what grudgings, hatreds, and exasperations of mind among private men, have happened by reason of some inferior differences! We all at this day grieve to behold them. “*Tantum religio potuit suadere malorum!*”<sup>10</sup> It is most concerning, then, for us to endeavor to obey our Savior’s precept of seeking first the kingdom of God, so that we may be partakers of the good things comprised in the promise annexed to it. If there were but this one argument, *to seek the peace of the church*, it would be

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<sup>4</sup> That is, Roman Catholic bishops.

<sup>5</sup> Here, censure refers to excommunication from the church.

<sup>6</sup> A potentate is a powerful ruler, prince, or king; here Owen suggests they may lack restraint in their ambition to rule.

<sup>7</sup> He alludes to the attempted invasion of England by the Spanish Armada in 1588. In France the civil wars on account of religion were terminated about 1628, when the Protestants secured the confirmation of the Edict of Nantes, but lost possession of the towns that had been given in guarantee for the faithful observance of it. – ED.

<sup>8</sup> Sleid. Com.

<sup>9</sup> John Diazius was a Spaniard, martyred in 1546. He was an ambassador with Bucer to the council at Ratsibon, and had let his reformationist views on religion be known to the Pope’s factor, Peter Malvenda. Malvenda wrote the emperor’s confessor about him. John’s brother Alphonso, one of the Pope’s lawyers, learned of John’s opinions. He went to visit John, who was in Germany printing Bucer’s book. Alfonso became distraught that John could not be dissuaded from the Reformation cause. Alfonso had brought an assassin with him, whom he sent to His brother in disguise with letters. As John rose in the morning to read the letters, the assassin struck him in the head with a hatchet, leaving it embedded there. He fled with Alphonso by horseback. They were finally caught, but papist lawyers stalled long enough to allow the emperor, who may have ordered the assassination, to intervene and hear the case himself. The murderers went unpunished. – John Foxe, *Book of Martyrs Complete* (Robt. Carter & Bros., NYC, M.H. Seymour editor, 1855), p. 448

<sup>10</sup> “So potent was religion in persuading to evil deeds.”

## Address to the Committee for Religion

sufficient to quicken our utmost industry to attain it, because the peace of the commonwealth depends on this. Now, what peace can there be in the church without truth? All conformity to anything else is but the agreement of Herod and Pilate to destroy Christ and his kingdom. Nor is it this or that particular truth, but the whole counsel of God revealed to us, without adding or detracting; embracing it is required to make our peace firm and stable. There is no halting between Jehovah and Baal, Christ and Antichrist. It is as good as becoming Philistines, and worshippers of Dagon, as it is to speak partly the language of Ashdod and partly the language of the Jews. From this, *this*, have arisen all of our miseries, and all of our dissensions. Factious men labored every day to commend themselves to those who sat aloft in the temple of God, by introducing new popish-Arminian errors, whose patronage they had wickedly undertaken. Who would ever have thought that our church would entertain these Belgic semi-Pelagians, who have thrown dirt on the faces and raked up the ashes of all those great and pious souls whom God magnified. He used them as his instruments to reform his church, the least of which the whole troop of Arminians shall never make themselves equal, even if they swell till they break. What benefit ever came to this church by attempting to prove that the chief part *in the several degrees of our salvation is to be ascribed to ourselves, rather than God?* This is the source and sum of all the controversies between them and us. And must not introducing and fomenting a doctrine that is so opposite to the truth which our church has quietly enjoyed ever since the first Reformation, necessarily bring along with it schisms and dissensions, so long as any remain who love the truth, or who esteem the gospel above preferment? Nor let any deceive your wisdoms, by asserting that these differences are of an inferior nature, which are this day agitated between the Arminians and the orthodox divines of the reformed church. Be pleased but to cast an eye on the following instances, and you will find them hewing at the very root of Christianity.

Consider seriously their denial of that fundamental article of *original sin*. Is this but a small escape in theology? – Why, what need is there of the gospel, what need is there of Christ himself, if our nature *is* not guilty, depraved, and corrupted? Nor are many of the rest of less importance. Surely these are not things “*in quibus possimus dissentire salvâ pace ac charitate,*” as Austin<sup>11</sup> speaks – “about which we may differ without loss of peace or charity.” One church cannot wrap in her communion Austin and Pelagius, Calvin and Arminius. I have here only given you a taste, whereby you may judge the rest of their fruit – “*mors in olla, mors in olla;*”<sup>12</sup> their doctrine of the *final apostasy of the elect*, of true believers, of a wavering hesitancy concerning our present grace and future glory, with various others which I have wholly omitted. Those which I have produced are enough to make their abettors<sup>13</sup> incapable of our church-communion. The sacred bond of peace encompasses only the unity of that Spirit which leads us into all truth.<sup>Joh 16.13</sup> We must not offer the right hand of fellowship, but rather proclaim ἱερὸν πόλεμον,<sup>14</sup> “a holy war,” to such enemies of God’s providence, Christ’s merit, and the powerful operation of the Holy Spirit. Nor let anyone object that all the Arminians do not openly profess all these errors which I have recounted. Let ours, then, show in which ways they differ from their

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<sup>11</sup> Austin – that is, Augustine of Hippo (354-430). - WHG

<sup>12</sup> “death in the pot, death in the pot.” – i.e., it is a poisonous brew being stirred.

<sup>13</sup> One who helps, encourages, or incites another.

<sup>14</sup> Greg. Naz.

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masters.<sup>15</sup> We see their own confessions; we know their arts, βάθη καὶ μεθοδείας τοῦ Σατανᾶ – “the depths and crafts of Satan;” we know the several ways they have to introduce and insinuate their heterodoxies into the minds of men. With some, they appear only to dislike our doctrine of *reprobation*; with others, they appear only to claim an allowable *liberty of the will*. Yet, for the most part, it is like a serpent – wherever she gets her head in, she wriggles her whole body in, stinger and all. If we give but the least admission, then the whole poison must be swallowed. I do not know what the intention was of those who maintain these strange assertions among us – whether the efficacy of error really prevailed with them or not; or whether it was better to comply with Popery, and thereby draw us back to Egypt. But I have heard that it was affirmed on knowledge, in a former parliament, that the introduction of Arminianism among us was the issue of a Spanish consultation. It is a strange story that learned Zanchius <sup>16</sup> tells us, how upon the death of the Cardinal of Lorraine, there was found in his study a note with the names of various German doctors and ministers who were Lutherans, and to whom an annual pension was paid (by assignment of the cardinal), that they might take pains to oppose the Calvinists. And so, by cherishing dissension, they reduce the people to Popery again. If there are any such among us who, upon such poor and inconsiderable motives, would be won to betray the gospel of Christ, then God grant them repentance before it is too late! However, upon what grounds, with what intentions, and for whatever ends these tares have been sown among us by envious men, the hope of all the piously learned in the kingdom is that, by your effectual care and diligence, some means may be found to root them out. Now, God Almighty increase and fill your whole honorable society with wisdom, zeal, knowledge, and all other Christian graces necessary for your great calling and employments – which is the daily prayer of your most humble and devoted servant,

**JOHN OWEN.**

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<sup>15</sup> Profitentur Remonst, hasce ad promotionem causae sure artes adhibere, ut apud vulgus non ulterius progrediantur quam de articulis vulgo notis, ut pro ingeniorum diversitate quosdam lacte din alant, alios solidiore cibo, etc. – Festus Hom. praestat ad specimen Con. Bel.

<sup>16</sup> Hieron. Zanch. ad Holderum. Res. Miscel.

## TO THE CHRISTIAN READER.

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**READER** – you cannot be such a stranger in our Israel that it should be necessary for me to acquaint you with the first sowing and spreading of these tares in the field of the church, much less to declare what divisions and thoughts of heart, and what open bitter contentions have been stirred up among us, leading to the loss of ecclesiastical peace. There are only a few things relating to my particular endeavor that I would willingly forewarn<sup>1</sup> you about:

First, never were so many *prodigious errors* introduced into a church, with so high a hand and so little opposition, as these have been introduced into ours, since the nation of Christians was known in the world. I take the chief cause to be what Æneas Sylvius gave as to why more maintained that the pope is above the council, than maintained that the council is above the pope: because popes awarded archbishoprics, bishoprics, etc.; but the councils sued “*in forma pauperis*,” and, therefore, they could scarcely get an advocate to plead their cause.<sup>2</sup> The fates of our church having lately devolved the government of it into the hands of men tainted with this poison, Arminianism became backed with the powerful arguments of praise and preferment, and quickly prevailed to beat poor naked Truth into a corner. It is high time, then, for all the lovers of the old way to oppose this innovation, which is prevailing by such unworthy means, before our breach grows as great as the sea, and there is none to heal it.

My intention in this weak endeavor (which is only the undigested result of a few broken hours and too many causes in these furious malignant days, continually interrupting the course of my studies), is but to stir up those who, having more leisure and greater abilities, will not as yet move a finger to help vindicate the oppressed truth.

In the meantime, I hope this revelation may not be unuseful, especially to those who, lacking either the will or the abilities to peruse larger discourses, may still be allured by the words of these men, which are smoother than oil, so as to taste the poison of asps that is under their lips. Satan has βόθη καὶ μεθοδείας [*depths and methods*] – depths where to hide, and methods how to broach his lies. Never did any of his emissaries employ his received talents with more skill and diligence than our Arminians, laboring earnestly in the first place to instill some errors that are most plausible. They intend chiefly a more palpable introduction of them – but they know that if those are suppressed for a time, until these are well-digested, they will follow of their own accord. This is why I have endeavored to lay open to the view of all, some of their foundation-errors that are not usually discussed; the whole inconsistent superstructure is erected on these. By this means it will become apparent how, under a vain pretense of furthering piety, they have prevaricated<sup>3</sup> against the very grounds of Christianity; in which –

*First*, I have not observed the same method in handling each particular controversy, but followed several ways that seemed most convenient to clarify the truth and reveal their heresies.

*Secondly*, I have not touched some of their errors at all – such as those concerning *universal grace, justification*, and the *final apostasy of true believers* – because they did not come within

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<sup>1</sup> Originally, “premonish.”

<sup>2</sup> The pope gave lands and the authority to rule over them in return for support, while the councils were paupers. The pope was able to bribe; the council was not. It was an “unworthy means” by which these lies were maintained, and for political ends.

<sup>3</sup> To be deliberately ambiguous or unclear in order to mislead or withhold information.

## To the Christian Reader

the compass of my proposed method, as you may see in chapter one (where you have the sum of the whole discourse).

*Thirdly*, I have given some instances of their opposition to the received doctrine of the Church of England contained in various of the Thirty-nine Articles. I wish this did not yield just cause for further complaint against the iniquity of those times into which we had lately fallen! Had a poor Puritan offended against half so many canons as they opposed these articles, he would have forfeited his livelihood, if not endangered his life. I wish I could hear any other probable reason why various prelates were so zealous for the discipline of the church, and so negligent of its doctrine, except that the one was reformed by the word of God, and the other remained as we found it in the times of Popery.

*Fourthly*, I have purposely not undertaken to answer any of their arguments, referring that labor to a further design, clearing our doctrine of *reprobation*, and of the administration of God's *providence* towards the reprobates – his providence over all their actions – from those calumnious aspersions they cast upon it. But concerning this, I fear the discouragements of these woeful days will leave me nothing but a desire that so necessary a work may find a more able pen [than my own].

**JOHN OWEN.**

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## ΘΕΜΑΤΙΑΣ ΑΠΤΕΟΤΣΙΑΣΤΙΚΗΣ

	<b>Spectamen.</b>	<b>Arma:</b>	
<p>Ut omnis controversia dirimatur per verbum Dei, concilium hoc respectum videri debet et non uno nomine perniciosum est.—Rémon. Vindic. ad Vidal. p. 30.</p>	<p>Primas Copiarum impetus, in Campo qui de nomine aheris ducis, Lib. Arbit. dicitur seu humanarum actionum dilo.</p> <p>Utique autem a voluntate humana remota et confessa jacent, —</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Coactio,</li> <li>2. Necessitas absoluta interna,</li> <li>3. Mera seu solitaria spontaneitas.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">Arma:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ad Legem, ad Prophetas. Scrutamini Scripturas.—Johan. v. 39.</p>	<p>1. De creaturibus habum immutabile,</p> <p>2. Praescientia infallibilis,</p> <p>3. Providentia, per</p>
<p>1. Lib. Arbitrium,</p> <p>2. contingenda,</p> <p>3. In differentia ad tró velle et nolē.</p> <p>4. Sperimentum actus sui dominium.</p> <p>5. Eius ovro óv independentis in agendo.</p>	<p>1. Voluntatem mutabilem,</p> <p>2. Scientiam fallibilem</p> <p>3. Providentiam otiosam.</p>	<p>1. Sustainationem,</p> <p>2. Determinationem,</p> <p>3. Guberrationem,</p> <p>4. Directionem,</p> <p>5. Efficaciam in agendo realem,</p> <p>debere necesse est.</p>	<p>1. De creaturibus habum immutabile,</p> <p>2. Praescientia infallibilis,</p> <p>3. Providentia, per</p>
<p>1. Lib. Arbitrium.</p> <p>2. Integritas naturae.</p> <p>3. Lumen naturale.</p> <p>4. Actus ethicos.</p> <p>5. Faciens quod in se est.</p> <p>6. Facies novum universale.</p> <p>7. Vires credendi per lapsum non amissae.</p> <p>8. Potentia active obedientialis ad bonum morale.</p> <p>9. Svasio moralis.</p>	<p>Impetus copiam secundus cir gratiam naturam, ubi adversis fratribus et cominus pugnantur.</p> <p>Campus autem hic stans naturae post lapsum vocatur, cuius loca praecipua quae in mappa — τοῦ μᾶζοῦ γόρνοῦ delineantur, sunt,—</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Peccatus primitivus.</li> <li>2. Corruptio naturae.</li> <li>3. Mors spiritualis, ubi multa mortuorum sepulchra, e quibus resurgente Christo, exierunt pauci.</li> <li>4. Impotentia credendi.</li> <li>5. Caecitas intellectus.</li> <li>6. Peccatus voluntatis.</li> <li>7. Obduratio cordis.</li> <li>8. Aversio a bono incommutabili.</li> <li>9. Propensio ad bonum commutabile.</li> </ol>	<p>1. Predestinationis gratia.</p> <p>2. Meritum Christi.</p> <p>3. Operatio Spiritus.</p> <p>4. Gratia efficax.</p> <p>5. Infatus habituum.</p> <p>6. Vocatio secundum immutabile dei propositum.</p> <p>7. Evangelium Iesu Christi.</p> <p>8. Libet vitae.</p>	<p>1. Essentiam,</p> <p>2. Subsistentiam,</p> <p>3. Motum,</p> <p>4. Determinationem ad actum,</p> <p>5. Efficaciam in agendo realem,</p> <p>debere necesse est.</p>
<p>1. Lib. Arbitrium.</p> <p>2. Integritas naturae.</p> <p>3. Lumen naturale.</p> <p>4. Actus ethicos.</p> <p>5. Faciens quod in se est.</p> <p>6. Facies novum universale.</p> <p>7. Vires credendi per lapsum non amissae.</p> <p>8. Potentia active obedientialis ad bonum morale.</p> <p>9. Svasio moralis.</p>	<p>“Lingua nostra praevalemas; labia penes nos sunt: quis esset nobis Dominus?” Ps. xli.</p> <p>His tu gradibus Romule Alpini, ascendisti in coelum.</p> <p>Dei immus est quod vivimus, nostrum vero, quod bene sanctaeque vivimus.</p> <p>—fortunam a Deo petendam, a se ipso sumendum esse sapientiam.</p> <p>Quia tibi quisque virtutem acquirit nemo de sapientibus de ea gratias Deo egi.</p>	<p>“Non nobis, Domine non nobis, sed in omni tuo da honorem,” Ps. cxiv.</p> <p>“Nam quos praescivit, etiam praedestinavit conformandos imagini Filii sui: ut is sit primogenitus inter multos fratres. Quos vero praedestinavit, eos etiam justificavit: et quos justificavit, eos etiam glorificavit.” Rom. viii.</p> <p>Cui soli sapienti gloria sit per Jesum Christum in saecula!</p>	<p>1. Essentiam,</p> <p>2. Subsistentiam,</p> <p>3. Motum,</p> <p>4. Determinationem ad actum,</p> <p>5. Efficaciam in agendo realem,</p> <p>debere necesse est.</p>

# CHAPTER 1.

## OF THE TWO MAIN ENDS AIMED AT BY THE ARMINIANS, BY THEIR INNOVATIONS IN THE RECEIVED DOCTRINE OF THE REFORMED CHURCHES.

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Because of the corruption of his nature, the *soul of man* is not only darkened with a mist of ignorance by which he is disabled from comprehending divine truth, but he is also armed with prejudice and opposition against some parts of it.<sup>1</sup> These are either most above or most contrary to some false principles which he has framed for himself. Just as a desire for self-sufficiency was the first cause of this infirmity, so he still languishes with a conceit of it.<sup>2</sup> He contends for nothing more than he contends for an independence from any supreme power which might either help, hinder, or control him in his actions. This is that bitter root from which have sprung all those heresies<sup>3</sup> and wretched contentions which have troubled the church, concerning the power of man in working his own happiness, and his exemption from the over-ruling providence of Almighty God. All these wrangling disputes of carnal reason against the word of God come at last to this head: *whether the first and highest part in disposing of things in this world, ought to be ascribed to God or man?* Men for the most part have vindicated this pre-eminence for themselves by exclamations that it must be so, or else God is unjust, and his ways are unequal.<sup>4</sup> Never did any men, “*postquam Christiana gens esse caepit,*”<sup>5</sup> more eagerly endeavor to erect this Babel than the Arminians, the modern blinded patrons of human self-sufficiency. All their innovations in the received doctrine of the reformed churches aim at, and tend towards, is one of these two ends:

FIRST. To exempt themselves from God’s jurisdiction – to free themselves from the supreme dominion of his all-ruling providence; not to live and move in him,<sup>Act 17.28</sup> but to have an absolute *independent* power in all their actions. So that the event of all things in which they have any interest, might considerably relate to nothing but chance, contingency, and their own wills – this is a most nefarious and sacrilegious attempt! To this end –

*First.* They deny the eternity and unchangeableness of God’s decrees; for these being established, they fear they would be kept within bounds from doing anything but what his counsel has determined should be done. If the purposes of the Strength of Israel are eternal and immutable, then their idol *free-will* must be limited, and their independence prejudiced. Therefore they choose rather to affirm that his decrees are temporary and changeable – indeed, they affirm that he really changes them according to the several mutations he sees in us. I will show in the second chapter how wild a conceit this is, how contrary to the pure nature of God, and how destructive to his attributes.

*Secondly.* They question the prescience or foreknowledge of God; for if all his works are known to God from the beginning, and if he certainly foreknew all things that would hereafter come to pass, then it seems to cast an infallibility of event upon all their actions, which

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<sup>1</sup> Eph 4:18; John 1:5; 1Cor 2:14

<sup>2</sup> John 6:42, 7:52. “*Natura sic apparet vitiata ut hoc majoris vitii sit, non videre.*” – Aug.

<sup>3</sup> Pelagianism; Semi-pelagianism; Scholasticism.

<sup>4</sup> “*In hac causa non judicant secundum aequitatem, sed secundum affectum commodi sui.*” – Luth, de Arbit. Serv.

<sup>5</sup> Roughly, “*since Christianity became dominant*” – WHG

encroaches upon the large territory of their new goddess, *Contingency*. No, it would quite dethrone the queen of heaven, and induce a kind of necessity of our doing all and nothing but what God foreknows. Now, it will be declared in the third chapter that to deny this prescience is destructive to the very essence of the Deity; and it is plain atheism.

*Thirdly*. They depose the all-governing providence of this King of nations, denying its energetic, effectual power, in turning the hearts, ruling the thoughts, determining the wills, and disposing the actions of men, by granting nothing to it but a general power and influence, to be limited and used according to the inclination and will of every particular agent. So they make Almighty God to be a desirer that many things were otherwise than they are, and an idle spectator of most things that are done in the world. The falseness of these assertions will be proved in the fourth chapter.

*Fourthly*. They deny the irresistibility and uncontrollable power of God's will, asserting that oftentimes he seriously wills and intends what he cannot accomplish; and so God is deceived about his aim. Though God desires and really intends to save every man, it is wholly in *their* own power, they say, whether he shall save anyone or not. Otherwise their idol, *free-will*, would have but a poor deity if God could cross and resist their idol in his dominion, how and when God desired. Concerning this, see the fifth chapter. "His gradibus itur in coelum."<sup>6</sup> Corrupted nature is still ready, either with Adam to nefariously attempt to be like God, or to think foolishly that God is altogether like us, Psalm 50.

All men run into one of these inconveniences if they have not learned to submit their frail wills to the almighty will of God, and make their understanding captive to the obedience of faith. [See chapter five.]

SECONDLY. The second end at which the new doctrine of the Arminians aims is to clear human nature from the heavy imputation of being sinful, corrupted, wise to do evil but unable to do good.<sup>Jer 4.22</sup> And so they claim for themselves a power and ability to do all the good which God can justly require them to do in their current state – a power and ability making them differ from others who will not make such good use of the endowments of their natures; so that the first and highest part in the work of their salvation may be ascribed to themselves – this is a proud Luciferian endeavor! To this end –

*First*. They deny the doctrine of predestination by which God is affirmed to have chosen certain men before the foundation of the world to be holy, and to obtain everlasting life by the merit of Christ, to the praise of his glorious grace. They deny any such predestination which may be the fountain and cause of such grace or glory if, according to God's good pleasure, it determines the persons on whom these things shall be bestowed. For this doctrine would make the special grace of God the sole cause of all the good that is in the elect, more than the reprobates; it would make faith the work and gift of God, with various other things, which would show their idol to be nothing and of no value. Therefore, they have substituted a corrupt heresy in its place; see the sixth chapter.

*Secondly*. They deny original sin and its demerit; if rightly understood, this would easily demonstrate that, notwithstanding all the labor of the smith, the carpenter, and the painter, their idol is by nature only an unprofitable block of wood; it will reveal not only our nature's impotence to do good, but also where it comes from; see the seventh chapter.

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<sup>6</sup> Roughly, "By steps they enter heaven."

*Thirdly.* If you charge that our human nature is repugnant to the law of God, they will maintain that this nature was also in Adam when he was first created; and so it must come from God himself: the eighth chapter.

*Fourthly.* They deny the efficacy of the merit of the death of Christ – both that God intended by his death to redeem his church, or to acquire for himself a holy people; and also that Christ by his death has merited and procured for us grace, faith, or righteousness, and the power to obey God in fulfilling the condition of the new covenant. No, this would plainly set up an ark to break their Dagon’s neck; <sup>1Sam 5.1-4</sup> for, “what praise,” they say, “can be owed to us for believing, if the blood of Christ has procured God’s bestowal of faith upon us?” “Increpet to Deus, O Satan!”<sup>7</sup> See chapters nine and ten.

*Fifthly.* If Christ would claim such a share in saving his people (those who believe in him), they will grant some to have salvation quite without him – those who never heard so much as a report of a Savior. Indeed, in nothing do they advance their idol nearer the throne of God, than in this blasphemy: chapter eleven.

*Sixthly.* Having thus robbed God, Christ, and his grace, they adorn their idol *free-will* with many glorious properties that are in no way due to it. This is discussed in chapter twelve, where you will find how, “*movet cornicula risum, furtivis nudata coloribus.*”<sup>8</sup>

*Seventhly.* They not only claim a saving power for their new-made deity, but they also affirm that he is very active and operative in the great work of saving our souls –

*First.* In fitly preparing us for the grace of God, and so disposing us that grace becomes owed to us: chapter thirteen.

*Secondly.* In effectually working our conversion with this power: chapter fourteen.

And so at length, with much toil and labor, they have placed an altar for their idol in the holy temple, on the right hand of the altar of God; and on it they offer sacrifice to their own net and drag; at least, “*nec Deo, nec libero arbitrio, sed dividatur,*” – not all to God, nor all to free-will, but let the sacrifice of praise, for all good things, be divided between them.

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<sup>7</sup> “The Lord rebuke you, O Satan.” – In his response to Zwingli’s dispute at Zurich against the “real presence” of Christ in the communion elements, Luther denounced him (*Defensio Verborum Coenae*) saying, “The Lord rebuke you, and put you to silence, O Satan; how bitterly you delude and deceive us.” – F, Walsingham, *A Search into Matters of Religion*, 1843, p. 132

<sup>8</sup> “The crow, stripped of its stolen colors, provokes our ridicule” – Horace (Roman Poet). See fn. 2, page 72.

## CHAPTER 2.

### OF THE ETERNITY AND IMMUTABILITY OF THE DECREES OF ALMIGHTY GOD, DENIED AND OVERTHROWN BY THE ARMINIANS.

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It has always been believed among Christians, on infallible grounds (as I will show hereafter), that all the decrees of God, as they are internal acts of his will, so they are eternal acts of his will; and therefore they are unchangeable and irrevocable. Mutable decrees and occasional resolutions are most contrary to the pure nature of Almighty God. Such principles as these, evident and clear by their own light, were never questioned by anyone before the Arminians began ἀκίνητα κινεῖν,<sup>1</sup> and to profess themselves to delight in opposing common notions of reason concerning God and his essence so that they might exalt themselves into his throne. To ascribe the least mutability to the divine essence, with which all the attributes and internal free acts of God are one and the same, was always accounted ὑπερβολητητος, “transcendent atheism,” in the highest degree.<sup>2</sup> Now, of whatever nature this crime may be, it is not an unjust imputation to charge the Arminians with it, because they confess themselves guilty, and glory in the crime.

First. They undermine and overthrow the eternity of God’s purposes by affirming that, in the order of the divine decrees, *there are some which precede every act of the creature, and some again that follow them:* so says Corvinus,<sup>3</sup> the most famous of that sect.<sup>4</sup> Now, all the acts of every creature, being but of yesterday and temporary, like themselves, surely those decrees of God cannot be eternal which follow them in order of time. And yet they press this, especially in respect to human actions, as a certain and unquestionable truth. “It is certain that God wills or determines many things which he would not will or determine, unless some act of man’s own will preceded it,” says their great master, Arminius.<sup>5</sup> The same thing is affirmed, with a little addition (as such men always become worse and worse)<sup>6</sup> by his genuine scholar, Nic. Grevinchovius.<sup>7</sup> I suppose,” he says, “that God wills many things which he neither *would* nor justly *could* will and purpose, unless some action of the creature preceded it.”<sup>8</sup> And here observe that in these places they do not speak of God’s external works – of his outward actions– such as

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<sup>1</sup> That is, to move things that ought not to be moved.

<sup>2</sup> Philippians lib. quod sit Deus immutabilis.

<sup>3</sup> “In ordine volitorum divinatorum, quaedam sunt quae omnem actum creaturae praecedunt, quaedam quae sequuntur.” – Corv., ad Molin., cap. 5. sect. 1, p. 67.

<sup>4</sup> Johannes Arnoldi **Corvinus** (*Ravens*) (c.1582–1650) Dutch Remonstrant minister and jurist. Originally a Calvinist, he became a pupil of Jacobus Arminius, and advocated Arminianism. In 1610 he signed the *Five Articles of Remonstrance*. After the Synod of Dort (1618-1619) rejected the Remonstrant Articles, he lost his church office. Later he became a lawyer in Amsterdam.

<sup>5</sup> “Certum est Deum quaedam velle, quae non vellet nisi aliqua volitio humana antecederet.” – Armin., Antip., p. 211.

<sup>6</sup> Originally, “*proficere in pejus*”, to become worse and worse.

<sup>7</sup> Nicolaas Grevinckhoven (Grevinchovius, Grevinghoven or Grevinchoven in German sources) (died 1632) was a Dutch Protestant minister, and a combative proponent of the Remonstrant party. While in Antwerp, he provided shelter for the Arminian, Hugo Grotius, father of International Law, who had escaped from prison hidden in a chest of books in 1621.

<sup>8</sup> “Multa tamen arbitror Deum velle; quae non vellet, adeoque nec juste velle posset, nisi aliqua actio creaturae praecederet.” – Ad Ames., p. 24

inflicting punishments, bestowing rewards, and other such outward acts of his providence. We admit that the administration of these is various, and diversely applied to several occasions. Rather, they speak of the internal purposes of God’s will, his decrees and intentions, which have no present influence upon or respect to any action of the creature. Indeed, they deny that God has any determinate resolution at all concerning many things, or any purpose further than a natural affection towards them. “God does or omits that towards which, in his own nature and in his proper inclination, he is affected – as he finds man complying with or not complying with that order which God has appointed,” says Corvinus.<sup>9</sup> Surely these men do not care what indignities they cast upon the God of heaven, so that they may maintain the pretended endowments of their own wills. For here they ascribe to their wills such an absolute power that God himself cannot determine a thing to which he is well-affected (as they strangely phrase it), before he is sure of their compliance by an actual concurrence. Now, this imputation they cast upon the decrees of God, that in *general* they are temporary, they press home upon that *particular* decree which lies most in their way, the decree of election. Concerning this, they tell us roundly that it is false that election is confirmed from eternity.<sup>10</sup> The Remonstrants say so in their *Apology*, notwithstanding that St. Paul tells us that it is the “purpose of God,” Rom 9:11, and that we were “chosen before the foundation of the world,” Eph 1:4. Nor do the Arminians grant anything material there – namely, that there is a decree preceding this, which may be said to be from everlasting. Seeing that St. Paul teaches us that election is nothing but God’s purpose of *saving* us, to then affirm that God eternally decreed that he would *elect* us, is the same as saying that God purposed that in time he would purpose to *save* us. Such resolutions may be fit for their own wild heads, but they must not be ascribed to God only-wise.

Secondly. Because they assert that God’s decrees are temporary and had a beginning, so also his decrees will expire and have an ending, subject to change and variableness. “Some acts of God’s will cease at a certain time,” says Episcopus.<sup>11</sup> What? Does anything come into his mind that changes his will? “Yes,” says Arminius, He would have all men to be saved; but compelled by the stubborn and incorrigible malice of some, he would have them miss it.”<sup>12</sup> However, this is some recompense – denying God a power to do what he will, they let him be content to do what he may, and not to repine much at his hard condition. Certainly, if not for this favor, God would be a debtor to the Arminians. Thieves give what they do not take. Having robbed God of his power, they would leave him just enough goodness that he will not be troubled by it, though he is sometimes compelled to what he is very loath to do. How they and their fellows, the Jesuits, denounced poor Calvin for sometimes using the hard word *compulsion* to describe the effectual, powerful working of the providence of God in the actions of men;<sup>13</sup> but they can fasten the same term on the will of God, and no harm done! Surely he will one day plead his own cause against them. Yet do not blame them, “si violandum est jus, regnandi causa violandum est.” It is to make themselves absolute that they cast off the yoke of the Almighty in this way, and they do that both in things concerning this life, and the life to come. They are greatly troubled if it were said that

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<sup>9</sup> “Deus facit vel non facit id ad quod, ex se et natura sua ac inclinatione propria est affectus, prout homo cum isto ordine conspirat, vel non conspirat.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 5. ad sect. 3.

<sup>10</sup> “Falsum est quod electio facta est ab seterno.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 18. p. 190.

<sup>11</sup> “Volitiones aliquae Dei cessant certo quodam tempore.” – Episcop. Disp. de Vol. Dei., thes. 7

<sup>12</sup> “Deus vult omnes salvos fieri, sed compulsus pertinaci et incorrigibili malitia quorundam, vult illos jacturam facere salutis.” – Armin. Antip. fol. 195.

<sup>13</sup> Bell. Amiss. Grat.; Armin. Antip. Rem. Apol.

every one of us brings along with us into the world an unchangeable pre-ordination to life and death eternal;<sup>14</sup> for such a supposal would quite overthrow the main foundation of their heresy – namely, that men can make their election void and frustrated (as they jointly lay down in their Apology).<sup>15</sup> No, it is a dream, says Dr Jackson,<sup>16</sup> to think of God’s decrees concerning things to come as irrevocably finished acts; this would hinder what Welsingius lays down as truth,<sup>17</sup> “that the elect may become reprobates, and the reprobates may become elect.” Now, added to these particular sayings is their whole doctrine concerning the decrees of God, as they refer to the actions of men being exactly conformable to them;<sup>18</sup> such as,

*First.*<sup>19</sup> They distinguish God’s decrees as either peremptory or not peremptory.<sup>20</sup> These are terms used in the citations of courts of litigation, rather than as expressions of God’s purpose in sacred Scripture. This distinction is not, as applied by them, compatible with the unchangeableness of God’s eternal purposes. Πρόσκαιροί, they say, or temporary believers, are elected (though not peremptorily) with such an act of God’s will (in its origin, continuance, and end) as to co-exist in every way commensurate with their fading faith. Sometimes, like Jonah’s gourd, this election is but “filia unius noctis” – in the morning it flourishes, in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withers. In their opinion, a man who is in Christ by faith, or who actually believes (which is, as they say, in everyone’s own power to do),<sup>21</sup> is the proper object of election – of *election*, I say, *not* peremptory; election is a pendent act,<sup>22</sup> expecting the final perseverance and consummation of a man’s faith; and therefore it is immutable – because man having fulfilled his course, God has no cause to change his purpose of crowning him with reward. Also (as they teach), a man is the object of *reprobation* only according to his infidelity, whether it is present and removable, or obdurate<sup>23</sup> and final; if obdurate, reprobation is peremptory and absolute; if removable, it is conditional and alterable. Thus their election and reprobation hang on the qualities of faith and unbelief.<sup>24</sup>

Now, this lets a faithful man, elected by God according to his present righteousness, apostatize totally from grace (with them, affirming that there is any promise of God implying a man’s perseverance is to overthrow all religion); and it lets the unbelieving reprobate leave his

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<sup>14</sup> “(Docent) unumquemque invariabilem vitae, ac morris protagh<n una cum ipso ortu, in lucern hanc nobiscum adferre.” – Filii Armin. In Epist. Ded. ad Examen Lib. Perk.

<sup>15</sup> “Possunt homines etectionem suam irritam et frustraneam reddere.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 9. p. 105.

<sup>16</sup> Jackson, of the Divine Essence.

<sup>17</sup> “Non mirum videri debet quod aliquando ex electis reprobi et ex reprobis electi fiant.” – Welsin, de Of. Ch. Hom.

<sup>18</sup> Or compliant – referring to Corvinus’ statement (previous page) that God responds “as he finds man complying with or not complying with that order which God has appointed.”

<sup>19</sup> “Omnia Dei decreta, non sunt peremptoria, sed quaedam conditionata ac mutabilia.” – Concio. ad Cler. Oxon. ann. 1641, Rem. Decla. Sent. in Synod., alibi passim. “Electio sicut et justificatio, et incerta et revocabilis, utramque vero conditionatam qui negaverit, ipsum quoque evangelium negabit.” – Grevinch, ad Ames., pp. 136,137.

<sup>20</sup> “Peremptory” means not allowing contradiction or refusal.

<sup>21</sup> “Ad gloriam participandam pro isto tempore quo credunt electi sunt.” – Rem. Apol., p. 190.

<sup>22</sup> Pendent is “hanging” like grapes from a vine – suspended - pending.

<sup>23</sup> Stubbornly persistent in wrongdoing.

<sup>24</sup> “Decreta hypothetica possunt mutari, quia conditio respectu hominis vel prsestatur vel non praeatur, atque ita existit vel non existit. Et quum extitit aliquandiu, saepe existere desinit, et rursus postquam aliquandiu desiit, existere incipit.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 5. sec. 10.

incredulity and turn to the Lord – and corresponding to this mutation of their conditions, are the changings of the purpose of the Almighty concerning their everlasting state.

Again, suppose these two men, by alternate courses, should each return to their former estate (as the doctrine of apostasy which they maintain allows), the decrees of God concerning them must again be changed; for it is unjust for God either not to elect the one that believes, if only for an hour, or not to elect reprobate unbelievers. Now, what unchangeableness can we fix to these decrees, if it lies in the power of man to make them as inconstant as Euripus?<sup>25</sup> Besides this, it makes it possible that all the members of Christ’s church, whose names are written in heaven, should within one hour be enrolled in the black book of damnation.

*Secondly.* Because these not-peremptory decrees are *mutable*, they make the peremptory decrees of God *temporal*. “Final impenitency,” they say, “is the only cause of reprobation; and the finally unrepenting sinner is the only object of reprobation – peremptory and irrevocable.” As the poet thought none were happy,<sup>26</sup> so they think that no man is to be elected, or be a reprobate, before his death. Now, he receives that denomination<sup>27</sup> from the decrees of God concerning his eternal estate, which must necessarily, then, be enacted first. The relation that exists between the *act of reprobation* and the *person who is reprobated* imports a co-existing denomination of “reprobate.” When God reprobates a man, the man then becomes a reprobate. If this does not occur before the man has actually fulfilled the measure of his iniquity, and sealed it with the quality of his final impenitency upon his death, then the decree of God must be temporal. The just Judge of all the world has suspended his determination until then, awaiting the last resolution of this changeable Proteus.<sup>28</sup> It is plain from the whole course of their doctrine, that God’s decrees concerning men’s eternal estates are temporal in their judgment, and do not begin until their death. This is especially plain where they strive to prove that if there were any such determination, God could not threaten punishments or promise rewards. “Who,” they ask, “can threaten punishment to someone that, by a peremptory decree, he wants to be free from punishment?”<sup>29</sup> It seems God cannot have determined to save anyone whom he threatens to punish if they sin. It is evident, however, that he does threaten all so long as they live in this world; this makes God not only mutable, but it quite deprives him of his foreknowledge. And it makes the form of his decree run this way: “If man will believe, then I will determine that he shall be saved; if he will not believe, then I will determine that he shall be damned,” – that is, “I must leave him in the meantime to do what he will, so that I may meet with him in the end.”

*Thirdly.* They assert that no decree of Almighty God concerning men is so unalterable that all those who are now in rest or misery might have had contrary lots<sup>30</sup> – that those who are damned,

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<sup>25</sup> A sea channel characterized by turbulent and unpredictable currents.

<sup>26</sup> “Dicique beatus – Ante obitum nemo,” etc. – Ovid. [For a man's final day is always to be waited for, and no one should be called blessed before his passing and his last funeral rites.](#)

<sup>27</sup> [That is, classification, or label \(elect or reprobate\).](#)

<sup>28</sup> [\(Greek mythology\) Proteus was a prophetic god who served Poseidon; he was capable of changing his shape at will.](#)

<sup>29</sup> “Quis enim comminetur poenam ei, quem peremptorio decreto a poena immunem esse vult ?” – Rem. Apol., cap. 17. p. 187.

<sup>30</sup> Author of “God’s Love to Mankind,” p. 4, [a treatise written by Hoard. Davenant, professor of divinity in Cambridge, and afterwards bishop of Salisbury, wrote in reply his “Animadversions” on it. Dr Hill, in his Lectures on Divinity, pronounces this work of Davenant to be “one of the ablest defences of the Calvinistic system of predestination.” – ED.]

such as Pharaoh, Judas, etc., might have been saved; and that those who are saved, such as the blessed Virgin, Peter, John, etc., might have been damned. This must reflect a strong charge of mutability on Almighty God, who knows who are his. I could produce various other instances of this nature, by which it would be further evident that these innovators in Christian religion overthrow the eternity and unchangeableness of God’s decrees; but these are sufficient for any discerning man.

I will add in closing, an antidote against this poison, briefly showing what the Scripture and right reason teach us concerning these secrets of the Most High.

*First.* “Known to God,” says St. James, “are all his works from the beginning,” Acts 15:18; Up to now it has been concluded from this that whatever God brings to pass in time, he decreed from all eternity. All his works were known to him from the beginning. Consider it particularly in the decree of election, that fountain of all spiritual blessings. Obtaining a saving sense and assurance of it, 2Peter 1:10, might effect a spiritual rejoicing in the Lord, 1Cor 15:31.<sup>31</sup> Such things are taught everywhere in Scripture in such a way as may raise us to consider it as an eternal act, irrevocably and immutably established: “He has chosen us before the foundation of the world,” Eph 1:4: his “purpose according to election” – before we were born – must “stand,” Rom 9:11; for to the irreversible stability of this act of his will, he has set the seal of his infallible knowledge, 2Tim 2:19. His purpose of our salvation by grace, not according to works, was “before the world began,” 2Tim 1:9. An eternal purpose, proceeding from such a will that none can resist it, joined with such a knowledge of all things past, present, and to come – open and evident to him – means his purpose must be like the laws of the Medes and Persians: permanent and unalterable.

*Secondly.* The decrees of God<sup>32</sup> being conformable to his nature and essence, they require eternity and immutability as their inseparable properties. God, and only him, never was, nor ever can be, what now he is not. Passive possibility to anything, which is the fountain of all change, can have no place in the one who is “actus simplex,” and purely free from all composition. For this reason, St. James affirms that “with him there is no variableness, nor shadow of turning,” James 1:17; “with him,” that is, in his will and purposes. And by his prophet he affirms, “I am the LORD, I do not change; therefore you sons of Jacob are not consumed,” Malachi 3:6 – where he proves that his gracious purposes do not change, because he is the LORD. The eternal *acts* of his will, not really differing from his unchangeable *essence*, his will must be immutable.

*Thirdly.* Whatever God has determined to be accomplished, according to the counsel of his wisdom and the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glory, stands sure and immutable; for “the Strength of Israel will not lie or change his mind; for he is not a man, that he should change his mind,” 1Samuel 15:29. “He declares the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” Isaiah 46:10. This certain and infallible execution of his pleasure is extended to particular contingent events, Isaiah 48:14. Indeed, it is an ordinary thing with the Lord to confirm the certainty of those things that are yet to come from his own decree. For example, “The LORD of hosts has sworn, saying, Surely as I have thought, so it shall come to pass; and as I have purposed, it shall stand, that I will break the Assyrian,” etc., Isaiah 14:24-25 – “It is certain the

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<sup>31</sup> “Every day I am in danger of death! This is as sure as my boasting in you, which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (NET)

<sup>32</sup> “Quicquid operatur, operatur ut est.”

## Chap. 2 – The Eternity and Immutability of God’s Decrees

Assyrian shall be broken, because the Lord has purposed it;” this would be a weak kind of reasoning, if his purpose might be altered. No. “He is of one mind, and who can turn him? And he does what his soul desires,” Job 23:13. “The Lord of hosts has purposed, and who shall annul it?” Isa 14:27. So that the purpose of God and the immutability of his counsel (Heb 6:17) have their certainty and firmness from eternity, and they do not depend on the variable lubricity of mortal men. We must grant this, unless we intend to set up impotency against omnipotency, and arm the clay against the potter.

