



A TREATISE ON

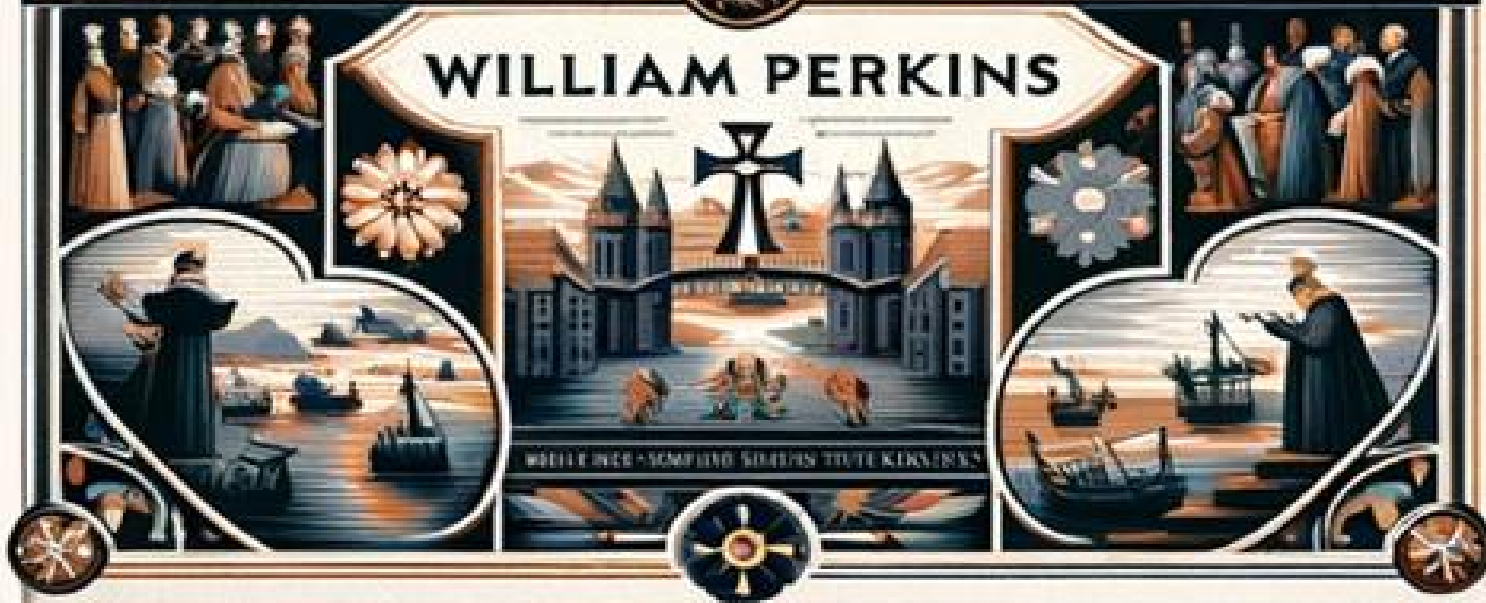
**GOD'S
FREE GRACE
AND MAN'S FREE WILL**

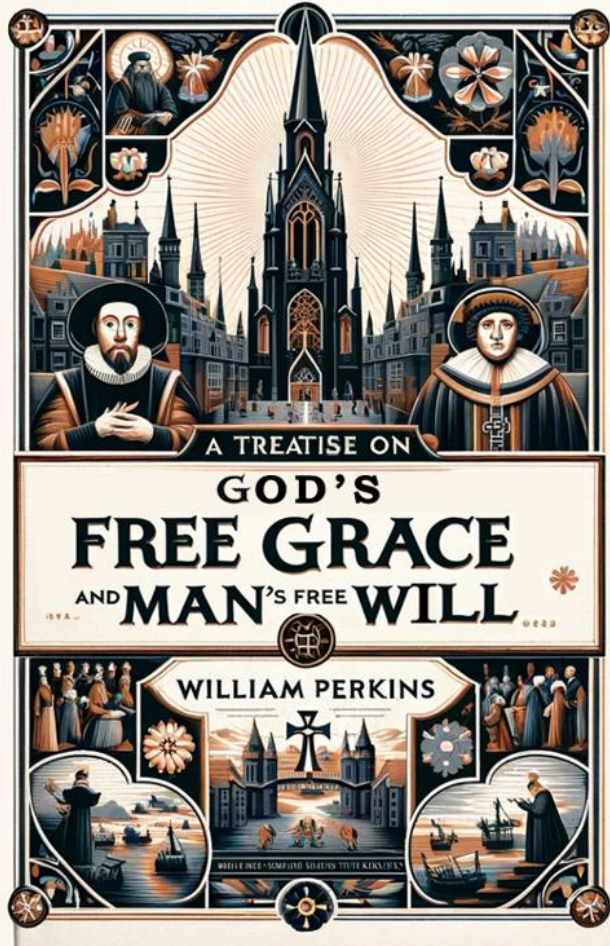
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WILLIAM PERKINS





A Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will

by William Perkins

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To the Right Worshipful, Sir Edward Dennie, Knight

Right Worshipful, it is a thing most evident that the present religion of the Church of Rome is an enemy to the grace of God, two ways. First, because it exalts the liberty of man's will and extenuates the

grace of God, and this it does in five respects. For first of all, it teaches that natural free will of man has in it not only a passive or potential but also an active power or imperfect strength in duties of godliness, and so much the less power is ascribed to the grace of God. This doctrine of theirs is flat against reason. For the will of man in itself is a natural thing, and therefore it is neither fit nor able to effect any supernatural action (as all actions of godliness are) unless it be first of all (as they say) elevated above his condition by the impressions of a supernatural habit. And the Scripture is utterly against this doctrine when it says, "Ye were once darkness" (Eph. 5:8). We are not sufficient of ourselves, to think anything of ourselves (2 Cor. 3:5). The natural man—that is, he that wants the Spirit of God—cannot perceive of the things of God (1 Cor. 2:14). You were dead in sins and trespasses (Eph. 2:1), without Christ and without God in the world (v. 12). Again, Scripture says further that the heart of man is slow (Luke 24:25) and vain (Ps. 5:9) and hard that cannot repent (Rom. 2:5) and stony (Ezek. 36:26); and that the Jews were obstinate, their neck as an iron sinew, and their brow brass (Isa. 48:4); and that it is God who gives eyes to see and a heart to understand (Deut. 29:4). By these testimonies it is manifest that grace does not only help and assist our weak nature, but altogether change the perverse qualities thereof and bring it from darkness to light (Acts 26:18) and from death to life (Eph. 2:1). Which grace whoever does not so far forth acknowledge never yet knew what the gospel means, neither did he ever consider the words of our Savior Christ: "No man comes to me, unless the Father draw him" (John 6:44). Prosper, the scholar of St. Augustine, has a notable saying, which I marvel the Papists of our time do not consider. "We have, says he, "free will by nature, but for quality and condition it must be changed by our Lord Jesus Christ."

Secondly, some of the Romish religion avouch that the efficacy of God's preventing grace depends upon the cooperation of man's will, and they affirm that the Council of Trent is of this mind. But then to the question of Paul, "Who has separated thee?" (1 Cor. 4:7), the answer may be made, "I myself have done it by my own will." And that shall be false which Paul teaches that beside possible, the power of well-willing, *ipsum velle*—that is, the act of well-willing is of God (Phil. 2:13). Others therefore place the efficacy of grace in the congruity of fit objects and persuasion, as though it were sufficient to stir up the heart and to incline the will in spiritual matters, and our weakness might be cured with so easy a medicine; but God is further said to soften the heart (Ezek. 36:26), to turn the heart (Luke 1:17), to open the heart (Acts 16:14). And because our hearts are over hard, He wounds them (Song 4:9); He circumcises them (Deut. 30:6)—nay, He bruises them (Ezek. 6:9). And when nothing will do good, at length God is said to take away the stony heart (11:19), to quicken them that are contrite (Isa. 57:15; Eph. 2:5), to give a new heart (Ezek. 36:26; Eph. 4:23)—nay, to create a new heart (2:10; 4:28).

Thirdly, they give to God in all contingent actions a depending will whereby God wills and determines nothing but according as before sees that the will of man will determine itself. And thus to maintain the supposed liberty of the will—that is, the indifferency and indetermination thereof—they deprive God of His honor and sovereignty. For by this means, not God but the will itself is the first mover and beginner of her own actions. And there are even of the papists themselves that condemn this doctrine as a conceit.