*Fourthly.* If God’s determination concerning anything were to have a temporal origin, it must be either because he then perceived some goodness in it of which he was ignorant before, or else because some accident affixed a real goodness to some state of things which it did not have from him. Neither of these can be affirmed without abominable blasphemy. This is because he knows the end from the beginning, all things from everlasting, being always the same, the fountain of all goodness, of which other things participate in that measure which it pleases him to communicate it to them. Add to this the omnipotency of God: there is “power and might in his hand,” so that none is able to withstand him, 2Chronicles 20:6. This will not permit any of his purposes to be frustrated. In all our own intentions, if the defect is not in the error of our understanding (which may be rectified by better information), when we cannot do what which we would, we will do what we can. The alteration of our purpose is for lack of power to fulfill it. This impotency cannot be ascribed to Almighty God who is “in heaven, and has done whatever he pleased,” Psalm 115:3. So that the immutability of God’s nature – his almighty *power*, the infallibility of his *knowledge*, his immunity from *error* in all his counsels – show that he never fails to accomplish anything that he proposes to manifest his glory. To close up this discourse, in which I have not revealed half the poison contained in the Arminian doctrine concerning God’s decrees, I will present in brief the opposing views in this matter between the word of God and the patrons of free-will:

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,” Eph 1:4.	“It is false to say that election is confirmed from everlasting,” Rem. Apol.
“He has called us according to his own purpose and grace, before the world began,” 2Tim 1:9.	“It is certain that God determines diverse things which he would not, did not some act of man’s will go before,” Armin.
“Known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world,” Acts 15:18.	“Some decrees of God precede all acts of the will of the creature, and some follow,” Corvinus
“Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, swing, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” Isaiah 46:10.	“Men may make their election void and frustrated,” Rem. Apol.
“For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand,” as Rom 9:11.	“It is no wonder if men sometimes of the elect become reprobate, and those of the reprobate become elect,” Welsin.
“The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal, The Lord knows those that are his,” 2Tim 2:19.	“Election is uncertain and revocable; whoever denies it overthrows the gospel,” Grevinch.

## Chap. 2 – The Eternity and Immutability of God’s Decrees

<p>“The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations,” Psalm 33:11.</p>	<p>“Many decrees of God cease at a certain time,” Episcop.</p>
<p>“My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” Isaiah 46:10.</p>	<p>“God would have all men be saved, but compelled by the stubborn malice of some, God changes his purpose, and will have them perish,” Armin.</p>
<p>“I am the LORD, I do not change,” Malachi 3:6.</p>	<p>“As men may change themselves from believers to unbelievers, so God’s determination concerning them changes,” Rem.</p>
<p>“With the Father of lights there is no variableness, or shadow of turning,” James 1:17; Exodus 3:13,14; Psalm 102:27; 2Tim 2:13; 1Samuel 15:29; Isaiah 14:27; Job 23:13; Psalm 115:3.</p>	<p>“All God’s decrees are not peremptory, but some are conditional and changeable,” Sermon at Oxford.</p>



## CHAPTER 3.

### OF THE PRESCIENCE OR FOREKNOWLEDGE OF GOD, AND HOW IT IS QUESTIONED AND OVERTHROWN BY THE ARMINIANS.

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The prescience or foreknowledge of God has not up till now been denied by the Arminians in express terms, but only questioned and overthrown by consequence – inasmuch as they deny the certainty and unchangeableness of his decrees on which it is founded. It is not a foreknowledge of all or any thing which they oppose, but only of things free and contingent, and that is opposed only to comply with their formerly-disproved error, that the purposes of God concerning such things are temporal and mutable. Once this obstacle is removed, the way is open for them to ascribe the presidentship of all human actions to omnipotent *contingency*, and to her sire, *free-will*. Now, we call something contingent when, before it comes to pass (in regard to its next and immediate cause), it may be done or it may not be done. For example, a man may do a thing tomorrow, or any time after that, which he may choose to do, whether he ever does it or not. Such things as these are free and changeable with regard to men, who are the immediate and secondary causes of them. But if we look up to Him who foresees and has ordained the event of such things, or their omission, as we ought to do (James 4:13-15),<sup>1</sup> then they may be said to *necessarily* come to pass, or be omitted – it could not be otherwise than it was. Upon such events (and in all things of this nature), Christians up to now, yes, and heathens, have usually reflected on God as the one whose determination was passed on them from eternity;<sup>2</sup> he knew these things long before. For example, men being killed by a house falling on them – in respect to the freedom of their own wills, they might not have been there. Or if a man falls into the hands of thieves, we quickly conclude that it was the will of God. It must be so; he knew it before.

Divines, for distinction's sake, ascribe to God a twofold knowledge; one, *intuitive* or *intellective*, whereby he foreknows and sees all things that are possible – that is, all things that can be done by his almighty power – without any respect to their future existence, whether they shall come to pass or not.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, infinite things whose existence eternity shall never behold, are thus open and naked to him – for was there not strength and power in his hand to have created another world? Was there not counsel in the storehouse of his wisdom to have created it another way, or not to have created it at all? Shall we say that his providence extends itself in every way to the utmost of its activity? Or can he not produce innumerable things in the world which he does not now produce? Now, all these things, and every thing else that is feasible to his infinite power, he foresees and knows “*scientia*,” as they say, “*simplicis intelligentiae*,” by his essential knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit"; <sup>14</sup> whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. <sup>15</sup> Instead you *ought* to say, "If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that." (NKJ)

<sup>2</sup> Διὸς δ' ὀτελείετο βουλή, Hom – “God’s will was done.”

<sup>3</sup> “Quaecunq̄ue possunt per creaturam fieri, vel cogitari, vel dici, et etiam quaecunq̄ue ipse facere potest, omnia cognoscit Deus, etiamsi neque sunt, neque erunt, neque fuerunt, scientia simplicis intelligentiae.” – Aquin, p. q. 14, a. 9, c. Ex verbis apostoli, Rom 3, “Qui vocat ea quae non sunt tanquam ea quae sunt.” Sic scholastici omnes. Fer. Scholast. Orthod. Speci. cap. in., alii passim. Vid. Hieron. Zanch. De Scientia Dei, lib. diatrib. 3., cap. 2, q. 5.

Out of this large and boundless territory of possible things, God by his decrees freely determines what shall actually come to pass; he makes them *future* which before were only *possible*.<sup>4</sup> After this decree, as they commonly say, follows or accompanies (as others say more exactly), that prescience of God which they call “*visionis*,” “of vision,”<sup>5</sup> whereby he infallibly sees all things in their proper causes, and how and when they shall come to pass.<sup>6</sup> Now, these two sorts of knowledge [*intuitive* and *visionary*] differ: by the one, God knows what is possible and may come to pass; by the other, God knows only what is impossible and shall not come to pass.<sup>7</sup> Things are *possible* with regard to God’s *power* – they are *future* with regard to his *decree*. So that (if I may say so) the measure of the first kind of science is God’s omnipotency – what he *can* do; the measure of the other kind is his purpose, what he certainly *will* do, or permit to be done. With this *prescience*, then, God foresees all things; and nothing but what he has decreed shall come to pass.

For every thing to be produced next and under him, God has prepared diverse and several kinds of causes, variously operating to produce their effects.<sup>8</sup> Some of these are said to work necessarily, because the institution of their nature is to do as they do, and not otherwise – so the sun gives light, and fire gives heat. And yet, in some regard, their effects and products may be said to be contingent and free, inasmuch as the concurrence of God, the first cause, is required for their operation. He does all things most freely, according to the counsel of his will.<sup>Eph 1.11</sup> Thus the sun stood still in the time of Joshua,<sup>Jos 10.13</sup> and the fire did not burn the three children;<sup>Dan 3.25</sup> but ordinarily such agents work “*necessitate naturae*,” their effects are said to be necessary.

Secondly. God has fitted free and contingent causes to some things, which either apply themselves to particular operations according to election, choosing to do this thing rather than that – as when angels and men, in their free and deliberate actions, so perform that they might easily *not* have done them – or else they produce effects τὸ συμβεβηκός, merely by accident. We say the operation of such things is casual, as when a hatchet falls out of the hand of a man cutting down a tree, and kills another man he never saw. Now, nothing in either of these ways comes to pass unless God has determined it, both the matter and manner of it.<sup>9</sup> It is agreeable to their causes – some necessarily, some freely, some casually or contingently – yet also having a certain future from his decree: he infallibly foresees that they *shall* so come to pass. Yet whether

<sup>4</sup> Vid. Sam. Rhaetfort. Exercit. de Grat., ex. 1. cap. 4.

<sup>5</sup> “Scientia visionis dicitur, quia ea quae videntur, apud nos habent esse distinctum extra videntem.” – Aq. p. q. 14, a. 9, c.

<sup>6</sup> “Res ipsae nullo naturae momento possibles esse dicendae sunt priusquam a Deo intelliguntur, scientia quae dicitur simplicis intelligentiae, ita etiam scientia quae dicitur visionis, et fertur in res futuras, nullo naturae momento, posterior statuenda videtur, ista futuratione, rerum; cum scientia,” etc. – Dr Twiss. ad Errat. Vind. Grat.

<sup>7</sup> “In eo differt praescientia intuitionis, ab ea, quae approbationis est, quod illa praesciat, quod evenire possibile est; hoc vero quod impossibile est non evenire.” – Ferrius. Orthod. Scholast. Spoci. cap. 23. Caeterum posterior ista scientia non proprie dicitur a Ferrio scientia approbationis, illa enim est, qua Deus dicitur nosse quae amat et approbat; ab utraque altera distincta. Mat 7:23; Rom 11:2; 2Tim 2:19. “Quamvis infinitorum numerorum, nullus sit numerus, non tamen est incomprehensibilis ei, cujus scientiae non est numerus.” – Aug. de Civit. Dei, lib. 12. cap. 18.

<sup>8</sup> “Quibusdam effectibus praeparavit causas necessarias, ut necessario eveniret, quibusdam vero causas contingentes ut evenirent contingenter, secundum conditionem proximarum causarum.” – Aquin. p. q. 28, a. 4, in Cor. Zanch. de Natur. Dei, lib. v., qu. 4, thes.

<sup>9</sup> “Res et modos rerum” – Aquin.

he does so with regard to things which are free and contingent is greatly questioned by the Arminians in express terms, and denied by *consequence*, notwithstanding that St. Jerome affirms that to do so is destructive to the very essence of the Deity.<sup>10</sup>

*First.* Their doctrine of the mutability of God’s decrees, on whose firmness is founded the infallibility of God’s prescience, quite overthrows it. God thus foreknows only what he has so decreed shall come to pass. If that is not firmly settled, and it may be, and often is, altered according to the various inclinations of men’s wills (which I showed before they affirm), then God can have at best only a conjectural foreknowledge of what is yet to come. It is not founded on his own unchangeable purpose, but on a guess at the free inclination of men’s wills.<sup>11</sup> For instance, God wills that all men should be saved. This act of his will, according to the Arminian doctrine, is his conditional decree to save all men *if* they will believe.<sup>12</sup> Well, among these is Judas,<sup>13</sup> who is as equal a sharer in the benefit of this decree as Peter. God, then, will have him saved; and so to this end he allows Judas all necessary means to produce faith in him; and in every way they are sufficient for that purpose – they produce that effect in others. What then can God foresee, except that Judas as well as Peter will believe? He intends that he should; he has determined nothing to the contrary. Let him come, then, and act his own part. Yet he proves so obstinately malicious that God, with all his omnipotency, as they say,<sup>14</sup> by any way that becomes him (except *irresistible* efficacy), cannot change Judas’ obdurate heart. Well, then, God determines according to the exigence of his justice, that Judas shall be damned for his impenitency; and he foresees that accordingly. But now, suppose this wretch, even at his last moment, should reconsider and return to the Lord (which in their conceit he may), notwithstanding his former reprobation (which, as they state it,<sup>15</sup> seems like a great act of mercy),<sup>16</sup> God must keep to the rules of his justice, and elect or determine to save him; by this line of thinking, the varlet<sup>17</sup> has twice or thrice deceived God’s expectation.

*Secondly.* They affirm that God is properly said to expect and desire various things which nonetheless never come to pass. “We grant,” says Corvinus, “that there are desires in God that never are fulfilled.”<sup>18</sup> Now, surely, to desire what one is sure will never come to pass, is not an act regulated by wisdom or counsel; and, therefore, they must grant that beforehand he did not

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<sup>10</sup> “Cui praesentiam tollis, auferis divinitatem.” – Hieron. ad Pelag., lib.

<sup>11</sup> Notice how such ideas form the basis for *Open Theism*. Here Owen makes the case for *classical theism*: that God is immutable, immovable, and timeless. God fully determines the future; thus, humanity does not have independent free will, for it must be compatible with God’s determining will. Open Theism makes the case for a personal God who is open to influence through the prayers, decisions, and actions of people. God knows everything that has been determined, as well as what has not yet been determined, but he remains “open” and responsive, changing course to accommodate the actions of men. Open theists do not believe that God does not know the future; rather, that the future does not exist to be known by anyone, including God.

<sup>12</sup> “Deus ita omnium salutem ex aequo vult, ut illam ex aequo optet et desideret.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 31. sect. 1

<sup>13</sup> “Talis gratia omnibus datur quae sufficiat ad fidem generandam.” – Idem, ibid, sect. 15.

<sup>14</sup> “Pertinaci quorundam malitia compulsus.” – Armin., ubi sup.

<sup>15</sup> “Reprobatio populi Judaici fuit actio temporaria et quae bono ipsorum Judaeorum si modo sanabiles adhuc essent, animumque advertere vellent, servire poterat, utque ei fini serviret a Deo facta erat.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 20. p. 221.

<sup>16</sup> “Injustum est apud Deum vel non credentem eligere, vel credentem non eligere.” – Rem. Apol.

<sup>17</sup> A deceitful and unreliable scoundrel.

<sup>18</sup> “Concedimus in Deo desideria, quae nunquam implentur.” – Corv. Ad Molin., cap. v. sect. 2.

know, but perhaps it might be so. “God wishes and desires some good things, which still do not come to pass,” they say, in their Confession.<sup>19</sup>

From this one of two things must follow – either, *first*, that there is a great deal of imperfection in God’s nature, that he should desire and expect what he knows shall never come to pass; or else he did not know it, but it might come to pass – which overthrows his prescience. Indeed, they expressly say, “That the hope and expectation of God is deceived by man;” and they confess, “That the strength of their strongest argument lies in this, that God hoped and expected obedience from Israel.”<sup>20</sup> *Secondly*. That God complains that his hope is deluded. Taking this properly, and as they urge it, it cannot be consistent with his eternal prescience; for they disesteem<sup>21</sup> the usual answer of divines, that hope, expectation, and similar passions, which include any imperfection in them, are ascribed to God per ἄνθρωποπάθειαν [*anthropomorphism*] – in regard to that analogy, his actions hold with those of ours which we perform having those passions.<sup>22</sup>

*Thirdly*. They teach that God has determined nothing concerning such things as these in question. “That God has determined future contingent things to either part (I mean those which issue from the free-will of the creature), I abominate, hate, and curse as false, absurd, and leading us on to blasphemy,”<sup>23</sup> says Arminius. To determine them “to either part” is to determine and ordain whether they shall be, or whether they shall not be – such as David shall or shall not go up tomorrow against the Philistines and prevail. Now, if there is no such thing as this, then the infallibility of God’s foreknowing such things, depending on the certainty of his decree and determination, must also fall to the ground.

*Fourthly*. See what they write positively concerning this everlasting foreknowledge of God: first, they call it a troublesome question; secondly, they make it disputable whether there is any such thing or not; and though perhaps it may be ascribed to God, yet, thirdly, they think it is no motive to worship him; fourthly, they say, it would be better if it were quite rejected, because the difficulties that attend it can scarcely be reconciled with man’s liberty, with God’s threatening, and with his promises; indeed, fifthly, it rather seems invented to crucify poor mortals, than to be of any import in religion. So Episcopius said.<sup>24</sup> It may be excepted that this is but one doctor’s opinion. It is true – they are one man’s words; but the thing itself is countenanced by the whole

<sup>19</sup> “Bona quaedam Deus optat et desiderat.” – Rem. Confes., cap. 2. sect. 9.

<sup>20</sup> “Dei spes et expectatio est ab hominibus elusa.” – Rem. Scrip. Syn. in cap. v., Isaiah 5:1. “In eo vis argumenti est, quod Deus ab Israele obedientiam et sperarit, et expectarit.” – Idem, ibid. “Quod Deus de elusa spe sua conqueratur.” – Idem, ubi supra.

<sup>21</sup> *Disesteem: to have little or no respect for; to hold in contempt.*

<sup>22</sup> *In other words, we make God out to be like a man, with similar passions and weaknesses.*

<sup>23</sup> “Deum futura contingentia, decreto suo determinasse ad alterutram partem (intellige quae a libera creaturae voluntate patrantur), falsum, absurdum, et multiplicis blasphemiae praeivium abominor et execror.” – Armin. Declarat. Senten.

<sup>24</sup> “Disquiri permittimus: – 1. Operosam illam quaestionem, de scientia futurorum contingentium absoluta et conditionata; 2. Etsi non negemus Deo illam scientiam attribui posse; 3. Tamen an necessarium saluti sit ad hoc ut Deus recte colatur examinari permittimus; 4. Tum merito facessere debent a scholis et ecclesiis, intricatae et spinosae istae quaestiones quae de ea agitari solent – quomodo illa cum libertate arbitrii, cum seriis Dei comminationibus, aliisque actionibus, consistere possit: quae omnia crucem potius miseris mortalibus fixerunt, quam ad religionem cultumque divinum, momenti aliquid inquisitoribus suis attulerunt.” – Episcopius, Disput. 4. sect. 10.; Rem. Apol., pp. 43,44.

sect. For example, in the large prolix<sup>25</sup> declaration of their opinions, they do not speak one word of it. Being taxed for this omission by the professors of Leyden, they vindicated themselves so coldly in their Apology, that some learned men conclude from this,<sup>26</sup> that certainly, in their most secret judgments, all the Arminians consent with Socinus in ascribing to God only a conjectural foreknowledge. One great prophet of their own, Vorstius, affirms roundly, “That God, in his way, often suspects and prudently conjectures that this or that evil may arise, and that is not without cause,”<sup>27</sup> And their highest patriarchs say, “That God often intends what he does not foresee will come to pass,” Armin., Corv.<sup>28</sup> Now, whether this kind of atheism is tolerable among Christians or not, let all men judge who have their senses exercised in the word of God; which, I am sure, teaches us another lesson. For –

*First.* It is laid down as a firm foundation, that “known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world,” Acts 15:18. Everything, then, that in any respect may be called his work, is known to him from all eternity. Now, what in the world, if we may speak as he has taught us, can be exempted from this denomination of things known to him? Even actions that are sinful in themselves are not; though they are not known sinfully, yet they are known in some other regard, such as punishments of others. “Behold,” says Nathan to David, in the name of God, “I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun; for you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel,” 2Samuel 12:11-12. So, also, when wicked robbers had nefariously robbed Job of all his substance, the holy man concludes, “The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away,” Job 1:21. Now, if the working of God’s providence is so mighty and effectual, even in and over those actions in which the devil and men most maliciously offend – as did Absalom and the Sabeans with the Chaldean thieves – so that it may be said to be his work, and he may be said to “do it” (I crave liberty to use the Scripture phrase), then certainly nothing in the world, in some respect or other, is independent of his all-disposing hand. Indeed, Judas himself betraying our Savior did nothing but “what his hand and counsel determined before should be done,”<sup>29</sup> Acts 4:28, in regard to the event of the thing itself. And if these actions, notwithstanding these two hindrances – *first*, that they were contingent, and wrought by free agents, working according to election and choice; *secondly*, that they were sinful and wicked in the agents themselves – if they were still dependent on his purpose and determinate counsel, surely he has an operational interest in the acts of every creature. But his works, as it appears before, are all known to him from the beginning; for God works nothing by chance or accident, but all things are worked determinately, according to his own decree, or “the counsel of his own will,” Eph 1:11.

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<sup>25</sup> Tediously prolonged; written at great length.

<sup>26</sup> Ames. Antisynod, p. 10.

<sup>27</sup> “Deus suo modo aliquando metuit, hoc est, merito suspicatur et prudenter conjicit, hoc vel illud malum oriturum.” – Vorsti. de Deo, p. 451.

<sup>28</sup> “Deus non semper ex praescientia finem intendit.” – Armin., Antip., p. 667; Corv. ad Molin., cap. 5. sect. 5.

<sup>29</sup> “Cum et pater tradiderit filium suum, et ipse Christus corpus suum: et Judas dominum suum: cur in hac traditione Deus est pius, et homo reus, nisi quia in re una quam fecerunt, causa non fuit una propter quam fecerunt.” – Aug., Epist. 48.

*Secondly.* The manner of God’s knowing things evidently shows that nothing that is, or may be, or can be hidden from him. <sup>30</sup> This is not by discourse and the collection of one thing from another, conclusions from principles; but it is altogether and at once – evidently, clearly, and distinctly, both in respect to the *cause* and the *effect*.<sup>31</sup> By one most pure act of his own essence, he discerns all things. For there is “no creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all are naked and opened to his eyes,” Heb 4:13. So he knows of those things which we are speaking about, in three ways: <sup>32</sup>

(1) in himself and by his own decree, as the *first cause* of them – they may be said to be necessary in respect to the certainty of their event;

(2) in their *immediate causes*, in which their contingency properly consists;

(3) in their own nature as being *future* – but to his infinite knowledge, they are ever present.

*Thirdly,* The Scripture (Psalm 44:21; Job 11:11; Daniel 2:47; Psalm 7:9, 26:2, 147:4; Luke 2:27; Mat 10:29, 30; Psalm 139:2) is full of expressions to this purpose: “That God knows all secrets, and reveals hidden things: he searches the affections and the heart: he knows the number of the stars, and the birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the falling of sparrows, the number of the hairs of our heads.” Some places are most remarkable, as that of the Psalmist, “He knows my thoughts long before;” even before ever they come into our minds, before their first rising. And yet many actions that are most contingent, depend on those thoughts which are known to God from eternity; indeed, this breaks the very neck of the goddess contingency – those things in which her great power is imagined to consist, are directly ascribed to God, as our words have it, “the answer of the tongue,” Prov 16:1; and the directing of an arrow, shot by chance, to a mark that was not aimed at, 1Kings 22:34.<sup>33</sup> Surely God must foreknow the event of that contingent action; he must know the man would so shoot, for he had determined his arrow would be the death of a king. He makes men poor and rich, Prov 22:2; He lifts up one, and pulls down another, Psalm 75:7. How many contingencies the dreadful eye of the Lord <sup>34</sup> – his piercing eye – ran through to foresee the crowning of Esther for the deliverance of his people! In a word, “Known to God are all his works.” Now, what can possibly be imagined to be more contingent than the killing of a man by the fall of an axe from the hand of someone who intended no such thing? Yet God assumes this as his own work, Deut 19:5, Exodus 21:13; and it was thus surely foreknown by him.

*Fourthly,* But consider the prophecies in Scripture, especially those concerning our Savior, how many free and contingent actions concurred to fulfill them, such as Isaiah 7:14, 9:6, 53; Gen 3:15, etc. The same may be said of other predictions, such as of the wasting of Jerusalem by the Babylonians – though in regard to God’s prescience, it would certainly come to pass, yet the Babylonians did it most freely, not only following the counsel of their own wills, but also using

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<sup>30</sup> “Deus non particulatim, vel singillatim omnia videt, velut alternanter concepta, hinc illuc, inde huc, sed omnia videt simul.” – Aug., lib. 15. de Trinit., cap. 14. “In scientia divina nullus est discursus, sed omnia perfecte intelligit.” – Tho., p. q. 14, a. 7. c.

<sup>31</sup> Owen originally wrote the phrase in Greek: τοῦ ὄτι, and τοῦ διότι.

<sup>32</sup> Tilen. Syntag. de Attrib. Dei, thes. 22; Zanch. de Nat. Dei. Unumquodque quod est, dum est, necesse est, ut sit

<sup>33</sup> Now a certain man drew a bow at random, and struck the king of Israel between the joints of his armor. (1Ki 22:34 NKJ)

<sup>34</sup> “The dreadful eye of the Lord” Owen originally wrote in Greek: “γοργὸν ὄμμα τοῦ δεσπότης.”

### Chap. 3 – The Foreknowledge of God

divination, or chance lots, for their direction, Ezekiel 21:21. Yet the One who made the eye, sees all these things, Psalm 94:9.

Various other reasons and testimonies might be produced to confirm our doctrine of God’s everlasting prescience. Notwithstanding Episcopi’s blasphemy, that it only serves to torture poor mortals, we believe it is a good part of the foundation of all that consolation which God is pleased to afford us in this vale of tears. Amidst all our afflictions and temptations, under whose pressure we would otherwise faint and despair, it is no small comfort to be assured that we can do not suffer anything except what his hand and counsel guides to us. They are open and naked before his eyes, and he knows their end and issue long before. This is a strong motive for patience, a sure anchor of hope, and a firm ground of consolation. Now, to present in one view how opposite to this sacred truth the opinions of the worshippers of the great goddess *Contingency* are, take this short antithesis:

S.S.	Lib. Arbit.
“Known to God are all his works from the beginning of the world,” Acts 15:18.	“God sometimes fears, and prudently conjectures, that this or that evil may arise,” Vorsti.
“Nor is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened to the eyes of him with whom we have to deal,” Heb 4:13.	“God does not always foresee the event of what he intends,” Corvin. ad Mol.
“He that formed the eye, shall he not see?” Psalm 94:9. “When a man goes into the woods with his neighbor to hew wood, and his hand fetches a stroke with the axe to cut down the tree, and the head slips from the handle, and lands on his neighbor, so that he dies,” Deut 19:5. “God delivers him into his hand,” Exodus 21:13.	“Future contingencies are not determined for either part,” Armin. That is, God has not determined, and so, consequently, he does not foreknow, whether they shall come to pass or not.
“Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or with what shall we be clothed? For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things,” Mat 6:31-32.	“God hopes and expects various things that will never come to pass,” Rem. “Take away God’s prescience and you overthrow his deity,” Jerome. “The doctrine of prescience seems to be invented only to trouble and torture poor mortal men,” Episcop.

## CHAPTER 4.

### OF THE PROVIDENCE OF GOD IN GOVERNING THE WORLD DIVERSELY, THRUST FROM THIS PRE-EMINENCE BY THE ARMINIAN IDOL OF FREE-WILL.

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I come now to address what lies between the providence of God and the Pelagian idol, which is *bellum*, ἄσπονδον – implacable war and immortal hatred – absolutely destructive to the one side. For that concept of it which Christianity has embraced up to now, and that sense in which the Arminians maintain it, can no more be consistent with each other than fire and water, light and darkness, Christ and Belial. The one who goes to conjoin them, plows with an ox and an ass; they must be tied together with the same ligament – “*quo ille mortua jungebat corpora vivis*” – with which the tyrant tied dead bodies to living men. This strange advancement of the clay against the potter, is not by way of repining,<sup>1</sup> as if to say, “Why have you made me thus?” It is by way of emulation, “I will not be so; I will advance myself to the sky, to the sides of your throne.”<sup>2</sup> This was previously unknown to the more refined Paganism. As these made a goddess of *Contingency*, so they (with a better error), made a goddess of *Providence*; They feigned that she helped Latona to give birth in the isle of Delos; intimating that Latona, or nature, though big and great with assorted effects, could still produce nothing without the interceding help of *Divine Providence*.<sup>3</sup> This mythology of theirs seems to contain a sweeter gust of divine truth than any we can expect from the towering fancies of those who are inclined to believe that God sustains all things for no other reason but that he does not destroy them.<sup>4</sup> Now, that their proud, God-opposing errors may better appear according to my former method, I will plainly show what the Scripture teaches us concerning this providence – with what is agreeable to right and Christian reason; not what is dictated by tumultuating affections.

Providence is a word which, in its proper meaning, may seem to comprehend all the actions of God that are outwardly of him, and that have any respect to his creatures, and all his works that are not *ad intra* (essentially belonging to the Deity). Now, God “works all things according to his decree, or the counsel of his will,” Eph 1:11, whatever he does now it pleased him to do from the beginning, Psalm 115:3; and known to God are all his works from eternity. Therefore, three things<sup>5</sup> concerning his providence are to be considered: 1. His *decree* or *purpose*, whereby he has disposed of all things in order, and appointed them for certain ends which he fore-ordained. 2. His *prescience*, whereby he certainly fore-knows all things that shall come to pass. 3. His *temporal operation*, or working in time – “My Father works up to now,” John 5:17 – whereby he actually executes all his good pleasure. The first and second of these have been the subject of the

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<sup>1</sup> To express discontent; whine.

<sup>2</sup> Θεία πάντων ἀρχὴ δὲ ἦς ἅπαντα καὶ ἔστι καίνει. – Theophrastus, apud Picum. Vid. Senecam de Provid. et Plotinum.

<sup>3</sup> Greek Mythology: Latona for her intrigue with Zeus was hunted by Hera over the whole earth, till she came to Delos and gave birth to her first, Artemis, by the help of whose midwifery she afterwards gave birth to Apollo.

<sup>4</sup> “An actus divinae providentiae omnium rerum conservatrix, sit affirmativus po-tentiae, an tantum negativus voluntatis, quo nolit res creatas perdere.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 6.

<sup>5</sup> “Providentia seu ratio ordinis ad finem duo praecipue continet: principium decernens seu ipsam rationem ordinis in mente divina, ipsi Deo coaeternum, et principium exequens, quo suo modo, per debita media, ipsa in ordine et numero disponit.” – Thom.

former chapters; only the latter now requires our consideration. Providence, then, we may conceive of as an ineffable act or work of Almighty God, *whereby he cherishes, sustains, and governs the world, or all things created by him, moving them agreeably according to those natures which he endowed them with in the beginning, for those ends which he has proposed.* To confirm this, I will first prove this position: That the whole world is cared for by God, and governed by him, and this applies to all men, good or bad, and all things in particular, however small and inconsiderable in our eyes. Secondly, I will show the manner in which God works all, in all things, and according to the diversity of secondary causes which he has created. Some are necessary, some are free, and others are contingent, to produce their effects *nec πάντως, nec ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ, sed κατὰ συμβεθεηκός*, merely by accident.

The providence of God in governing the world is made known to us plentifully, both by his works and by his word. I will give a few instances of either sort: 1. In general, the almighty Δημιουργός, and Framer of this whole universe, proposes to himself no end in the creation of all things – he lacks neither power, goodness, will, nor wisdom, to order and dispose the works of his own hands – it is altogether impossible to be otherwise. 2. Take one particular instance concerning accident, the knowledge of which by some means or other, in some degree or other, has spread itself throughout the world – and that is the almost universal destruction of all by the flood, whereby the whole world was nearly reduced to its primitive confusion. Is there nothing but chance to be seen in this? Was there any circumstance about it that did not show a God and his providence? Not to mention those revelations whereby God foretold that he would bring such a deluge. What chance, what fortune, could collect such a small number of individuals of all sorts, in which the whole of its kind might be preserved? What hand guided that poor vessel from the rocks and gave it a resting-place on the mountains? Certainly, the very reading of that story in Gen 7-8, being confirmed by the catholic tradition of all mankind, would be enough to startle the stubborn heart of an atheist.

The word of God does not relate it less fully than his works declare it, Psalm 19, “My Father works up to now,” says our Savior, John 5:17. But did not God end his work on the seventh day, and did he not then “rest from all his work?” Gen 2:2. True, he rested from his work of creation by his omnipotence; but his work of governance by his providence as yet knows no end. Yes, and he does various particular things besides the ordinary course, only to make known “that he thus works,” John 9:3.<sup>6</sup> Just as he has framed all things by his wisdom, so he continues them by his providence in excellent order, as is declared at large in that golden Psalm 104: and this is not limited to any particular places or things, but “his eyes are in every place, beholding the evil and the good,” Prov 15:3; so that “none can hide himself in secret places that he shall not see him,” Jer 23:24; Acts 17:24; Job 5:10,11; Exodus 4:11. And all this he does that men “may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside him. He is the LORD, and there is none else. He forms the light, and creates darkness: he makes peace, and creates evil: he does all these things,” Isaiah 45:6-7. In these and innumerable similar places, the Lord declares that there is nothing which he has made, that he does not govern and sustain with the good hand of his providence.

Now, this general extent of his common providence to *all* in no way keeps him from exercising certain special acts of providence towards some in *particular*. I mean his church here on earth, and those of which it consists; “for what nation is there so great, who has God so near to them?”

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<sup>6</sup> “That the works of God should be revealed in him.” Joh 9.3

Deut 4:7. In governing this, he most eminently shows his glory and exercises his power. Join here his works with his word – what he has done with what he has promised to do for the conservation of his church and people – and you will find admirable issues of a more special providence. He promises that “the gates of hell shall not prevail,” against this church Mat 16:18; he also promised to remain in their midst, Mat 28:20; supplying all things necessary, Mat 6:33; desiring that “all their care might be cast upon him, who cares for them,” 1Peter 5:7; forbidding any to “touch his anointed ones,” Psalm 105:15, because they are “the apple of his eye,” Zec 2:8. Now, this special providence has respect to a supernatural end, to which alone that providence is to be conveyed.

For wicked men, as they are excepted from this special care and government, so they are not exempted from the dominion of his almighty hand. He has created them “for the day of evil,” Prov 16:4, and provided a “place of their own” for them to go to, Acts 1:25. He does not allow them to live outside the boundary of his all-ruling providence in this world, but allows and endures their iniquities with great patience and “long-suffering,” Rom 9:22 – often defending them from the injuries of one another, Gen 4:15. He grants many temporal blessings to them, Mat 5:45, disposing all their works to the glory of his great name, Prov 21:1-2. He declares that they also live, and move, and have their being in him, <sup>Act 17.28</sup> and are under the government of his providence. No, there is not the least thing in this world to which his care and knowledge does not descend. It would not become his wisdom to sustain, order, and dispose of all things created by him, and yet leave them to the ruin of uncertain chance. Jerome, then, was injurious to God’s providence, and cast a blemish on his absolute perfection, when he thought to clear God’s majesty from being defiled with the knowledge and care of the smallest reptiles and vermin at every moment.<sup>7</sup> St. Austin expressly to the contrary asked, “Who has disposed the several members of the flea and gnat, and given them order, life, and motion?” etc. <sup>8</sup> This is most agreeable to the holy Scriptures, as in Psalm 104:20-21, 145:15; Mat 6:26, 30, “He feeds the fowls, and clothes the grass of the field;” Job 39:1-2; Jonah 4:6-7. Surely it is not troublesome to God to take notice of all that he has created. Did he use that great power in the production of the least of his creatures, so far beyond the united activity of men and angels, for no end at all? Doubtless, even they must also have a well-disposed order, to manifest his glory. “Not a sparrow falls on the ground without our Father;” even “the hairs of our head are all numbered,” Mat 10:29-30. “He clothes the lilies and grass of the field, which is to be cast into the oven,” Luke 12:27-28. Behold his knowledge and care of them! Again, he used frogs and lice to punish the Egyptians, Exodus 8; with a gourd and a worm he agitated his servant Jonah, chapter 4; indeed, he calls the locusts his “terrible army;” – and shall not God know and take care of the number of his soldiers, the ordering of his dreadful host?

It is sufficiently proved that God, by his providence, governs and disposes of all things created by him. The manner in which he works all in all, <sup>1Cor 12.6</sup> how he orders the works of his own hands, <sup>Psa 102.25</sup> and in what this governing and disposing of his creatures <sup>Psa 67.4</sup> chiefly consists, now comes to be considered. Here four things are principally to be observed: *First*. The

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<sup>7</sup> “Majestatem Dei dedecet scire per momenta singula, quot nascantur culices, quae pulicum et muscarum in terra multitudo.” – Hieron, in cap. 1, Hab.

<sup>8</sup> “Quis disposuit membra pulicis ac culicis, ut habeant ordinem suum, habeant vitam suam, habeant motum suum,” etc. “Qui fecit in coelo angelum, ipse fecit in terra vermi culum, sed angelum in coelo pro habitatione coelesti, vermiculum in terra pro habitatione terrestri, nunquid angelum fecit reperire in coeno, aut vermiculum in coelo,” etc. – Aug., tom. 8, in Psalm 148.

sustaining, preserving, and upholding of all things by his power; for “he upholds all things by the word of his power,” Heb 1:3. *Secondly*. His working together with all things, by a causal influence in the agents themselves; “for he also has wrought all our works in us,” Isaiah 26:12. *Thirdly*. His powerful overruling of all events – necessary, free, and contingent – and disposing them to certain ends to manifest his glory. So Joseph tells his brothers, “As for you, you thought evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, that many people should be saved alive,” Gen 50:20. *Fourthly*. His determining and restraining secondary causes to have particular effects: “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like rivers of water: he turns it wherever he will,” Prov 21:1.

*First*. His sustaining or upholding of all things is his powerful continuation of their being, and of their natural strength and faculties, that were bestowed on them at their creation: “In him we live, and move, and have our being,” Acts 17:28. So he does not work all by himself in them, without any co-operation of theirs – that would turn all things into stocks;<sup>9</sup> indeed, it would remove their own proper nature from stocks. It would also be contrary to that general blessing which he spread over the face of the whole world in the beginning, “Be fruitful, and multiply,” Gen 1:22 – it would leave them to subsistence on their own while God, in the meantime, merely chooses not to destroy them.<sup>10</sup> That would make God an idle spectator of most things in the world; he would not “work up to now,” as our Savior says. And he would grant to various things here below an absolute being that is not derivative from him. The first of these is blasphemous; the latter is impossible.

*Secondly*. As for God’s working in and together with all secondary causes to produce their effects, it seems beyond the reach of mortals to determine which part or portion in the work we are to pointedly assign to him, and which to the power of inferior causes. Nor is an exact comprehension if in any way necessary – so we make everything beholding to his power for its *being*, and everything beholding to his assistance for its *operation*.

*Thirdly*. His supreme dominion *exercises* itself in disposing of all things to certain and determinate ends for his own glory. And his dominion is chiefly *discerned* in advancing itself over those things which are most contingent, making them in some sense necessary, inasmuch as they are certainly disposed of to some proposed ends. Between the birth and death of a man, how many things that are merely contingent occur! How many chances! How many diseases! In their own nature, they are all evitable; and in regard to the event, not one of them but to some proves mortal. Yet, it is certain that a man’s “days are determined; the number of his months are with the Lord; he has appointed his bounds that he cannot pass,” Job 14:5. And oftentimes by things that are purely contingent and accidental, God executes his purposes – bestows rewards, inflicts punishments, and accomplishes his judgments – as when he delivers a man to be slain by the head of an axe, flying from the handle in the hand of a man cutting a tree by the way. But in nothing is this more evident than in the ancient casting of lots, a thing as casual and accidental as can be imagined, huddled in the cap at a venture. Yet God overrules them to declare his purpose, freeing truth from doubts, and manifesting his power: Prov 16:33, “The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing of it is from the LORD.” You may see this in the examples of Achan (Joshua 7:16-18); Saul (1Samuel 10:20-21); Jonathan (1Samuel 14:41-42); Jonah (Jonah 1:7); and Matthias (Acts 1:26). And yet this overruling act of God’s providence (as with no other

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<sup>9</sup> That is, it would turn all creatures into domesticated animals.

<sup>10</sup> Rem. Apol., cap. 6.

decree or act of his) does not rob contingent things of their proper nature – for cannot the one who effectually causes them to come to pass, also cause them to come to pass *contingently*?

*Fourthly.* God’s predetermination of secondary causes. I do not place this last as though it were the last act of God’s providence about his creatures; for indeed it is the first act that concerns their operation. His predetermination of secondary causes is that effectual working of his, according to his eternal purpose, whereby some agencies, such as the wills of men, are the most free and indefinite causes, or the unlimited lords of their own actions, in respect to their internal principle of operation (that is, their own nature). Yet all agencies, in respect to God’s decree and by his powerful working, are determined to have this or that particular effect. It is not that they are compelled to do this, or hindered from doing that, but they are *inclined* and *disposed* to do this or that, according to their proper manner of working – that is, most freely. For truly such testimonies of God’s powerful working are obvious everywhere in Scripture: stirring up men’s wills and minds, bending and inclining them to various things, governing the secret thoughts and motions of the heart – so that his working cannot by any means be relegated to a naked permission, or a governance only of external actions, or a general influence, whereby men would have [independent] *power* to do this or that, or anything else – which some suppose God’s whole providence consists of.

Let us now jointly apply these several acts to free agents, working according to choice or relation, as the wills of men do. That will open the way to view the Arminian heterodoxies concerning this article of Christian belief. And here, two things must be premised: *first*. That these free agents are not deprived of their own radical or original internal liberty; *secondly*. That they are not exempt from the moving influence and governance of God’s providence. The first would leave no just room for rewards and punishments; the other, as I said before, is injurious to the majesty and power of God. St. Augustine judged Cicero worthy of special blame, even among the heathens, for attempting to make men so free, that he made them sacrilegious – denying they were subject to an overruling providence.<sup>11</sup> This gross error was directly maintained by Damascen, a learned Christian, who taught, “Things of which we have any power, do not depend on providence, but on our own free will.”<sup>12</sup> This is an opinion fitter for a hog of the Epicurus herd than for a scholar in the school of Christ. And yet this proud, prodigious error is now, though in other terms, stiffly maintained. For what else is asserted by those who ascribe such an absolute independent liberty to the will of man, that it has in its own power every circumstance, every condition whatsoever, that belongs to operation – all things otherwise required on the part of God to perform an action; so that it remains solely in the power of a man’s own will, whether he will do it or not. This supreme and plainly divine liberty, joined with such an absolute, uncontrollable power and dominion over all his actions, would exempt and free the will of man not only from all fore-determining as to the production of particular effects, but also from any effectual working or influence of the providence of God in the will itself – influence that would sustain, help, or cooperate with the will in doing or willing anything. Therefore, the authors of this imaginary liberty have wisely framed an imaginary concurrence of God’s providence, that corresponds to it – namely, a general and indifferent influence, always waiting and expecting the will of man to determine itself toward this or that effect, good or bad. God is, as it were, always ready at hand to do that small part which he has in our actions, whenever we are pleased to use him; or, if we please to let him alone, then he would in no way

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<sup>11</sup> “Qui sic homines voluit esse liberos ut fecit sacrilegos.” – Aug.