Fourthly, they teach that the grace which makes us acceptable and grateful to God stands in the inward gifts of the mind, especially in the gifts of charity. But this is most false which they teach, for charity is the fulfilling of the law. And Paul says we are not under the law but

under grace (Rom. 6:14). And again, as many as are justified by the law are fallen from grace (Gal. 5:4). Now the grace that does indeed make us grateful to God is the free favor and mercy of God, pardoning our sins in Christ and accepting us to eternal life—and not any quality in us, as Paul signifies when he says we are saved not according to our works, but according to His purpose and grace, which is given to us in Christ before all times (2 Tim. 1:9).

Lastly, they teach that the renewed will of man by the general direction and cooperation of God can perform the duties of godliness without any special help from God by new grace. But the Scripture speaks otherwise. "By the grace of God, I am that I am. I have labored yet not I, but the grace of God which is with me" (1 Cor. 15:10). "No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost" (12:3). "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). "After ye believed, ye were sealed with the Spirit" (Eph. 1:13). "He which has begun this good work in you, will finish it until the day of Christ" (Phil. 1:6). "That ye may abound with hope by the virtue of the Spirit" (Rom. 15:13). "It is God that works in you the will and the deed" (Phil. 2:13). "Though the righteous fall, he shall not be cast off, for the Lord puts under his hand" (Ps. 37:24). "Incline my heart to thy testimonies: turn away mine eyes from beholding of vanity, and quicken me in the way" (119:36–37). "Teach me to do thy will, because thou art my God: let thy good spirit lead me in the land of righteousness" (143:10). "Create in me a new heart, renew a right spirit in me—; and establish me by thy free spirit" (51:10, 12). "draw me and I will run after thee." By these and many other places it is evident that God, after He has endued us with His Spirit, does not leave us to be guided by ourselves (for then we should fall again to our former misery); but He directs us, He lifts us up, He leads us, He confirms and sustains us by the same grace and by the same Spirit

dwelling in us, that walking in the way of His commandments we may at length attain to everlasting happiness.

The second way whereby the papist shows himself to be an enemy of the grace of God is that he joins the merit of works as a co-cause with the grace of God in that which they call the second justification and in the procurement of eternal life—whereas on the contrary, Paul in the article of justification opposes grace to works, yea to such as are the gifts and fruits of the Spirit. For Abraham did good works not by natural free will, but by faith (Heb. 11:8). And Paul opposes justifying grace to the works of Abraham when he says, "To him that worketh, the wages is not imputed according to grace." And Titus 3:5: "Not of the works of righteousness, which we have done, but of his mercy he saved us." Romans 11:6: "If by grace, then not of works, or else were grace no more grace." Augustine said well that grace is no way grace, unless it be freely given every way.

Thus then, all things considered, it is the best to ascribe all we have or can do that is good wholly to the grace of God. Excellent is the speech of Augustine: "Only hold this as a sure point of godliness, that no good thing can come either to the sense or mind or be any way conceived which is not of God." And Bernard: "The church shows herself to be full of grace when she gives all she has to grace—namely, by ascribing to it both the first and last place. Otherwise, how is she full of grace, if she have anything which is not of grace? Again, I tremble to think anything my own, that I may be my own." This doctrine is the safest and the surest in respect of peace of conscience and the salvation of our souls. So much the papists themselves (betraying their own cause) say and confess. Bellarmine, the Jesuit says, "By reason of the uncertainty of our own justice and for fear of falling into vain glory, it is the safest to put our whole confidence in the alone mercy and goodness of God." Cassander cites

a saying of Bonaventure, which is on this manner: "It is the duty of godly minds to ascribe nothing to themselves, but all to the grace of God. Hence it follows, that however much so a man gives to grace, though in giving many things to the grace of God, he takes something from the power of nature and free will, he departs not from godliness; but when anything is taken from the grace of God and given to nature, which pertains to grace, there may be some danger." Thus then to hold and maintain justification by faith without works and to ascribe the whole work of our conversion to God without making any division between grace and nature is the safest.

These things I show more at large in this treatise following, which I now present to your Worship as a final testimony of mine humble duty and love, desiring you to accept the mind of the giver and to peruse it at your leisure. And thus I commend your Worship to the protection and grace of God in Christ.