<sup>12</sup> Τὰ ἐφ’ ὑμῖν οὐ τῆς προνοίας ἀλλὰ τοῦ ἡμετέρου ἀντεζουσίου. – Damascen.

move us to perform anything. Now, God forbid that we should give our consent to the choice of such a captain, under whose conduct we might go down again to Paganism – to erecting such an idol on the throne of the Almighty. No, doubtless, let us be most indulgent to our wills, and assign them all the liberty that is competent for a created nature, to do all things freely according to election and foregoing counsel, being free from all natural necessity and outward compulsion. But for all this, let us not presume to deny God’s effectual assistance, his particular powerful influence on the wills and actions of his creatures, directing them to voluntarily perform what he has determined. This is what the Arminians, opposing on behalf of their darling *free-will*, work in the hearts of men: an overweening of their own power, and an absolute independence of the providence of God. For –

First, they deny that God (in whom we live, and move, and have our being) does anything by his providence, “whereby the creature should be stirred up, or helped in any of his actions.”<sup>13</sup> That is, God leaves a man entirely in the hand of his own counsel, to dispose of his own absolute independent power, without any regard to God’s providence at all. From this they may well conclude, as they do, “that those things which God would have done by us freely” (as are all human actions), “he cannot himself will or work more powerfully and effectually, than by wishing or desiring it,” as Vorstius says.<sup>14</sup> This is no more than what one man can do concerning another, and perhaps far less than an angel can do. I can wish or desire that another man would do what I have a mind that he should do; but, truly, to describe the providence of God by such expressions seems to me intolerable blasphemy. But thus it must be – without such helps as these, Dagon cannot keep his head on, nor can the idol of uncontrollable *free-will* enjoy his dominion.

Hence Corvinus will grant that the killing of a man by the slipping of an axe’s head from its handle, although contingent, may be said to happen according to God’s counsel and determinate will; but *on no terms will he yield that this may be applied to actions in which the counsel and freedom of man’s will take place, as though they should also be dependent on any such overruling power.*<sup>15</sup> By this, he absolutely excludes the providence of God from having any sovereignty within the territory of human actions. That plainly shakes off the yoke of God’s dominion, and makes men lords who are paramount within themselves. So they may well ascribe to God (as they do) *only a deceivable expectation of those contingent things that are yet to come*, there being no act of his own in producing such effects, on which he can base any certainty.<sup>16</sup> He may only conjecture, according to his guess at men’s inclinations. And, indeed, this is the Helen<sup>17</sup> for whose enjoyment, these thrice ten years, they have maintained warfare with the hosts of the living God. Their whole endeavor has been to prove that, notwithstanding the performance

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<sup>13</sup> “Deus influxu suo nihil confert creaturae, quo ad agendum incitetur ac adjuvetur.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 3. sect. 15, p. 35.

<sup>14</sup> “Quae Deus libere prorsus et contingenter a nobis fieri vult, ea potentius aut efficacius quam per modum voti aut desiderii, velle non potest. – Vorst. Parasc., p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> “Deinde etsi in isto casu destinatum aliquod consilium ac voluntas Dei determi-nata consideranda esset, tamen in omnibus actionibus et in its quidem quae ex deliberato hominum consilio et libera voluntate et male quidem fiunt, ita se rem habere inde concludi non possit, puta, quia hic nullum consilium et arbitrii libertas locum habent.” – Corv. ad. Molin., cap. 3. sect. 14, p. 33.

<sup>16</sup> “Respectu contingentiae quam res habent in se, tum in divina scientia Deo expectatio tribuitur.” – Rem. Defen. Sent. in Act. Syn., p. 107.

<sup>17</sup> Referring to the abducted Helen of Troy, whose beauty launched a thousand war-ships on a quest to retrieve her.

of all things on the part of God, that are required to produce any action, yet *the will of man remains absolutely free to do it or not to do it, both in respect to the event, as well as its manner of operation.*<sup>18</sup> That is, notwithstanding God’s decree that such an action shall be performed, and his foreknowledge that it will thus come to pass; and notwithstanding his cooperating with the will of man (as far as they will allow him) for doing it; and though he has determined by that act of man to execute some of his own judgments; yet there is no kind of necessity except that he may just as well omit it, as to do it. This is the same as saying, “Our tongues are our own; we ought to speak: who is lord over us? We will vindicate ourselves into a liberty of doing what and how we will, though we cast God out of his throne for it.”<sup>19</sup> And, indeed, if we mark it, we shall find them undermining and pulling down the actual providence of God, at the root and several branches of it; for –

*First.* For his conservation or sustaining of all things, they assert that it is likely nothing but a *negative act of his will, whereby he wills or determines not to destroy the things created by him;* and when we produce passages of Scripture which affirm that it is an act of his power, they say *these passages are foolishly cited.*<sup>20</sup> So, truly, let the Scripture say what it will (in their conceit), God no more sustains and upholds all his creatures than I do a house by not setting it on fire, or a worm when I do not tread upon it.

*Secondly.* For God’s concurring with inferior causes in all their acts and working, they affirm it is only a *general influence, alike on all men, which they may use or not use at their pleasure;* and in the use, they determine it to this or that effect, whether good or bad (so Corvinus says)<sup>21</sup> as it seems best to them. In a word, this influence is nothing more to the will of man than what allows it to play its own part freely according to its inclination – as they jointly say in their Confession.<sup>22</sup> Observe, also, that they consider this influence of God’s providence not to be on the agent, the will of man, by which it would be helped or enabled to do anything (no, that would seem to grant self-sufficiency), but *only on the act itself to produce it.*<sup>23</sup> If I were to help a man lift a log, it may become lighter for him, but he is not made one jot stronger by it; this takes away from the proper work of providence, consisting in an internal assistance.

*Thirdly.* For God’s determining or circumscribing the will of man to do this or that in particular, they absolutely reject it as a thing which is destructive to their adored liberty. “It is in no way consistent with it,” they say in their Apology.<sup>24</sup> So also Arminius says: “The providence

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<sup>18</sup> “Potentia voluntatis, ab omni interna et externa necessitate immunis debet mahere.” – Rem. Confes., cap. 6. sect. 3. Vid. plura. Rem. Apol., cap. 6. p. 69, a.

<sup>19</sup> “In arbitrio creaturae semper est vel influere in actum vel influxum suum suspendere, et vel sic, vel aliter influere.” – Corv, ad. Molin., cap. 3. sect. 15.

<sup>20</sup> “An conservatio ista sit vis sive actus potentiae an actus merus voluntatis negativus, quo vult res creatas non destruere aut annihilare – pesterius non sine magna veri specie affirmatur: locus ad Heb 1:3 inepte adducitur.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 6. sect. 1, p. 68, a.

<sup>21</sup> “Curandum diligenter, ut Deo quidem universalis, homini vero particularis influxus in actus tribuatur, quo universalem Dei influxum, ad particularem actum determinet.” – Corv, ad Molin., cap. 3. sect. 5.

<sup>22</sup> “Ita concurrat Deus in agendo, cum hominis voluntate, ut istam pro genio suo agere et libere suas partes obire sinat.” – Rem. Confes., cap. 6. sect. 3.

<sup>23</sup> “Influxus divinus est in ipsum actum non in voluntatem.” – Armin. Antip., alii passim.

<sup>24</sup> “Determinatio cum libertate vera nullo modo consistere potest.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 7. fol. 82

of God does not determine the will of man to one part of the contradiction.”<sup>25</sup> That is, “God has not determined that you will do this thing rather than that, or do this and omit that; nor does He by any means overrule your wills.” So the sum of their endeavor is to prove that the will of man is so absolutely free, independent, and uncontrollable, that God does not – no, with all his power he *cannot* – determine that it will certainly and infallibly perform this or that particular action, and thereby accomplish his own purposes and attain his own ends. Truly, it seems to me the most unfortunate attempt that Christians ever lighted on; if it were to get success comparable to the greatness of the undertaking, then the providence of God in men’s esteem would be quite thrust out of the world. “Tantae molis erat.”<sup>26</sup> The new goddess *Contingency* could not be erected until the God of heaven was utterly despoiled of his dominion over the sons of men. In its place, a home-bred idol of self-sufficiency has been set up, and the world is persuaded to worship it.

But, so that the building will climb no higher, let all men observe how the word of God overthrows this Babylonian tower.

*First.* In innumerable places it pointedly says that his providence rules in the counsels of men and in their most secret resolutions. This is why the prophet declares that he knows that “the way of man is not in himself” – that “it is not in man that walks to direct his steps,” Jer 10:23; and Solomon says that “a man’s heart devises his way, but the LORD directs his steps,” Prov 16:9; David, also, laid this ground, that “the Lord brings the counsel of the heathen to nothing,” and “makes the devices of the people of no effect,” but “his own counsel stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations,” Psalm 33:10-11. David then proceeds accordingly, in his own distress, to pray that the Lord would infatuate<sup>27</sup> and make “foolish the counsel of Ahithophel,” 2Samuel 15:31 – the Lord did this by also working in the heart of Absalom to listen to the cross counsel of Hushai.<sup>28</sup>

*Secondly.* That the working of his providence is effectual even in the hearts and wills of men to turn them whichever way he will, and to determine them to take this or that course in particular, as he pleases: “The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the LORD,” says Solomon, Prov 16:1. Jacob trusted and relied on this when he prayed that the Lord would grant that his sons find favor and mercy before that man whom he then supposed to be some atheistic Egyptian, Gen 43:14. From this we must grant, either that the good old man believed that it was in the hand of God to incline and unalterably turn and settle the heart of Joseph to favor his brothers, or else his prayer must have had such a senseless sense as this: “Grant, O Lord, such a general influence of your providence, that the heart of that man may be turned to good towards my sons, or else that it may not, being left to its own freedom.” A strange request! Yet I cannot conceive how it may be bettered by one who believes the Arminian doctrine. Thus Solomon affirms that “the king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water: he turns it wherever he will,” Prov 21:1. The heart of a king has an inward natural liberty that is equal with others, and he has an outward liberty that belongs to his state and condition above others. If this liberty is still so in the hand of the Lord, that he always turns the

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<sup>25</sup> “Providentia divina non determinat voluntatem liberam ad unam contradictionis vel contrarietatis partem.” – Armin. Artic. Perpen.

<sup>26</sup> “So vast was the struggle” – from Virgil’s Aeneid: “so vast was the struggle to found the race of Rome.”

<sup>27</sup> *Infatuate*: to cause to behave in an irrational way.

<sup>28</sup> “Dominus dissipavit consilium quod dederat Achitophel agendo in corde Absolon, ut tale consilium repudiaret, et aliud quod ei non expediebat eligeret.” – Aug, do Grat., et Lib. Arbit., cap. 20.

king's heart to what he pleases in particular – then certainly other men are not excepted from being ruled by the same providence. This is the plain sense of these words, and the direct thesis which we maintain in opposition to the Arminian idol of absolute and independent free-will. So Daniel, also, reproving the Babylonian tyrant, affirms that he “did not glorify the God in whose hand was his breath, and to whom belonged all his ways,” Daniel 5:23. Not only his breath and life, but also all his ways – his actions, thoughts, and words – were in the hand of God.

Indeed, *thirdly*, sometimes the saints of God, as I touched on before, prayed that God would be pleased in this way to determine their hearts, and bend their wills, and wholly incline them to some certain thing, and to do that without any prejudice to their true and proper liberty. So David in Psalm 119:36, “Incline my heart toward your testimonies, and not to *covetousness*.” This prayer being his, may also be ours, and we may ask it in faith, relying on the power and promise of God in Christ that he will perform our petitions, John 14:14. Now, I desire any Christian to resolve whether by these and similar requests, he intends to desire from the hand of God nothing but an indifferent motion toward any good, such that it leaves him to his own choice whether he will do it or not (which is all the Arminians will grant him); or rather, that he would powerfully bend his heart and soul to his testimonies, and have God work in him an actual embracing of all the ways of God – not desiring *more* liberty, but only enough to do it willingly. No, surely the prayers of God's servants would request with Solomon that the Lord would be with them, and “incline their heart to him, to keep his statutes and walk in his commandments,” 1Kings 8:57-58; and with David, to “create in them a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within them,” Psalm 51:10; according to God's promises, they entreat him “to put his fear into their hearts,” Jer 32:40, “to unite their hearts to fear his name,” Psalm 86:11, to work in them both the will and the deed – an actual obedience to his law. This cannot possibly aim at nothing but a general influence, which enables them alike either to do, or not to do, what they so earnestly long for.

*Fourthly*. The certainty of various promises and threatenings of Almighty God depends upon his powerful determining and turning the wills and hearts of men whichever way he pleases. Thus, to those who fear him, he promises that they will find favor in the sight of men, Prov 3:4. Now, if, notwithstanding all God's powerful operation in their hearts, it remains absolutely in the hands of men whether they will favor those who fear him or not, then it is wholly in their power whether God will be true to his promises or not. Surely when Jacob wrestled with God on the strength of such a promise, Gen 32:12, he little questioned whether it was in the power of God to perform it. Indeed, the event showed that there ought to be no such question, chapter 33; for the Lord turned the heart of his brother Esau, just as he turns the hearts of others – as when he makes them pity his servants when they have at times carried them away as captives, Psalm 106:46. See also the same powerful operation required to execute his judgments, Job 12:17, 20:21, etc. In brief, there is no prophecy or prediction in the whole Scripture, no promise to the church or faithful, whose accomplishment requires the free actions and concurrence of men. Rather, it evidently declares that God disposes of the hearts of men, rules their wills, inclines their affections, and determines them freely to choose and to do whatever he in his good pleasure has decreed shall be performed – such were the prophecies of deliverance from the Babylonian captivity by Cyrus, Isaiah 45; of the conversion of the Gentiles; of the stability of the church, Mat 16; of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, chapter 24; with innumerable others. I will add only a few reasons at the close of this long discourse.

This opinion, that God has nothing but a general influence on the actions of men, and does not effectually move their wills to this or that course in particular –

Chap. 4 – The Providence of God

*First.* It grants a goodness of *entity*, or being, to various things, of which God is not the author, such as those special actions which men perform without his special concurrence; this is blasphemous. The apostle affirms that “of him are *all* things.”

*Secondly.* It denies that God is the author of all moral goodness; for any action is good inasmuch as it is such an action in particular. If any action is good, according to this opinion, it is to be attributed merely to the will of man. The general influence of God moves man no more to prayer than to evil communications, which tends to corrupt good behavior.<sup>29</sup>

*Thirdly.* It makes all the decrees of God altogether uncertain, for their execution depends on human actions; his foreknowledge of such things is thus made fallible and easily deceived; no reconciliation is possible, or to be hoped for, between the following and similar assertions:

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“In him we live, and move, and have our being,” Acts 17:28.	“God’s sustaining of all things is not an affirmative act of his power, but a negative act of his will.”
“He upholds all things by the word of his power,” Heb 1:3	“Whereby he will not destroy them,” Rem. Apol.
“You have wrought all our works in us,” Isaiah 26:12. “My Father works up to now,” John 5:17.	“God by his influence bestows nothing on the creature whereby it may be incited or helped in its actions,” Corvinus.
“The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD,” Prov 16:1. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the LORD, like the rivers of water: he turns it wherever he will,” Prov 21:1.	“Those things God would have us freely do ourselves; he can no more effectually work or will than by way of wishing,” Vorstius.
“Incline my heart to your testimonies, and not to covetousness,” Psalm 119:36. “Unite my heart to fear your name,” Psalm 86:11. “You have not glorified the God in whose hand your breath is, and to whom belong all your ways,” Daniel 5:23.	“The providence of God does not determine the free-will of man to this or that in particular, or to one part of the contradiction,” Arminius.
See Mat 27:1, compared with Acts 2:23, and 4:27-28; Luke 24:27; John 19:31-36. For the necessity of other events, see Exodus 21:17; Job 14:5; Mat 19:7, etc.	“The will of man ought to be free from all kinds of internal and external necessity in its actions,” Rem. That is, God cannot lay such a necessity upon any thing that it must infallibly come to pass as he intends. <i>See the contrary in the places cited.</i>

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<sup>29</sup> “Qui aliquid boni a Deo non effici affirmat, ille Deum esse negat: si namque vel tantillum boni a Deo non est: jam non omnis boni effector est eoque nec Deus.” – Bucer. 3 cap. 9. ad Rom.

## CHAPTER 5.

### WHETHER THE WILL AND PURPOSE OF GOD MAY BE RESISTED, AND HE BE FRUSTRATED OF HIS INTENTIONS.

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By the former steps, the altar of Ahaz is set on the right hand of the altar of God – the Arminian idol is exalted to an equal plane with the power and will of the Most High, in direct opposition. I shall now present to you the Spirit of God once more contending with the towering imaginations of poor mortals, about a transcendent privilege of greatness, glory, and power. For having made his decrees mutable, and his prescience fallible, and having quite divested him of his providence as the sum and issue of all their endeavors, they affirm that his will may be resisted. He may fail in his intentions and be frustrated of his ends. He may and does propose such things that he either does not or cannot accomplish at any time. And all of that is because the execution of such acts of his will might by perhaps clash against the freedom of the will of men. If this is not an expression of spiritual pride above all that the devil ever attempted in heaven, then divines do not explicate that sin of his very well. Now, there may seem some difficulty in this matter, because of the several conceptions<sup>1</sup> of the *will* of God – especially in regard to the affirmation that his law and precepts are his will, and alas! we all too often resist or transgress them. I will unfold one distinction of the will of God, which will leave it clear what the Arminians oppose, and for which we count them worthy of so heavy a charge.

“Divinum velle est ejus esse,”<sup>2</sup> say the schoolmen: “The will of God is nothing but God willing;” it does not differ from his essence “secundem rem,” in the thing itself, but only “secundem rationem,” in a relation to the thing that is willed. The essence of God being a most absolute, pure, and simple act or substance, his will can only and simply be one; we ought to make neither division nor distinction in it. If what *signifies* God’s will was always taken properly and strictly for the eternal will of God, then the distinctions that are usually made about it, are distinctions about the signification of the word, rather than the thing itself.

In this regard, these distinctions are not only tolerable, but necessary, because without them it is utterly impossible to reconcile some places of Scripture that are seemingly repugnant to one another. In the 22<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Gen, verse 2, God commands Abraham to take his only son Isaac, and offer him for a burnt-offering in the land of Moriah. Here the words of God declare some will of God to Abraham, who knew it ought to be performed, and thought little but that it should be. Yet, when he actually addressed himself to his duty, in obedience to the will of God, he received a countermand in verse 12, that he should not lay his hand upon the child to sacrifice him. The event plainly manifests that it was the will of God that Isaac should *not* be sacrificed; and yet notwithstanding, by reason of his command, Abraham beforehand seemed bound to believe that it was well-pleasing to God that he *should* accomplish what he was enjoined to do. If the will of God in the Scripture is conceived of in only one way, then here is a plain contradiction. Thus God commands Pharaoh to let his people go. Could Pharaoh think otherwise? No. Was he not bound to believe that it was the will of God that he should dismiss the

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<sup>1</sup> Originally the word was “acceptations” – what we accept to be true about it. It seems clear that Owen is referring to the way we conceive of God’s will. His will is not many things, but only one thing, variously exercised to attain His ends.

<sup>2</sup> Aquinas, p. q. 19, ar. ad. 1.

Israelites at the first hearing of the message? Yet God affirms that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not allow them to depart until God had showed his signs and wonders in the land of Egypt. To reconcile these and similar places in Scripture, the ancient fathers and schoolmen, along with modern divines, affirm that the one will of God may be said to be diverse or manifold with regard to the various ways by which he wills things to be done, and in other respects. Yet, taken in its proper signification, God's will is simply one and the same. The common distinction between God's secret will, and his revealed will, is such that all the other distinctions may be reduced to these two; and therefore I have chosen to insist upon it.

The SECRET WILL of God is his eternal, unchangeable purpose concerning all things which he has made, to be brought to their appointed ends by certain means. He himself affirms that "his counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure," Isaiah 46:10. Some call this the absolute, efficacious will of God, the will of his good pleasure, which is always fulfilled. Indeed this is the only proper, eternal, constant, immutable will of God, whose order can neither be broken nor its law transgressed, so long as there is neither change nor shadow of turning with him. <sup>Jas 1.17</sup>

The REVEALED WILL of God does not contain his purpose and decree, but our duty – not what he will do according to his good pleasure, but what we should do if we would please him; and this will, consisting of his word, his precepts and promises, belongs to us and our children, so that we may do the will of God. Now this, indeed, is τὸ θελητόν rather than τὸ θέλημα – that which God wills, rather than his will – but what we call the will of a man is what he has determined shall be done: "This is the will of him that sent me, that every one which sees the Son, and believes on him, may have everlasting life," says our Savior, John 6:40; that is, this is what his will has appointed. Hence it is called "voluntas signi," or the sign of his will. It is only metaphorically called his will, says Aquinas;<sup>3</sup> for inasmuch as our commands are the signs of our wills, the same is said of the precepts of God. This is the rule of our obedience, the transgression of which makes an action sinful; for ἡ ἁμαρτία ἐστὶν ἡ ἄνομία, "sin is the transgression of a law;" such a law is given to the transgressor to be observed. Now, God has not imposed on us the observation of his eternal decree and intention (his *secret* will); and as it is utterly impossible for us to transgress or frustrate it, we would be unblamable if we should. A master requires of his servant to do what he commands, not to accomplish what he intends, which perhaps he never revealed to him. No, the commands of superiors are not always signs that the commander would have the things commanded actually performed, but only that those who are subject to his command are obliged to obedience, as far as the sense of that extends. "Et hoc clarum est in praeceptis divinis," says Durand,<sup>4</sup> etc. – "And this is clear in the commands of God," by which we are obliged to do what he commands. Yet it is not always his pleasure that the thing itself, in regard to the event, should be accomplished, as we saw before in the examples of Pharaoh and Abraham.

Now, the will of God in the first conception is said to be hidden or secret, not because it is always so, for in some particulars it is revealed and made known to us two ways: –

*First.* By his word, as where God affirms that the dead shall rise. We do not doubt that they shall rise, and that it is the absolute will of God that they shall do so. *Secondly.* By the effects, for when anything comes to pass, we may cast the event on the will of God as its cause, and look at it as a revelation of his purpose. Jacob's sons little imagined that it was the will of God, by them,

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<sup>3</sup> Aquin., q. g. 19, a. 11, c.

<sup>4</sup> Durand, Dist. c. 48, q. 3.

to send their brother into Egypt. Yet afterward Joseph tells them plainly it was not them, but God that sent him there, Gen 45:5. But it is said to be *secret* for two causes: *First*. Because for the most part it is. There is nothing in various outcomes that declare God’s determination, except that the event, while it is future, is hidden from those who may have faculties to judge things past and present, but not to discern things to come. Hence St. James bids us not be too peremptory in our determinations that we will do this or that, not knowing how God will engage with us for its performance.<sup>Jas 4.13</sup> *Secondly*. It is said to be secret in reference to its cause, which for the most part is past our finding out: “His path is in the great waters, and his footsteps are not known.”<sup>Psa 77.19</sup>

It appears, then, that the *secret* and *revealed* will of God are diverse in various respects, but chiefly in regard to their acts and their objects. *First*, In regard to their acts, the secret will of God is his eternal decree and determination concerning anything to be done in its appointed time; his revealed will is an act whereby he declares himself to love or approve anything, whether it is ever done or not. *Secondly*. They are diverse in regard to their objects. The object of God’s purpose and decree is what is good in any way, with reference to its actual existence – for it must infallibly be performed. But the object of his *revealed* will is only what is morally good (inasmuch as his will approves or commands it), agreeing with the law and the gospel; for whether it is actually performed or not is incidental to the object of God’s revealed will.

Now, of these two differences, the first is *perpetual* in regard to their several acts, but not so with their objects; they are sometimes *coincident* in regard to their objects. For instance, God commands us to believe; here his revealed will is that we should do so – along with this, he *intends* we shall do so. Therefore he ingenerates faith in our hearts so that we may believe. Here his secret and his revealed will are coincident; the former<sup>5</sup> being his *precept* that we *should* believe, and the latter being his *purpose* that we *shall* believe. In this case, I say the object of the one and the other is the same: what we *ought* to do, and what he *will* do. And this inasmuch as he has “wrought all our works in us,” Isaiah 26:12. They are our own works which he works in us; his act in us and by us is often our duty towards him. He commands us by his revealed will to walk in his statutes, and to keep his laws; upon this command he also promises that he will so effect all things, that this shall be performed by some: “A new heart I will also give you, and a new spirit I will put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments and do them.” (Ezekiel 36:26- 27) So the obedience of the people of God is the self-same object of his will here, taken in either conception of it. And yet the precept of God is not here, as some learned men suppose, declarative of God’s intention – for then it must be declared to all to whom the precept is given. Evidently it is not, for many are commanded to believe, on whom God never bestows faith. It is still to be looked at as a mere declaration of our duty, its engagement with God’s intention being incidental to it. There is a wide difference between “Do such a thing,” and, “You shall do it.” If God’s command to Judas to believe meant, “It is my purpose and intention that Judas shall believe,” then it must contradict that will of God whereby he determined that Judas, for his infidelity, should go to his “own place.”<sup>Act 1.25</sup> His precepts are to be performed in all obedience by us, but they do not signify his will that we shall actually fulfill his commands. Abraham was not bound to believe that it was

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<sup>5</sup> The words “former” and “latter” evidently refer to the previous sentence – “former” corresponding with the revealed will, “latter” with the secret will of God. The order is reversed in the first clause of this sentence, and hence the author’s meaning might be mistaken. – ED.

God's intention that Isaac should be sacrificed, but that it was his own duty. There was no obligation on Pharaoh to think it was God's purpose that the people should depart at the first summons; he had nothing to do with that. But there was one thing to believe: that if he would please God, then he must let them go. Hence diverse things of good use may be collected in these controversies:

*First.* That God may command many things by his word which he never decreed to actually be performed; because, in such things, his words are not a revelation of his eternal decree and purpose, but only a declaration of something which he is well-pleased with – whether it is performed by us or not. In the fore-cited case, God commanded Pharaoh to let his people go, and then plagued him for refusing to obey his command. Hence we may *not* collect that God intended the obedience and conversion of Pharaoh by his precept, and was frustrated of his intention – for the Scripture is evident and clear that God purposed a far different end by Pharaoh's disobedience, which was to manifest his glory by Pharaoh's punishment. We may collect only that obedience to God's commands is pleasing to him, as in 1Samuel 15:22.<sup>6</sup>

*Secondly.* That the will of God, to which our obedience is required, is the revealed will of God contained in his word – our compliance with his decree is such that, from this, we learn three things tending toward its execution: *First.* That it is the condition and dispensation of the word of God, to instantly persuade us to faith and obedience. *Secondly.* That it is our duty by all means to aspire to perform all things enjoined by it, and it is our fault if we do not. *Thirdly.* That by these means, God will accomplish his eternal decree of saving his elect; and that he wills the salvation of others, to the extent that he calls them to perform the condition of it. Now, our obedience is to be so regulated by this revealed will of God, that we may sin either by omission against its precepts, or by commission against its prohibitions; although by our omitting or committing anything, the *secret* will or purpose of God is fulfilled. Had Abraham disobeyed God's precept, when he was commanded to sacrifice his son Isaac, though God's will had been accomplished by it (who never intended it), yet Abraham had grievously sinned against the *revealed* will of God, the rule of his duty. The holiness of our actions consists in conformity to God's precepts, and not to his purposes. On this ground Gregory affirms, "That many fulfill the will of God" (that is, his intentions) "when they think to change it" (by transgressing his precepts); "and by resisting imprudently, they obey God's purpose."<sup>7</sup> And to show how merely in our actions we are tied to this rule of our duty, St. Austin shows how a man may do good in something that crosses God's secret will, and do evil in something which complies with it. He illustrates this by the example of a sick parent who has children, the one wicked, who desires his father's death, and the other godly, who prays for his life. But the will of God is that he shall die, which agrees with the desire of the wicked child; yet it is the other who performed his duty, and did what is pleasing to God.<sup>8</sup>

*Thirdly.* What we are now agitated about is the secret will of God, which we unfolded before. And this is what we charge the Arminians: for affirming that God's secret will may be resisted – that is, that *God may fail in his purposes, come short of what he earnestly intends, or be frustrated of his aim and end.* It is as if God were to determinately resolve the faith and salvation of a man, and it is in the power of that man to void God's determination, and not believe, and not

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<sup>6</sup> **1Samuel 15:22** NKJ Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, *And* to heed than the fat of rams.

<sup>7</sup> "Multi voluntatem Dei faciunt, cum illam nituntur vitare, et resistendo imprudenter obsequuntur divino consilio." – Greg. Moral., lib. 6. cap. 11.

<sup>8</sup> Aug. Enchirid. ad Lauren., cap. 101.

be saved. Now, it is only in cases of this nature, in which our own free wills have an interest, that they thus limit and *circumscribe* the power of the Most High. In other things they grant that his *omnipotence* is of no lesser extent than others claim; but in *this* case they are peremptory and resolute, without any coloring or equivocation. For although there is a question proposed by the apostle in Rom 9:19, “Who has resisted his will?” none has or can resist it. Paul grants in the following verses, Corvinus asserts, “It is only an objection of the Jews that is rejected by the apostle.”<sup>9</sup> This is much like an answer that young scholars give to some difficult passage in Aristotle, when they cannot think of a better one: “Loquitur ex aliorum sententia;”<sup>10</sup> for there is no sign of any such rejection of it by the apostle in the entire discourse which follows. Indeed, it is not the Jews that St. Paul disputes with here, but weaker brothers concerning the Jews. This is manifest from the first verse of the next chapter, where he distinguishes between “brothers” *to* whom, and “Israel” *of* whom he spoke. *Secondly*. He speaks of the Jews in the whole treatise in the third person, but of the disputer in the second person. *Thirdly*. It is taken for a confessed principle between St. Paul and the disputer (as he calls him) that the Jews were rejected, which surely they would not readily acknowledge themselves. So that Corvinus rejects, as an objection of the Jews, a granted principle of St. Paul and the other Christians of his time. With similar confidence, the same author affirms that, “They doubt nothing but that many things are not done which God would have done.”<sup>11</sup> Vorstius goes further, teaching that “not only are many things not done which God would have done, but also many things are done which God would not have done.”<sup>12</sup> He does not mean our transgressing of God’s law, but God’s failing in his purpose, as Corvinus clarifies it, acknowledging that the execution of God’s will is suspended or hindered by man, to which Episcopius subscribes.<sup>13</sup> As for example, God purposes and intends the conversion of a sinner – suppose it were Mary Magdalene – can this intention of his be crossed and his will resisted? “Indeed,” say the Arminians, “for God converts sinners by his grace.” “But we can resist God when he would convert us by his grace,”<sup>14</sup> said six of them jointly in their meeting at the Hague. “But some may object,” they say, “that thus God fails of his intention, and does not attain the end at which he aims. We answer, ‘This we grant.’” Or if it is the salvation of men, they say, “they are certain that God intends for many what they never obtain;” God cannot compass that end.<sup>15</sup>

And here, I think, they place God in a most unhappy condition, by affirming that some are damned whom God would have saved, even though he desires their salvation with a most vehement desire and natural affection,<sup>16</sup> such as crows, I think, have a natural affection for the

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<sup>9</sup> “Ea sententia non continet apostoli verba, sed Judseorum objectionem ab apostolo rejectam.” – Corv, ad Molin., cap. 3. per. 19.

<sup>10</sup> *Loquitur ex aliorum sententia* – “the thing itself comes from another thought.”

<sup>11</sup> “Multa non fieri quae Deus fieri vult, vel non dubitamus.” – Ibid, cap. 5:p. 5.

<sup>12</sup> “Multa fiunt quae Deus fieri non vult: nec semper fiunt quae ipse fieri vult.” – Vorst. de Deo, p. 64.

<sup>13</sup> “Ab homine esse agnoscimus, quod voluntatis (divinae) executio saepe suspendatur.” – Corv., ubi sup. parag. 12; Episcop. Disput. Pri. De Volun. Dei, corol. 5.

<sup>14</sup> “Possumus Deo resistere, cum nos vult per gratiam suam convertere.” – Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 193. “Objiciet quis, ergo illum suum finem Deus non est assecutus, respon-demus, nos hoc concedere.” – Rem. Defens. Sent. in Synod., p. 256.

<sup>15</sup> “Nobis certum est, Deum multorum salutem intendere, in quibus eam non assequitur.” – Grevinch, ad Ames., p. 271.

<sup>16</sup> “Vehemens est in Deo affectus ad homini benefaciendum.” – Corv, ad Molin., cap. 5. sect. 8.

good of their young ones.<sup>17</sup> They plainly affirm that in God, there are such desires that are never fulfilled, because they are not regulated by wisdom and justice;<sup>18</sup> for although God might accomplish them by his infinite power, perhaps, yet it would not become him to do so.

Now, let any good-natured man, who has been a little troubled for poor Jupiter in Homer, mourning for the death of his son Sarpedon, which he could not prevent; or who has been grieved for the sorrow of a distressed father who is not able to remove the wickedness and inevitable ruin of an only son; let such a man drop one tear for the restrained condition of the God of heaven. When he would have each and every man in the world come to heaven to escape the torments of hell, and he has a serious purpose and intention that it *shall* be so, and a vehement affection and fervent natural desire that it *should* be so, yet not being able to save even one by himself alone, God is forced to lose his desire, lay down his affection, change his purpose, and see the greater part of them perish everlastingly – indeed, *notwithstanding that he had provided a sufficient means for them all to escape, with a purpose and intention that they should so do.*<sup>19</sup>

In brief, their whole doctrine on this point is laid down by Corvinus, in chapter 3, *Against Moulin*, and in the third section where, first, he allows the distinction of the will of God into that whereby *he will have us do something, and that whereby he will do anything himself*. The first is nothing but his law and precepts; which we affirm with him that it may be said to be resisted, inasmuch as it is transgressed. The latter, he says, if it respects any act of man's, may be considered as preceding that act, or following that act. If it precedes that act, then it may be resisted, if man will not cooperate. Now, this is the will of God, whereby God himself intends to do anything. The sum of this distinction is this, "The will of God concerning the future being of anything, may be considered as going before the actual existence of the thing itself. In this regard, it may be hindered or resisted. But when it is considered to follow any act of man, it is always fulfilled." By this latter phrase, in striving to mollify the harshness of the former, Corvinus runs himself into inexplicable nonsense. He is affirming that any act of the will of God, by which he intends men to do anything, cannot be hindered *after* they have done it. That is, God has irresistibly purposed that they shall do it, provided they do it! In his following discourse, also, Corvinus plainly asserts that there is no act of God's will concerning the salvation of men, that may not be made void and of no effect, except for the general decree by which God has established an inseparable connection between faith and salvation; or by which he has appointed faith in Christ as the means of attaining blessedness. This is only an immanent act of God's will, producing no outward effect; so that every act of God's will that issues from human co-operation, is frustrable and may fall to the ground. Let the following instances declare how this stands in direct opposition to the word of God:

*First*, "Our God is in the heavens," says the psalmist: "he has done whatever he has pleased," Psalm 115:3. Not only part, but all – *whatever* he pleased should come to pass, by *any* means. "He rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever he will," Daniel 4:17. The

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<sup>17</sup> This is Owen's caustic humor; by making such an assertion, the Arminians are turning God into no more than a mother crow.

<sup>18</sup> "Esse in Deo desideria quae non implentur concedimus." – Idem, sect. 9. "Non decet ut Deus infinita sua potentia utatur ad id efficiendum, quo desiderio suo naturali fertur." – Armim Antip., p. 584.

<sup>19</sup> "Deus eo fine et intentione remedium praeparavit, ut omnes ejus actu fierent participes, quamvis id non actu evenit." – Rem. Apol., cap. 7. fol. 86.

transposition of kingdoms<sup>20</sup> is not accomplished without the mixture of various free and voluntary actions of men; and yet in that great work, God does all that he pleases. Indeed, before him “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he does according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say to him, What are you doing?” verse 35. “My counsel,” he says, “shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure,” Isaiah 46:10; “I have purposed; I will also do it,” verse 11. So certain is God of accomplishing all his purposes, that he confirms it with an oath: “The LORD of hosts has sworn, Surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand,” Isaiah 14:24. And indeed it would be a very strange thing if God intended what he foresees will never come to pass. But I confess this argument will not be pressing against the Arminians, who question that prescience of God. Yet, they should also observe from the Scripture that the failing of wicked men’s counsels and intentions is a thing that God is said to “deride in heaven,” as in Psalm 2:4. He threatens them with it. “Take counsel together,” he says, “and it shall come to nothing; speak the word, and it shall not stand,” Isaiah 8:10. See also chapter 29:7-8. And shall they be enabled to recriminate, and cast a similar aspersion on the God of heaven? No, surely. Says St. Austin, “Let us take heed that we are not compelled to believe that Almighty God would have anything done which does not come to pass.”<sup>21</sup> The schoolmen have universally consented to this truth, also, as shown by Alvarez, Disput. 32, pro. 3.<sup>22</sup> These few instances will manifest the Arminian opposition to the word of God in this particular:

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“Our God is in the heavens: he has done whatever he has pleased,” Psalm 115:3.	“We do not doubt but that many things which God wills, or that it pleases him to have done, yet never come to pass,” Corvinus. “We grant that some of God’s desires are never fulfilled,” Idem.
“I will do all my pleasure.” Isaiah 46:10. “None can stay his hand, or say to him, What are you doing?” Daniel 4:35.	“It is in the power of man to hinder the execution of God’s will,” Idem.
“I have purposed, I will also do it,” Isaiah 46:11.	“It is ridiculous to imagine that God does not seriously will any thing but what takes effect,” Episcopius.
“As I have purposed, so shall it stand,” Isaiah 14:24.	“It may be objected that God fails of his end: this we readily grant,” Rem. Synod.

<sup>20</sup> That is, kingdoms and governments come and go through the voluntary and willful actions of men; and yet God governs all.

<sup>21</sup> “Ne credere cogamur aliquid omnipotentem Deum voluisse factumque non esse.” – Aug. En., cap. 103.

<sup>22</sup> Probably **Diego Alvarez** (1550-1635), who represented the Dominicans in a dispute concerning the heretical teachings of the Spanish Jesuit Luis de Molina (from whom ‘Molinism’ arose, c.1558). A debate ensued (*Congregatio de Auxiliis*) that didn’t end until 1607 when the Dominicans and the Jesuits agreed to disagree. By decree of the Inquisition in Dec 1611, intended to keep the peace between these two factions, no book could be published pro or con about *efficacious grace* without the consent of the Holy See. That prohibition lasted through most of the 17<sup>th</sup> century – although Thomas Aquinas’ commentaries were often quoted by the Dominicans in opposition to Molinism.

## CHAPTER 6.

### *HOW THE WHOLE DOCTRINE OF PREDESTINATION IS CORRUPTED BY THE ARMINIANS.*

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The cause of all these quarrels, with which the Arminians and their abettors have troubled the church of Christ, comes to our consideration next. The chief endeavor of all the patrons of human self-sufficiency has been the demolishing of this rock of our salvation: the eternal predestination of Almighty God – that fountain of all spiritual blessings – which predestines all the effects of God’s love derived for us through Christ. It has been done to vindicate for themselves a power and independent ability to do good, to make themselves differ from others, and to attain everlasting happiness, without taking one step outside themselves. And this is their first attempt to attain their second proposed end – to build a tower from the top of which they may mount into heaven, but whose foundation is nothing but the sand of their own free-will and endeavors. Quite suddenly, what they tried to do in effect was to take away this divine predestination, both name and thing. It has been a notorious attempt, as noted, and would not likely attain the least success among men professing to believe the gospel of Christ. Therefore, allowing the name to remain, they have abolished the thing itself, and substituted another so unlike it in its place, that anyone may see they have gotten a bleary-eyed Leah instead of Rachel, and they hug a cloud instead of a Deity. The true doctrine itself has been so excellently delivered by various learned divines, and so freed from all objections, that I will only briefly and plainly lay it down, and do so with special reference to the seventeenth article of our church, where it is clearly avowed. I will show, as my chief intention, how this article is thwarted, opposed, and overthrown by the Arminians.

*Predestination, in the usual sense in which it is taken, is a part of God’s providence concerning his creatures, distinguished from it by a double restriction:*

First. In respect to their *objects*; for where the decree of providence comprehends God’s intentions towards all the works of his hands, predestination respects only *rational* creatures.

Secondly. In regard to their *ends*; for where God’s PROVIDENCE directs all creatures in general to those several ends to which at length they are brought – whether they are proportional to their nature or exceeding the sphere of their natural activity – PREDESTINATION is exercised only in directing rational creatures to supernatural ends. So that, in general, predestination is *the counsel, decree, or purpose of Almighty God concerning the last and supernatural end of his rational creatures, to be accomplished for the praise of his glory*. But this also must receive a double restriction before we come precisely to what we aim at in this place. And these restrictions again are in regard to the objects or the ends of predestination.

The *object* of predestination is all rational creatures. Now, these are either angels or men. I will not address angels. Secondly. The *end* provided by predestination for these rational creatures, is either eternal happiness or eternal misery. I speak only of the former – the act of God’s predestination transmitting men to everlasting happiness. And in this restrained sense, it does not differ at all from election, and we may use them *synonymously* as terms of the same importance. Though, when some affirm that God predestines to faith those whom he has chosen, these terms seem to be distinguished as to the decrees of the end, which is election, and the means that are conducive to it, which is predestination. But this exact distinction does not appear directly in the Scripture.

The word of God proposes election as the gracious, immutable decree of Almighty God, whereby, *before the foundation of the world, out of his own good pleasure, he chose certain men, determining to free them from sin and misery, to bestow upon them grace and faith, to give them to Christ, to bring them to everlasting blessedness, for the praise of his glorious grace;* or, as it is expressed in our church articles, “Predestination to life is the everlasting purpose of God, whereby, before the foundations of the world were laid, he has constantly decreed by his counsel, secret to us, to deliver from curse and damnation those whom he has chosen in Christ out of mankind, and to bring them by Christ to everlasting salvation, as vessels made for honor; wherefore, those who are endued with so excellent a benefit from God, are called according to God’s purpose,” etc.

Now, to avoid prolixity,<sup>1</sup> I will annex only such annotations as may clarify the sense and confirm the truth of the article by the Scriptures. And I will show briefly how it is overthrown by the Arminians in every particular of it:

*First.* The article, agreeable to the Scripture, affirms that *it is an eternal decree, made before the foundations of the world were laid;* so that by this decree we must be chosen before we were born, before we have done either good or evil. The words of the article are clear, and so also is the Scripture: “He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,” Eph 1:4; “The children not yet being born, neither having done any good or evil,” etc., Rom 9:11-12; “We are called with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” 2Tim 1:9. Now, from this it would undoubtedly follow that no good thing in us can be the cause of our election, for every cause must precede its effect; but all things of which we are partakers by any means, inasmuch as they are ours, they are temporary; and so they cannot be the cause of what is eternal. Things with that qualification must have reference to the sole will and good pleasure of God; this reference would break the neck of Arminian election. This is why, to prevent such a fatal ruin, they deny the principle that election is eternal.<sup>2</sup> So the Remonstrants say in their Apology, “Complete election refers only to one who is dying; for this peremptory election decrees the whole accomplishment and consummation of salvation; therefore it requires the finished course of faith and obedience in the object,” says Grevinchovius.<sup>3</sup> This makes God’s election nothing but an act of his justice, approving our *obedience*. Such an act is incidental to any weak man, who does not know what will happen in the next hour that is yet to come. Is this post-destination what is proposed in the Scripture as the unsearchable fountain of all God’s love towards us in Christ? “Yes,” they say, “we acknowledge no other predestination to be revealed in the gospel besides that by which God decrees to save those who persevere in faith.”<sup>4</sup> That is, God’s determination concerning their salvation is pending, until he finds by experience that they will persevere in

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<sup>1</sup> *Prolixity*: wordiness; long-winded about a subject. Considering Owen’s penchant for wordiness, this is amusing.

<sup>2</sup> “Electio non est ab aeterno.” – Rem. Apol.

<sup>3</sup> “Electio alia completa est, quae neminem spectat nisi immortentem. Electio peremptoria totum salutis complementum et consummationem decernit, ideoque in objecto requirit totam consummatam fidei obedientiam.” – Grevinch, ad Ames. p. 136, passim. dis. Nicolaas Grevinckhoven (Grevinchovius, Grevinghoven or Grevinchoven in German sources) Dutch minister in Rotterdam (1601), died 1632. He attended the debate between Arminius and Gomarus in 1609, signed the Remonstrance of 1610, and attended the Hague Conference of 1611. Noted for his ongoing debate with English Puritan William Ames c. 1610.

<sup>4</sup> “Non agnoscimus aliam praedestinationem in evangelio patefactam, quam qua Deus decrevit credentes et qui in eadem fide perseverarent, salvos facere.” – Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 34.

obedience. But seeing that election is confessedly one of the great expressions of God’s infinite goodness, love, and mercy towards us, I wonder why we do not have it if it follows our obedience, like all other blessings and mercies that are promised to us. Is it not because such propositions as these, “Believe, Peter, and continue in the faith to the end, and I will choose you before the foundation of the world,” are more fit for the writings of the Arminians than for the word of God? Nor will we be their rivals in such an election, because no fruit, no effect, and no consolation can be derived from this for any mortal man while he lives in this world.<sup>5</sup>

*Secondly.* The article affirms that it is *constant* decree – that is, one immutable decree; this also is agreeable to the Scriptures, teaching only one purpose, only one foreknowledge, one good pleasure, one decree of God, concerning the infallible ordination of his elect to glory. Although it may be said there are two acts of this decree – one concerning the means, the other concerning the end; but both knit up in the “immutability of God’s counsel,” Heb 6:17. “The foundation of God stands sure, having this seal: The Lord knows those who are his,” 2Tim 2:19; “His gifts and calling are irrevocable;” Rom 11:29. Now, what do our Arminians say to this? Why, they have invented a whole multitude of notions and terms to obscure the doctrine. “Election,” they say, “is either legal or evangelical, general or particular, complete or incomplete, revocable or irrevocable, peremptory or not peremptory,”<sup>6</sup> along with I do not know how many more distinctions of this single eternal act of Almighty God. There is neither sign nor token of it in the whole Bible, nor by any approved author. Yet they accommodate their doctrine to these quavering divisions; or rather they purposely invented them to make their errors unintelligible. In accord with this, they dictate: “There is a *complete* election, belonging to none but those who are dying; and there is another election, *incomplete*, which is common to all who believe. Just as the good things of salvation are incomplete and continue only while faith is continued – but are revoked when that is denied – so election is incomplete in this life; and it is revocable.”<sup>7</sup> Again: “There are,” they say in their Confession, “three orders of believers and repenters in the Scripture, of which some are beginners, others continue for a time, and some persevere [to the end]. The first two orders are chosen *vere*, truly, but not *prorsus absolute*, absolutely; it is only for a time – so long as they will remain as they are. The third order are chosen *finally* and *peremptorily*. For this act of God’s election is either continued or interrupted, according to whether we fulfill the condition.”<sup>8</sup> But where did the Arminians learn this doctrine from? Not one word of it is from the word of truth. There is no mention of any such desultory<sup>9</sup> election, no speech about faith but one that it is consequent to one, eternal, irrevocable, decree of predestination: They “believed” who were “ordained to eternal life,” Acts 13:48. There is no distinction between half and wholly elected men where Scripture affirms that it is impossible for the elect to be seduced, Mat 24:24 – and that none can snatch Christ’s sheep out of his Father’s hand, John 10:28-29. Would they have more examples? God’s purpose of election is sealed up,

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<sup>5</sup> “Electionis fructum aut sensum in hac vita nullum agnosco.” – Grevinch.

<sup>6</sup> Episcop. Thes., p. 35; Epist. ad Walach., p. 38; Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 133.

<sup>7</sup> “Electio alia completa est, quae neminem spectat nisi morientem, alia incompleta, quae omnibus fidelibus communis est; ut salutis bona sunt incompleta quae continuantur, fide continuata, et abnegate, revocantur, sic electio est incompleta in hac vita, non peremptoria, revocabilis.” – Grevinch, ad Ames.

<sup>8</sup> “Tres sunt ordines credentium et resipiscentium in Scripturis, novitli, credentes aliquandiu, perseverantes. Duo priores ordines credentium eliguntur vere quidem, at non prorsus absolute, nec nisi ad tempus, puta quamdiu et quatenus tales sunt,” etc. – Rem. Confess., cap. 18, sect. 6,7.

<sup>9</sup> [Desultory: indefinite, wandering, jumping from one thing to another.](#)

2Tim 2:19, and therefore it cannot be revoked; it must stand firm, Rom 9:11, in spite of all opposition. Nor will reason allow us to think that any immanent act of God is incomplete or revocable, because of the bounded alliance that it has with God's very nature. But reason, Scripture, God himself, must all give way to any absurdities that may stand in the Arminians' way. They bring in their idol with shouts, and they prepare his throne by claiming that the cause of their predestination is in themselves.

*Thirdly.* The article is clear that the object of this predestination is *some particular men chosen out of mankind*; that is, it is an act of God that concerns some men in particular. It is taking them aside, as it were, from the midst of their brothers, and designing them for some special end and purpose. The Scripture also abounds in asserting this truth, calling those who are so chosen a "few," Mat 20:16 – which must denote some *certain* persons; and the "remnant according to election," Rom 11:5; those whom "the Lord knows to be his," 2Tim 2:19; men "ordained to eternal life," Acts 13:48; "us," Rom 8:39; those whose names are "written in the Lamb's book of life," Rev 21:27. All of these verses and various others, clearly prove that the number of the elect is certain – not only materially, as the Arminians say, that there are only so many [unspecified persons], but formally also: they are these particular persons and no others, which cannot be altered.<sup>10</sup> The very nature of the thing itself so demonstrably evinces it, that I wonder that it could possibly be conceived of under any other notion. To apprehend an election of men that is not circumscribed to particular persons, is such a conceited, Platonical abstraction, that it seems strange for anyone to dare profess to understand that there can be predestination, and yet none are predestined; an election, and yet none are elected; a choice among many, and yet none are left or taken; a decree to save men, and yet salvation by that decree is destined for no one man – either in deed or in expectation.<sup>11</sup> In a word, asserting that there can be a purpose of God to bring men to glory, which stands inviolable, even though no one ever attained the purposed end, is such a riddle that no Oedipus can unfold it.<sup>12</sup>

Now, the Arminians have substituted such an election, and such a predestination, in place of God's everlasting decree. "We deny," they say, "that God's election extends itself to any singular persons as singular persons;"<sup>13</sup> that is, that any particular persons, such as Peter, Paul, and John, are elected by it. No? How then? Corvinus says, "God has appointed to dispense the means of faith indiscriminately;<sup>14</sup> and when he sees these persons believing or not believing by

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<sup>10</sup> Aquinas *Summa Theologica*, Quest 23, Predestination; Art. 7 Obj. 3: Augustine says (De Corr. et Grat. 13): "The number of the predestined is certain, and can neither be increased nor diminished." I answer that, The number of the predestined is certain. Some have said that it was *formally*, but not *materially* certain; as if we were to say that it was certain that a hundred or a thousand would be saved; not however these or those individuals. But this destroys the certainty of predestination; of which we spoke above (Article 6). Therefore we must say that to God the number of the predestined is certain, not only formally, but also materially. It must, however, be observed that the number of the predestined is said to be certain to God, not by reason of His knowledge, because, that is to say, He knows how many will be saved (for in this way the number of drops of rain and the sands of the sea are certain to God); but by reason of His deliberate choice and determination.

<sup>11</sup> Owen also inserted the Latin here: *re aut spe*.

<sup>12</sup> Referring to *Oedipus Rex*, Sophocles' play, in which Oedipus must solve the riddle of the Sphinx, which is the riddle of man.

<sup>13</sup> "Nos negamus Dei electionem ad salutem extendere sese ad singulares personas, qua singulares personas." – Rem. Coll. Hag., fol. 76.

<sup>14</sup> Originally, "without difference." They assert that God has made faith possible for everyone universally, not just for some.

the use of those means of faith, then at length he determines about them.”<sup>15</sup> Well, then, God chooses no particular man to salvation, but only a man he sees believing by his own power, using the same means afforded to others who never believe. And just as such a man makes himself differ from others by a good use of his own abilities, so that man may also be reduced again to the same predicament as the others – and then his election, which does not respect him in his person, but only in his qualification, quite vanishes. But is this God’s decree of election? “Yes,” they say, and they dolefully complain that any other doctrine should ever be taught in the church.<sup>16</sup> “It is imposed upon the church,” say the true-born sons of Arminius, “as a most holy doctrine, that God, by an absolute, immutable decree, from all eternity, out of his own good pleasure, has chosen certain persons, and those but few in comparison, without any respect to their faith and obedience, and has predestined them to everlasting life.” But what great exception is this doctrine liable to, what wickedness does it include, that it should not be accounted most holy? Not only the *matter*, but the very *terms* of it are contained in the Scripture. Does it not say that the elect are few,<sup>Mat 22.14</sup> and that they were chosen before the foundation of the world,<sup>Eph 1.4</sup> without any respect to their obedience or anything they had done?<sup>Rom 9.11</sup> Was this not done out of God’s mere gracious good pleasure,<sup>Eph 1.9-10</sup> so that his free purpose according to election might stand<sup>Rom 9.11</sup> – and because it pleased him?<sup>Gal 1.15</sup> And was this not done so that they might be holy, believe, and be sanctified, so that they might come to Christ, and be preserved by him to everlasting life? This is indeed what galls them. “No such will can be ascribed to God, whereby he wills anyone to be saved such that, from this, their salvation should be sure and infallible,” says the father of those children.<sup>17</sup>

Well, then, let St. Austin’s definition be quite rejected, “Predestination is a preparation of such benefits whereby some are most certainly freed and delivered from sin and brought to glory.”<sup>18</sup> And also that definition of St. Paul, “That (by reason of this) nothing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ.” What is this election in your judgment? “Nothing but a decree whereby God has appointed to save those who believe in Christ,” says Corvinus, whoever they may be;<sup>19</sup> or a general purpose of God, whereby God has ordained faith in Christ to be the means of salvation. Indeed – but this belongs to Judas as well as to Peter. Such a decree, then, equally to those who are damned and to those who are saved. Salvation, under the condition of faith in Christ, was also proposed to them; but was Judas and all his company elected? How did they come, then, to be seduced and perish? That any of God’s elect should go to hell, is still a strange assertion in Christianity. To say that notwithstanding this decree, none may believe, or all who

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<sup>15</sup> “Deus statuit indiscriminatim media ad fidem administrare, et prout has, vel illas personas, istis mediis credituras vel non credituras videt, ita tandem de illis statuit.” – Corv. ad Tilen., 76.

<sup>16</sup> “Ecclesiae tanquam sacrosancta doctrina obtruditur, Deum absolutissimo et immutabili decreto ab omni retro aeternitate, pro puro suo beneplacito, singulares quosdam homines, eosque, quoad caeteros, paucissimos, citra ullius obedientiae aut fidei in Christum intuitum praedestinasse ad vitam.” – Praefat. Lib. Armin. ad Perk.

<sup>17</sup> “Nulla Deo tribui potest voluntas, qua ita velit hominem ullum salvari, ut salus inde illis constet certo et infallibiliter.”--Armin. Antip., p. 583.

<sup>18</sup> “Praedestinatio est praeparatio beneficiorum quibus certissime liberantur quicumque liberantur.” – Aug, de Bono Per. Sen., cap. 14.

<sup>19</sup> “Decretum electionis nihil aliud est quam decretum quo Deus constituit credentes in Christo justificare et salvare.” – Corv, ad Tilen., p. 13.

do believe may fall away (and so none at all are saved), is a strange kind of predestination; or to say that *all* may believe, continue in faith, and be saved, is an even stranger kind of election.<sup>20</sup>

We poor souls thought up to now that we might have believed (according to Scripture), that by this purpose some were in a special way made the Father's ("Yours they were"),<sup>Joh 17.6</sup> and given by him to Christ, that he might bring them to glory; and that these men were so certain and unchangeable a number, that not only does God "know them" as being "his," but also that Christ "calls them by name," John 10:3, and sees that none takes them out of his hand.<sup>Joh 10.28</sup> We never before imagined that Christ has been the mediator of an uncertain covenant, there being no certain persons covenanted with, but only those who may or may not fulfill the condition. We always thought that some had been separated beforehand by God's purpose from the rest of the perishing world, so that Christ might lay down his life for his "friends,"<sup>Joh 15.15</sup> for his "sheep,"<sup>Joh 10.27</sup> for those "given to him" by his Father.<sup>Joh 17.6</sup> But now it seems that he was ordained to be a king when it was completely uncertain whether he would ever have any subjects, to be a head without a body, to a church whose collection and continuance depended wholly and solely on the will of men.

These are doctrines that I believe searchers of the Scripture would scarcely be acquainted with, if they had not lighted on those expositors who teach that, "The only reason why God loves" (or chooses) "any person, is because the honesty, faith, and piety with which that person is endued, according to God's command and his own duty, are acceptable to God."<sup>21</sup> Though we grant that this is true of God's consequent or approving love, yet surely there is a divine love with which he looks upon us differently when he gives us to Christ. Otherwise, either giving us to Christ is not done out of love, or else we are pious, just, and faithful before we come to Christ – that is, we have no need of him at all. Against either of these, though we may try to blot these testimonies out of our hearts, yet they will still stand as recorded in holy Scripture – namely, that God so loved us when we were his "enemies," Rom 5:10, "sinners," verse 8, without "strength," verse 6; that "he gave his only-begotten Son" to die, "that we should not perish, but have everlasting life," John 3:16. But enough of this.

*Fourthly.* Another thing that the article asserts according to the Scripture, is that *there is no other cause of our election but God's own counsel.* It recounts no motives in us, nothing impelling the will of God to choose some out of mankind and rejecting others, except his own decree – that is, his absolute will and good pleasure. So there is no cause in anything outside himself why God would create the world, or elect anyone at all. For he does all these things for himself, to the praise of his own glory. Thus there is nothing in singular elected persons causing God to choose them rather than others. He looked upon all mankind as being in the same condition, vested with the same qualifications, or rather without any qualifications at all. For *it is the children not yet born that are chosen or rejected, before they do either good or evil;* his free grace embraces the one and passes over the other. Yet here we must observe that, although God freely, without any deserving of theirs, chooses some men to partake both of the end (salvation) and the means (faith), yet he bestows faith, or the means, on no one but for the merit of Christ. Nor do any attain the end (salvation) except by their own faith, through Christ's righteousness. The free grace of God notwithstanding, choosing Jacob while Esau is rejected, means the only antecedent cause of any difference between the elect and reprobates remains firm and unshaken.

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<sup>20</sup> That is, election implies that some are chosen out of all, not that *all* are chosen (meaning no choice was made).

<sup>21</sup> "Ratio dilectionis personae est, quod probitas, tides, vel pietas, qua ex officio suo et prrescripto Dei ista persona praedita est, Deo grata sit." – Rem. Apol., p. 18.

Surely, unless men were resolved to trust wholly in their own merit, and to take nothing *gratis*<sup>22</sup> from the hands of God, they would not endeavor to rob God of his glory, of having mercy on whom he will have mercy, of loving us without deserving it, before the world began. If we must claim an interest in obtaining the temporal acts of God’s favor by our own endeavors, then let us grant God the glory of being good to us only for his own sake – for we were in his hand as the clay is in the hand of the potter. What made this piece of clay fit for pleasing service, and not a vessel in which there is no pleasure, except the power and will of the Framer? It is enough, indeed too much, for those who are vessels fitted for wrath, to complain and say, “Why have you made us this way?” Do not let those who are prepared for honor, exalt themselves against God, and sacrifice to their own nets as the sole providers of their glory.<sup>23</sup> But so it is: human vileness still displays itself by claiming to have a worth that is not due it. If the Arminians are not guilty of furthering this claim, let the following declaration of their opinions determine it:

“We confess roundly,” they say, “that faith, in the consideration of God choosing us for salvation, precedes and does not follow as a fruit of election.”<sup>24</sup> So that whereas Christians have up to now believed that God bestows faith on those who are chosen, it seems that it is no such thing, but God chooses afterward those whom he finds that believe, on the stock of their own abilities. Nor is faith, in the judgment of the Arminians, only required as a necessary condition in the one that is to be chosen, but as a cause that moves the will of God to elect the one that has it. “Just as the will of the judge is moved to bestow a reward on the one who deserves it according to the law,” as Grevinchovius says.<sup>25</sup> Corvinus strives to temper these words, but all in vain, though he twists them contrary to the intention of the author; for all his fellows agree with him. “The one and only absolute cause of election is not the will of God, but the regard of our obedience,” says Episcopius.<sup>26</sup> At first they required nothing but faith, and that faith was a condition, not a cause; then they required perseverance in faith, which at length they began to call obedience, comprehending in it our entire duty to the precepts of Christ. For the cause of this love toward any person, they say, is the righteousness, faith, and piety with which he is endued.<sup>27</sup> These being all the good works of a Christian, in effect they affirm that a man is chosen for them – that our good works are the cause of our election; I somewhat doubt whether this was ever so grossly taught, either by Pelagians or the Papists.

Observe that this does not thwart my former assertion that they deny the election of any particular persons – which here they seem to grant upon a foresight of a particular person’s faith and good works. For there is not one person, as a person, notwithstanding all this, that in their judgment is elected in this life, unless he has the qualifications of faith and good works, of which he may divest himself at any time, and so again become no more elected than Judas.

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<sup>22</sup> *Gratis*: by grace, or freely.

<sup>23</sup> Hab 1:16 Therefore they sacrifice to their net, and burn incense to their drag, because by them their portion is large, and their food is plentiful.

<sup>24</sup> “Rotunde fatemur, fidem in consideratione Dei in eligendo ad salutem antecedere, et non tauquam fracture electionis sequi.” – Rem. Hag. Coll., p. 85.

<sup>25</sup> Grevinch. ad Amea, p. 24; Corv. ad Molin., p. 260.

<sup>26</sup> “Electionis et reprobationis causa unica vera et absoluta non est Dei voluntas, seal respectus obedientise et inobedientise.” – Epis. Disput. 8.

<sup>27</sup> “Cum peccatum pono causam merltoriam reprobationis, ne existlmato e contra me ponere justitiam causam meritoriam electionis.” – Attain. Antip.; Rein. Apol., p. 73.

The sum of their doctrine in this particular is laid down by one of ours in a tract entitled “God’s Love to Mankind,”<sup>28</sup> etc. It is a book full of palpable ignorance, gross sophistry, and abominable blasphemy. Its author seems to have proposed nothing himself, but rakes all the dunghills of a few of the most invective Arminians, and collects the most filthy scum and pollution of their railings to cast upon the truth of God. And under I know not what self-coined pretences, he belches out odious blasphemies against God’s holy name.

The sum, he says, of all these speeches (which he cited to his purpose) is that, “There is no decree of saving men except what is built on God’s foreknowledge of the good actions of men.”<sup>29</sup> No decree? No, not even that by which God determines to give some to Christ, to ingraft them in him by faith, and bring them to glory by him. This illumines that place of Arminius where he affirms that, “God loves none specifically to eternal life unless they are considered just, either with legal or evangelical<sup>30</sup> righteousness.”<sup>31</sup> Now, to love one to eternal life is to destine one to obtain eternal life by Christ; and so it is coincident with the former assertion that our election, or choosing to grace and glory, is based on the foresight of our good works. This contains a doctrine so contradictory to the words and meaning of the apostle in Rom 9:11,<sup>32</sup> that it was condemned in so many councils, suppressed by so many edicts and decrees of emperors and governors, and opposed as a pestilent heresy, ever since it was first hatched by so many orthodox fathers and learned schoolmen. It is so directly contrary to the doctrine of this church, so injurious to the grace and supreme power of Almighty God, that I wonder greatly that anyone, in this light of the gospel and flourishing time of learning, should be so boldly ignorant or impudent so as to broach it among Christians. To prove this is a heresy, rejected by all orthodox and catholic antiquity, would be to light a candle in the sun; for it must surely be known to all and every one who ever heard or read anything of the state of Christ’s church after the rising of the Pelagian tumults.<sup>33</sup>

To accumulate testimonies of the ancients is quite beside my purpose. I will only add the confession of Bellarmine, a man otherwise not overly affected to truth. “Predestination,” he says, “from the foresight of works, cannot be maintained unless we suppose there is something in the righteous man which would make him differ from the wicked man, something that he does not receive from God; which truly all the fathers reject with unanimous consent.”<sup>34</sup> But we have a more sure testimony to which we will take heed: the holy Scripture, pleading strongly for God’s free and undeserved grace.

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<sup>28</sup> This may refer to a work written by Samuel Hoard (1599–1658); he was originally a zealous Calvinist, but later an Arminian. That may be why Owen says it was written “by one of ours.”

<sup>29</sup> *God’s Love*, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Legal righteousness is Christ’s righteousness; evangelical righteousness is our own inherent righteousness (good works).

<sup>31</sup> “Deum nullam creaturam preecise ad vitam ,eternam amare, nisi consideratam ut justam sire justitia legali sire evangelica” – Armin. Artic. Perpend., fol. 21.

<sup>32</sup> **NKJ Romans 9:11** (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls)...

<sup>33</sup> Vid. Prosp. ad Excep. Gen. ad Dub., 8,9. Vid. Car. de Ingratis., c. 2,3.

<sup>34</sup> “Non potest defendi praedestinatio ex operibus praevisis, nisi aliquid boni ponatur in homine justo, quo discernatur ab impio, quod non sit illi a Deo, quod sane patres omnes summa consensione rejiciunt.” – Bellar, de Grat., et Lib. Arbit., cap. 14.

First, our Savior Christ, Mat 11:26, declaring how God reveals the gospel to some, but it is hidden from others (it is a special fruit of election). This rests in God's will and good pleasure as the only cause of it: "Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in your sight." So, comforting his "little flock," Luke 12:32, he bids them not to fear, "for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom;" That is, "His good pleasure is the only reason why his kingdom is prepared for you rather than others." But is there no other reason for this discrimination? No; he does it all "so that his purpose according to election might stand" firm, Rom 9:11; for we are "predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things after the counsel of his own will," Eph 1:11. But did this counsel of God not direct him to choose us rather than others because we had something to commend us more than they? No; "The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; but because the LORD loved you," Deut 7:7-8. "He has mercy on whom he will have mercy;" indeed, "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 calls. It was said to her, 'The elder shall serve the younger: as it is written, Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated,'" Rom 9:11-13. In brief, wherever there is any mention of election or predestination, it is accompanied with the purpose, love, or will of God; his foreknowledge, whereby he knows those who are his; and with his free power and supreme dominion over all things. There is not one syllable, no mention of our faith, obedience, or anything importing so much, unless it is the fruit and effect of election. It is the sole act of God's free grace and good pleasure that "he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy," Rom 9:23. For this end only, has he "saved us, and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before the world began," 2Tim 1:9. Even our calling is free and undeserved, because it flows from that most free grace of election, which we were partakers of before we existed. It would be needless to heap up more testimonies in a thing so clear and evident. When God and man stand in competition as to who will be accounted the cause of an eternal good, we may be sure that the Scripture will pass the verdict on the part of the Most High. And the sentence, in this case, may be derived from this by the following reasons:

*First.* If final perseverance in faith and obedience is the cause of, or a condition required for election, then none can be said to be elected in this life; for no man finally perseveres until he is dead, until he has finished his course and consummated the faith. But it is certain that it is spoken of some in the Scripture that they are elected even in this life: "Few are chosen," Mat 20:16; "For the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," chapter 24:22; "And shall, if it were possible, deceive the very elect," verse 24 – where it is evident that election is required to make one persevere in the faith; but nowhere is perseverance in the faith required for election. Indeed, Peter gives us all a command that we should give all diligence to get an assurance of our "election," even in this life, 2Peter 1:10. Therefore, surely it cannot be a decree presupposing consummated faith and obedience.

*Secondly.* Consider two things of our estate, before the first temporal act of God's free grace comprehends us (for grace is not grace if it is not free), which is the first effect of our predestination. First, "Were we better than others?" No, in no way: both Jews and Gentiles were all under sin," Rom 3:9. "There is no difference; for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," verse 23 – being all "dead in trespasses and sins," Eph 2:1; being "by nature the children of wrath, even as others," verse 3; "far off," until we are "made near by the blood of

Christ,” verse 13. We were “enemies” against God, Rom 5:10; Titus 3:3. And look what desert<sup>35</sup> there is in us with these qualifications, when our vocation separates us from the world of unbelievers. It is the first effect of our predestination, as St. Paul shows, Rom 8:30, and as I shall prove later. There is so much in regard to predestination itself, that if we have in any way deserved it, it is by being sinners, enemies, children of wrath, and dead in trespasses. These are our deserts; this is the glory of which we ought to be ashamed. But, secondly, When they are in the same state of actual alienation from God, yet then, in respect to his purpose to save them by Christ, some are said to be his: “Yours they were, and you gave them to me,” John 17:6 – they were his before they came to Christ by faith; the sheep of Christ before they were called, for he “calls his sheep by name,” chapter 10:3; before they came into the flock or congregation, for “I have other sheep,” he says, “which are not of this fold, I must also bring them,” chapter 10:16 – to be beloved by God before they love him: “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us,” 1John 4:10. Now, all this must be with reference to God’s purpose of bringing them to Christ, and by Christ bringing them to glory; which we see goes *before* all their faith and obedience.

*Thirdly.* Election is an eternal act of God’s will: “He has chosen us before the foundation of the world,” Eph 1:4; consummated antecedently to all our duty, Rom 9:11. Now, every cause must, in order of nature, precede its effect; nothing has an activity which causes something before it even has a being. Operation in every kind is a *second* act, flowing from the essence of a thing which is the *first* act. But all our graces and works, our faith, obedience, piety and charity, are all temporal, of yesterday, having the same standing with ourselves, and no longer than that. Therefore these cannot be the cause of or so much as a condition required for, the accomplishment of an eternal act of God, irrevocably established before we exist.

*Fourthly.* If predestination is for faith that is foreseen, then these three things, with various absurdities, will necessarily follow: *First.* Such an election is not from “him that calls,” as the apostle says in Rom 9:11 – that is, it is not of the good pleasure of God, who calls us with a holy calling, but of the one who is called. For, if election depends on faith, then it must be his whose faith exists, and that believes. *Secondly.* God cannot have mercy on whom he will have mercy, for the very purpose of it is thus tied to the qualities of faith and obedience in the person, so that God must have mercy only on believers antecedently to his decree. *Thirdly.* This hinders him from being an absolute free agent, and doing what he will with his own – and from having such a power over us as the potter has over his clay; for he finds us made of different matter, one clay and another gold, when he comes to appoint us to different uses and ends.

*Fifthly.* God sees no faith, no obedience or perseverance, nothing but sin and wickedness in any man, except what he himself intends graciously and freely to bestow on him. For “faith is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God;” <sup>Eph 2:8</sup> it is “the work of God, that we believe,” John 6:29; he “blesses us with all spiritual blessings in Christ,” Eph 1:3. Now, all these gifts and graces God bestows only upon those whom he has antecedently ordained to everlasting life: for “the elect obtained it, and the rest were blinded,” Rom 11:7; “The Lord added to the church daily those who should be saved” Acts 2:47. Therefore, surely, God chooses us not because he *foresees* those things in us; he bestows those graces because he has *chosen* us. “Which is why,” says Austin, “Christ says, ‘You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you.’ They did not choose him

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<sup>35</sup> *Desert: what we deserve; just punishment.*

so that he should choose them. Rather, he chose them so that they might choose him.”<sup>36</sup> We choose Christ by *faith*; God chooses us by his decree of *election*. The question is whether we choose him because he has chosen us, or he chooses us because we have chosen him, which in effect is choosing ourselves. We affirm the *former*, because our choice of God is a gift that he himself bestows only on those whom he has chosen.

*Sixthly, and principally.* The *effects* of election, infallibly following it, cannot be the *causes* of election, certainly preceding it. This is evident, for nothing can be the cause and the effect of the same thing, before and after itself. But all our faith, our obedience, repentance, and good works are the *effects* of election, flowing from it as their proper fountain, erected on it as the foundation of this spiritual building; and for this, the article of our church is evident and clear. “Those,” it says, “who are endued with this excellent benefit of God, are called according to God’s purpose, are justified freely, are made the sons of God by adoption; they are made like the image of Christ; they walk religiously in good works,” etc. Where, *first*, they are said to be partakers of this benefit of election, and *then* by virtue of it to be entitled to the fruition of all those graces. *Secondly*, it says, “Those who are endued with this benefit enjoy those blessings;” intimating that election is the rule whereby God proceeds to bestow those graces, restraining the objects of the temporal acts of God’s special favor only to those whom his eternal decree embraces. Both these, indeed, are denied by the Arminians; which makes further reveals their heterodoxies in this particular. “You say,” says Arminius to Perkins,<sup>37</sup> “that election is the rule of giving or not giving faith; and therefore, election is not of the faithful, but the faith of the elect: but by your leave I must deny this.”<sup>38</sup> Yet, whatever it is that the sophisticated<sup>39</sup> heretic denies here, either antecedent or conclusion, he falls foul on the word of God. “They ‘believed,’” says the Holy Ghost, “who were ‘ordained to eternal life,’” Acts 13:48; and, “The Lord added to the church daily those who should be saved,” chapter 2:47. From both these passages it is evident that God bestows faith only on those whom he has pre-ordained to eternal life; but most clearly, Rom 8:29-30, “For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son. Moreover whom he predestined, he also called: and whom he called, he also justified: and whom he justified, he also glorified.” St. Austin interpreted this place by adding in every link of the chain, “Only those.” However, the words directly import a precedency of predestination before the bestowing of other graces, and also a restraint of those graces to those only that are so predestined. Now, the inference from this is not only for the logical form, but for the matter also; it contains the very words of Scripture, “Faith is of God’s elect,” Titus 1:1.

For the other part of the proposition, that faith and obedience are the fruits of our election, they cannot be more peremptory in its denial than the Scripture is plentiful in its confirmation: “He has chosen us in Christ, so that we should be holy,” Eph 1:4; not because we were holy, but that we *should* be holy. Holiness, of which faith is the root and obedience is the body, is that to which, and not for which, we are elected. The end and the meritorious cause of any one act cannot be the same; they have diverse respects, and require repugnant conditions. Again; we are

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<sup>36</sup> “Non ob aliud dicit, ‘Non vos me eligistis, sed ego vos elegi,’ nisi quia non elegerunt eum ut eligeret eos; sed ut eligerent eum elegit eos.” – Aug, de Bono Perse, cap. 16.

<sup>37</sup> [William Perkins \(1558–1602\) – An influential and moderate Puritan clergyman and Cambridge theologian; he advocated double-predestination, in line with Theodore Beza, which put him at odds with Arminius.](#)

<sup>38</sup> “Dicis electionem divinam esse regulam fidei dandae vel non dandae; ergo, electio non est fidelium, sed tides electorum: sed liceat mihi tua bona venia hoc negare.” – Armin. Antip., p. 221.

<sup>39</sup> [Sophistical: plausible but misleading.](#)

Chap. 6 – The Doctrine of Predestination

“predestined to the adoption as children by Jesus Christ,” Eph 1:5. Adoption is that whereby we are assumed into the family of God, when before we were “foreigners, aliens, strangers, and far off;” we see this is a fruit of our predestination, though it is the very entrance into that estate in which we begin first to please God in the least measure. Of the same nature are all those places of holy writ which speak of God’s giving some to Christ, of Christ’s sheep hearing his voice and others not hearing because they are not of his sheep; all of which, and various other invincible reasons, I willingly omit, with sundry other false assertions and heretical positions of the Arminians about this fundamental article of our religion, concluding this chapter with the following scheme:

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
<p>“Those whom he foreknew, he also did predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brothers. Moreover, those whom he predestined, he also called: and whom he called, he also justified: and whom he justified, he also glorified.” So that “nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus,” Rom 8:29-30, 39.</p>	<p>“No such will can be ascribed to God, whereby he so would have anyone to be saved, that from this his salvation should be sure and infallible,” Armin. “I acknowledge no sense, no perception of any such election in this life,” Grevinch. “We deny that God’s election to salvation extends itself to singular persons,” Rem. Coll. Hag.</p>
<p>“He has chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy,” Eph 1:4.</p>	<p>“As we are justified by faith, so we are not elected but by faith,” Grevinch.</p>
<p>“Not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,” 2Tim 1:9.</p>	<p>“We profess roundly that faith is considered by God as a condition preceding election, and not following as a fruit of it,” Rem. Coll. Hag.</p>
<p>“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 calls,” etc., Rom 9:11. “All that the Father gives me shall come to me,” John 6:37</p>	<p>“The sole and only cause of election is not the will of God, but the respect of our obedience,” Episcop. “For the cause of this love to any person is that the goodness, faith, and piety with which he is endued, according to God’s command and his own duty, are pleasing to God,” Rem. Apol.</p>
<p>“Many are called, but few are chosen,” Mat 22:14. “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom,” Luke 12:82.</p>	<p>“God has determined to grant the means of salvation to all indiscriminately; and according as he foresees men will use those means, so he determines of them,” Corr.</p>
<p>“What do you have that you did not receive?” 1Cor 4:7. “Are we better than they? No, in no way,” Rom 3:9. But we are “predestined to adoption as children by Jesus Christ, according to the good pleasure of his will,” Eph 1:5; John 6:37-39, 10:3, 13:18, 17:6; Acts 13:48; Titus 1:1; 2Tim 2:19; James 1:17-18, etc.</p>	<p>The sum of their doctrine is: God has appointed the obedience of faith to be the means of salvation. If men fulfill this condition, he determines to save them, which is their election; but if after they have entered the way of godliness, they fall from it, they also lose their predestination. If they will return again, they are chosen anew; and if they can hold out to the end, then, and for that continuance, they are peremptorily elected, or post-destined, after they are saved. Now, whether these positions may be gathered from those places of Scripture which deliver this doctrine, let any man judge.</p>

## CHAPTER 7.

### *OF ORIGINAL SIN AND THE CORRUPTION OF NATURE.*

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Herod the Great, imparting to the Jews his advice to rebuild the temple, they greatly feared he would never be able to accomplish his intention.<sup>1</sup> Like an unwise builder, having demolished the old before he sat down to account whether he would be able to erect the new, the Jews would have been deprived of a temple by his proposal. Therefore, to satisfy their concerns, he resolved as he took down any part of the old, to quickly erect a portion of the new in its place. In the same way, the Arminians have determined to demolish the building of divine providence, grace, and favor, by which men have up to now ascended into heaven. But fearing we would be troubled by finding ourselves suddenly deprived of what we reposed our confidence in for happiness, they have erected by degrees a Babylonish tower in its place, whose top, they would persuade us, will reach to heaven. First, therefore, they bring out the foundation-stones, crying, "Hail, hail," to them; and they throw them on the sandy, rotten ground of our own natures. Now, previously some wise master-builders had discovered this ground to be unfit as the base of such a lofty erection, because a corrupt issue of blood and filth arose in the middle of it, and overspread the whole platform. And so, to encourage men to associate in this desperate attempt, they proclaim to all that there is no such evil fountain in the plain which they have chosen for the foundation of their proud building. They claim it does not set itself up against the knowledge of God in plain terms. Having rejected God's providence as the origin of any goodness in our actions, and God's predestination as the cause of whatever moral and spiritual goodness may clothe us, they endeavor to draw the praise of both providence and predestination toward the rectitude of their own nature, and the strength of their own endeavors. But this attempt, in the case of predestination, is thought by them to be altogether vain, because of the disability and corruption of nature, and because of original sin that has been propagated to all of us by our first parents. By these, they claim, predestination has become wholly void of integrity and holiness; and all of us have become wise and able to do evil, but have no power to do good; we have no understanding. Therefore, they utterly reject this imputation of an inherent, original guilt, and demerit worthy of punishment. Rather, it is an enemy to our upright and well-deserving condition. And oh, that they were as able to root it out of the hearts of all men, so that it would not be there evermore, as they have been able to persuade the heads of so many that it was never there at all!

If anyone wanted to know how considerable this article concerning original sin has been accounted in the church of Christ, let him only consult the writings of St. Augustine, Prosper, Hilary, Fulgentius, and any of those learned fathers whom God stirred up to resist, and enabled to overcome, the spreading Pelagian heresy. Or look at the many councils, edicts, and decrees of emperors, in which that heretical doctrine which denies original corruption, is condemned, cursed, and disproved. Now, among the many motives they had to proceed so severely against this heresy, one was especially inculcated<sup>2</sup> that deserves our consideration:

It overthrew the necessity of Christ's coming into the world to redeem mankind. It is sin alone that makes a Savior necessary; and will Christians tolerate any error such as this, which by direct consequence, implies that the coming of Jesus Christ into the world was needless? My purpose for the present is not to allege any testimonies of this kind; but, staying close to my first

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph. Antiq. Judeo., lib. 15. cap. 11, sect. 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Inculcate*: to teach and impress by frequent repetitions or admonitions.

intention, my purpose is to show how far in this article, as well as others, the Arminians have apostatized from the pure doctrine of the word of God, from the consent of orthodox divines, and from the confession of the Church of England.

In the ninth article of our church, which concerns original sin, I observe four things especially: *First*. That the fault and corruption of the nature of every man is an inherent evil. *Secondly*. That it is not subject or conformable to the law of God, but even after baptism, it has in itself the nature of sin. *Thirdly*. That by it we are averse from God, and inclined to all manner of evil. *Fourthly*. That it deserves God’s wrath and damnation. All of these are frequently and evidently taught in the word of God, and every one of them is denied by the Arminians, as it may appear by these instances in some of their writings:

*First. That original sin is inherent sin and the pollution of our nature, having a proper guilt of its own, which makes us responsible to the wrath of God; it is not a bare imputation of another’s fault to us as his posterity. Because it reflects on us all with a charge of native imbecility and insufficiency to good, it is quite rejected by these self-idolizers.*

“Infants are simply in that estate in which Adam was before his fall,”<sup>3</sup> says Venator.<sup>4</sup> “Nor is it at all to be considered whether they are the children of believers or of heathens and infidels; for infants, as infants, all have the same innocence.”<sup>5</sup> They say this jointly in their Apology. Even more plainly, “It can be no fault with which we are born.”<sup>6</sup> In this last expression, with one dash of their pens, these bold innovators have quite overthrown a sacred verity, an apostolic, catholic, and fundamental article of the Christian religion. But, truly, to me there are no stronger arguments of the sinful corruption of our nature than to see such wicked outworkings<sup>7</sup> of unsanctified hearts. Let us look, then, to the word of God which confounds this Babylonish<sup>8</sup> design.

The nature of man at first was created pure and holy, after the image of God. It was endowed with such a rectitude and righteousness as was necessary and appropriate to bring it to that supernatural end to which it was ordained. It is now altogether corrupted. It has become abominable, sinful, and averse from goodness, and this corruption or concupiscence is originally inherent in us. It is derived from our first parents, as plentifully delivered in holy writ, as what chiefly compels us to self-denial, and drives us to Christ. “Behold, I was formed in iniquity; and in sin my mother conceived me,” says David in Psalm 51:5. For the praise of God’s goodness towards him, David begins with a confession of his native perverseness, and of the sin in which he was wrapped before he was born. Nor was this peculiar to him alone; he did not have it from the particular iniquity of his immediate progenitors, but by an ordinary propagation from the common parent of us all; though in some of us, by this Pelagian attempt to hide the disease, Satan has made it almost incurable. For even those infants of whom the Arminians boast

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<sup>3</sup> “Infantes sunt simplicies, et stantes in eodem statu in quo Adamus fuit ante lapsum.” – Venat. Theol. re. et me., fol. 2.

<sup>4</sup> [Adolphus Venator, or de Jager; also called Tectander \(c. 1565-1619\), one of the leading Remonstrants; a confidant of Jacobus Arminius.](#)

<sup>5</sup> “Nec refert an infantes isti sint fidelium, an ethnicorum liberi, infantium enim, qua infantium, eadem est innocentia.” – Rem. Apol., p. 87.

<sup>6</sup> “Malum culpee non est, quia nasci plane est involuntarium,” etc. – Ibid, p. 84.

<sup>7</sup> Originally, “nefarious issues.”

<sup>8</sup> Babel-like.

innocence, are unclean in the verdict of St. Paul, 1Cor 7:14,<sup>9</sup> unless they are sanctified by an interest in the promise of the covenant; no unclean thing shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. “The weakness of the members of infants is what is innocent, and not their souls.”<sup>10</sup> That is, they lack nothing, except that the members of their bodies are not yet ready instruments of sin. They are sinful not only by external denomination – accounted sinful only because of the imputation of Adam’s actual transgression to them – but they all have an uncleanness in them by their very nature, Job 14:4, from which they must be “cleansed with the washing of water by the word,” Eph 5:20. Their whole nature is overspread with such a pollution that is proper only to inherent sin, and does not accompany imputed sin. We may see this in the example of our Savior, who was pure, immaculate, holy, and undefiled – yet “the iniquity of us all” was imputed to him – from which we have those phrases about “washing away sin,” Acts 22:16; and “cleansing filth,” 1Peter 3:21, Titus 3:5. There is something in them, as soon as they are born, that excludes them from the kingdom of heaven; for unless they are also born again of the Spirit, they shall not enter into it, John 3:5.

*Secondly.* The opposition that is made between the righteousness of Christ and the sin of Adam, Rom 5, which is the proper seat of this doctrine, shows that there is an inbred sinful corruption in our nature. The sin of Adam holds such a relation to sinners that it proceeds from him by natural propagation; just as the righteousness of Christ proceeds to those who are born again of him by spiritual regeneration. But we are truly, intrinsically, and inherently sanctified by the Spirit and grace of Christ. Therefore, being so often called “sinners” in this chapter (because of this original sin), there is no reason why we should dismiss it, as if we were concerned only with an external denomination; for once the comparison and its analogy is correctly instituted,<sup>11</sup> it quite overthrows the solitary imputation of Adam’s sin.

*Thirdly.* All those places of Scripture which assert that our nature is prone to all evil, that we have an utter disability to do any good, and that we have a wretched opposition to the power of godliness – all of which are furnished from the womb – confirm the same truth. But I will have occasion to speak about these places later.

*Fourthly.* The flesh, in the Scripture phrase, is a quality (if I may say so) that is inherent in us; for that, along with its concupiscence,<sup>12</sup> is opposed to the Spirit and his holiness, which is certainly inherent in us.<sup>13</sup> Now, the whole man by nature is flesh; for “what is born of the flesh is flesh,” John 3:6 – it is an inhabiting thing, a thing that “dwells” within us, Rom 7:17. In brief, this vitiosity,<sup>14</sup> sinfulness, and corruption of our nature is laid open, *First.* By all those places which throw on our nature itself an aspersion of guilt, or deserving punishment, or pollution; as in Eph 2:1, 3 we are “dead in trespasses and sins,” being “by nature the children of wrath, even as others,” being wholly encompassed by a “sin that easily besets us.” *Secondly.* By those which fix this original pravity in the heart, will, mind, and understanding, as in Eph 4:18; Rom 12:2; Gen 6:5. *Thirdly.* By those which positively decipher this natural depravity, as in 1Cor 2:14;

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<sup>9</sup> 1Cor 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

<sup>10</sup> “Imbecillitas membrorum infantilium innocens est, non animus.” – Aug.

<sup>11</sup> To advance or set forth in court, as in “institute proceedings.”

<sup>12</sup> That is, sexual lust.

<sup>13</sup> “The Spirit and his holiness” is inherent in believers, not in mankind.

<sup>14</sup> The state of being vitiated (ruined in character or quality); a corrupted state; depravity.

Rom 8:7 – or, *Fourthly*. Those which place it in the flesh, or in the old man, as in Rom 6:6; Gal 5:16. So that it is not a bare imputation of someone else’s fault, but it is an intrinsic and adjacent corruption of our nature itself, that we call original sin. But, alas! It seems we carve too large a portion for ourselves, in those things with which we will not be contented.

The Arminians deny all such imputation. They say it is too heavy a charge for the pure, unblamable condition in which they are brought into this world. They deny, I say, that they are guilty of Adam’s sin, as if “sinning in him,” or that his sin is any way imputed to us. This is their second assault upon the truth of this article of faith.

“Adam sinned in his own proper person, and there is no reason why God should impute his sin to infants,” says Boraeus.<sup>15</sup> The nature of the first covenant, the right and power of God, the comparison instituted by the apostle between Adam and Christ, the divine constitution, whereby Adam was appointed to be the head, fountain, and origin of all human kind, are no reasons at all to persuade him of it. “For it is against equity,” says their Apology, “that one should be accounted guilty for a sin that is not his own – that he should be reputed nocent<sup>16</sup> who, in regard to his own will, is truly innocent.”<sup>17</sup> And here, Christian reader, behold plain Pelagianism thrust upon us without either welt<sup>18</sup> or guard; men all of a sudden are made pure and truly innocent, notwithstanding all the natural pollution and corruption which Scripture everywhere proclaims they are furnished with. Nor is the reason they intimate of any value – that their wills did not assent to it – which they plainly urged shortly before. “It is,” they say, “against the nature of sin that it should be counted as a sin to anyone who did not commit it by his own proper will.”<sup>19</sup> This being all they have to say, they repeat it over and over in this form: “It must be voluntary, or it is not sin.” But I say this has no force at all; for *first*, St. John, in his most exact definition of sin, does not require voluntariness for its nature, but only an obliquity, a *deviation* from the rule. It is an anomaly – a *discrepancy* from the law, which whether it is voluntary or not, does not matter much. But it is sure enough that such a repugnancy to the law of God is in our nature. So that, *secondly*, if originally we are free from a voluntary actual transgression, yet we are not free from a habitual voluntary digression and exorbitance<sup>20</sup> from the law. But, *thirdly*, in respect to our wills, we are not innocent either; for we all sinned in Adam, as the apostle affirms.<sup>Rom 5.12</sup>

Now, all sin is voluntary, say the Remonstrants, and therefore Adam’s transgression was our voluntary sin also, and that is so in various respects. I answer *first*, that *his voluntary act is imputed to us as ours*, by reason of the covenant which was made with him on our behalf. But because this consists in an imputation, it must be extrinsic to us; therefore, *secondly*, we say that Adam, being the root and head of all human kind, and we are all branches from that root, and we are all parts of that body of which he was the head, *his will may be said to be ours*. *We were then all that one man*,<sup>21</sup> – we were all in him, and we had no other will but his. So that, though this is

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<sup>15</sup> Adamus in propria persona peccavit, et nulla est ratio cur Deus peccatum illud infantibus imputet.” – Bor. in Artic. 31.

<sup>16</sup> *Nocent: guilty.*

<sup>17</sup> “Contra aequitatem est, ut quis reus agatur propter peccatum non suum, ut vere nocens judicetur, qui quoad propriam suam voluntatem innocens est.” – Rem. Apol., c. 7. p. 84.

<sup>18</sup> An old Saxon word denoting *a fence or border*. – ED.

<sup>19</sup> “Contra naturam peccati est, ut censeatur peccatum, aut ut proprie in peccatum imputetur, quod propria voluntate commissure non est.” – Rem. Apol., c. 7. p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> *Exorbitance: exceeding the bounds of something.*

<sup>21</sup> “Omnes eramus unus ille homo.” – Aug.

extrinsic to us when we are considered as particular persons, yet it is intrinsic because we are all parts of one common nature. As in Adam we sinned, so in him we had a will to sin. *Thirdly, original sin is a defect of nature, and not of this or that particular person.* <sup>22</sup> Alvarez grounds this difference of actual and original sin in this: that the one is always committed by the proper will of the sinner; and the other requires only the will of our first parent, who was the head of human nature. *Fourthly.* It is hereditary and natural; in no way is it involuntary, or put into us against our wills. It possesses our wills and inclines us to voluntary sins.

I see no reason, then, why Corvinus should affirm, as he does, “That it is absurd, that by one man’s disobedience many should be made actually disobedient,” <sup>23</sup> unless he did it purposely to contradict St. Paul, who taught us that “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” Rom 5:19. *Paulus ait, Corvinus negat; eligite cui credatis* – choose whom you will believe, St. Paul or the Arminians. The sum of their endeavor in this particular is to clear the nature of man from being in any way guilty of Adam’s actual sin, or from being then in Adam as a member and part of the body of which he was the head, or from being liable to an imputation of guilt by reason of that covenant which God made with us all in Adam. So that, denying (as you saw before) all inherent corruption and depravity of nature – and now denying all participation by any means in Adam’s transgression – I think they cast a great aspersion on Almighty God, however he dealt with Adam for his own particular sin, for casting us, his most innocent posterity (they claim), out of paradise. It seems a hard case that, having no deviation or sin in our own nature to deserve it, and having no interest in Adam’s disobedience, whose obedience had been the means of conveying so much happiness to us, we should still be involved in so great a punishment as we are. For if we are not now by birth under a great curse and punishment, the Arminians will never be able to persuade any poor soul [of his need for Christ], who ever heard of paradise or the garden where God first placed Adam. And though all the rest, in their judgment, is no great matter, but merely an infirmity and weakness of nature (or some such thing), yet whatever it is, they confess that it lights on us as well as him. “We confess,” they say, “that the sin of Adam may be imputed to his posterity, inasmuch as God would have them all born liable to that punishment which Adam incurred by his sin, or permitted that evil which was inflicted on Adam to descend on them.” <sup>24</sup>

Now, whatever this punishment may be, however small, yet if we have no demerit of our own, nor any interest in Adam’s sin, it is such an act of injustice that we must reject it from the Most Holy, with a “God forbid.” Far be it from the Judge of all the world to punish the righteous with the ungodly. <sup>Gen 18.25</sup> If God should impute the sin of Adam to us, and then pronounce that we are liable to the curse it deserves – when we have a pure, sinless, and unspotted nature – this could scarcely be reconciled with God’s proceeding in justice with the sons of men, “The soul that sins shall die;” <sup>Ezek 18.20</sup> which clearly grants an impunity to all who are not tainted with sin. Sin and punishment, though they are sometimes separated by God’s mercy (pardoning the sin and so not inflicting the punishment), yet it is never by his justice, inflicting the punishment where the sin is not found. Imputed sin, by itself alone, without an inherent guilt, was never punished in anyone

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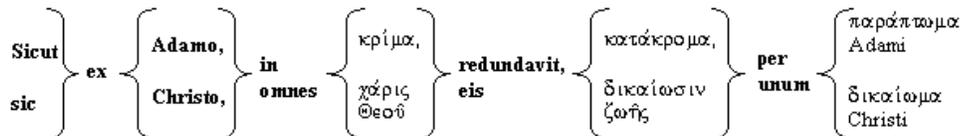
<sup>22</sup> “Est voluntarium, voluntate primi originantis, non voluntate contrahentis: ratione naturam, non personam.” – Thom, 1,2., q. 81, a.

<sup>23</sup> “Absurdum est ut ex unius inobedientia multi actu inobedientes, facti essent.” – Corr. ad Molin., cap. 7. sect. 8.

<sup>24</sup> “Fatemur peccatum Adami, a Deo posse dici imputatum posteris ejus, quatenus Deus posteros Adami eidem malo, cui Adamus per peccatum obnoxium se reddidit, obnoxios nasci voluit; sive quatenus Deus, malum, quod Adamo inflictum erat in poenam, in posteros ejus dimanare et transire permisit.” – Rem. Apol., p. 84.

but Christ.<sup>2Cor 5.21</sup> The unsearchableness of God’s love and justice, in laying the iniquity of us all on him who had no sin, is an exception to that general rule by which God walks in dealing with the posterity of Adam. So if punishment is not due to us for a solely imputed sin, then much less can we justly be wrapped in such a curse and punishment as woful experience teaches us that we lie under, when it does not stand with the justice and equity of God to impute any iniquity to us at all. Now, the Arminians place the whole nature of original sin in this act of injustice with which they charge the Almighty.<sup>25</sup> “We do not consider,” they say, “original sin to be properly called a sin, that would make the posterity of Adam deserve the wrath of God; nor do we consider it an evil that is properly called a punishment; but it is only an infirmity of nature;” which they interpret as a kind of evil that, being inflicted on Adam, God allows to descend on his posterity. So all the depravation of nature, the pollution, guilt, and concupiscence we derive from our first parents, the imputation of Adam’s actual transgression, is all limited to a small infirmity inflicted on poor innocent creatures.

But let them enjoy their own wisdom, which is earthly, sensual, and devilish. The Scripture is clear that the sin of Adam is the sin of us all, not only by propagation and communication (whereby it is not his singular fault, but something of the same nature that is derived to us), but also by an imputation of his actual transgression to us all – his singular disobedience is made ours by this means. The grounds of this imputation I touched on before, which may all be reduced to his being the common person and head of all our nature. This invests us with a double interest in his demerits: (1) as we were then in him and were parts of him; and (2) as he sustained the position of our whole nature in the covenant that God made with him. Both of these, according to the demands of God’s justice, require that his transgression also be accounted as ours. St. Paul is plain, not only that “by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” (Rom 5:19) by the derivation of a corrupted nature, but also that “by one man’s offense judgment came upon all” (verse 18). Even for his one sin, all of us are accounted to deserve judgment and condemnation; therefore, verse 12, he affirms that by one man sin and death entered the whole world; and that is because we have all sinned in him, which we in no other way do except that his transgression is accounted as ours in God’s estimation. And the opposition the apostle makes there between Christ and his righteousness, and Adam and his disobedience, sufficiently evinces it; as may be apparent by this figure: <sup>26</sup>



The whole similitude chiefly consists in the imputation of Adam’s sin and Christ’s righteousness – to the seed of Adam by nature, and to the seed of Christ by grace. But among Protestants (though some differ in the manner of their expressions) it is still without question that we are counted righteous for the righteousness of Christ; and therefore we are no less and undoubtedly accounted sinners by (or guilty of) the first sin of Adam.

<sup>25</sup> “Peccatum itaque originale nec habent pro peccato proprie dicto, quod posteros Adami odio Dei dignos faciat, nec pro malo, quod per modum proprie dictae poenae ab Adamo in posteros dimanet sed pro infirmitate,” etc. – Rem. Apol., fol. 84.

<sup>26</sup> Pareus., ad Rom. 5.

I will not show their opposition to the truth in many more particulars concerning this article of original sin. This was long ago most excellently prevented using this very method: its antithesis to the Scripture and the orthodox doctrine of our church. This was done by the famously learned Master Reynolds, in his excellent treatise, “Of the Sinfulness of Sin.” There he revealed their errors, fully answered their sophistic<sup>27</sup> objections, and invincibly confirmed the truth from the word of God. I have shown already how they make what we call original sin to be no sin at all; they claim it is not inherent in us, nor imputed to us, nor is it truly called punishment. Only because our church says directly that original sin merits damnation, I will briefly show what the Arminians conceive to be the desert of it.

*First.* For Adam himself, they affirm “that the death threatened if he transgressed the covenant, and which was due him for it,<sup>28</sup> was not *temporal* death – for he was subject to that before, by the primary constitution of his nature; nor was it such an *eternal* death as is accompanied with damnation or everlasting punishment.” Why then, let us learn some new divinity here; for Christians up to now have believed that whatever may be comprised under the name of *death* (together with its antecedents, consequents, and attendants), was threatened to Adam in this commination.<sup>29</sup> And divines, until this day, can find only these two sorts of death in the Scripture [temporal and eternal], as penal<sup>30</sup> to men, and it is properly called so. Shall we now be persuaded that it was neither of these that Adam was threatened with? It must be so if we believe the Arminians – neither one nor the other. But because Adam was created mortal, and he was subject to a temporal death, the sanction for his disobedience was the threat of the utter dissolution of his soul and body, or a reduction to their primitive nothingness. But what if someone will not take them at their word, and instead believes what St. Paul said, that death entered by sin; that if we had never sinned, we would never have died; that man in his state of innocence was, by God’s constitution, free even from temporal death, and from all things directly conducive to it?

*Secondly.* That this death which was threatened to our first parents, also comprehended damnation of soul and body forevermore, and that there is not the least intimation in the word of God of their imagined dissolution. Why, I confess they have *impudence* enough, in various places, to beg that we would believe their assertions, but they never have *confidence* enough to venture once to prove them true. Now, those who make so slight of the desert of this sin in Adam himself, will hardly allow it to have any ill merit at all in his posterity.

“Whether anyone was ever damned for original sin, and adjudged to everlasting torments, is deservedly doubted. Indeed, we have no doubt in affirming that no one was ever so damned,” says Corvinus.<sup>31</sup> And he declares that this is not his sole opinion, by telling you no less of his master, Arminius. “It is most true,” he says, “that Arminius teaches that it is perversely said that original sin makes a man guilty of death;”<sup>32</sup> guilty of any death it would seem, whether temporal, eternal, or that annihilation which they dream of. And he spoke truly enough; Arminius does

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<sup>27</sup> [Sophistry: A deliberately invalid argument displaying ingenuity in reasoning in the hope of deceiving someone.](#)

<sup>28</sup> “Cure de aeterna morte loquuntur Remonstrantes in hac de Adamo quaestione, non intelligunt mortam illam, quae aeterna poena sensus – dicitur,” etc. – Rem. Apol., cap. 4. p. 57.

<sup>29</sup> [A commination is a formal denunciation that threatens divine punishment.](#)

<sup>30</sup> [Penal: subject to punishment.](#)

<sup>31</sup> “An ullus omnino homo, propter peccatum originis solum damnetur, ac aeternis cruciatibus addicatur, merito dubitari potest: imo nullum ita damnari affirmare non veremur.” – Corv, ad Molin., cap. 9. sect. 5.

<sup>32</sup> “Verissimum est Arminium docere, perverse dici peccatum originis reum facere mortis.” – Corv, ad Tilen., p. 888.

affirm it, adding this reason: “Because it is only the punishment of Adam’s actual sin.”<sup>33</sup> Now, what kind of punishment they make this out to be I showed you before. But truly I wonder, seeing they are so peremptory everywhere that the same thing cannot be a sin and a punishment, why then do they so often nickname this as an “infirmity of nature,” and call it a sin; this thing which they suppose to be as far different from original sin as fire from water. Is it because they are unwilling, by renaming it, to contradict St. Paul in express terms, never proposing it under any other denomination? Or, if they cannot get a sophistic elusion<sup>34</sup> from St. Paul by doing so, would Christians more plainly discern their heresy? Or whatever other cause it may be, in this I am sure: they contradict themselves, notwithstanding that they agree full well in this: “That God rejects none for original sin only,” as Episcopus speaks.<sup>35</sup> And here, if you tell them that the question is not *de facto* what God does, but *de jure* what such sinners deserve, they tell us plainly: “That God will not destine any infants to eternal punishment for original sin, without their own proper actual sins; nor can he do so by right or in justice.”<sup>36</sup> So the children of Turks, Pagans, and similar infidels, strangers from the covenant of grace, dying in their infancy, are far happier than any Christian men who must undergo hard warfare against sin and Satan, who are in danger of finally falling away at the last hour, and who enter the kingdom of heaven through many difficulties – while they, without any further trouble, are quickly assumed into the kingdom of heaven for their innocence. Indeed, they are saved although they are not elected by God (for, as they affirm, he chooses none except for their faith, which they do not have); nor redeemed by Christ (for he died only for sinners – “he saves his people from their sins” – sins which they are not guilty of); nor sanctified by the Holy Ghost, all of whose operations they restrain to a moral persuasion, of which such infants are not capable subjects. It is not much to the honor of the blessed Trinity, that heaven should be furnished with those whom the Father never elected, the Son never redeemed, nor the Holy Ghost sanctified.

Thus you see what they make of this original depravity of our nature: it is at most an infirmity or languor – it is neither a sin, nor the punishment of sin properly so-called, nor yet is it a thing that deserves punishment as a sin. This last assertion, whether it is agreeable to Holy Scripture or not, the following three observations will declare: –

*First.* There is no confusion, no disorder, no vanity in the whole world, in any of God’s creatures, that is not punishment of our sin in Adam. That great and almost universal ruin of nature, proceeding from the curse of God overgrowing the earth, and the wrath of God revealing itself from heaven, is the proper issue of Adam’s transgression. It was of the great mercy of God that the whole frame of nature was not presently rolled up in darkness, and reduced to its primitive confusion. If we ourselves had been deprived of those remaining sparks of God’s image in our souls, which distinguish us from the number of the beasts that perish – if we had all been born fools and void of reason – then by dealing so with some in particular, he shows us that it would only be justice to wrap us all in the same general misery. All things, when God first created them, were exceedingly good, and were thought to be good by the wisdom of God himself. But our sin compelled even that good and wise Creator to hate and curse the work of his

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<sup>33</sup> “Perverse dicitur peccatum originis, reum facere mortis, quum peccatum illud poena sit peccati actualis Adami.” – Armin. Resp. ad Quaest. 9. a. 3.

<sup>34</sup> [The act of avoiding capture \(especially by cunning\) – the act of eluding.](#)

<sup>35</sup> “Deus neminem ob solum peccatum originis rejecit.” – Episcop., disp. 9. thes. 2.

<sup>36</sup> “Pro certo statuunt Deum nullos infantes, sine actualibus ac propriis peccatis morientes, aeternis cruciatibus destinare velle, aut jure destinare posse ob peccatum quod vocatur originis.” – Rem. Apol., p. 87.

own hands. “Cursed is the ground,” he says to Adam, “for your sake; in sorrow you will eat of it all the days of your life; it will produce thorns and thistles for you,” Gen 3:17-18. From this came that heavy burden of “vanity,” that “bondage of corruption,” under which, to this day, “the whole creation groans and travails in pain” until it is delivered, Rom 8:20-22. Now, if our sin had such a strange malignant influence on those things which have no relation to us, except that they were created for our use, then surely it is by the great mercy of God that we ourselves are not quite confounded – which still does not interpose itself, except that we are all surrounded by diverse sad effects of this iniquity, that we are actually lying under diverse pressing miseries, and are deservedly liable to everlasting destruction. So that,

*Secondly.* Temporal death, with all its antecedents and attendants – all infirmities, miseries, sicknesses, wasting and destroying passions, penal casualties, and all evil that is conducive to it, or waiting on it – is a punishment for original sin. And this is not only because the first actual sin of Adam is imputed to us, but most of these are the proper issues of that native corruption and pollution of sin which is stirring and operative within us, and which produces such sad effects – our whole nature is thoroughly defiled by it. From this arise all the distortions and excesses<sup>37</sup> of the soul by lusts, concupiscence, passions, blindness of mind, perverseness of will, inordinateness of affections, with which we are pressed and turmoiled – these are the proper issues of that inherent sin which possesses our whole soul.

It also has such an influence on the body – in disposing it to corruption and mortality – that it is the origin of all those infirmities, sicknesses, and diseases, which make us nothing but a shop for such miseries, and for death itself. Just as these and similar degrees are the steps which rapidly lead us into the road that tends towards it, so they are the direct, internal, and efficient causes of it – in subordination to the justice of Almighty God which, by such means, inflicts it as a punishment for our sins in Adam. Man before his fall was immortal, a keeper of his own everlastingness; though this was not in regard to the reason for which he was made, nor merely in respect to his living form, yet it *is* in regard to God’s ordination. Death, to which man was not liable before, was threatened as a punishment for his sin: “In the day you eat of it you shall surely die;” the exposition of these words, given by God at the time he inflicted this punishment and pronounced that man was subject to mortality, clearly shows that it comprehended temporal death also: “Dust you are, and to dust you shall return.” Our return to dust is nothing but the soul leaving the body, where before it was preserved from corruption. Further, St. Paul opposes that death we had by the sin of Adam, to the resurrection of the body by the power of Christ: “For since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive,” 1Cor 15:21-22. The life which all shall receive by the power of Christ at the last day is essentially a reunion of soul and body; and therefore their separation is a thing we incurred by the sin of Adam. The same apostle also, in Rom 5, describes a universal reign of death over all, by reason of the first transgression. Even diseases, in the Scripture, are attributed to sin as their meritorious cause, John 5:14; 1Cor 11:30; Rev 2:22. And, in respect to all of these, the mercy of God does not so interpose itself unless all the sons of men are in some way partakers of them.

*Thirdly.* The final desert of original sin, as our article says, is damnation – the wrath of God, to be poured out on us in eternal torments of body and soul. Also, many previous judgments of God are subservient to this end – such as the privation of original righteousness (which he took and withheld upon Adam’s throwing it away), spiritual desertion, permission of sin, with all other

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<sup>37</sup> Originally, “distortures and distemperatures.”

destroying deprivations of our nature – as far as they are merely penal. Some of these are immediate consequents of Adam’s singular actual transgression, such as the privation of original righteousness; others, such as damnation itself, are the proper effects of that derived sin and pollution which is in us all. There is none that is damned except for his own sin. When divines affirm that by Adam’s sin we are guilty of damnation, they do not mean that any of us are actually damned for this particular act; but that by his sin, and our sinning in him, by God’s most just ordination, we have contracted that exceeding depravity and sinfulness of nature which deserves the curse of God and eternal damnation. It must be an inherent uncleanness that actually excludes us from the kingdom of heaven, Rev 21:27.<sup>38</sup> The apostle shows that this uncleanness in infants is not sanctified by an interest in the covenant. In brief, we are baptized for the “remission of sins,” so that we may be saved, Acts 2:38.<sup>39</sup> What is taken away by baptism, then, is what hinders our salvation; which is not the first sin of Adam that is imputed to us, but our own inherent lust and pollution. We cannot be washed, and cleansed, and purged from an imputed sin; this is done by the laver of regeneration. We have no need of cleansing from what lies upon us only by an external denomination; we may be said to be freed from it, or justified, but not purged. The soul, then, that is guilty of sin shall die, and that will be for its own guilt. If God were to condemn us for original sin only, it would not be for the imputation of Adam’s fault, but for the iniquity of that portion of nature in which we are proprietaries.<sup>40</sup>

Now here, to close it all, observe that in this inquiry of the desert of original sin, the question is not, “What will be the certain lot of those who depart this life under the guilt of this sin only?” But the question is, “What does this hereditary and native corruption deserve in all those in whom it exists?” For, as St. Paul says, “We do not judge those who are outside” (especially infants), 1Cor 5:13. But for the demerit of it in the justice of God, our Savior expressly affirms that, “unless a man is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,” John 3:3, 5. Let those who can, distinguish between not going to heaven, and going to hell; we do not find a third receptacle of souls in the Scripture. St. Paul also tells us that “by nature we are the children of wrath,” Eph 2:3. Both originally and actually, we are guilty of and liable to that wrath which is accompanied with a fiery indignation that shall consume the adversaries. Again, we are assured that no unclean thing shall enter into heaven, Rev 21:27; children are polluted with this hell-deserving uncleanness: and, therefore, unless it is purged by the blood of Christ, they have no interest in everlasting happiness. By this means, sin comes upon all to condemnation; and yet do we not peremptorily censure to hell all infants departing this world without the laver of regeneration – the ordinary means of waiving the punishment which is due for this pollution. That is the *de facto* question which we rejected before. Indeed, there are two ways by which God saves such infants, snatching them like brands out of the fire:

*First.* By giving them an interest in the covenant, if their immediate or remote parents have been believers. He is a God of them and of their seed, extending his mercy to a thousand generations of those that fear him.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. (Rev 21:27 <sup>NKJ</sup>)

<sup>39</sup> Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (Act 2:38 <sup>NKJ</sup>)

<sup>40</sup> That is, owners or principals – we have an interest in it ourselves.

<sup>41</sup> Psa 103.17; 105.8.

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*Secondly.* By his grace of election, which is most free, and is not tied to any conditions; by which I have no doubt but that God takes many to himself in Christ whose parents never knew or had despised the gospel. And this is the doctrine of our church, agreeable to the Scripture, affirming that the desert of original sin is God’s wrath and damnation. How opposite the Arminian doctrine is to both of these, may be apparent from these:

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“By the offense of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation,” Rom 5:18.	“Adam sinned in his own proper person only, and there is no reason why God should impute that sin to infants,” Boraeus.
“By one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,” Rom 5:19.	“It is absurd that by one man’s disobedience many should be made actually disobedient,” Corvinus.
“Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin my mother conceived me,” Psalm 51:5.	“Infants are simply in that estate in which Adam was before his fall,” Venator.
“Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy,” 1Cor 7:14. “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one,” Job 14:4. “Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” John 3:3. “That which is born of the flesh is flesh,” John 3:6.	“Nor is it to be considered whether they are the children of believers or of heathens; for all infants have the same innocence,” Rem. Apol. “That which we have by birth can be no evil of sin, because to be born is plainly involuntary,” Idem.
“By nature the children of wrath, even as others,” Eph 2:3. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned,” in him, Rom 5:12. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) no good thing dwells,” chap. 7:18.	“Original sin is neither a sin properly so called, which should make the posterity of Adam guilty of God’s wrath, nor a punishment of any sin on them,” Rem. Apol. “It is against equity that one should be accounted guilty of a sin that is not his own, that he should be judged nocent who in regard of his own will is truly innocent,” Idem.
“In the day that you eat of it you shall surely die,” Gen 2:17. “For as in Adam all die, even so,” etc., 1Cor 15:22. “By nature the children of wrath,” Eph 2:3. “And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defiles,” Rev 21:27.	“God neither does nor can in justice appoint any to hell for original sin,” Rem. Apol. “It is perversely spoken, that original sin makes anyone guilty of death,” Armin. “We have no doubt in affirming that no one was ever damned for original sin,” Corv.

## CHAPTER 8.

### *OF THE STATE OF ADAM BEFORE THE FALL, OR OF ORIGINAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.*

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In the last chapter we discovered the Arminian attempt to re-advance the corrupted nature of man into that state of innocence and holiness in which it was created at first by God. In this design, they can only discern that their success does not correspond to their desires. They are not able to deny that, for as much good as we want (having thrown it away), and for as much evil of sin that we are subject to (more than we were at our first creation), we must be responsible to the justice of God. And so they labor to draw our first parents, from the instant of their forming, down into the same condition in which we are engaged by reason of our corrupted nature. But, truly, I fear they will hardly obtain so prosperous an issue of their endeavor as Mohammed had when he promised the people he would call a mountain to him; when they assembled to behold this miracle, the mountain would not stir for all his calling. He replied, “If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed will go to the mountain,” and away he went towards it. We will find that our Arminians can neither climb the high mountain of innocence themselves, nor can they call it down into the valley of sin and corruption in which they are lodged. We have already seen how vain and frustrated their former attempt was. Let us now take a view of their aspiring insolence, to invest the pure creatures of God,<sup>1</sup> who were holy and undefiled by any sin, with the same wretchedness and perverseness of nature as ourselves.

It is not my intention to enter into any curious discourse concerning the state and grace of Adam before his fall, but only to give a faithful assent to what God himself affirmed about all the works of his hands – they were exceedingly good. No evil, no deformity, nor anything tending to that, issued directly from that Fountain of goodness and wisdom. And therefore it is without doubt that man, the most excellent work of his hands, and the great glory of his Creator, was without spot or blemish then. He was endued with all those perfections his nature and his state of obedience were capable of. And we must be careful not to cast any aspersions of defect on Adam that we would not ascribe with equal boldness to the image of God.

Nothing more manifests the deviation of our nature from its first institution, and declares the corruption with which we are polluted, than our propensity toward everything that is evil; that inclination of the flesh which always lusts against the Spirit; that lust and concupiscence which foment, conceives, hatches, brings forth, and nourishes sin; that perpetual proneness that is in our unregenerate nature toward everything that is contrary to the pure and holy law of God. Now, because neither Scripture nor experience will quite allow Christians to deny this depravity of our nature, the Arminians extenuate as much as they are able, this averseness from all good and this propensity to sin; they assert that it is no great matter, no more than Adam was subject to in the state of innocence. But, what! Did God create a proneness to evil in Adam? Was that part of his own glorious image in whose likeness Adam was framed? Yes, says Corvinus, “By reason of his creation, man had an affection toward what was forbidden by the law.”<sup>2</sup> Yet this seems unjust, that “God should give a man a law to keep, and put upon his nature a repugnancy to that law;”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> That is, Adam and Eve before the fall.

<sup>2</sup> “Ex ratione creationis homo habebat affectum ad ea quae vetabantur.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 6. sect. 1.

<sup>3</sup> “Deus homini repugnantiam indidit adversus legem.” – Joh. Gest. In Synod. Confes.

as one of them affirmed at the synod of Dort. “No,” says Corvinus, “man would not have been fit to have a law given to him, if he had not been endued with a propensity and natural inclination toward what is forbidden by the law.”<sup>4</sup> But why is this so necessary in men rather than in angels? No doubt there was a law, a rule for their obedience, given to them at their first creation, which some transgressed while others kept it inviolate. Did they also have a propensity to sin created within their nature? Did they have a natural affection put on them by God toward what was forbidden by the law? Let only those who would be wise beyond the word of God, affix such injustice on the righteous Judge of all the earth. But so it seems it must be: “There was an inclination in man to sin before the fall, though not altogether so vehement and inordinate as it is now,” says Arminius.<sup>5</sup> Up to now we thought the original righteousness in which Adam was created, included the integrity and perfection of the whole man; not only that by which the body was obedient to the soul, and by which all the affections were subservient to the rule of reason to perform all natural actions – but also a light, uprightness, and holiness of grace in the mind and will, whereby he was enabled to yield obedience to God to attain that supernatural end for which he was created. No, say our new doctors; “original righteousness was nothing but a bridle to help keep man’s inordinate concupiscence within bounds;”<sup>6</sup> the faculties of our souls were never endued with any proper innate holiness of their own. “In the spiritual death of sin there are no spiritual gifts properly lacking in the will, because they were *never* there,” say the six collocutors<sup>7</sup> at the Hague.<sup>8</sup>

The sum of their view is that man was created with a nature not only weak and imperfect, unable by its native strength and endowments to attain that supernatural end for which he was made, and which he was commanded to seek, but with a nature that was depraved with a love and desire for things that are repugnant to the will of God – an inbred inclination to sinning. It does not properly belong here to show how they extenuate those gifts which they cannot deny that Adam was endued with, and yet also deny those gifts which he had, such as a power to believe in Christ, or to assent to *any* truth that God revealed to him. And yet they grant this privilege to every one of his posterity, who are in that depraved condition of nature into which by sin Adam cast himself and us. We all now have a power to believe in Christ, they say; that is, Adam, by his fall, obtained a supernatural endowment that was far more excellent than any he had before. And let them not claim here the universality of the new covenant, until they can prove it; and I am certain it will be long enough. But this, I say, does not belong here; only let us see how, from the word of God, we may overthrow the former odious heresy:

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<sup>4</sup> “Homo non est idoneus cui lex feratur, quando in eo, ad id quod lege vetatur, non est propensio, ac inclinatio naturalis.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 10. sect. 15. [That is, man was created by God with a corrupt nature that was pre-inclined to sin.](#)

<sup>5</sup> “Inclinatio ad peccandum ante lapsum in homine fuit, licet non ita vehemens ac inordinata ut nunc est.” – Armin. ad Artic. Respon.

<sup>6</sup> “Justitia originalis instar fraeni fuit, quod preestabat internae concupiscentiae ordinationem.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 8. sect. 1.

<sup>7</sup> [Collocutor: a person who talks or engages in conversation; these men were part of a group that met at the Leyden state college for the education of preachers in The Hague, on 14 January 1610, to draw up the Remonstrance Articles of Arminianism.](#)

<sup>8</sup> “In spirituali morte non separantur proprie dona spiritualia a voluntate, quia illa nunquam fuerunt ei insita.” – Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 250.

God in the beginning “created man in his own image,” Gen 1:27 – that is, “upright,” Ecc 7:29, endowed with a nature that was composed toward obedience and holiness. That habitual grace and original righteousness with which man was invested was in a way due to him for obtaining that supernatural end for which he was created. A universal rectitude of all the faculties of his soul, advanced by supernatural graces, enabled him to perform those duties for which they were required. This is what we call the *innocence* of our first parents. Our nature was then inclined only to good; and it was adorned with all those qualifications that were necessary to make it acceptable to God; and it was able to do what was required of us by the law, under the condition of everlasting happiness. Nature and grace (or original righteousness) before the fall, ought not to be distinguished from one another as though nature was a thing that was prone to evil, and it was resisted and quelled by grace – for both complied in a sweet union and harmony to carry us along in the way of obedience to eternal blessedness. [There was] no contention between the flesh and the Spirit; but just as all other things are theirs, so the whole man jointly aimed at his own highest good, having in his power all the means to attain it. There was then, in the pure nature of man, no inclination to sin, no concupiscence of what is evil, no repugnancy to the law of God. This is proved, because –

*First.* The Scripture, in describing the condition of our nature at its first creation, intimates no such propensity to evil, but rather a holy perfection that quite excluded it. We were created “in the image of God,” Gen 1:27 – in such a perfect uprightness that it was opposite to all evil inventions, Ecc 7:29. We are in some measure “renewed” to this image by the grace of Christ, Col 3:10; we see by its first-fruits, that this image consisted in “righteousness and true holiness,” – in truth and perfect holiness, Eph 4:24.

*Secondly.* An inclination to evil, and a lusting after what is forbidden, is that inordinate concupiscence with which our nature is now infected. This is everywhere in the Scripture condemned as a sin. St. Paul, in the seventh chapter to the Romans, expressly affirms that it is a sin, and forbidden by the law, verse 7, producing all manner of evil, and hindering all that is good – a “body of death,” verse 24. And St. James makes it the very womb of all iniquity, James 1:14-15. Surely our nature was not at first yoked with such a troublesome inmate. Where is the uprightness and innocence which, up to now, we conceived our first parents enjoyed before the fall? A repugnancy to the law must be a sinful thing. An inclination to evil, to anything forbidden, is an anomaly – a deviation and discrepancy from the pure and holy law of God. If this is true, then we must speak no more about the state of innocence, but only about a short space in which no actual outward sins were committed. Their proper root, if this is true, was created within our nature. Is this that obedient harmony to all the commandments of God which is necessary for a pure and innocent creature which has a law prescribed to him? By which of the ten precepts is this inclination to evil required? Is it by the last, “You shall not covet?” or is it by that sum of them all, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart,” etc.? Is this all the happiness of paradise – to be turmoiled by a nature swelling with an abundance of vain desires, and with a main stream carried headlong toward all iniquity if its violent appetite is not powerfully restrained by the bit and bridle of original righteousness? As we see with children now; <sup>9</sup> so it would have been with them in paradise, if they were subject to this rebellious inclination to sin.

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<sup>9</sup> “Vidi ego zelantem parvulum qui nondum loquebatur, et intuebatur pallidus, amaro aspectu colluctaneum suum.” – Aug.

*Thirdly*, and principally. From where did our primitive nature get this affection toward those things that were forbidden to it – this rebellion and repugnancy to the law, which must be an anomaly, and thus a sinful thing? There was as yet no demerit to deserve it as a punishment. What fault is it to be created? <sup>10</sup> The operation of any thing which has its original being with its own being, must proceed from the same cause as the essence or being itself: just as a fire tends upwards relates to the original nature of fire itself. And therefore, this inclination or affection can have no other author but God; by this means, God is named not only as the efficient cause of the first sin, but of all the sins in the world which arise from it. Plainly, and without any strained consequences, God is made the author of sin. For even those positive properties which can have no other fountain but the author of nature, being set on evil, are directly sinful. And here the idol of free-will may triumph in this victory over the God of heaven. Up to now, all the blame for sin lay upon man’s shoulders. But now he begins to complain, Οὐκ ἔγὼ αἰτιός εἰμι ἀλλὰ Ζεὺς καὶ μοῖρα. “It is God and the fate of our creation that has placed us in this condition of having a natural affection toward what is evil. So get back with all your charges against the ill government of this new deity [of ours] within his imaginary dominion; what hurt does he do except to incline men to evil – did God himself do any less at the first?” Let those who will, rejoice in these blasphemies. It suffices for us to know that “God created man upright,” though man “has sought out many inventions;” <sup>Ecc 7.9</sup> so that in the following dissonance, we may cleave to the better part:

<b>S. S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them,” Gen 1:27. “Put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him,” Col 3:10. “– which is created after God in righteousness and true holiness,” Eph 4:24.	“There was in man before the fall an inclination to sinning, though not so vehement and inordinate as it now is,” Armin. “God put upon man a repugnancy to his law,” Gesteranus in the Synod. “Man, by reason of his creation, had an affection toward those things that are forbidden by the law,” Corv.
“Lo, this only have I found, that God has made man upright; but he has sought out many inventions,” Ecc 7:29. “By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin,” Rom 5:12.	“The will of man never had any spiritual endowments,” Rem. Apol.
“Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted by God: for God tempts no man: but every man is tempted when he is drawn away by his own lust,” James 1:13,14.	“It was not fitting that man should have a law given to him, unless he had a natural inclination to do what was forbidden by the law,” Corv.

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<sup>10</sup> “Operatio quae simul incipit cum esse rei, est ei ab agente, a quo habet esse, sicut moveri sursum inest igni a generante.” – Alvar., p. 199.

## CHAPTER 9.

### OF THE DEATH OF CHRIST, AND OF THE EFFICACY OF HIS MERITS.

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The sum of those controversies, with which the Arminians and their abettors have troubled the church about the death of Christ, may be reduced to two heads: *First*. Concerning the object of his merit, or whom he died for; *secondly*. Concerning the efficacy and end of his death, or what he deserved, procured, merited, and obtained for those for whom he died. In resolution of the first, they claim that he died for all and every one; of the second, that he died for no one at all, in the sense in which Christians up to now have believed: that he laid down his life and submitted himself to bear the burden of his Father's wrath for their sakes. It seems to me a strange extenuation of the merit of Christ to teach that, by his death, no good at all redounds<sup>1</sup> to those for whom he died. What participation in the benefit of his suffering did Pharaoh or Judas have? Do they not at this hour, and shall they not to eternity, feel the weight and burden of their own sins? Did they have either grace in this world, or glory in the other, that they should be said to have an interest in the death of our Savior? Christians up to now have believed that Christ made satisfaction for the sins of those for whom he died, so that they themselves would not suffer eternally for them. Is God unjust to punish twice for the same fault? To punish his own Son once, and then again punish the poor sinners for whom he suffered? I cannot conceive an intention in God that Christ would satisfy God's justice for the sin of those who were in hell some thousands of years before, and yet still be resolved to continue their punishment to all eternity. No, doubtless Christ gives life to every one for whom he gave his life; he loses not one of those whom he purchased with his blood.

The first part of this controversy may be handled under these two questions: *First*. Whether God by giving his Son, and Christ by making his soul a ransom for sin, intended to redeem all and every one from their sins, so that all and every one alike, from the beginning of the world to the last day, would all equally partake of the fruits of his death and passion – this purpose for the most part being frustrated? *Secondly*. Whether God did not have a certain infallible intention to gather to himself a “chosen people,” [Deut 7.6](#) to collect a “church of first-born,” [Heb 12.22](#) to save his “little flock,” [Luk 12.32](#) and to certainly bring some to happiness by the death of his only Son – which he accomplishes in the event of his Son's death?

The second part also may be reduced to these two heads: *First*. Whether Christ did not make full satisfaction for all the sins of those for whom he died, and merited glory or everlasting happiness, to be bestowed on them upon the performance of those conditions God would require? *Secondly* (which is the proper controversy I shall chiefly insist upon). Whether Christ did not procure for his own people the power to become the sons of God, and merit and deserve for them, grace, faith, righteousness, and sanctification from the hands of God, whereby they may infallibly be enabled to perform the conditions of the new covenant, upon which they shall be admitted to glory?

To the first question of the first part of the controversy, the Arminians answer affirmatively – that Christ died for all alike; the benefit of his passion belongs equally to all the posterity of Adam. And to the second negatively – that God had no such intention to bring many chosen sons to salvation by the death of Christ, but determined grace and glory no more precisely to one than

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<sup>1</sup> *Redound*: to return, accrue, or contribute.

to another, to John no more than to Judas, to Abraham no more than to Pharaoh. Both of these, as the learned Moulin observed,<sup>2</sup> seemed to be invented to make Christianity ridiculous, and expose our religion to the derision of all knowing men. For who can possibly conceive that by the appointment of God, one should die for another, and yet that other, by the same justice, be allotted to death himself, when only one’s death was due; that Christ should have made a full satisfaction for their sins who shall everlastingly feel the weight of them themselves; that he should merit and obtain reconciliation with God for those who live and die as his enemies; that he should merit and obtain grace and glory for those who are graceless in this life and damned in the life to come; that he should get remission of sins for those whose sins were never pardoned? In brief, if this sentence is true, then Christ did not reconcile us to God by his death, nor make satisfaction to God’s justice for our iniquities, nor redeem us from our sins, nor purchase a kingdom, an everlasting inheritance for us – which I hope no Christian would say; or else all the former absurdities must necessarily follow – which no rational man will ever admit.

Nor may we be charged as straiteners<sup>3</sup> of the merit of Christ; for we advance the true value and worth of it (as will appear shortly) far beyond all the Arminians ascribe to it. We confess that that “blood of God,” Acts 20:28, the blood of the “Lamb without blemish and without spot,” 1Peter 1:19, was so exceedingly precious, and of that infinite worth and value that it might have saved a thousand believing worlds, John 3:16; Rom 3:22. His death was of sufficient dignity to have been made a ransom for all the sins of every one in the world. And on this internal sufficiency of his death and passion is grounded the universality of evangelical promises; these have no such restriction in their own nature that they should not be made to all and every one, though the promulgation and knowledge of them are tied only to the good pleasure of God’s special providence, Mat 16:17.<sup>4</sup> This is also true of that economy and dispensation of the new covenant whereby, the partition-wall being broken down, there remains no more difference between Jew and Gentile – the utmost borders of the earth have been given for Christ’s inheritance. So that, in some sense, Christ may be said to die for “all,” and “the whole world;” – *first*, inasmuch as the worth and value of his death was sufficient to have paid a price for all their sins; *secondly*, inasmuch as this word “all” is taken for some of all sorts (not for every one of every sort), as it is frequently used in the holy Scripture. So Christ being lifted up, “drew all to himself,” John 12:32; that is, believers out of all sorts of men. The apostles cured all diseases, or some of all sorts: they did not cure every particular disease, but there was no kind of disease that was exempted from their power of healing. So that where it is said that Christ “died for all,” it means either *first*, all the faithful; or, *secondly*, some of all sorts; *thirdly*, not only Jews, but Gentiles. For –

*Secondly*. The proper counsel and intention of God in sending his Son into the world to die was that thereby he might confirm and ratify the new covenant to his elect, and purchase for them all the good things which are contained in the tenure of that covenant – grace and glory; so that by his death he might bring many (yet some certain) children to glory, obtaining for those that were given to him by his Father (that is, his whole church) reconciliation with God, remission of sins, faith, righteousness, sanctification, and life eternal. That is the end to which they are to be brought, and the means by which God would have them attain it. He died that he might gather

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<sup>2</sup> Molin. Suffrag. ad Synod. Dordra.

<sup>3</sup> That is, restricters.

<sup>4</sup> This is sometimes referred to as the “sincere offer.” Although not all are elect, we have no idea who the elect are. And we therefore make a sincere offer of the gospel promises to all people, without distinction.

the dispersed children of God, and make them partakers of everlasting glory – to “give eternal life to as many as God gave him,” John 17:2. The intercession of Christ for his elect and chosen people is founded on this purpose, of himself and his Father – performed partly on earth (John 17) and partly in heaven before the throne of grace. This is nothing but a presentation of himself and his merits before God, accompanied by the mediatorial prayers that God would be pleased to grant and effectually apply the good things he has obtained by his merits, to all those for whom he has obtained them. His intercession in heaven is nothing but a continued oblation<sup>5</sup> of himself. So that whatever Christ impetrated,<sup>6</sup> merited, or obtained by his death and passion, must be infallibly applied to and bestowed on those for whom he intended to obtain it; or else his intercession is in vain, and his mediatorial prayers are not heard. An actual reconciliation with God, and a communication of grace and glory, must befall all those that have any such interest in the righteousness of Christ as to have it accepted for their good. The sole end why Christ would so dearly purchase those good things, is an actual application of them to his chosen. God set forth the propitiation of his blood for the remission of sins, that he might be the justifier of him which believes on Jesus, Rom 3:25-26. But this part of the controversy is not what I principally intend; I will only give you a brief sum of those reasons which overthrow their heresy in this particular branch of it: –

*First.* The death of Christ in diverse places of the Scripture is restrained to his “people,” and “elect,” his “church,” and “sheep,” Mat 1:21; John 10:11-13; Acts 20:28; Eph 5:25; John 11:51,52; Rom 8:32,34; Heb 2:9,14; Rev 5:9; Daniel 9:26 – and therefore the good purchased by his death ought not to be extended to “dogs,” “reprobates,” and “those that are without.”

*Secondly.* For whom Christ died, he died as their sponsor, in their place and turn, so that he might free them from the guilt and desert of death; which is clearly expressed Rom 5:6-8. “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed,” Isaiah 53:5,6, etc. “He has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,” Gal 3:13. “He has made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin,” 2Cor 5:21. Evidently he changes turns with us, “so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.” Indeed, in other things, it is plain in the Scripture that to die for another is to take his place, with an intention that the other should live, 2Samuel 18:33; Rom 5. Thus Christ, in dying for men, made satisfaction for their sins, so that they would not die. Now, for those sins for which he made satisfaction, the justice of God is satisfied; which surely is not done for the sins of reprobates, because he justly punishes reprobates to eternity for themselves, Mat 5:26.

*Thirdly.* For whom Christ “died,” for them also he “rose again,” to make intercession for them. For their “offenses he was delivered;” for their “justification he was raised,” Rom 4:25, 5:10. He is a high priest “to make intercession for them” in the holy of holies for whom “by his own blood he obtained eternal redemption,” Heb 9:11-12. These two acts of his priesthood are not to be separated: it belongs to the same mediator to sacrifice for sin, and to pray. Our assurance that he is our advocate is grounded on his being a propitiation for our sins. He is an “advocate” for every one for whose sins his blood was a “propitiation,” 1John 2:1-2. But Christ does not intercede and pray for all, as he himself often testifies, John 17:9; he “makes intercession” only for those who “come to God by him,” Heb 7:25. He is not a mediator of those that perish, any more than he is

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<sup>5</sup> An oblation is an offering to God.

<sup>6</sup> Impetrate: to obtain by request or entreaty.

an advocate of those that fail in their suits; and therefore the benefit of his death must also be restrained to those who are finally partakers of both. We must not so disjoin the offices of Christ’s mediatorship, that one office may be wrapped<sup>7</sup> around some towards whom he does not exercise the other; much less ought we thus separate the several acts of the same office. For whom Christ is a priest (offering himself as a sacrifice for their sins), he is surely a king (applying to them the good things purchased by his death), as Arminius himself confesses; much more to whom he is a priest by *sacrifice*, he will be a priest by *intercession*. And therefore, seeing that he does not intercede and pray for every one, he did not die for every one.

*Fourthly*. For whom Christ died, he merited grace and glory, faith and salvation, and reconciliation with God; as I will show afterward. But he has not done this for all and every one. Many never believe; the wrath of God remains on some; the wrath of God abides on those that do not believe, John 3:36. To abide argues a continued, uninterrupted act. Now, to be reconciled to one, and yet to lie under his heavy anger, seem to me ἀσύστατα – things that scarcely go together. The reasons are many; I only point at the heads of some of them.

*Fifthly*. Christ died for those whom God gave to him to be saved: “Yours they were, and you gave them me,” John 17:6. He lays down his life for the sheep committed to his charge, John 10:11. But all are not the sheep of Christ; all are not given to him by God to be brought to glory; for of those that are given to him, there is not one that perishes, <sup>Joh 18:9</sup> for “he gives eternal life to as many as God has given him,” John 17:2. “No man is able to pluck them out of his Father’s hand,” John 10:28-29.

*Sixthly*. Look at whom, and how many, the love of God embraced, which was the cause of sending his Son to redeem them. For them, and only so many, according to the counsel of his Father and in himself, Christ intentionally laid down his life. Now, this love is not universal. It is his “good pleasure” to bless with spiritual blessings and save some in Christ, Eph 1:4-5. This good pleasure of his evidently comprehends some, while others are excluded, Mat 11:25-26.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, the love of God in giving Christ for us has the same extent as that grace whereby he calls us to faith, or bestows faith on us: for “he has called us with a holy calling, according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus,” 2Tim 1:9; which, doubtless, is not universal and common to all.

There are innumerable other reasons which prove that God has given only his elect, only those whom he loved, to Christ to be redeemed; that the Son loves only those who are given to him by his Father, and redeems only those whom he loves; and that the Holy Spirit, the love of the Father and the Son, sanctifies only those who are elected and redeemed. Therefore, it is with preposterous liberality on our part, and it is against the testimony of Christ himself, to assign the salvation attained by him, as due those outside the congregation of those whom the Father has loved and chosen, and who are outside the church which the Son loved and gave his life for. None of these are members of that sanctified body of which Christ is the Head and Savior. I urge no more, because this is not part of the controversy that I desire to lay open.

I come now to consider the main question of this difference, though sparingly handled by our divines, concerning what our Savior merited and purchased for those for whom he died. And

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<sup>7</sup> Originally *versated about* – probably from the Italian *versaro*: wrapped or twisted around.

<sup>8</sup> Mat 11:25-26 <sup>NKJ</sup> At that time Jesus answered and said, “I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from *the* wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight.”

here you shall find the old idol playing his pranks, and quite divesting the merit of Christ from the least ability or power of doing us any good. For though the Arminians pretend, very speciously, that Christ died for all men, yet, in effect, they make him die for no one at all. And they do this by denying the effectual operation of his death, and by ascribing the proper issues of his passion to the brave endeavors of their own Pelagian deity.

We, according to the Scriptures, plainly believe that Christ has, by his righteousness, merited grace and glory for us; that we are blessed with all spiritual blessings in, through, and for him;<sup>Eph 1.3</sup> that he is made unto us righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;<sup>1Cor 1.30</sup> that he has procured for us (and that God for his sake bestows on us) every grace in this life that makes us differ from others,<sup>2Cor 9.8</sup> and all that glory we hope for in what is to come;<sup>Eph 2.7</sup> that he procured for us remission of all our sins,<sup>Act 10.43</sup> an actual reconciliation with God,<sup>Rom 5.11</sup> faith, and obedience.<sup>Rom 1.5</sup> But this is such an extreme doctrine that it stabs at the very heart of their idol, and it would make him altogether useless, as if he were but a fig-tree log. What would remain for him to do if all the things in this great work of our salvation must be thus ascribed to Christ and the merit of his death? For this reason, the worshippers of this great god, *Free-will*,<sup>9</sup> oppose their engines against the whole fabric of it; and on behalf of their imaginary deity, they decry the title of Christ’s merits to these spiritual blessings.

Now, the things about which we contend before the King of heaven are twofold, each part producing its own evidence. The first part springs from the favor of God towards us, and the second from the working of his grace actually within us. I shall handle them severally and apart – especially because we lay a double claim on God’s behalf to things of this latter sort. They are “gifts” as we call them, which enable us to fulfill the condition required to attain glory. This is so *first*, because the death of Christ is the meritorious cause which procures them from him; *secondly*, because his free grace is their efficient cause which works them in us. These [Arminians] also produce a double title, whereby they invest their beloved darling [Free-will] with sole propriety in causing these effects; and this is so, *first*, in the regard that they are our own acts, performed *in* us and *by* us; and *secondly*, because they are parts of our duty which we are enjoined to do. So that the quarrel is directly between Christ’s merits and our own free-will in procuring the favor of God, and obtaining grace and righteousness. Let us see what they say to the first.

They assert that “the immediate and proper effect or end of the death and passion of Christ is not an actual ablation of sin from men, nor an actual remission of iniquities, nor the justification and redemption of any soul;”<sup>10</sup> that is, Christ’s death is not the meritorious cause of the remission of our sins, nor of our redemption and justification. The *meritorious* cause, I say. For some of these ends, such as justification (as it terminates in us), we confess there are causes of other kinds – for example, faith is the *instrument* of it, and the Holy Spirit is the *efficient* cause of it. But for the sole *meritorious* procuring cause of these spiritual blessings, we have always taken it to be the righteousness and death of Christ. We believed plainly that the end for which Christ died, and the fruit of his sufferings, was our reconciliation with God, redemption from our sins, freedom from the curse, and deliverance from the wrath of God and the power of hell. Though we are not actual partakers of these things, to the pacification of our own consciences, without the intervening operation of the Holy Spirit, and the faith that is wrought in us by him.

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<sup>9</sup> Originally, *Lib. Arbit.* an abbreviation for the Latin *liberum arbitrium*, or “free will” in English.

<sup>10</sup> “Immediata morris Christi effectio, ac passionis, illa est non actualis peccatorum ab his aut illis ablatio, non actualis remissio, non justificatio, non actualis horum aut illorum redemptio.” – Armin. Antip., p. 76.

But if this is not so, then pray tell what is obtained by the death of Christ? Why, “a potential, conditional reconciliation, not actual and absolute,” says Corvinus.<sup>11</sup> Yet this *potential* reconciliation is a new expression that is never intimated in the Scripture, and is scarcely intelligible of itself. Thus we want a further explanation of their mind, to know what it is that they directly assign to the merits of Christ. Therefore they tell us that the fruit of his death was “such an impetration or obtaining of reconciliation with God, and redemption for us, that God thereby has a power – his justice being satisfied, and so it is not compelling him to the contrary – to grant remission of sins to sinful men on whatever condition he would have;”<sup>12</sup> or, as another speaks of it, “By the effusion of Christ’s blood, a right was obtained and settled in God, to reconcile the world [to himself], and to open to all a gate of repentance and faith in Christ.”<sup>13</sup> But now, whereas the Scripture everywhere affirms that Christ died for our good, to obtain blessings for us, to purchase our peace, to acquire and merit for us the good things contained in the promise of the covenant, this opinion seems to restrain the end and fruit of his death to obtaining a power and liberty for God to prescribe for us a condition whereby we may be saved. Yet perhaps this much at least Christ obtained from God on our behalf: that God would assign faith in Christ to be this condition, and to bestow this faith on us also. No, they say; neither the one nor the other. “After all this, if it seemed good to his wisdom, God might have chosen the Jews, and others, following the righteousness of the law, as well as believers; because he might have assigned any other condition of salvation besides faith in Christ,” says Grevinchovius.<sup>14</sup> Notwithstanding, then, the death of Christ for us, they say we might have been held to the old rule, “Do this, and live.” But if this is true, I cannot perceive how it may be said that Christ died to redeem us from our sins, to save our souls, and to bring us to glory. Perhaps they do not think this is any great inconvenience; for the same author affirms that “Christ cannot properly be said to die to save any one.”<sup>15</sup> And a little afterward he more fully declares that “after Christ had obtained all that he obtained by his death, the right remained wholly in God to apply it, or not to apply it, as it seemed good to him; the application of grace and glory to any man was not the end for which Christ obtained them, but it was only to get a right and power for God to bestow those things on whatever sort of men he would;”<sup>16</sup> – which does not argue a redemption from our sins, but a vindication of God from such a condition in which he did not have power forgive them; it does not obtain salvation for us, but a liberty for God to save us on some condition or other.

But now, after God has gotten this power by the death of Christ, and out of his gracious good pleasure he has assigned faith to be the means for us to attain those blessings, he has procured for himself a liberty to bestow them. Did Christ obtain this faith for us from God, if it is not a thing

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<sup>11</sup> “Reconciliatio potentialis et conditionata non actualis et absoluta, per mortem Christi impetratur.” – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 28. sect. 11.

<sup>12</sup> “Remissionis, justificationis, et redemptionis, apud Deum impetratio, qua factum est, ut Deus jam possit, utpote justitia cui satisfactum est non obstante, hominibus peccatoribus peccata remittere.” – Armin., ubi sup.

<sup>13</sup> “Autoris mens non est alia, quam effuso sanguine Christi reconciliandi mundum Deo jus impetratum fuisse, et inito novo foedere et gratioso curn hominibus, Deum gratiae ostium omnibus denuo, poenitentiae ac verae in Christum fidei lege, adaperuisse.” – Epistol. ad Wal., p. 93.

<sup>14</sup> “Potuisset Deus, si ita sapientiae suae visum fuisset, operarios, Judaeos, vel alios etiam praeter fideles eligere, quia potuit aliam salutis conditionem, quam fidem in Christum exigere.” – Grevinch, ad Ames., p. 415.

<sup>15</sup> “Christus non est proprie mortuus ad aliquem salvandum.” – Idem, ibid, p. 8.

<sup>16</sup> “Postquam impetratio praestita ac peracta esset, Deo jus suum integrum mansit, pro arbitrio suo, eam applicare, vel non applicare; nec applicatio finis impetrationis proprie fuit, sed jus et potestas applicandi, quibus et qualibus vellet.” – p. 9.

in our own power to obtain? No; “faith is not obtained by the death of Christ,” says Corvinus.<sup>17</sup> So there is no good thing, no spiritual blessing, in which any man in the world has any interest by the death of Christ. This would not be so great an absurdity except that they are most ready to grant it! Arnoldus confesses, “that he believes that the death of Christ might have enjoyed its end, or his merit its full force, even if no one had ever believed:” and again, “The death and satisfaction of Christ being accomplished, it might come to pass that, none having fulfilled the condition of the new covenant, none would be saved.”<sup>18</sup> So also says Grevinchovius. O Christ! That anyone pretending to profess your holy name would thus slight the precious work of your death and passion! Surely none before, who counted it their glory to be called Christians, ever thus extenuated<sup>19</sup> the dignity of Christ’s merit and satisfaction (except their friends the Socinians).

Take but a short view of the benefit they allow to redound to us by the effusion of his precious blood, and you may see what a pestilent heresy these men have labored to bring into the church. Christ has purchased for us neither faith nor salvation, grace nor glory – we cannot claim that any spiritual blessing is ours by our interest in his death! It is not such a reconciliation with God that thereupon he would be content again to be called our God; it is not justification, nor righteousness, nor actual redemption from our sins; it did not make satisfaction for our iniquities and deliver us from the curse; “it was only a means to obtain such a possibility of salvation, that God might save us if he would, without wronging his justice one way or the other.”<sup>20</sup> So that, when Christ had done all that he could, there was not one man in the world who was immediately the better for it; notwithstanding the utmost of his endeavor, every one might have been damned with Judas to the pit of hell; for “he died as well for Simon Magus and Judas as he did for Peter and Paul,” say the Arminians.<sup>21</sup> Now, if no more good redounds to us by the death of Christ than it does to Simon Magus, we are not much obliged to Christ for our salvation. No, he may rather be said to have redeemed God than us; for he immediately procured for God a power to redeem us if he would; by virtue of that power, he only procured for us a *possibility* to be redeemed – which leaves nothing of the nature of merit annexed to his death; for merit requires that something be done, not only that it *may* be done; the workman deserves that his wages be *given* to him, and not that they *may* be given to him. And then what becomes of all the comfort and consolation that is proposed to us in the death of Christ? But it is time to see how this stubble is burned up and consumed by the word of God, and how what they thought to overthrow, is established.

*First.* It is, clear that Christ died to procure for us an *actual* reconciliation with God, and not just a *power* to be reconciled to him; for “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son,” Rom 5:10. We enjoy an actual reconciliation to God by Christ’s death. God is content to be called “our God” when we are enemies,<sup>Rom 5.10</sup> without any intervening condition on our part being required; though, before we believe in him, our souls are not

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<sup>17</sup> “Fides non est impetrata merito Christi,” etc. – Corv. ad Molin., cap. 28. p. 419.

<sup>18</sup> “Posita et praestita Christi morte et satisfactione, fieri potest, ut, nemine novi foederis conditionem prastante, nemo salvaretur.” – Idem. Grevinch. ad Ames. p. 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Extenuate*: to lessen the seriousness or extent of something.

<sup>20</sup> “Impetratio salutis pro omnibus, est acquisitio possibilitatis, ut nimirum Deus, illaesa sua justitia, hominem peccatorem possit recipere in gratiam.” – Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 172.

<sup>21</sup> “Pro Juda ac Petro mortuus est Christus, et pro Simone Mago et Juda tam quam pro Paulo et Petro.” – Rem. Synod, p. 320.

compassed by the sweetness, comfort, and knowledge of this reconciliation. Again, we have remission of sins by his blood, and justification from them; not just a vindication into such an estate that, if it pleases God and ourselves, our sins are pardonable. For we are “justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins,” Rom 3:24-25. Yes, he obtained righteousness and holiness for us by his death. “He gave himself for the church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it,” Eph 5:25-26; “that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle;” so that we would be “holy and without blemish,” verse 27, where, *first*, we have those for whom Christ died or gave himself (his church); *secondly*, we have what he obtained for them – holiness and righteousness, freedom from the spots and blemishes of sin; that is, he obtained the grace of justification and sanctity. “He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2Cor 5:21. And, *lastly*, he died to purchase for us “an eternal inheritance,” Heb 9:15. So that both grace and glory are bestowed on those for whom he died, as the immediate fruits of his death and passion.

*Secondly*. See what the Scripture ῥητῶς, “expressly,” assigns as the proper end and immediate effect (according to the purpose of God and his own intention) of the effusion of the blood of Jesus Christ, and you will find that he intended to take away the sins of many by it; to “make his soul an offering for sin,” so that he might “see his seed,” so that “the pleasure of the LORD might prosper in his hand,” Isaiah 53:10; to be “a ransom for many,” Mat 20:28; to “bear the sins of many,” Heb 9:28. He “bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we should live to righteousness,” 1Peter 2:24; so that “we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2Cor 5:21; thereby reconciling us to God, verse 19. He died to “reconcile us to God in the body of his flesh through death,” so that we might be “holy and unblamable,” Col 1:21-22; to “purge our sins,” Heb 1:3; to “obtain eternal redemption for us,” Heb 9:12. So that if Christ obtained by his death what he intended, then he has purchased for us not only a *possibility* of salvation, but actual holiness, righteousness, reconciliation with God, justification, freedom from the guilt and condemning power of sin, everlasting redemption, eternal life, and glory in heaven.

*Thirdly*. I appeal to the conscience of all Christians –

First. Whether they do not suppose that the very foundation of all their consolation is struck at when the following places in Scripture are twisted so as to say that Christ only did something from which these things *might* perhaps follow? Heb 9:12, 14-15, 24, 28; Isaiah 53:10; 1John 2:2, etc – these places affirm that Christ died to take away our sins, to reconcile us to God, to put away or abolish our transgressions, to wash and regenerate us, to perfectly save us, and to purchase for us an everlasting redemption, whereby Christ becomes to us righteousness, redemption, and sanctification, the Lord our righteousness, and we become the righteousness of God in him,

Secondly. Whether they do not think it is an easy way to impair their love and to weaken their faith in Christ, when they are taught that Christ has done no more for them than for those who are damned in hell; that however great their assurance that Christ died for them, there is still enough to be laid to their charge to condemn them; that although God is said to have reconciled them to himself in Christ, Col 1:19-20, yet indeed he is as angry with them as with any reprobate in the world; that God does not love us first, but as long as we continue in a state of enmity against him, and before our conversion, he continues to be our enemy also – so that the first act

of friendship or love must be performed on our part, notwithstanding that the Scripture says, “When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God,” Rom 5:10?

*Thirdly*, Whether they have not up to now supposed themselves bound to believe that Christ died for their sins, and rose for their justification? Do they not think it is lawful to pray that God would bestow grace and glory on them for Christ’s sake? And to believe that Jesus Christ was such a mediator of the new covenant, that he procured for the persons he covenanted with all the good things comprehended in the covenant promise?

I will not press this prevarication<sup>22</sup> against Christian religion any further. I desire only that all those who love Jesus Christ would seriously consider whether these men truly aim at his honor, and advance the dignity of his merit? Or do they rather praise their *own* endeavors, seeing that the sole cause of denying these glorious effects of the blood of Christ is to appropriate the praise of them to themselves (as we will see in the next chapter).

These charges are never to be waived by the vanity of their sophistical distinctions, as [they have waived] *impetration* and its application. Though *impetration* may be received in an orthodox meaning, yet it is not to be received in that sense (or rather nonsense) for which they abuse it – namely, as though Christ had obtained for some what will never be imparted to them; that all the blessings procured by his death are proper to none, but are hanging in the air for those who can or will catch them. When we object that by this means all the efficacy of the merit of Christ is in our own power,<sup>23</sup> they readily grant it, and say it cannot be otherwise. Let those who can, receive these monstrosities into Christianity. For my part, in the following contradictory assertions, I choose rather to adhere to the authority of the word of God, than of Arminius and his sectaries:

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“He made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,” 2Cor 5:21. “He loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might present it unto himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing,” Eph 5:25,27.	“The immediate effect of the death of Christ is not the remission of sins, or the actual redemption of any,” Armin. “Christ did not properly die to save any one,” Grevinch.
“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,” 2Cor 5:19.	“A potential and conditionate reconciliation, not actual and absolute, is obtained by the death of Christ,” Corv.
“When you shall make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand,” Isaiah 53:10.	“I believe it might have come to pass that the death of Christ might have had its end, though never any man had believed,” Corv.
“By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities,” Isaiah 53:11.	“The death and satisfaction of Christ being accomplished, yet it may so come to pass that, none at all fulfilling the condition of the new covenant, none might be saved,” Idem.

<sup>22</sup> [An intentionally vague or ambiguous statement that deviates from or perverts the truth.](#)

<sup>23</sup> “Sic efficacia meriti Christi tota penes nos stabit, qui vocationem alioqui inefficacem, efficacem reddimus; sane, fieri aliter non potest.” – Rem. Apol., p. 93.

Chap. 9 – The Efficacy of Christ’s Merits

<p>“Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many,” Heb 9:28. “By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us,” chapter 9:12. “He has reconciled you in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblamable, and unreprouable,” Col 1:21,22.</p>	<p>“The impetration of salvation for all, by the death of Christ, is nothing but the obtaining of a possibility thereof; that God, without wronging his justice, may open unto them a gate of mercy, to be entered on some condition,” Rem. Coll. Hag.</p>
<p>“Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins,” etc.: “that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believes in Jesus,” Rom 3:25,26.</p>	<p>“Notwithstanding the death of Christ, God might have assigned any other condition of salvation as well as faith, or have chosen the Jews following the righteousness of the law,” Grevinch.</p>
<p>“Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes we were healed,” 1Peter 2:24.</p>	<p>“Why, then, the efficacy of the death of Christ depends wholly on us.” “True; it cannot otherwise be,” Rem. Apol.</p>

## CHAPTER 10.

### OF THE CAUSE OF FAITH, GRACE, AND RIGHTEOUSNESS.

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The second part of this controversy particularly concerns grace, faith, and holiness – sincere obedience to the precepts of the new covenant – the praise for which we appropriate to the Most High, by reason of a double interest: first, *of the merit of Christ*, which procures them for us; secondly, *of the Holy Spirit*, which works them in us. The death of Christ is their meritorious cause; the Spirit of God and his effectual grace is their efficient cause, working instrumentally with power by the word and the ordinances.<sup>1</sup> Now, because this would deprive the [Arminian] idol of his highest glory, and expose him to open shame, like the bird “furtivis nudata coloribus,”<sup>2</sup> the Arminians advance themselves in his defense; and in behalf of their darling [*Free-will*], they exclude both the merit of Christ and the Spirit of God from any title to their production.

*First. For the merit of Christ.* We affirm that God “blesses us with all spiritual blessings in him,” or for his sake, Eph 1:3, among which, doubtless, faith does not possess the lowest place; that “he is made to us righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;” <sup>1Cor 1.30</sup> that “he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him;” <sup>2Cor 5.21</sup> that he is “the Lord our righteousness,” <sup>Jer 23.6</sup> and glories to be called by that name (and whatever he is to us, it is chiefly by way of merit); that “to us it is given ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, for Christ’s sake, to believe on him,” Phil 1:29, where ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ is plainly referred to δίδοται ἕχαρίσθη; “is given,” – as if the apostle had said, “Christ is the meritorious cause of bestowing those good gifts, faith and constancy unto martyrdom upon you.” When I say we profess that all these are the proper and immediate products of the passion and blood of Christ, these turbulent Davusses come in with a prohibition, and quite expel the blood of Christ from having any interest in these things.

“There is nothing more vain, nothing more foolish,” they say in their Apology, “than to attribute our regeneration and faith to the death of Christ; for if Christ may be said to have merited faith and regeneration for us, then faith cannot be a condition whose performance God requires at the hands of sinners under pain of eternal damnation.”<sup>3</sup> And again, “If faith is the effect of the merit of Christ, it cannot be our duty.”<sup>4</sup> No? Suppose the church were to pray that it would please God, for Christ’s sake, to call home those sheep that belong to his fold who are not yet collected, those who are still far off – and that God would grant faith and repentance to them based on the merit of his Son. Would this be an altogether vain and foolish prayer? Let others think as they please, it is a vanity I do not desire to be weaned from, nor does anyone who sincerely loves the Lord Jesus, I believe. Oh, [the thought] that Christians should patiently endure such a diminution of their Savior’s honor, that with one dash of an Arminian pen, they

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<sup>1</sup> The ordinances are baptism and communion.

<sup>2</sup> Reference to one of Horace’s Epistles, addressed to Julius Florus, conveying advice to Celsus not to pilfer from other writers any longer, or those he robbed would return one day to claim their feathers. Like a crow stripped of its stolen splendor (*furtivis nudata coloribus*), he would become a laughing-stock. In Shakespeare’s day, ‘crows in other bird’s feathers’ meant literary theft and dishonest appropriation. – *Shakespeare Survey* (Cambridge Univ. Press 1951, ed. Allardyce Nicoll), p. 65.

<sup>3</sup> “Nihil ineptius, nihil vanius, quam regenerationem et fidem merito Christi tribuere; si enim Christus nobis meritis dicatur fidem et regenerationem, tum fides conditio esse non poterat quam a peccatoribus Deus sub comminatione morris aeternae exigeret.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 8. p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> “Si fides sit effectum meriti Christi, non potest esse actus officii nostri.” – Idem.

would have the chief effects of his death and passion quite obliterated! If this is a motive to love and honor the Son of God, if this is a way to set forth the preciousness of his blood – by denying its efficacy in enabling us to get an interest in the new covenant by faith – then most Christians in the world need to be newly catechised by these seraphical doctors.<sup>5</sup> Until that time, they must give us leave to believe with the apostle, that God “blesses us with all spiritual blessings in Christ,” Eph 1:3; and we will take leave to account faith as a spiritual blessing, and, therefore, that it is bestowed on us for Christ’s sake. Again, our regeneration is nothing but a “purging of our consciences from dead works so that we may serve the living God.” This being done by “the blood of Christ,” as the apostle witnesses in Heb 9:14, we will ascribe our new birth (or forming anew) to the virtue of that grace, which is purchased by his blood. It is that “precious blood” which “redeems us from our vain conversation,”<sup>6</sup> 1Peter 1:18-19; and by its efficacy we are vindicated from the state of sin and corrupted nature in which we are born.

The Arminians have but one argument that I could ever encounter, and by which they strive to rob Christ of this glory of meriting and procuring for us faith and repentance. And that is, they say, because faith and repentance are such acts of ours, that we are bound to perform them in duty and obedience to the precepts of the gospel.<sup>7</sup> They press this everywhere at large, “usque et usque.”<sup>8</sup> In plain terms, they will not allow their idol to be considered defective in anything that is necessary to bring us to heaven. Now, concerning this argument, *that nothing which God requires of us can be procured for us by Christ*, I would note two things:

*First.* That the strength of their argument consists in this: that no gift of God bestowed *on us* can be a thing well-pleasing to him as being *in us*; for all of his precepts and commands signify only what is well-pleasing to him that *we* should be or do. It is not meriting anything by Christ, but God’s bestowing the gift as the effect of it, which keeps it from being a thing required of us as part of our duty (which I will shortly consider). Only observe for now that there is nothing in us by way of habit or act that is not required of us in the gospel – from the beginning of our faith to the consummation of it, from our new birth until we become perfect men in Christ by finishing our course. All and every grace of which we are partakers in this life, are by this argument denied to be the gifts of God.

*Secondly.* Consider the extent of this argument itself. Nothing which it is our duty to perform can be merited for us by Christ. When the apostle beseeches us to be “reconciled to God,”<sup>2Cor 5.20</sup> I want to know whether it is not a part of our duty to yield obedience to the apostle’s exhortation? If not, then his exhortation is frivolous and vain. If it is, then to be reconciled to God is a part of our duty; and yet the Arminians sometimes seem to confess that Christ has obtained reconciliation with God for us. The same may be said in diverse other particulars. So that this argument either proves that we enjoy no fruit of the death of Christ in this life, or (which is most true) it proves nothing at all. For neither the merit of Christ procuring grace, nor God bestowing any grace in the habit of our life, at all keeps it from being our duty to exercise that grace, inasmuch as it is done in us and by us. Notwithstanding this exception, then – which cannot stand on its own without the help of some other not as yet discovered argument – we will continue our prayers, as we are commanded, in the name of Christ; that is, that God would

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<sup>5</sup> Literally “burning ones”, the word seraph is normally a synonym for serpents.

<sup>6</sup> “Vain conversation” may also be translated, “aimless conduct” or “futile way of life.”

<sup>7</sup> Rem. Apol., ubi sup.; Corv. ad Molin., cap. 28. sect. 9.

<sup>8</sup> Latin for “on and on.”

bestow on us those things we ask for Christ’s sake, and immediately upon our plea,<sup>9</sup> indeed, even as we cry with the poor penitent, “Lord, help our unbelief,” or with the apostles, “Lord, increase our faith.”

**Secondly.** *Of the Holy Spirit.* The second plea on God’s behalf, to prove he is the author and finisher of all those graces of which we partake in this life, arises from what the Scripture affirms concerning his powerfully working these graces in us, by the effectual operation of his Holy Spirit. To which the Arminians oppose a seeming necessity that they must be our own acts, as distinct from God’s gifts, because they are *in us*, and commanded *by him*. The head, then, of this contention between our God and their idol about the living child of grace, is whether God can work in us what he requires of us. Let us hear them pleading their cause:

“It is most certain that what is wrought in us ought not to be commanded; and what is commanded cannot be wrought in us. The one who works in others what he commands them to do, foolishly commands them.” says their Apology.<sup>10</sup> O foolish St. Prosper,<sup>11</sup> who thought that it was the whole of the Pelagian heresy to say, “That there is neither praise nor worth as [great as] ours, in what Christ bestows on us!”<sup>12</sup> Foolish St. Augustine, praying, “Give us, O Lord, what you command, and command what you will!”<sup>13</sup> Foolish Benedict, bishop of Rome, who gave such a form to his prayer that it must cast an aspersion of folly on the Most High! “O Lord,” he says, “teach us what we should do; show us where we should go; work in us what we ought to perform.”<sup>14</sup> O foolish fathers of the second Arausican council, affirming, “That many good things are done in man which he does not do himself; but a man does no good which God does not so work that he should do it!” And again, “As often as we do good, God works in us and with us that we may so work.”<sup>15</sup> In a word, this makes *fools* of all the doctors of the church who ever opposed the Pelagian heresy, inasmuch as they unanimously maintained that we are partakers of nothing good of this sort without the effectual powerful operation of the almighty grace of God; and yet our faith and obedience are so wrought in us, as to be most acceptable to him. Indeed, what shall we say to the Lord himself, who in one place commands us to fear him,<sup>1Pet 2.17</sup> and in another promises to put his fear into our hearts so we shall not depart from him?<sup>Jer 32.40</sup> Is his command foolish, or is his promise false? The Arminians must affirm the one or else renounce their heresy. But more about this after I have laid open a little further this monstrous error from their own words and writings.

“Can anyone,” they say, “wisely and seriously prescribe the performance of a condition to another, under the promise of a reward and threatening punishment, who will effect it in the one

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<sup>9</sup> Originally, “and that by an immediate collation...”

<sup>10</sup> “Illud certissimum est, nec jubendum esse quod efficitur, nec efficiendum quod jubetur. Stulte jubet et vult ab alio fieri aliquid, qui ipse quod jubet in eo efficere vult.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 9. p. 105, a.

<sup>11</sup> Prosper of Aquitaine (c. 390 – c. 455), a Christian writer and disciple of Saint Augustine of Hippo. (*This is said sarcastically.*)

<sup>12</sup> “At exigua conclusione pene tu totum Pelagianum dogma confirmas, dicendo, nullius laudis esse ac meriti; si id in eo Christus quod ipse donaverat praetulisset.” – Prosp. ad Collat., cap. 36.

<sup>13</sup> “Da, Domine, quod jubes, et jube quod vis.” – Aug.

<sup>14</sup> “O Domine, doce nos quid agamus; quo gradiamur ostende; quid efficiamus operare.” – Ben. Pap. in Concil. Legunstad.

<sup>15</sup> “Multa in homine bona fiunt. quae non facit homo: nulla vero facit homo bona, quae non Deus praestet ut faciat.” – Consil. Arau. 2. can. 20. “Quoties enim bona agimus, Deus in nobis et nobiscum, ut operemur, operatur.” – Can. 9.

to whom it is prescribed? This is a ridiculous action, scarce worthy of the stage.”<sup>16</sup> That is, seeing Christ has affirmed that “he that believes shall be saved; but he that does not believe shall be damned,” Mark 16:16. By this, faith is established as the condition of salvation, and unbelief is threatened with hell; if God should by his Holy Spirit ingenerate faith in the hearts of any, causing them to fulfill the condition, it would be a mere mockery, and be driven from a theater as an unlikely fiction. I leave to all men’s silent judgment, what an aspersion this casts upon the whole gospel of Christ, indeed, on all God’s dealings with the children of men ever since they became unable by themselves to fulfill his commands by reason of the fall. Well, then, seeing they must be considered ἀσύστατα, things inconsistent, that God should be so righteous as to show us our duty, and yet be so good and merciful as to bestow his graces on us, let us hear more of this stuff, “Faith and conversion cannot be our obedience, if they are wrought in us by God,” they said at the Hague;<sup>17</sup> and Episcopius, “That it is a most absurd thing, to affirm that God either effects by his power, or procures by his wisdom, that the elect should do those things which he requires of them.”<sup>18</sup> So that where the Scripture calls faith the gift and work of God,<sup>19</sup> they say it is an improper expression, inasmuch as he commands it; properly, it is an act or work of our own. And as for that renowned saying of St. Augustine, that “God crowns his own gifts in us,” “it is not to be received without a grain of salt;”<sup>20</sup> that is, without some gloss such as those with which they corrupt the Scripture. The sum at which they aim is this: affirming that God bestows any graces on us, or effectually works them in us, contradicts his word requiring them as our duty and obedience. By this means they have erected their idol into the throne of God’s free grace and mercy. And they attribute to this idol all the praise due to those many heavenly qualifications that the servants of God are endowed with – for they never have more good in them than that; no, not even so much as is required. All they have, or do, is only their duty.<sup>Luk 17.10</sup> They themselves seem to acknowledge how derogatory this is to the merit of Christ, when they affirm that he is not said to be a Savior in any other way than all those who confirm the way to salvation by preaching, miracles, martyrdom, and example. So that, having quite overthrown the merits of Christ,<sup>21</sup> “they grant us to be our own saviors in a very large sense.”<sup>22</sup> I will now demonstrate how contrary all of these assertions are to the express word of God.

There is not one of all those plain texts of Scripture, not one of those innumerable and invincible arguments, by which the effectual working of God’s grace in the conversion of a sinner, in his powerful translation of us from death to life, from the state of sin and bondage to

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<sup>16</sup> “Anne conditionem quis serio et sapienter praescribet alteri, sub promisso praemii et poenae gravissimae comminatione, qui eam, in eo cui praescribit efficere vult! Haec actio tota ludicra, et vix scena digna est.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 9. p. 105, a.

<sup>17</sup> “Fides et conversio non possunt esse obedientia, si tantum ab aliquo, in alio, efficiantur.” – Rem. Coll. Hag., p. 196.

<sup>18</sup> “Absurdem est statuere Deum aut efficere per potentiam, aut procurare per sapientiam, ut electi ea faciant, quae ab ipsis, ut ipsi ea faciant, exigit et postulat.” – Episcop., Disp. Pri. 8. thes. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Eph 2.8; 2Thess 1.11.

<sup>20</sup> Apol., cap. 9. ubi. sup. – “Deum dona sua in nobis coronare, dictum hoc Augustini nisi cum grano salis accipiatur, neutiquam est admittendum.” – Idem, ibid p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> “Atqui dices, sic servatores nostri essent omnes,” – eodem sensu quo Christus – “saltem ex parte qui praeconio, miraculis, et exemplo salutis viam, confirmant; esto, quid tum?” – Rem. Apol., cap. 8. [p. 94.]

<sup>22</sup> Rem. Apol., fol. 96.

the liberty of the sons of God, which does not overthrow this prodigious error. I will content myself to give a few instances of them which are directly opposite to it, even in terms:

*First.* Deut 10:16, The Lord commands the Israelites to “circumcise the foreskin of their hearts, and not be stiff-necked anymore;” so that the circumcising of their hearts was part of their obedience – it was their duty so to do, in obedience to God’s command. And yet, in the 30th chapter, verse 6, he affirms that “he will circumcise their hearts, that they might love the LORD their God with all their hearts.” So it seems the same thing, in diverse respects, may be God’s act in us, *and* our duty towards him. How the Lord will escape that Arminian censure, that if his words are true in the latter place, his command in the former is vain and foolish, “*ipse viderit*,”<sup>23</sup> – let him plead his cause, and avenge himself on those that rise up against him.

*Secondly.* Ezekiel 18:31, “Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit: for why will you die, O house of Israel?” The making of a new heart and a new spirit is required here under a promise of a reward of life, and a great threatening of eternal death; so that so to do must be a part of their duty and obedience. And yet, chapter 36:26-27, God affirms that he will do this very thing that he requires of them here: “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh; and I will cause you to walk in my statutes,” etc. In how many places, also, are we commanded to “fear the Lord!” which, when we do that, I hope no one will deny that it is a performance of our duty; and yet in Jer 32:40, God promises that “he will put his fear in our hearts, so that we shall not depart from him.”

*Thirdly.* Those two gifts against which they lay particular exceptions, faith and repentance, are also expressly attributed to the free donation of God: He “grants the Gentiles repentance unto life,” Acts 11:18. And He grants faith directly, “It is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God,” Eph 2:8. I would rather fasten my belief to this assertion of the Holy Spirit than to the Arminians, who assert that it is not a gift of God because it is of ourselves; and yet this does not hinder it from being styled, “Our most holy faith” in Jude 1:20. Let those who will, deny that something can still be properly ours which God bestows on us; the prophet did not consider these two things inconsistent when he averred that “the LORD works all our works in us,” Isaiah 26:12. They are *our* works, though of *his* working. The apostle labored; though it was not he, but “the grace of God that was with him,” 1Cor 15:10. He “works in us *καὶ τὸ ζῆλειν καὶ τὸ ἐνεργεῖν* of his good pleasure,” Phil 2:13; and yet the performance of our duty may consist in those acts of our wills and those good deeds of which he is the author. So that, according to St. Austin’s counsel,<sup>24</sup> we will still pray that he would bestow what he commands us to have.

*Fourthly.* 1Cor 4:7, “Who makes you different from another? And what do you have that you did not receive?” Everything that makes us different from others is received from God. Therefore, faith and repentance being the foundation of all difference in spiritual things between the sons of Adam, they must also, of necessity, be received from above. In brief, God’s “circumcising our hearts,” Col 2:11; his “making us alive when we are dead,” Eph 2:1-2; birthing us anew, John 1:13; making us in all things as he would have us to be – all these are contained in that promise of the new covenant in Jer 32:40, “I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, so that they will not depart from me.” In no way is this repugnant to the holy Scripture, declaring our duty to

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<sup>23</sup> *Ipse viderit* – He looks to himself.

<sup>24</sup> “Petamus ut det quod ut habeamus jubet.” – Aug.

be all that the Lord would have us be. And now, against so many clear testimonies of the Holy Ghost, let all men judge whether the Arminian reasons, borrowed from the old philosophers, are of any value. You may find the sum of them all in Cicero, his third book *De Natura Deorum*.<sup>25</sup> “Everyone,” he says, “obtains virtue for himself; no wise man ever thanked God for that: for our virtue we are praised; in virtue we glory, which might not be if it were a gift of God.” And truly this, in softer terms, is the sum of the Remonstrants’ arguments in this particular.

*Lastly.* Observe, that this error, of all others, is what the orthodox fathers most opposed in the Pelagian heretics; yes, and to this day,<sup>26</sup> the more learned schoolmen stoutly maintain the truth in this against the innovating Jesuits. I will close this discourse with a few of the testimonies of the ancients. “It is certain that when we do anything, *we* do it,” says St. Augustine; “but it is *God* that causes us to do so.”<sup>27</sup> And in another place, “Shall we not account that to be the gift of God, because it is required of us under the promise of eternal life? God forbid that this would seem so, either to the partakers or the defenders of grace;”<sup>28</sup> he rejects both the error and the sophism with which it is upheld. So also Coelestius, bishop of Rome, in his epistle to the bishops of France: “So great,” he says, “is the goodness of God towards men, that he will have those good things be our good duties<sup>29</sup> which are his own gifts.”<sup>30</sup> To this same purpose I previously cited two canons out of the Arausican council. And St. Prosper, in his treatise against Cassianus the semi-Pelagian, affirms it is a foolish complaint of proud men “that free-will is destroyed, if the beginning, progress, and continuance in good be said to be the gifts of God.”<sup>31</sup> And so the imputation of folly, wherewith the Arminians in my first quotation charge their opposers, being retorted on them by this learned father, I refer you to these following excerpta for a close:

<b>S. S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and be stiff-necked no more,” Deut 10:16. “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed,” chapter 30:6. – “Make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit, for why will you die, O house of Israel?” Ezekiel 18:31. “A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you,” chapter 36:26.	“This is most certain, that what is wrought in us ought not to be commanded. He foolishly commands that to be done of others who will himself work in them what he commands,” Rem. Apol.
“If you fear the LORD, and serve him, then shall you continue following the LORD your God,” 1Sam 12:14. “I will put my fear in their hearts, so that they shall not depart from me,” Jer 32:40.	“It is absurd to assert that God either works by his power, or procures by his wisdom, that the elect should do those things which God requires of them,” Episcop.

<sup>25</sup> “Virtutem autem nemo unquam acceptam deo retulit. Nimirum recte: propter virtutem enim jure laudamur, et in virtute recte gloriamur. Quod non contingeret, si id donum a Deo, non a nobis haberemus.” – Cicero De Nat. Deor. 3. 36,

<sup>26</sup> Alvarez, Disput. 81., ubi Aug., Thom., alios, citat.

<sup>27</sup> “Certum est nos facere cum facimus; sed ille facit ut faciamus.” – Aug. de Grat., et Lib. Arbit., cap. xvi.

<sup>28</sup> “ – Neque id donum Dei esse fateamur, quoniam exigi audivimus a nobis, praemio vitae si hoc fecerimus oblato? Absit, ut hoc placeat participibus et defensoribus gratiae.” – Aug. de Praedest. Sanc., cap. 20.

<sup>29</sup> Coelestius calls our duties “merits,” according to the phraseology of those days

<sup>30</sup> “Tanta est erga homines bonitas Dei, ut nostra velit esse merita quae sunt ipsius dona.” – Coelest. Epist. ad Ep. Gal., cap. 12.

<sup>31</sup> “Non enim conturbat nos superbientium inepta querimonia; quia liberum arbitrium causantur auferri: si et principia, et profectus, et perseverantia in bonis usque ad finem Dei dona esse dicantur.” – Prosp. ad Collat., p. 404.

Chap. 10 – The Cause of Faith, Grace, and Righteousness

<p>“You have wrought all our works in us,” Isa 26:12. “God works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure,” Phil 2:13.</p>	<p>“Faith and conversion cannot be acts of our obedience if they are wrought in us by God,” Rem. Coll. Hag. “That God should require of us what he himself will work in us is a ridiculous action, scarce fit for a stage,” Rem. Apol.</p>
<p>“He has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ,” Eph 1:3.</p>	<p>“That saying of Augustine, that ‘God crowns his own gifts in us,’ is not easily to be admitted,” Ibid.</p>
<p>“To you it is given in the behalf of Christ to believe on him,” Phil 1:29. “The blood of Christ purges our consciences from dead works to serve the living God,” Heb 9:14.</p>	<p>“There is nothing more vain and foolish than to ascribe faith and regeneration to the merit of Christ,” Idem.</p>



## CHAPTER 11.

### *WHETHER SALVATION MAY BE ATTAINED WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF, OR FAITH IN, CHRIST JESUS.*

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I shall close this entire discourse concerning the meritorious cause of salvation, with the Arminians' exclusion of Christ from being the only one and absolutely necessary means to bring us to heaven, to make us happy. This is the last pile they erect upon their Babylonish foundation, which makes the idol of human self-sufficiency in every way perfect and fit to be sacrificed to. Until these proud builders, to get materials for their own temple, laid the axe to the root of Christianity, we took it for granted that "there is no salvation in any other," because "there is no other name under heaven given to men whereby we must be saved," Acts 4:12. Nor will their nefarious attempts frighten us from our creed, or make us lacking in the defense of our Savior's honor. But I will be very brief in the consideration of this heterodoxy, not doubting that merely repeating it is to have confuted it fully, in the judgment of all pious Christians.

First, then. They grant salvation to the ancient patriarchs and Jews, before the coming of Christ, without any knowledge of or faith in him at all; no, they deny that any such faith in Christ was ever prescribed to them or required of them. They say jointly in their Apology, "It is certain that there is no place in the Old Testament from which it may appear that faith in Christ as a Redeemer was ever enjoined or found in any of them."<sup>1</sup> We will see shortly the truth of this assertion. They grant only a general faith, involved under types and shadows, and looking at the promise as it lay hidden in the goodness and providence of God; this indirectly might be called a faith in Christ. I see no reason why thousands of heathen infidels should be excluded from this kind of faith. The dictates of their patriarch Arminius are agreeable to these assertions, affirming, "that the whole description of the faith of Abraham, Rom 4, makes no mention of Jesus Christ, either expressly or so implicitly as to be easily understood by anyone." As to the contrary testimony of Christ himself in John 8:56, "Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; he saw it, and was glad," Arminius answers with a hefty gloss, corrupting the text: "He rejoiced to see the birth of Isaac, who was a type of me."<sup>2</sup>

Secondly. What they teach about the Jews, they also grant concerning the Gentiles living before the incarnation of Christ; that they also might attain salvation and be justified without any knowledge of Christ. "For although," says Corvinus, "the covenant was not revealed to them by the same means that it was to the Jews, yet they are not to be assumed to be excluded from the covenant" (of grace), "nor to be excluded from salvation; for some way or other they were called."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> "Certum est locum nullum esse, unde appareat fidem istam, sub Vet. Test., praeceptam fuisse aut viguisse." – Rem. Apol., cap. 7. p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> "Consideretur omnis descriptio fidei Abrahae, Rom 4; et apparebit in illa Jesu Christi non fieri mentionem, expresse, sed illa tantum implicatione, quam explicare cuivis non est facile." – Armin. "Gavisus est videre natalem Isaac, qui fuit typus mei." – Idem.

<sup>3</sup> "Gentes sub Veteri Testamento viventes licet ipsis ista ratione qua Judaeis non fuit revelatum, non tamen inde continuo ex faedere absolute exclusae sunt, nec a salute praecise exclusi judicari debent, quia aliquo saltem modo vocantur." – Corv. Defens. Armin. ad Tilen., p. 107.

Thirdly. They have come at length to that perfection in setting out this stain of Christianity, that Bertius,<sup>4</sup> upon good consideration, denied this proposition: “That no man can be saved that is not ingrafted into Christ by a true faith.”<sup>5</sup> To this question, “Whether the only means of salvation is the life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ?” Venator answers, “No.”<sup>6</sup> Thus they lay men in Abraham’s bosom who never believed in the Son of Abraham; they make them out to overcome the serpent who never heard of the Seed of the woman; they bring goats into heaven, who were never of the flock of Christ and who never entered by the door, who is Christ; they make men out to please God without faith, and obtain remission of sins without sprinkling the blood of the Lamb – they make them saved without a Savior, redeemed without a Redeemer – to become the sons of God, never knowing their elder Brother! This prodigious error might still be pardoned, and ascribed to human imbecility, had it casually slipped from their pens, as it did from some others.<sup>7</sup> But seeing it has its foundation in all the grounds of their new doctrine, and that it is maintained by them after mature deliberation,<sup>8</sup> it must be looked at by all Christians as a heresy to be detested and accursed. For, first, they deny the contagion and demerit of original sin; then they make the covenant of grace universal, comprehending all and every one of the posterity of Adam; thirdly, they grant a power in ourselves to come to God by any means he appoints, and they affirm that he assigns some means to all. It will naturally follow that knowledge of Christ is not absolutely necessary to salvation, and so down falls the preeminence of Christianity; its heaven-reaching crown must be laid level with the services of dunghill gods.<sup>9</sup>

It is true, indeed, that some of the ancient fathers, before the rising of the Pelagian heresy, had so put on Christ, as Lipsius<sup>10</sup> put it, that they had not fully put off Plato. They unadvisedly released some speeches seeming to grant that various men before the incarnation, who were living μετὰ λόγου, “according to the dictates of right reason,” might be saved without faith in Christ. This is well-shown by the learned Casaubon<sup>11</sup> in his first *Exercitation on Baronius*.<sup>12</sup> But let this be accounted part of that stubble which shall burn at the last day, with which the writings of all men who are not divinely inspired may be stained. It has also since (and what has not?) been drawn into dispute among the wrangling schoolmen. And yet (which is rarely seen) their

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<sup>4</sup> Bertius was a friend of Arminius, and spoke at his funeral in 1609. A controversy arose with Francis Gomarus, the chief opponent of Arminianism, on the basis of the published version of the funeral oration. In 1612, against the advice of fellow Remonstrants, Bertius published *Hymenaeus desertor*, a Latin work that went further than Arminius in theology.

<sup>5</sup> “Nego hanc propositionem: neminem posse salvari, quam qui Jesu Christo per veram fidem sit insitus.” – Bert, ad Sibrand., p. 133.

<sup>6</sup> “Ad hanc queestionem an unica via salutis, sit vita, passio, mors, resurrectio, et as-censio Jesu Christi? respondeo, Non.” – Venat., apud Fest. Hom. et Peltium.

<sup>7</sup> Zulng. Profes. Fid. ad Reg. Gall.

<sup>8</sup> Art. of the Church of Eng., art. xvii.

<sup>9</sup> “Nihil magis repugnat fidei, quam sine fide salvum esse posse quempiam hominum.” – Acost. de Indo. Salu. Proc.

<sup>10</sup> Justus Lipsius (1547-1606) - Belgian classical philologist and Humanist, wrote a series of works designed to revive ancient Stoicism in a form compatible with Christianity. The most famous of these is *De Constantia* (‘On Constancy’).

<sup>11</sup> Isaac Casaubon (1559–1614) classical scholar and philologist, first in France and then later in England, regarded by many of his time as the most learned in Europe.

<sup>12</sup> Caesar Baronius (1538–1607) an Italian Cardinal and ecclesiastical historian whose annals of the Church were error-ridden.

verdict in this particular almost unanimously affirms the truth of it. Aquinas<sup>13</sup> tells us a story of the corpse of a heathen that was to be taken up in the time of the Empress Irene and her son Constantine;<sup>14</sup> he had a golden plate on his breast, in which was this inscription: “Christ is born of a virgin, and I believe in him. O sun, you shall see me again in the days of Irene and Constantine.” But the question is not whether a Gentile believing in Christ may be saved, or whether God revealed himself and his Son extraordinarily to some of them. For shall we straiten the breast and shorten the arm of the Almighty, as though he might not do what he will with his own? The question is whether a man may come to heaven by the conduct of nature, without the knowledge of Christ? This is the assertion which we condemn as a wicked, Pelagian, Socinian heresy. We think it was well said by Bernard, “That many laboring to make Plato a Christian, prove themselves to be heathens.”<sup>15</sup> If we look at the several branches of this novel Arminian doctrine, extenuating the precious worth and necessity of faith in Christ, we find them hewed off by the two-edged sword of God’s word:

FIRST. For their denying that the patriarchs and Jews had faith “in Christum exhibendum et moriturum,” as we in him “exhibitum et mortuum.”<sup>16</sup> It is disproved –

*First.* By all the evangelical promises made from the beginning of the world to the birth of our Savior; such as Gen 3:15, “The seed of the woman shall break the serpent’s head;” and Gen 12:3, 49:10; Psa 2:7, Psa 8, Psa 110; with innumerable other passages concerning his life, office, and the redeeming of his people. For surely [those who lived before Christ] were obliged to believe the *promises* of God [concerning his coming].

*Secondly.* By those many clear expressions of his death, passion, and suffering for us, such as Gen 3:15; Isaiah 53:6-10, etc., 63:1-3; Daniel 9:26. But why do we need to reckon any more? Our Savior taught his disciples that all the prophets from Moses forward spoke concerning him,<sup>17</sup> and the sole reason why they did not so readily embrace the faith of his passion and resurrection was because they did not believe the prophets, Luke 24:25-26;<sup>18</sup> this shows plainly that the prophets required faith in his death and passion.

*Thirdly.* By the explicit faith of many Jews, such as the faith of old Simeon, Luke 2:34; of the Samaritan woman who looked for a Messiah, not as an earthly king, but as one that would “tell them all things,” redeem them from sin, and tell them all those things which Christ was then discoursing about concerning the worship of God, John 4:25.

*Fourthly.* By the express testimony of Christ himself. “Abraham,” he says, “rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad,” John 8:56. His day, his hour, in the Scripture, principally

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<sup>13</sup> Aquin. 2, 2ae q. 2, a. 7, c. – “Christus nascitur ex virgine, et ego credo in eum. O sol, sub Irenae et Constantini temporibus iterum me videbis.”

<sup>14</sup> Irene of Greece (752-803) wife of the Byzantine emperor Leo IV. On his death in 780, Irene became guardian of their 10-year-old son, Constantine VI, and co-emperor with him. Instrumental in bringing back icon-worship in the Orthodox church.

<sup>15</sup> “Dum multum sudant nonnulli, quomodo Platonem faciant Christianum, se probant esse ethnicos.” – Bern. Epist.

<sup>16</sup> They had faith in “Christ *to be* manifested and dead” as we have faith in him “manifested and dead;” i.e. *they looked forward to his coming and death; and so they placed their faith in the yet unfulfilled promises of God.* This faith was evidenced by Abraham who trusted God’s promises, though he had no idea *how* they would or could be fulfilled (Heb 11.8, 11-12, 17-19).

<sup>17</sup> Joh 5.46; Luk 16.16

<sup>18</sup> **Luke 24:25** Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! <sup>26</sup> Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”

denotes his passion. And what he saw he surely believed, or else the father of the faithful was more diffident than Thomas, the most incredulous of his children.

*Fifthly.* By these following passages, and similar places in Scripture: Christ is a “Lamb slain from the foundation of the world,” Rev 13:8; slain in promises, slain in God’s estimation, and slain in the faith of believers. He is “the same yesterday, today, and forever,” Heb 13:8, under the law and the gospel. “There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved,” Acts 4:12. Therefore, no one ever came to the sight of God without the knowledge of a Redeemer, participation in his passion, and communication of his merits; no man ever came to the Father but by him. Hence St. Paul tells the Ephesians that they were “without Christ,” because they were “aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,” Eph 2:12. He was intimating that God’s covenant with the Jews included Christ Jesus and his righteousness, no less than it does now with us. On these grounds, holy Ignatius called Abel “A martyr of Christ;”<sup>19</sup> he died for his faith in the promised Seed. And in another place, “All the saints were saved by Christ; hoping in him, and waiting on him, they obtained salvation by him.”<sup>20</sup> Also Prosper, “We must believe that no man was ever justified by any other faith, either before the law or under the law, than by faith in Christ coming to save what was lost.”<sup>21</sup> For this reason, Eusebius contends that all the old patriarchs might properly be called Christians; they all ate of the same spiritual meat, and all drank of the same spiritual drink, even of the rock that followed them, which rock was Christ.<sup>22</sup>

SECONDLY. If the ancient people of God did not obtain salvation without faith in Christ, notwithstanding various other special revelations of his will and heavenly instructions, then much less may we grant this happiness without him, to those who were also deprived of those other helps. So that, although we confess that the poor natural endeavors of the heathen did not lack their reward,<sup>23</sup> yet we absolutely deny that there is any saving mercy of God towards them that is revealed in the Scripture, which would give us the least intimation that they attained everlasting happiness.

For we we must consider the corruption and universal disability of nature to do anything that is good (“without Christ we can do nothing,” John 15:5); and also the sinfulness of their best works and actions, so that the “sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD,” Prov 15:8 (“Evil trees cannot bring forth good fruit; men do not gather grapes from thorns, nor figs from thistles,” Mat 7:16-17). The word of God is plain, “without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb 11:6; “he that does not believe is condemned,” Mark 16:16; no nation or person can be blessed except in the Seed of Abraham, Gen 12:3. The “blessing of Abraham” comes upon the

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<sup>19</sup> Παραδοθείς γε, τῶν διὰ Χριστὸν ἀναιρουμένοι, ἀπὸ τοῦ αἵματος Ἄζελ τοῦ δσικαίου. – Ignat. Epist. ad Ephes. [cap. 12.]

<sup>20</sup> Πάντες οὖν εἰ ἅγιοι ἐν Χριστῷ ἐσώθησαν, ἐλπίσαντας εἰς αὐτὸν καὶ αὐτὸν ἀμαγεῖναντες, καὶ δι’ αὐτοῦ σωτηρίας ἔτυχον. – Epist. ad Philippian [cap. 5.]

<sup>21</sup> “Non alia fide quemquam hominum, sive ante legem sive legis tempore, justificatum esse, credendum est, quam hac eadem qua Dominus Jesu,” etc. – Prosp. ad Ob. 8., Gallorum. (Luk 19.10)

<sup>22</sup> “Omnes ergo illos qui ab Abraham sursum versus ad primum hominem, generationis ordine conscribuntur, etsi non nomine, rebus tamen, et religione Christianos fuisse, si quis dicat, non mihi videtur errare.” – Euseb. Hist. Eccles., lib. 1. cap. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Their rewards were either positive in this life, by outward prosperity, and inward calmness of mind – in that they were not all perplexed and agitated with furies, like Nero and Caligula – or else they were negative rewards in the life to come, by a diminution of the degrees of their torments: they will not be beaten with so many stripes (Luk 12.48).

Chap. 11 – Whether Salvation Requires Faith in Christ

Gentiles only “through Jesus Christ,” Gal 3:14. He is “the way, the truth, and the life, No one comes to the Father but by him.” John 14:6. He is the “door,” by which those that do not enter are “outside,” with “dogs and idolaters,” Rev 22:15. “No one can lay a foundation” of blessedness “other than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1Cor 3:11.

In brief, just compare these two places of St. Paul: in Rom 8:30, he shows that none are glorified except those who are called; and in Rom 10:14-15, he declares that all calling is done instrumentally, by the preaching of the word and the gospel. It clearly appears that no salvation can be granted to those on whom the Lord has so far poured out his indignation, as to deprive them of the knowledge of the sole means of salvation, which is Christ Jesus. And to those that are otherwise-minded, I give only this necessary caution: let them take heed, lest by inventing new ways to heaven for others, they lose the true way themselves.

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things?” Luke 24:25-26.	“There is no place in the Old Testament from which it may appear that faith in Christ as a Redeemer was either enjoined or found in any then,” Rem. Apol.
“Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad,” John 8:56. “By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities,” Isaiah 53:11. See the places cited before.	“Abraham’s faith had no reference to Christ,” Annin.
“At that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world,” Eph 2:12.	“The Gentiles living under the Old Testament, though it was not revealed to them as to the Jews, yet they were not excluded from the covenant of grace, and from salvation,” Corv.
“There is no other name under heaven given to men, whereby we must be saved,” but only by Christ, Acts 4:12.	“I deny this proposition, That none can be saved that is not ingrafted into Christ by a true faith,” Bert.
“The blessing of Abraham comes on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ,” Gal 3:14. “He that does not believe is condemned,” Mark 16:16. “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” Heb 11:6. “No one can lay a foundation other than what is laid, which is Jesus Christ,” 1Cor 3:11.	“To this question, Whether the only way of salvation be the life, passion, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ? I answer, No,” Venat.

## CHAPTER 12.

### *OF FREE-WILL, THE NATURE AND POWER THEREOF.*

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Our next task is to take a view of the idol himself, of this great deity of free-will, whose original not being well known, he is pretended (like the Ephesian image of Diana) to have fallen down from heaven, and to have his endowments from above. Yet, considering what a nothing he was at his first unveiling, in comparison to that vast giant-like hugeness to which he has now grown, we may say of him, as the painter said of his monstrous picture which he had mended (or rather marred) according to everyone's fancy: *hunc populus fecit* – it is the issue of the people's brain. Origen is supposed to have first brought him into the church; <sup>1</sup> but among those many sincere worshippers of divine grace, this setter forth of new demons was little entertained. It was looked upon like the stump of Dagon, with his head and hands laid down before the ark of God, without whose help he could neither know nor do what is good in any kind. It was still accounted but *truncus ficulnus, inutile lignum*, “a fig-tree log, an unprofitable piece of wood.” *Incerti patres scamnum facerentne?* The fathers of the succeeding ages debated much about what use they should put it to. Though some exalted it a degree or two above its merits, most concluded to keep it a block [of wood]. At length there arose a stout champion,<sup>2</sup> challenging the whole church of God on behalf of the idol. Like a knight-errant, he wandered from the west to the east to grapple with anyone who would oppose his idol. Though he met with various adversaries,<sup>3</sup> one especially,<sup>4</sup> on behalf of the grace of God, continually foiled him and cast him to the ground – and he did so in the judgment of all the lawful judges assembled in councils,<sup>5</sup> and also in the opinion of most Christian bystanders.<sup>6</sup> Yet, by his cunning insinuation, this knight-errant planted in the hearts of diverse persons, such an opinion of his idol's deity and self-sufficiency, that to this day it has not been rooted out.

Now, after the decease of his Pelagian worshippers, some of the corrupter schoolmen, out of mere charity and self-love, built this idol a temple – seeing him thus exposed to all kinds of assaults from his birth, and having no shelter from wind and weather. They adorned this temple with natural lights, merits, uncontrolled independent operations, along with many other festive

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<sup>1</sup> Hieron. ad Ruff

<sup>2</sup> “Pelagius: Dogma quod – Pestifero vomuit coluber sermone Britannus.” – Prosper. de Ingrat., cap. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Adfuit, exhortante Deo provisa per orbem, Sanctorum pia cura patrum: – 1. Pestern subeuntem Prima recidit, Sedes Roma Petri. 2. Non signior inde, orientis Rectorum cura emicuit. Synod. Palest. 3. Hieronymus libris valde excellentibus hostem Dissecuit. 4. Atticus Constantinop. 5. Duae Synodi Africanæ.” – Prosper. de Ingrat.

<sup>4</sup> “Concilium cui dux Aurelius ingeniumque Augustinus erat. Quem Christi gratia cornu Ueberiore rigans, nostro lumen dedit aevo.” – Prosp., ibid.

<sup>5</sup> “Dixit Pelagius, quis est mihi Augustinus? Universi acclamabant blasphemantem in episcopum, ex cujus ore, dominus univerae Africae, unitatis indulserit felicitatem, non solum a conventu illo, sed ab omni ecclesia pellendum.” – Oros. Apologet., p. 621, de Synod. Palest. “Prae omnibus studium gerite libros. S. Aug. quos ad Prosp. et Hilar. scripsit, memoratis fratribus legendos iugere,” etc. – Epist. Synod. Byzac.

<sup>6</sup> “Imo noverunt, non solum Romanam Africanamque ecclesiam, sod per omnes mundi partes, universae promissionis filios, cum doctrina hujus viri, sicut in tota fide, ita in gratiae confessione congruere.” – Prosp. ad Rufin. “Augustinum sanctae recordationis virum pro vita sua, et meritis, in nostra communione semper habuimus, nec unquam hunc sinistrae suspicionis saltem rumor suspexit.” – Coelest., Epist. Ad Gal. Episcop. These I have cited to show what a heavy prejudice the Arminian cause lies under, being professedly opposite to the doctrine of St. Austin, and they continually slight his authority.

attendances. But in the beginning of the Reformation – that fatal time for idolatry and superstition, and for abbeys and monasteries – the zeal and learning of our forefathers, with the help of God’s word, demolished this temple, and tore this building down to the ground. We well-hoped the idol himself had been so deeply buried in the rubble, that his head would never again be exalted to the trouble of the church of God. That was until not long ago, when some curious wits, whose weak stomachs were clogged with manna, and who loathed the sincere milk of the word – raking all the dunghills for novelties – lighted unhappily upon this idol. And presently, with no less joy than the mathematician at the discovery of a new geometrical proportion, they exclaimed, “We have found it! We have found it!” Without any more ado, they erected a shrine; and until this day, they continue an offering of praise and thanks for all the good they do to this work of their own hands.

So that the idol may be free from the ruin which they have found by experience he is subject to, they matched him to *Contingency*, a new goddess of their own creation. Having proved very fruitful in monstrous births upon their conjoining, they have no doubts that they will always have an offspring to set on the throne, and make president of all human actions. After he has contended with the providence and grace of God at least twelve hundred years, with various success, he now boasts as if he had obtained a total victory. Yet all his prevailing is to be attributed to the diligence and varnish of his new abettors, with (to our shame!) the negligence of his adversaries. There is no more real worth in him and his cause than there was when he was rejected and cursed out of the church by the ancient fathers. Those who can look at the thing itself, through the many winding labyrinths of curious distinctions, will find that, like Egyptian novices, they have been brought through many stately frontispieces and goodly fabrics, with a great show of zeal and devotion, to the image of an ugly ape.

Yet observe here that we do not absolutely oppose free-will, as if it were “nomen inane,” a mere figment; it is no such thing. We oppose it only in that sense which the Pelagians and Arminians assert it. We will not contend about words. We grant that man, in the substance of all his actions, has as much power, liberty, and freedom as a mere created nature is capable of. We grant that he is free in his choice from all outward co-action, or inward natural necessity, to work according to election and deliberation, spontaneously embracing what seems good to him. Now, call this power free-will, or whatever you please. As long as you do not make it supreme, independent, and boundless, we are not at all troubled. The imposition of names depends on the discretion of their inventors. Again; even in spiritual things, we deny that our wills are at all debarred, or deprived of their proper liberty. But here we say, indeed, that we are not properly free until the Son makes us free – there is no great use of freedom in what we can do nothing about. We do not claim a liberty that would make us despise the grace of God <sup>7</sup> – the grace by which we may attain true liberty indeed – which adds to, but takes nothing from, our original freedom. But more about this after I have shown what an idol the Arminians make of free-will. Only take notice at the start that we speak of free-will now, not as it was at first created by God, but as it is now corrupted by sin. Yet, being considered in that estate also, they ascribe more to it than it was ever capable of. As it now stands, according to my formerly-proposed method, I will show first, what inbred native virtue they ascribe to it, and with how absolute a dominion and sovereignty over all our actions they endow it. Secondly, I will show what power they say it has in preparing us for the grace of God. Thirdly, I will show how effectually operative free-will is in receiving grace, and how, with little help from grace, it accomplishes the great work of our

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<sup>7</sup> Homo non libertate gratiam, sed gratia libertatem, assequitur.” – Aug.

conversion – all briefly, with only as many observations as will suffice to reveal their proud errors in each particular.

Arminius says, “The liberty of the will consists in this: that all things required to enable it to will anything being accomplished, it still remains indifferent to will or not to will.”<sup>8</sup> And all of them at the synod said, “There is an inseparable property accompanying the will of man, which we call liberty, for which the will is termed a power. When all things pre-required for the operation of the will are fulfilled, it may will anything, or not will it.”<sup>9</sup> That is, our free wills have such an absolute and uncontrollable power in the territory of all human actions, that no influence of God’s providence, no certainty of his decree, no unchangeableness of his purpose, can sway it at all in its free determinations, or have any power with his highness, *Free-Will*, to cause him to will or resolve to do any act which God intends to produce by him.

Take for example the great work of our conversion.<sup>10</sup> “All unregenerate men,” says Arminius, “have, by virtue of their free-will, a power to resist the Holy Spirit, to reject the offered grace of God, and contemn<sup>11</sup> the counsel of God concerning themselves, to refuse the gospel of grace, and not open the heart to him that knocks.” What a stout idol this is, whom neither the Holy Spirit, the grace and counsel of God, the calling of the gospel, nor the knocking at the door of the heart, can move at all, or in the least measure prevail against him! Woe to us, then, if when God calls us, our free-will is not in good temper, and well-disposed to hearken to him! For it seems there is no dealing with free-will by any other way, however powerful and almighty.<sup>12</sup> “For if we grant,” says Corvinus, “all the operations of grace which God can use in our conversion, conversion still remains so much in our own free power that we cannot be converted; that is, we can either turn or not turn ourselves.” Here the idol plainly challenges the Lord to work his utmost, and tells him that after he has done so, the idol will do what he pleases. God’s infallible prescience, his powerful predetermination, the moral efficacy of the gospel, the infusion of grace, the effectual operation of the Holy Spirit – all are nothing; they are not available at all in helping or furthering our independent wills in their proceedings.

Well, then, in what estate *will* you have the idol placed? “In such an estate that he may be allowed to sin, or to do well, at his pleasure,”<sup>13</sup> as the same author intimates. Does it seem then, as to sin, that nothing is required for this idol to be able to do good except God’s permission? No! For the Remonstrants (as they speak of themselves) “always suppose a free power to obey or not to obey, in those who obey as well as in those who do not obey – he that is obedient may

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<sup>8</sup> “Libertas Arbitrii consistit in eo, quod homo, positis omnibus requisitis ad volendum, indifferens tamen sit, ad volendum vel nolendum, hoc vel illud.” – Armin. Art. Perpend., p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> “Voluntatem comitatur proprietas quaedam inseparabilis, quam libertatem vocamus; a qua voluntas dicitur potentia, quae positis omnibus praerequisitis ad agendum necessariis, potest velle et nolle, aut velle et non velle.” – Remon. in Act. Synod, p. 16.

<sup>10</sup> “Omnes irrogeniti habent Lib. Arbit. et potentiam Spiritui Sancto resistendi, gratiam Dei oblatam repudiandi, consilium Dei adversus se contemrendi, evangelium gratiae repudiandi, ei qui cot pulsat non aperiendi.” – Armin. Artic. Perpend.

<sup>11</sup> [To disdain; to value as little or nothing; to treat or regard with contempt.](#)

<sup>12</sup> “Positis omnibus operationibus gratiae, quibus Deus in conversione nostri uti possit, manet tamen conversio ita in nostra potestate libera, ut possimus non converti; hoc est, nosmet ipsos convertere vel non convertere.” – Corv, ad Bog., p. 263.

<sup>13</sup> “Non potest Deus Lib. Arbit. integrum servare, nisi tam peccare hominem sineret, quam bene agere.” Corv, ad Molin., cap. 6.

therefore be counted obedient, because he obeys when he might not obey, and so too on the contrary.”<sup>14</sup> All the praise of our obedience, by which we differ from others, is thus ascribed to ourselves alone, and to that free power that is in us. Now, by this they mean not any one act of obedience, but faith itself, and the whole consummation of it.<sup>15</sup> Arminius said triumphantly to Perkins, “For if a man were to say that every man in the world has a power to believe if he will, and of attaining salvation if he will, and that this power is settled in his nature, then what argument have you to confute him?” Here the sophistical innovator confounds grace and nature as plainly as Pelagius ever did. What the Arminians claim here in behalf of their free-will is an absolute independence of God’s providence in doing anything, and an independence of his grace in doing what is good. It is self-sufficient in all its operations, a plenary<sup>16</sup> indifference in doing what we will, whether this or that, being neither determined to the one nor inclined to the other by any overruling influence from heaven. So that the good acts of our wills do not depend on God’s providence as they are acts, nor do they depend on his grace as they are good; but in both regards, they proceed from a principle within us that in no way is moved by any superior agent.

Now, the first of these we deny to our wills, because they are created; and the second we deny, because they are corrupted. Their creation hinders them from doing anything of themselves without the assistance of God’s providence; and their corruption hinders them from doing anything that is good without God’s grace. We cannot allow a self-sufficiency that operates without the effectual motion of Almighty God, who is the first cause of all things. We cannot concede this for men or angels, unless we intend to make them gods. And we cannot grant that man has the power to do good by nature, equal to his power to do evil, unless we deny the fall of Adam, and fancy that we are still in paradise. But let us consider these things separately.

FIRST, I will not try to decipher the nature of human liberty, which perhaps would require a larger discourse than my proposed method will bear. It may suffice that, according to my former intimation, we grant as large a freedom and dominion to our wills as a creature is capable of over its own acts, subject to the supreme rule of God’s providence. We are endued with a liberty of will that is free from all outward compulsion and inward necessity, having an elective faculty to apply itself to whatever seems good to it, and in which it is a free choice. Notwithstanding this, its will is subservient to the decree of God, as I showed before, chap. 4. It is most free in all its acts, both in regard to the object it chooses, and in regard to that vital power and faculty by which it works. It infallibly complies with and works by virtue of the motion of God’s providence. But surely it plainly denies that our wills are subject to the rule of the Most High if we assert such a supreme independence, and in every way an unbounded indifference as the Arminians claim. All other requisite things are pre-supposed, so that it remains absolutely in our own power to will or not to will something, to do anything or not to do it. It is granted that in such a chimerical,<sup>17</sup> fancied consideration of free-will, which is seen as having no relation to any act of God’s except its creation, abstracted from his decree,<sup>18</sup> it may be said to have such a liberty

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<sup>14</sup> “Semper Remonstrantes supponunt liberam obediendi potentiam et non obediendi; ut qui obediens est idcirco obediens censeatur, quia cum possit non obedire obedit tamen, et e contra.” – Rem. Apol., p. 70.

<sup>15</sup> “Quod si quis dicat omnes in universum homines, habere potentiam credendi si velint, et salutem consequendi: et hanc potentiam esse naturae hominum divinitus collatam, quo tuo argumento eum confutabis?” – Armin. Antip., p. 272.

<sup>16</sup> *Plenary* – full in all respects; complete and comprehensive.

<sup>17</sup> Reference to the chimera of Greek mythology, suggesting that it is produced by a vivid imagination.

<sup>18</sup> *Abstracted* – considered apart from God’s decree.

in regard to the object. But the truth is, this divided sense is plain nonsense, a mere fiction of such an estate which never was, nor ever can be, so long as men confess any deity but themselves, to whose determinations they must be subject. Until more significant terms are invented for this free power in our nature, which the Scripture never once deigns to name, I will be content with Prosper, to call it a “spontaneous appetite for what seems good to it”<sup>19</sup> – free from all compulsion, but subservient to the providence of God. Against exalting it to the height of independence which they claim, I oppose –

First. Everything that is independent of anyone else in its operation is purely active; and so consequently, it is a god – for nothing but a divine will can be purely active, possessing such a liberty by virtue of its own essence. Every *created* will, however, must have its liberty by participation, which includes such an imperfect potentiality that it cannot be brought into action without some pre-motion (if I may say so) of a superior agent. Being extrinsic, this motion does not at all prejudice the true liberty of the will. Such liberty indeed requires only that the internal principle of operation be active and free, not that an outward superior agent cannot move that principle to operate. In this sense, nothing can have an independent principle of operation which does not have an independent being. It is no more necessary to the nature of a free cause – from which a free action proceeds – that it be the *first* beginning of that action, than it is necessary to the nature of a cause that it be the *first* cause.

Secondly. If the free acts of our wills are so subservient to the providence of God that he uses them to whatever end he will, and he effects many of his purposes by them, then they cannot be so absolutely independent as to have every necessary circumstance and condition in their own power, that they may use or not use them at their pleasure. Now, the former is proved by all those reasons and texts of Scripture I produced before to show that the providence of God overrules the actions and determines the wills of men to freely do what he has appointed. And, truly, if it were it otherwise, God’s dominion over most things in the world would be quite excluded; he would have had no power to determine that any one thing should ever come to pass which has any reference to the wills of men.

Thirdly. All the acts of the will being positive entities, if they had not previously been moved by God himself, “in whom we live, move, and have our being,” then they must have their essence and existence solely from the will itself. Such a will is thereby made ἀὐτὸ ὄν, a first and supreme cause, endued with an underived being.<sup>20</sup> So much for that particular.

Let us now, in the SECOND place, look at the power of our free-will in doing what is morally good. Here we will find not only an essential imperfection, inasmuch as it is *created*, but also a contracted effect, inasmuch as it is *corrupted*. The ability which the Arminians ascribe to it, of doing what is morally and spiritually good, is as great and competent for this as in the state of innocence: a power to believe and a power to resist the gospel, a power to obey and not to obey, a power to turn or not to be converted.

The Scripture, as I observed before, has no such term at all, nor anything equivalent to it. Rather, the expressions it uses concerning our nature and all its faculties in this state of sin and unregeneration, seem to imply quite the contrary: that we are in “bondage,” Heb 2:15; “dead in sins,” Eph 2:1, “free from righteousness,” Rom 6:20; “servants of sin,” verse 17; under the “reign” and “dominion” of sin, verses 12, 14; all our members are “instruments of

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<sup>19</sup> “Lib. Arbit. est rei sibi placitae spontaneus appetitus.” – Prosp, ad Collat., cap. 18, p. 379.

<sup>20</sup> [That is, if men had such a will, they would be God.](#)

unrighteousness,” verse 13; we are not “free indeed,” until “the Son makes us free.” So that this idol of free-will, in respect to spiritual things, is not one whit better than the other idols of the heathen. Though it looks like “silver and gold,” it is the “work of men’s hands. It has a mouth, but it does not speak; it has eyes, but it does not see; it has ears, but it does not hear; a nose, but it does not smell; it has hands, but it does not handle; it has feet, but it does not walk; nor does it speak through its throat. Those who made it are like it; and so is everyone that trusts in it. O Israel, trust in the LORD,” etc., Psalm 115:4-9. I showed before that it is the work of men’s hands, or a human invention. For the rest, it has a mouth unacquainted with the “mystery of godliness,” “full only of cursing and bitterness,” Rom 3:14; “speaking great swelling words,” Jude 16; “great things, and blasphemies,” Rev 13:5; a “mouth causing the flesh to sin,” Ecc 5:6 – his eyes are blind, not able to perceive those things that are of God, nor to know those things that are “spiritually discerned,” 1Cor 2:14; “eyes before which there is no fear of God,” Rom 3:18 – his “understanding is darkened, because of the blindness of his heart,” Eph 4:18; “wise to do evil, but to do good he has no knowledge,” Jer 4:22.

So that without further light, all the world is but a mere “darkness,” John 1:5 – he has ears, but they are like the ears of the “deaf adder” to the word of God, “refusing to hear the voice of charmers, charming ever so wisely,” Psalm 58:5; being “dead” when his voice first calls it, John 5:25; “ears stopped so that they would not hear,” Zec 7:11; “heavy ears” that cannot hear, Isaiah 6:10 – a nose, to which the gospel is “the savor of death to death,” 2Cor 2:16 – “hands full of blood,” Isaiah 1:15; and “fingers defiled with iniquity,” chap. 59:3 – feet, indeed, but, like Mephibosheth, lame in both by a fall, so that he cannot walk at all in the path of goodness; but is “swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in his ways, and the way of peace he has not known,” Rom 3:15-17. The Scripture attributes these, and various other endowments and excellent qualifications, to this idol which it calls “The old man,” as I will more fully reveal in the next chapter. Is this not a solid reed to rely on in the paths of godliness? Is this not a powerful deity to which we may repair for a power to become the sons of God, and attain eternal happiness? I will consider the abilities of free-will in particular later; for now I will, by one or two reasons, show that it cannot be the sole and proper cause of any truly good and spiritual act that is well-pleasing to God.

FIRST. All spiritual acts that are well-pleasing to God, such as faith, repentance, and obedience, are supernatural; flesh and blood does not reveal these things: “Not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man; but of God,” John 1:13; “What is born of the flesh is flesh; and what is born of the Spirit is spirit,” John 3:6. Now, the performance of any supernatural act requires that its productive power also be supernatural; for nothing can actively cause something above its own sphere. *Nec imbelles generant ferores aquilas columbae.*<sup>21</sup> But our free-will is a merely natural faculty; there is no relation between it and those spiritual, supernatural acts, unless it is advanced above its own orb by inherent, habitual grace. Divine, theological virtues, differ in the substance of their acts, from those moral performances of the same acts to which the strength of nature may reach (for the difference in acts arises from their formal objects, which vary between the two). They must therefore have another principle and cause above all the power of nature in civil things and morally good actions; for they are subject to a natural perception, and do not exceed the strength of our own wills. This faculty of free-will may exist, yet not without the following limitations: *First*. That it always requires the general concurrence of God,

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<sup>21</sup> A peaceful dove cannot produce a fierce eagle.

by which the whole class<sup>22</sup> in which free-will subsists may be sustained, Mat 10:29-30.<sup>23</sup> *Secondly*. That we do all these things imperfectly and with much infirmity; also, every degree of excellence in these things must be counted a special gift of God, Isaiah 26:12.<sup>24</sup> *Thirdly*. That our wills are determined by the will of God as to all their acts and motions in particular; but we have no knowledge, no power to do what is spiritually good.

SECONDLY. I gave one special instance of faith, the production of which the Arminians greatly attribute to free-will. This they affirm (as I showed before) to be inbred in nature, everyone having in him from his birth a natural power to believe in Christ and his gospel. For Episcopus denies that “any action of the Holy Spirit on the understanding or will is necessary, or promised in the Scripture, to make a man able to believe the word preached to him.”<sup>25</sup> So it seems that every man has at all times a power to believe, to produce the act of faith upon the revelation of its object. This gross Pelagianism is contrary –

*First*, To the doctrine of the church of England, warning that a man cannot so much as prepare himself by his own strength, to faith and to call upon God, until the grace of God by Christ prevents him,<sup>26</sup> so that he may have a good will. – Artic. 10.

*Secondly*, To the Scripture, teaching that it is “the work of God that we believe,” John 6:29. It is “not of ourselves; it is the gift of God,” Eph 2:8. To some “it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,” Mat 13:11. And what is peculiarly given to *some* cannot be in the power of *everyone*: “To you it is given in behalf of Christ to believe on him,” Phil 1:29. Faith is our access or coming to Christ; which none can do “unless the Father draws him,” John 6:44; and he so draws, or “has mercy, on whom he will have mercy,” Rom 9:18. Although Episcopus rejects any immediate action of the Holy Spirit for ingenerating faith, St. Paul affirms that there is no less effectual power required for it than that which raised Christ from the dead; which surely was an action of the almighty Godhead. “That you may know,” he says, “what is the exceeding greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” Eph 1:18-20.

So that, let the Arminians say what they please, recalling that I write to Christians, I will spare my labor of further proving that faith is the free gift of God; the Arminians’ opposition to the truth of the Scripture in this particular is so evident to the lowliest capacity of Christians, that there is no need to recapitulate to present the sum of it to their understandings.

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<sup>22</sup> “Class” was originally *suppositum* - A “person” is an individual instance of its *suppositum* (class) which includes all rational and irrational, living and non-living individuals.

<sup>23</sup> Mat 10:29-30 “Are not two sparrows sold for a copper coin? And not one of them falls to the ground apart from your Father’s will. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” Free-will is subject to this general principle of God’s sovereignty.

<sup>24</sup> Isa 26:12 “LORD, You will establish peace for us, for You have also done all our works in us.”

<sup>25</sup> “An ulla actio S. S. immediata in mentem aut voluntatem necessaria sit, aut in Scriptura promittatur ad hoc, ut quis credere possit verbo extrinsecus proposito, negativam tuebimur.” – Episcop., Disput. Privat.

<sup>26</sup> The meaning here is that God’s grace must come before or anticipate his faith. ‘Prevents’ comes from the obsolete word *prevene*; hence the term “prevenient grace,” used by Arminians to refer to a universal and innate ability to believe the gospel.

## CHAPTER 13.

### *OF THE POWER OF FREE-WILL IN PREPARING US FOR OUR CONVERSION TO GOD.*

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The judgment of the Arminians concerning the power of free-will about spiritual things in an unregenerate man – someone who is in the state of corrupted nature before and without the help of grace – may be laid open by the following positions which they hold:

First. That every man in the world, reprobates and others, have in themselves the power and ability to believe in Christ, to repent and yield due obedience to the new covenant; and this is because they did not lose this power by the fall of Adam. “Adam after his fall,” says Grevinchovius, “retained a power to believe; and so did all reprobates in him.”<sup>1</sup> “He did not lose” (as they said at the synod) “the power to perform that obedience which is required in the new covenant, formally considered as required by the new covenant; he did not lose a power to believe, nor a power to forsake sin by repentance.”<sup>2</sup> And those graces that he did not lose are still in our power. From which they affirm that, “faith is called the work of God only because he requires us to do it.”<sup>3</sup> Now, having appropriated this power to themselves, ensuring that the grace of God is quite excluded, a grace which they made needless before, they teach –

Secondly. That to reduce this power into an act, so that men may become actual believers, there is no infused habit of grace, no spiritual vital principle necessary for them, or bestowed on them; rather everyone, by the use of his native endowments, makes himself differ from others. “We reject those things which are spoken concerning the infusion of habits before we can exercise the act of faith,”<sup>4</sup> says the epistle to the Walachians. “I deny that the internal principle of faith required in the gospel is a habit divinely infused, and that the will should be determined by the strength and efficacy of it,” says another of them.<sup>5</sup> Well, then, if we must grant that the internal vital principle of a supernatural spiritual grace is a mere natural faculty, not elevated by any divine habit – if it is not God that begins the good work in us, but our own free-wills – then let us see what more goodly stuff will follow. One man by his own mere endeavors, without the aid of any received gift, makes himself differ from another.<sup>6</sup> “What does it matter that a man makes himself differ from others? There is nothing truer: the one who yields faith to God who commands him, makes himself differ from the one who will not have faith when God commands it.” These are the words of their Apology, which, without question, is an irrefragable<sup>7</sup> truth if faith is not a gift received from above. For on that ground alone the apostle proposes these questions, “Who makes you to differ from another? And what do you have that you did not

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<sup>1</sup> “Adamus post lapsum potentiam credendi retinuit, et reliqui reprobi etiam in illo.” – Grevinch. ad Ames., p. 188.

<sup>2</sup> “Adamus non amisit vires eam obedientiam praestandi quae in novo foedere exigitur, prout puta ea consideratur formaliter, hoc est, prout novo foedere exacta est, nec potentiam credendi amisit; nec amisit potentiam, per respiscentiam, ex peccato resurgendi.” – Rem. Declar. Sent. in Synod., p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Fides vocatur opus Dei, quia Deus ipse id a nobis fieri postulat.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 10. p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> “Ea quae de habituum infusione dicuntur, ante omnem fidei actum, rejiciuntur a nobis.” – Epist, ad Wal., p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> “Principium internum fidei a nobis in evangelio requisitum, esse habitum quendam divinitus infusum, cujus vi ac efficacitate voluntas determinetur; hoc negavi.” – Grevinch, ad Ames., p. 324.

<sup>6</sup> “Quid in eo positum est, quod homo discriminare seipsum dicitur? Nihil verius; qui fidem Deo praecipienti habet, is discriminiunt se ab eo qui Deo praecipienti fidem habere non vult.” – Rem. Apol., cap. 14. p. 144.

<sup>7</sup> [Not to be refuted or overthrown; undeniable.](#)

receive? Now if you did receive, why do you glory, as if `you had not received it?’ The sole reason why Paul denies that anyone makes himself differ from another by his own power, is because what the difference consists of is “received;” it is freely bestowed on him. Deny this, and I confess the other will fall by itself. But until their authority is equal with the apostles’, they would do well to forbear the naked obtrusion<sup>8</sup> of assertions that are so contradictory to the apostles’; and thus they would not trouble the church. Let them take all the glory to themselves, as Grevinchovius does. “I make myself,” he says, “differ from another when I do not resist God and his divine predetermination; which I could have resisted. And why may I not boast of this as of my own? That I *could* do it is by God’s mercy” (endowing his nature with such an ability as you heard before); “but that I *would* do it, when I might have done otherwise, is of *my* power.”<sup>9</sup> Now, when, after all this, they are forced to confess some evangelical grace, though it consists only in a moral persuasion by the outward preaching of the word, they teach –

Thirdly. That God sends the gospel, and reveals Christ Jesus to men, according to how well they dispose themselves for such a blessing. “Sometimes,” they say in their synodical writings, “God calls this or that nation, people, city, or person, to the communion of evangelical grace, whom he pronounces worthy of it in comparison to others.”<sup>10</sup> In Acts 18:10, God encourages Paul to preach at Corinth by affirming that he had “many people in that city” (which, doubtless, were his people then only by virtue of their election). But in these men’s judgments “they were called so because even then they feared God, and served him with all their hearts, according to that knowledge they had of him; and so they were ready to obey the preaching of St. Paul.”<sup>11</sup> It is a strange doctrine, that men should fear God, know him, and serve him in sincerity, before they ever heard of the gospel; and by these means they deserve that the gospel should be preached to them! This is that pleasing of God before faith that they plead for in Act. Synod., p. 66; that “preparation and disposition to believe, which men attain by the law and by virtuous education;”<sup>12</sup> that “something which is in sinners, by which, although they are not justified, yet they are made worthy of justification.”<sup>13</sup> For “conversion and the performance of good works is,” in their apprehension, “a condition pre-required to justification.”<sup>14</sup> So speak the children of Arminius. If this is not an expression that is unparalleled in the writings of any Christian, then I am somewhat mistaken.

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<sup>8</sup> Thrust oneself in as if by force – essentially, to impose an unsolicited and unwarranted assertion on someone else.

<sup>9</sup> “Ego meipsum discerno, cum enim Deo ac divinae praedeterminationi resistere possem, non restiti tamen. Atqui in eo quidni liceat mihi tanquam de meo gloriari? Quod enim potui Dei miserentis est, quod autem volui cum possem nolle, id meae potestatis est.” – Grevinch, ad Ames., p. 253.

<sup>10</sup> “Interdum Deus hanc vel illam gentem, civitatem, personam, ad evangelicae gratiae communionem vocat, quam ipse dignam pronuntiat comparative,” etc. – Rein. Declarat. Sent. Synod.

<sup>11</sup> “Illi, in quorum gratiam, Dominus Paulum in Corinthum misit, dicuntur Dei populus, quia Deum turn timebant, eique, secundum cognitionem quam de eo habebant, serviebant ex animo, et sic ad praedicationem Pauli,” etc. – Corv. ad Molin. 3. sect. 27.

<sup>12</sup> “Per legem, vel per piam educationem vel per institutionem – per haec enim hominem praeparari et disponi ad credendum, planissimum est.” – Rem. Act. Synod.

<sup>13</sup> “Praecedat aliquid in peccatoribus, quo quamvis nondum justificati sunt, digni efficiantur justificatione.” – Grevinch, ad Ames., p. 434.

<sup>14</sup> “Tenendum est, veram conversionem praestationemque bonorum operum esse conditionem praerequisitam ante justificationem.” – Filii Arm. Praef. ad cap. 7. ad Rem.

The sum of their doctrine, then, in this particular concerning the power of free-will in the state of sin and unregeneration, is this:

*That every man having a native, inbred power of believing in Christ upon the revelation of the gospel, also has an ability to do so much good that it will procure from God the preaching of the gospel to him; without any internal assistance of grace, he can give assent and yield obedience to the gospel; the preparatory acts of his own will always proceed so far as to make him excel others who do not perform them, and those others are therefore excluded from further grace.*

This Pelagianism is more gross than Pelagius himself would ever justify. Therefore we reject all the former positions, as so many monsters in Christian religion. In their place we assert the following positions:

**First.** That we, being by nature dead in trespasses and sins, have no power to prepare ourselves to receive God’s grace, nor in the least measure to believe and turn ourselves to him. It is not that we deny there are pre-conditions in us for our conversion, or dispositions that prepare us in some measure for our new birth or regeneration; but we affirm that all these are also the effects of the grace of God, and that alone is their proper cause; for of ourselves, “without him, we can do nothing,” John 15:5. “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves,” 2Cor 3:5, much less to do what is good. In respect to that, “every one of our mouths must be stopped;” for “we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God,” Rom 3:19, 23. We are “by nature the children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins,” Eph 2:1-3; Rom 8:6. Our new birth is a resurrection from death, wrought by the greatness of God’s power. And what ability, I pray, does a dead man have to prepare himself for his resurrection? Can he collect his scattered dust, or renew his perished senses? If the leopard can change his spots, and the Ethiopian his skin, then we can do good who by nature are taught to do evil, Jer 13:23. We are all “ungodly,” and considered “without strength” when Christ died for us, Rom 5:6; we are “wise to do evil,” but “we have no strength, no knowledge, to do good.” Indeed, all the faculties of our souls, by reason of that spiritual death under which we are detained by the corruption of our nature, are altogether useless in respect to any power to do what is truly good. Our understandings are blind or “darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in us, because of the blindness of our hearts,” Eph 4:18; by such blindness we become “darkness” itself, Eph 5:8. So void is the understanding of true knowledge, that “the natural man cannot receive the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him,” 1Cor 2:14. [He is] nothing but confounded and amazed at spiritual things; and, if he does not mock, he can do nothing but wonder, and say, “What does this mean?” Acts 2:12-13. *Secondly*, we are not only blind in our understandings, but we are also captives to sin in our wills, Luke 4:18; by this “we are servants of sin,” John 8:34; we are “free” only in our obedience to that tyrant, Rom 6:20. Indeed, *thirdly*, all our affections are wholly corrupted, for “every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man is only evil continually,” Gen 6:5. While we are “in the flesh, the motions of sin work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death,” Rom 7:5.

These are the endowments of our nature. These are the preparations of our hearts for the grace of God which we have within ourselves. No –

**Secondly**, There is not only an *impotency* but an *enmity* in our corrupted nature to anything spiritually good: The things that are of God are “foolishness to a natural man,” 1Cor 2:14. There is nothing that men more hate and condemn than that which they consider folly. They mock at it as a ridiculous drunkenness, Acts 2:13. And I would to God that our days did not yield such evident proofs of that universal opposition that exists between light and darkness, Christ and

Belial, nature and grace – that we could not see every day the prodigious issues of this inbred corruption swelling over all bounds, and breaking forth into a contempt of the gospel and all the ways of godliness! It is so true that “the carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can it,” Rom 8:7. So that –

**Thirdly.** Just as a natural man neither knows nor wills by the strength of his own free-will, so it is utterly impossible for him to do anything pleasing to God. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then he can do good,” Jer 13:23. “An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit.” “Without faith it is impossible to please God,” Heb 11:6; and “that is not of ourselves, it is the gift of God,” Eph 2:8. Almighty God works in various ways and sundry manners, according to the unsearchableness of his wisdom, to translate his chosen ones from the power of darkness into his marvelous light. He calls some powerfully in the midst of their march in the way of ungodliness, as he did Paul. He prepares others by outward means and helps of common restraining grace, moralizing their nature before it is begotten anew by the immortal seed of the word. Yet this is certain, that all good of this kind is from his free grace; there is nothing in ourselves, as being from ourselves, except sin. Yes, and all those previous dispositions with which our hearts are prepared by virtue of common grace, do not at all enable us to concur, by any vital operation, with that powerful, blessed, renewing grace of regeneration by which we become the sons of God. Nor is there any disposition towards grace, however remote, that can possibly proceed from a mere faculty of nature; for every such disposition must have the same order as the form that is to be introduced. But nature, in respect to grace, is a thing of an inferior alloy, between which there is no proportion. A good use of gifts may promise additional uses, provided they are of the same kind. There is no rule, law, or promise that would make grace due upon the good use of natural endowments.

But you may say here that I quite overthrow free-will, which I seemed to grant before. To this I answer that in regard to that object concerning which now we treat, a natural man has no such thing as free-will at all, if you take it for a power to do what is good and well-pleasing to God in spiritual things; or for an ability to prepare our hearts for faith and to call upon God. As our church article says, that would be a home-bred self-sufficiency, preceding the change of our wills by the almighty grace of God, and by which any good might be said to dwell in us; and we utterly deny that there is any such thing in the world. The will is radically free in itself; yet in respect to the term or object to which it should tend in this regard, the will is corrupted, enthralled, and under a miserable bondage. It is tied to such a need to sin in general, that although unregenerate men are not restricted to this or that sin in particular, for the most part they can do nothing but sin. All their actions in which there is any morality are attended with iniquity: “An evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit;” even “the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD.”

These things being thus made clear from the Scripture, the former Arminian positions will fall to the ground by themselves, having no foundation but their own authority to stand on. For they make no pretense of proof from the word of God. The first two I considered in the last chapter, and now concerning the third, I add only this: that the sole reason why the gospel is sent to some and not to others is not because of any dignity, worth, or desert in those to whom it is sent, any more than these are found in the rest who are allowed to remain in the shadow of death. Rather, it is the sole good pleasure of God, so that it may be a subservient means to execute his decree of election: “I have many people in this city,” Acts 18:20; “I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed

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them to babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in your sight,” Mat 11:25-26. So that the Arminian opposition to the truth of the gospel in this particular is clearly manifest:

<b>S.S.</b>	<b>Lib. Arbit.</b>
“Of ourselves we can do nothing,” Joh 15:5. “We are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as being from ourselves,” 2Cor 3:5. “We are by nature the children of wrath, dead in trespasses and sins,” Eph 2:1-3.	“We retain still after the fall a power of believing and of repentance, because Adam did not lose this ability,” Rem. Declar. Sen. in Synod.
“Faith is not of ourselves: it is the gift of God,” Eph 2:8.	“Faith is said to be the work of God, because he commands us to perform it,” Rem. Apol. “There is no infusion of any habit or spiritual vital principle necessary to enable a man to believe,” Corv.
“Who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did receive, why do you glory as if you had not received?” 1Cor 4:7.	“There is nothing truer than that one man makes himself differ from another. He who believes when God commands, makes himself differ from him who will not,” Rem. Apol.
“Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, who are taught to do evil,” Jer 13:23.	“I may boast of my own, when I obey God’s grace, which it was in my power not to obey, as well as to obey,” Grevinch.
“Believing on him that justifies the ungodly,” Rom 4:5. “Being justified freely by his grace,” Rom 3:24.	“True conversion and the performance of good works is a condition required on our part before justification,” Filii Attain.
“I thank you, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in your sight,” Mat 11:25-26.	“God sends the gospel to such persons or nations, that in comparison to others, they may be said to be worthy of it,” Rem. Apol.

## CHAPTER 14.

### OF OUR CONVERSION TO GOD.

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The Arminians assign little or nothing at all to the *grace of God*, in performing the great work of our conversion. It plainly appears from what I have shown already, that they ascribe it to *our own free-will*. Thus I will briefly pass over what otherwise is so copiously delivered in the holy Scripture; that would require a far larger discussion. A prolix<sup>1</sup> confirmation of the truth we profess does not suit so well my intention, which is merely to reveal their errors; so many are deceived and inveigled by not knowing the depths of them. In this great conjunction of grace and nature, the Arminians ascribe two things to free-will: first, *a power to co-operate* and work with grace to make it at all *effectual*; secondly, *a power to resist* its operation and make it altogether *ineffectual*. God in the meantime bestows no grace, but awaits an act issuing from one of these two abilities to have its corresponding effect. If a man co-operates, then grace attains its end; if he resists, it returns empty. To this end, they pretend that all the grace of God bestowed on us for our conversion is but a moral persuasion by his word, and not an infusion of a new vital principle by the powerful working of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, granting this, I will most willingly comply with them in assigning to free-will one of the endowments recited before – a power to resist the operation of grace; but instead of the other power, I must ascribe to our whole corrupted nature (and everyone that partakes of it) a universal disability to obey or couple in that work which God intends by his grace. If the grace of our conversion is nothing but a moral persuasion, then being dead in sin, we have no more power to obey it than a man in his grave has power in himself to live again, and to come out at the next call. God’s promises and the saints’ prayers in the holy Scripture seem to intend a grace that would give us a real internal ability to do what is spiritually good. But it seems there is no such matter; for if a man were to persuade me to leap over the Thames, or to fly in the air (however eloquent he might be), his persuasion makes me no more able to do it than before I ever saw him. If God’s grace is nothing but a sweet persuasion (however powerful), it is an extrinsic thing; it proposes a desired object, but it gives us no new strength to do anything we did not have the power to do before. But let us hear their own pleading to each of these particulars concerning grace and nature –

**First**, for the nature of grace: “God has appointed to save believers by grace – that is, a soft and sweet persuasion, convenient and agreeable to their free-will – and not by any almighty action,” says Arminius.<sup>2</sup> It seems strange, “the carnal mind being enmity against God,” and the will being enthralled to sin, and full of wretched opposition to all his ways, that God would have no other means to move them to himself except some persuasion that is sweet, agreeable, and congruous to them in their current estate. It does little to exalt the dignity and power of grace, when the chief reason why it is effectual, as Alvarez observes, may be reduced to a well-digested supper or an undisturbed sleep; by these some men may be brought to a better temperament to comply with this congruous grace. But let us for the present accept this, and grant that God does call some by such a congruous persuasion, at the time and place he knows they will assent to it. I ask whether God calls all men this way, or only some? If all men are called this way, then why are not all converted? For the very granting of it to be congruous makes it effectual. If only

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<sup>1</sup> *Prolix*: tediously prolonged, or tending to speak or write at great length.

<sup>2</sup> “Deus statuit salvare credentes per gratiam, id est, lenem ac suavem liberoque ipsorum arbitrio convenientem seu congruam suasionem, non per omnipotentem actionem seu motionem.” – Armin. Antip., p. 211.

some, then why them, and not others? Is it out of a special intention to have them obedient? Let them take heed, for this nearly establishes the decree of election; they will never be able to determine out of what other intention it should be. Therefore Corvinus denies that any such congruity is required for the grace by which we are converted. It is only required that it be a moral persuasion, which we may obey if we will, and so make it effectual.<sup>3</sup> Yes, and Arminius himself, after he had defended it as far as he was able, puts it off from himself, and falsely attributes it to St. Austin. So that, as they jointly affirm, “they confess that no grace is necessary for the production of faith, but only what is moral;”<sup>4</sup> one of them interprets this to be “a declaration of the gospel to us;”<sup>5</sup> – just like their old master Pelagius did. “God,” he says, “works in us to will what is good and to will what is holy, while he stirs us up with promise of rewards and the greatness of the future glory – though before we were given over to earthly desires, like brute beasts, loving nothing but present things, stirring up our stupid wills to a desire for God by a revelation of wisdom, and persuading us to all that is good.”<sup>6</sup> Both of them affirm that the grace of God is nothing but a *moral persuasion*, working by way of powerful, convincing arguments. Yet here Pelagius seems to ascribe a greater efficacy to it than the Arminians, granting that it works on us when, after the manner of brute beasts, we are fixed merely on earthly things. But, as they confess, for the production of faith, it is necessary that such arguments be proposed on the part of God to which nothing can probably be opposed, as for example, why they should not seem credible. So, they say, a pious docility and probity of mind is required on our part. So that all the grace of God bestowed on us consists in persuasive arguments out of the word; which, if they meet with teachable minds, may work their conversion.<sup>7</sup>

**Secondly.** Having thus extenuated the grace of God, they affirm, “that in the operation of grace, the efficacy of it depends on free-will.” So the Remonstrants say in their Apology.<sup>8</sup> “And to speak confidently,” says Grevinchovius, “I say that the effect of grace, in an ordinary course, depends on some act of our free-will.”<sup>9</sup> Suppose, then, that two men are made partakers of the same grace – that is, they both have the gospel preached to them by the same means. One is converted and the other is not. What may be the cause of so great a difference? Was there any intention or purpose in God that one should be changed rather than the other? “No,” they say. “He equally desires and intends the conversion of all and every one.” Did, then, God work more powerfully in the heart of the one by his Holy Spirit than in the heart of the other? “No,” they

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<sup>3</sup> Corv. ad Molin. – “His ita expositis ex mente Augustini,” etc. – Armin. Antip. De Elec.

<sup>4</sup> “Fatemur, aliam nobis ad actum fidei eliciendum necessariam gratiam non agnosci quam moralem.” – Rem. Act. Synod. ad Art. 4.

<sup>5</sup> “Annuntiatio doctrinae evangelicae.” – Popp. August. Port. p. 110.

<sup>6</sup> “Operatur in nobis velle quod bonum est, velle quod sanctum est, dum nos terrenis cupiditatibus deditos mutorum more animalium, tantummodo praesentia diligentes, futurae gloriae magnitudine et praemiorum pollicitatione, succendit: alium revelatione sapientiae in desiderium Dei stupentem suscitatur voluntatem, dum nobis suadet omne quod bonum est.” – Pelag., ap. Aug. de Grat. Ch. cap. 10.

<sup>7</sup> “Ut autem assensus hic eliciatur in nobis, duo in primis necessaria sunt: – 1. Argumenta talia ex parte Dei, quibus nihil verisimiliter opponi potest cur credibilia non sint. 2. Pia docilitas animique probitas.” – Rem. Declar., cap. 17. sect. 1.

<sup>8</sup> “Ut gratia sit efficax in actu secundo pendet a libera voluntate.” – Rem. Apol., p. 164.

<sup>9</sup> “Imo ut confidentius agam, dico effectum gratiae, ordinaria lege, pendere ab actu aliquo arbitrii.” – Grevinch, ad Ames., p. 198.

say. “The same operation of the Spirit always accompanies the same preaching of the word.” But was not one, by some almighty action, made partaker of real infused grace, which the other did not attain to it? “No,” they say. “For that would destroy the liberty of his will, and deprive him of all the praise of believing.” How, then, did this extreme difference of effects come about? Who made the one differ from the other? Or what does he have that he did not receive? “Why, all this proceeds merely from the strength of his own free-will yielding obedience to God’s gracious invitation, which (like the other) he might have rejected. This is the immediate cause of his conversion, for which all praise is due.” And here the old idol may boast to all the world that if he can only get his worshippers to prevail in this, he has quite excluded the grace of Christ, and made it *nomen inane*, a mere title – but in fact there is no such thing in the world.

**Thirdly.** They teach that, notwithstanding any purpose and intention of God to convert and thus to save a sinner – and notwithstanding the most powerful and effectual operation of the blessed Spirit, with the most winning and persuasive preaching of the word – it remains in man’s power to frustrate that purpose, and to resist that operation, and to reject that preaching of the gospel. I do not need to prove this, for it is what they directly plead for; it is also what they must do, if they are to comply with their previously mentioned principles. For granting all these things have no influence on any man except by way of moral persuasion, we must not only grant that God’s grace may be resisted, but we must also utterly deny that it can be obeyed. We may resist it, I say, because we have both a disability to do good and we have a repugnancy against it. As for obeying it, unless we would deny all inherent corruption in us, and all depravation in our nature, we cannot attribute any such sufficiency to ourselves.

Now, concerning this *weakness* of grace (that it is not able to overcome the opposing power of our sinful nature), one testimony of Arminius will suffice: “It always remains in the power of free-will to reject grace that is given, and to refuse what follows; for grace is no almighty action of God which free-will cannot resist.”<sup>10</sup> I would not assert, in opposition to this, such an operation of grace as to violently overcome the will of man, and force him into obedience; that would be prejudicial to our liberty. I would only assert that it consists in such a sweet and effectual working as to infallibly promote our conversion, to make those willing who before were unwilling, and to make those obedient who were not obedient – a working that creates clean hearts and renews right spirits within us.

What we assert, then, in opposition to these Arminian heterodoxies, is that *the effectual grace which God uses in the great work of our conversion, by its own nature – being the instrument and intent of God for that purpose – surely and solely produces the intended effect, without successful resistance, and without any considerable co-operation of men’s own wills, until they are prepared and changed by that very grace.* The infallibility of its effect depends chiefly on the purpose of God. When he intends a man’s conversion by any means, those means must have such an efficacy added to them as to make them fit instruments to accomplish that intention, so that the counsel of the Lord may prosper, and his word may not return empty. But the manner of its operation – that it requires no human assistance, and it is able to overcome all repugnance – is proper to the act in which grace consists. I will briefly confirm this nature and efficacy of grace, in opposition to the assertions of an indifferent influence of the Holy Spirit, or a metaphorical motion, or working by way of moral persuasion – or to that grace which only proposes a

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<sup>10</sup> “Manet semper in potestate Lib. Arbit. gratiam datam rejicere et subsequentem repudiare, quae gratia non est omnipotentis Dei actio, cui resisti a libero hominis arbitrio non possit.” – Armin. Antip., p. 243.

desirable object that is easy to be resisted, and is not effectual unless it is helped by an inbred ability of our own; for this is the *Arminian* grace. I will premise these few things:

First. In their conversion, God does not use the wills of men as malign spirits use the members of men who are having a fit, by a violent wrested motion. Rather he uses them sweetly and agreeably to their own free nature. Yet, in the first act of our conversion the will is merely passive; it is a capable subject of such converting work, but it does not at all concur cooperatively in our turning. The will is not, I say, the *cause* of the work, but the *subject* in which it is wrought, having only a passive capability to receive that supernatural being which is introduced by grace. The beginning of this “good work” is merely from God, Phil 1:6. Indeed, faith is ascribed to grace, not by way of conjunction with our wills, but in opposition to them: “Not of ourselves; it is the gift of God,” Eph 2:8. “Not that we are sufficient of ourselves; our sufficiency is of God,” 2Cor 3:5. “Turn us to you, O LORD, and we shall be turned,” Lam 5:21.

Secondly. The will of man confers nothing to the infusion of the first grace, but subjectively receives it. Yet in the very first act that is wrought in and by the will, it most freely cooperates (by way of subordination) with the grace of God; and the more effectually it is moved by grace, the more freely it works with it. Man being converted, converts himself.

Thirdly. We do not affirm that grace is *irresistible*, as though it came upon the will with such an overflowing violence as to beat it down before it, and subdue it by compulsion to what it is not inclined to in any way. But if that term must be used, it denotes, in our sense, only such an unconquerable efficacy of grace as to always and infallibly produce its effect; for who can “withstand God?” Acts 11:17 – as it may also be used on that part of the will which will not resist it: “All that the Father gives to Christ shall come to him,” John 6:37. The operation of grace is not resisted by a hard heart because it mollifies the heart itself. It does not so much take away a power to resist, as give a will to obey, whereby the *powerful impotency* of resistance is removed.

Fourthly. Concerning grace itself, it is either common or special. *Common* or general grace consists in the external revelation of the will of God by his word, with some illumination of the mind to perceive it, and a correction of affections not to condemn it too much. This, in some degree or other (to some more and to some less), is common to all who are called. *Special* grace is the grace of regeneration, which comprehends special grace, adding more spiritual acts to it, but especially presupposing the purpose of God on which the efficacy of grace chiefly depends.

Fifthly. This saving grace, by which the Lord converts or regenerates a sinner, translating him from death to life, is either external or internal. *External* consists in the preaching of the word, etc., which operates by way of moral persuasion, when we beseech our hearers by it “in Christ’s stead, so that they would be reconciled to God,” 2Cor 5:20. This is the instrumental organ of our conversion. It may be said to be a sufficient cause of our regeneration, inasmuch as no other cause of the same kind is necessary. It may also be resisted *in sensu diviso*,<sup>11</sup> when considered separately from being the instrument of God for such an end.

Sixthly. Internal grace is distinguished by divines into the first (or *preventing*) grace, and the second following (or *cooperating*) grace. The first is that spiritual vital principle that is infused into us by the Holy Spirit; it is that new creation and bestowing of new strength by which we are made fit and able to produce spiritual acts, to believe and yield evangelical obedience: “For we are the workmanship of God, created in Christ Jesus for good works,” Eph 2:10. By this God

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<sup>11</sup> *In sensu diviso* means, “considered separately” (in a separate sense).

“gives us a new heart, and he puts a new spirit within us;” he “takes the stony heart out of our flesh, and gives us a heart of flesh;” he “puts his Spirit within us, to cause us to walk in his statutes,” Ezekiel 36:26-27.

Now, this first grace is not properly and formally a vital act, but *causal* only; it is a principle that motivates such vital acts within us. It is the habit of faith bestowed on a man so that he may be able to elicit and perform the acts of faith. This grace gives new light to the understanding, new inclinations to the will, and new affections to the heart. It is the infallible efficacy of this grace that we plead for against the Arminians. And I will make use only of a very few of those innumerable places of holy Scripture which confirm this truth, reduced to these three heads:

*First.* Our conversion is wrought by a divine, almighty action, which the will of man will not, and therefore cannot resist. The impotency of the will ought not to be opposed to this omnipotent grace which will certainly effect the work for which it is ordained. This gracious action is not inferior to the greatness of God’s “mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead,” Eph 1:19-20. And shall not that power which could overcome hell, and loose the bonds of death, be effectual to raise a sinner from the death of sin, when by God’s intention it is appointed to that work? He accomplishes “the work of faith with power,” 2Thes 1:11. It is “his divine power that gives us all things that pertain to life and godliness,” 2Peter 1:3. Surely a moral, resistible persuasion would not often be termed the “power” of God, which denotes an actual efficacy which no creature is able to resist.

*Secondly.* What consists in real efficiency is not at all efficient unless it actually works what it intends, when and where it intends it. It cannot be said without contradiction that it may be so resisted that it will not work, for its whole nature consists in such a real operation. Now, it may be proved that the very essence of divine grace consists in such a formal act by all those places in Scripture which affirm that God by his grace, or that the grace of God, actually accomplish our conversion. For example, Deut 30:6, “And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed, to love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, so that you may live.” The circumcision of our hearts, so that we may love the Lord with all our hearts, and with all our souls, is our *conversion*, which the Lord affirms here that he himself will do. He will not only enable us to do it, but he himself will really and effectually accomplish it. And again, “I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts,” Jer 31:33. “I will put my fear in their hearts, so that they will not depart from me,” Jer 32:40. He will not *offer* fear of him to them, but will *actually put* it into them. And most clearly, Ezekiel 36:26-27: “A new heart I will also give you, and a new spirit I will put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes.” Are these expressions of a moral persuasion only? Does God affirm here that he will *do* what he intends only to *persuade* us to, and which we may refuse to do if we will? Is it in the power of a stony heart to remove itself? What an active stone this is, in mounting itself upwards! How does it at all differ from that heart of flesh that God promises? Shall a stony heart be said to have a power to change itself into such a heart of flesh that it will cause us to walk in God’s statutes? Surely, unless men were willfully blind, they must perceive here that such an action of God is denoted as to effectually, solely, and infallibly work our conversion; “opening our hearts, so that we may attend to the word,” Acts 16:14; “giving us in behalf of Christ to believe on him,” Phil 1:29. Now, these and similar places prove that the nature of God’s grace consists in a real efficiency, and its operation is certainly effectual.

*Thirdly.* Our conversion is a “new creation,” a “resurrection,” a “new birth.” Now, the one who creates a man does not persuade that man to create himself, nor could he if he desired to; nor does he have any power to resist the one who would create him – that is (as we take it here), who would translate him from something that he is, to what he is not. What arguments do you think would be sufficient to persuade a dead man to rise? Or what great aid can he contribute to his own resurrection? Nor does a man birth<sup>12</sup> himself; a new real form has never yet been introduced into any matter by subtle arguments. These are the terms the Scripture is pleased to use concerning our conversion: “If any man is in Christ, he is a new creature,” 2Cor 5:17. The “new man is created after God in righteousness and true holiness,” Eph 4:24. It is our new birth: “Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” John 3:3. “Of his own will he birthed us with the word of truth,” James 1:18. And so we become “born again, not of corruptible seed, but incorruptible, by the word of God, which lives and abides forever,” 1Peter 1:23. It is our vivification<sup>13</sup> and resurrection: “The Son makes alive whom he will,” John 5:21, even those “dead,” who “hear his voice and live,” verse 25. “When we were dead in sins,” we are “made alive together with Christ by grace,” Eph 2:5; for “being buried with him by baptism, we are also raised with him through faith in the operation of God,” Col 2:12. And “blessed and holy is he that has part in that first resurrection. Over such the second death has no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” [Rev 20.6](#)

Τῷ Θεῷ ἀριστομεγίστῳ δόξα.

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<sup>12</sup> Originally, “beget” which is to bring forth or give birth to; to generate or produce, especially offspring.

<sup>13</sup> *Vivification*: the quality of being made active and spirited, alive and vigorous.

## APPENDIX

### FIVE ARTICLES OF REMONSTRANCE

The *Five Articles of Remonstrance* refers to the document drawn up in 1610 by the followers of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609). A “remonstrance” is literally “an expression of opposition or protest,” which in this case was a protest against the Calvinist doctrine of predestination contained in the *Belgic Confession*. Consequently, those followers of Arminius who drafted this protest were given the name “Remonstrants.”

*This document was condemned as heresy by the reformed churches at the Synod of Dort, 1618-1619.*

Source: [http://www.theopedia.com/Five\\_articles\\_of\\_Remonstrance](http://www.theopedia.com/Five_articles_of_Remonstrance)

#### § 66. The Remonstrance.

The Arminian or quinquarticular controversy started with opposition to the doctrine of absolute decrees, and moved in the sphere of anthropology and soteriology. The peculiar tenets are contained in the five points or articles which the Arminians in their ‘Remonstrance’ laid before the estates of Holland in 1610. They relate to predestination, the extent of the atonement, the nature of faith, the resistibility of grace, and the perseverance of saints.

The Remonstrance is first negative, and then positive. It rejects five Calvinistic propositions, and then asserts the five Arminian propositions. The doctrines rejected are thus stated:

1. That God has, before the fall, and even before the creation of man, by an unchangeable decree, foreordained some to eternal life and others to eternal damnation, without any regard to righteousness or sin, to obedience or disobedience, and simply because it so pleased him, in order to show the glory of his righteousness to the one class, and his mercy to the other. [*This is the supralapsarian view.*]
2. That God, in view of the fall, and in just condemnation of our first parents and their posterity, ordained to exempt a part of mankind from the consequences of the fall, and to save them by his free grace, but to leave the rest, without regard to age or moral condition, to their condemnation, for the glory of his righteousness. [*The sublapsarian view.*]
3. That Christ died, not for all men, but only for the elect.
4. That the Holy Spirit works in the elect by irresistible grace, so that they *must* be converted and be saved; while the grace necessary and sufficient for conversion, faith, and salvation is withheld from the rest, although they are externally called and invited by the revealed will of God.
5. That those who have received this irresistible grace can never totally and finally lose it, but are guided and preserved by the same grace to the end.

These doctrines, the Remonstrants declare, are not contained in the Word of God nor in the Heidelberg Catechism, and are unedifying, indeed dangerous, and should not be preached to Christian people.

Then the Remonstrance sets forth the five positive articles as follows:

## Appendix – Remonstrance Articles

### ARTICLE 1.

*Conditional Predestination.*—God has immutably decreed, from eternity, to save those men who, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, believe in Jesus Christ, and by the same grace persevere in the obedience of faith to the end; and, on the other hand, to condemn the unbelievers and unconverted (John 3.36).

Election and condemnation are thus conditioned by foreknowledge, and made dependent on the foreseen faith or unbelief of men.

### ARTICLE 2.

*Universal Atonement.*—Christ, the Saviour of the world, died for all men and for every man, and his grace is extended to all. His atoning sacrifice is, in and of itself, sufficient for the redemption of the whole world, and it is intended for all by God the Father. But its *inherent* sufficiency does not necessarily imply its *actual* efficiency. The grace of God may be resisted, and only those who accept it by faith are actually saved. He who is lost, is lost by his own guilt (John 3.16; 1John 2.2).

The Arminians agree with the orthodox in holding the doctrine of a vicarious or expiatory atonement, in opposition to the Socinians; but they soften it down, and represent its direct effect to be to enable God, consistently with his justice and veracity, to enter into a new covenant with men, under which pardon is conveyed to all men on condition of repentance and faith. The immediate effect of Christ's death was not the salvation, but only the salvability of sinners by the removal of the legal obstacles, and opening the door for pardon and reconciliation. They reject the doctrine of a *limited* atonement, which is connected with the supralapsarian view of predestination, but is disowned by moderate Calvinists, who differ from the Arminians in all other points. Calvin himself says that Christ died *sufficenter pro omnibus, efficaciter pro electis*.<sup>1</sup>

### ARTICLE 3.

*Saving Faith.*—Man in his fallen state is unable to accomplish any thing really and truly good, and therefore he is also unable to attain to saving faith, unless he is regenerated and renewed by God in Christ through the Holy Spirit (John 15.5).

### ARTICLE 4.

*Resistible Grace.*—Grace is the beginning, continuation, and end of our spiritual life, so that man can neither think nor do any good, or resist sin, without prevenient, co-operating, and assisting grace. But as for the manner of co-operation, this grace is not irresistible, for many resist the Holy Spirit (Acts 7).

### ARTICLE 5.

*The Uncertainty of Perseverance.*—Although grace is sufficient and abundant to preserve the faithful through all trials and temptations for life everlasting, it has not yet been proved from the Scriptures that grace, once given, can never be lost.

On this point the disciples of Arminius went further, and taught the possibility of a total and final fall of believers from grace. They appealed to such passages where believers are warned against this very danger, and to such examples as Solomon and Judas. They moreover denied, with the Roman Catholics, that any body can have a certainty of salvation except by special revelation.

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<sup>1</sup> That is, *sufficient for all, efficient for the elect*.

## Appendix – Remonstrance Articles

These five points the Remonstrants declare to be in harmony with the Word of God, edifying and, as far as they go, sufficient for salvation. They protest against the charge of changing the Christian Reformed religion, and claim toleration and legal protection for their doctrine.

### **SOURCE:**

Phillip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, Volume 1, Sixth Edition, 1877, Chap. 7, II. Creeds of France and the Netherlands, sec. 66, pp. 517ff.

## SIMEON AND WESLEY ON SAVING FAITH

*Here is the wisdom of Charles Simeon of Cambridge on the subject, in conversation with the veteran John Wesley on Dec 20th, 1784:*

“Sir, I understand that you are called an Arminian; and I have been sometimes called a Calvinist; and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers. But before I consent to begin the combat, with your permission I will ask you a few questions....

Pray, Sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning to God, if God had not first put it into your heart?”

“Yes,” says the veteran, “I do indeed.”

“And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?”

“Yes, solely through Christ.”

“But, Sir, supposing that you were at first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works?”

“No, I must be saved by Christ from first to last.”

“Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?”

“No.”

“What, then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?”

“Yes, altogether.”

“And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto His heavenly kingdom?”

“Yes, I have no hope but in Him.”

“Then, Sir, with your leave I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance: it is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it; and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.”

(Ch Simeon, *Horae Homileticae*, Preface: I.xvii f; quoted in JI Packer, *Evangelism and the Sovereignty of God*, IVF, London, 1961, pp 13-14).