Your Worships in the Lord,

William Perkins

A Treatise on God's Free Grace and Man's Free Will

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the Prophets, and stoneth them which are sent to thee: how often would I have gathered thy children together, as the hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not? Behold, your habitation shall be left to you desolate."—Matthew 23:37–38

This whole chapter contains a sermon that our Savior Christ made to the Jews at Jerusalem. It has two parts. The first is a reproof of the Jewish doctors—namely, the scribes and Pharisees—for sundry vices, from the beginning of the chapter to the thirty-sixth verse. The second is an invective against Jerusalem in the words I have now read: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killeth the prophets," etc. In the invective, two things are to be considered: the rebellion of Jerusalem in verse 37, and the punishment of this sin in verse 38.

Touching the rebellion itself, three things are set down: the place and persons, in the words, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem"; the degree and practice of rebellion, in these words, "which killeth the Prophets," etc.; the manner and form of their rebellion, in these words, "How oft would I have gathered you, and ye would not."

According to the order of the Holy Ghost, first, I will begin with the place. It is a wonder that Jerusalem, of all the places in the world, should be charged with the height of rebellion against God. For it was the city of God and had prerogatives above all cities in the world. Saint Paul has noted seven of them. The first is that they were Israelites—that is, of the posterity of Jacob. The second is adoption, in that they were reputed and called the children of God. The third is that they had the glory of God—that is, the mercy seat, the pledge of the presence of God. The fourth is the covenants—that is, the two tables of the covenant. The fifth is the giving of the law—namely, of the judicial and ceremonial law. The sixth is the worship of God, the

public solemnity whereof was tied to the temple at Jerusalem. The seventh, that to them pertained the promises made to the patriarchs touching the Messiah. To these the prophet Micah adds the eighth privilege, that the first church of the New Testament should be gathered in Jerusalem, and that consequently the preaching of the gospel should pass thence to all nations [Mic. 4:2]. Now, for all these blessings and mercies, Christ our Savior cries out and complains of Jerusalem's rebellion. And this is not the first time of His complaint. In the days of the prophet Isaiah, He says that when He had done all that He could do for His vineyard, it brought forth nothing but wild grapes [Isa. 5:4]. By the prophet Ezekiel, He sets down a long catalog of His blessings to His people, and withal a catalog of their unthankfulness [Ezekiel 16]. Hence it appears that where God shows the greatest mercy, there oftentimes is the greatest wickedness and unthankfulness. And this is partly verified in this land; for within the compass of this forty years, we have received great blessings from God both for this life and for the life to come—especially, the gospel with peace and protection; and the like have not been seen in former ages. Yet there was never more unthankfulness than now. For now commonly men are weary of the gospel and begin to decline from that which they have been, and the care to please God and do His will is accounted but a curious preciseness of many.

Secondly, hence it may be gathered that God does not tie the infallible assistance of His Spirit to any place or condition of men. If ever any city in the world had this privilege, it was Jerusalem. But Jerusalem, which was the seat and habitation of God, had not this privilege, because it is here charged with rebellion against God. No place therefore nor condition of men has it. It is alleged that God has made a promise to the order of priesthood: "The priest's lips shall preserve knowledge, and thou shalt require the law at his mouth" [Mal. 2:7]. I answer that these words are not a promise, but a

commandment. For sometimes words of the future tense are put for words imperative, and therefore the sense is this, "The priest's lips shall keep," that is, "Let them keep knowledge." Again, it is alleged that we are commanded to hear the scribes and Pharisees, because they sit in Moses' chair [Matt. 23:2]. I answer that the chair of Moses is not a place or seat, but the doctrine of Moses, and to this doctrine I grant the Spirit of God is annexed when it is truly taught and believed. Thirdly, it is alleged that God has promised the Spirit of truth to lead men into all truth [John 16:3]. I answer that this promise does not directly and absolutely concern all believers or all ministers, but only the apostles, to whom it was made—and not to them for all times and in all actions, but only while they were in the execution of their apostolic ministry, which stands in the founding of the church of the New Testament partly by publishing the gospel and partly by writing the Scriptures of the New Testament. In a word, no Scripture can be brought to prove that God has, does, or will bind His Spirit to any particular place or persons. Here then falls to the ground three popish conceits. The first, though the members of the Catholic church may severely err, yet they cannot err when they are together in a general council lawfully assembled. The second, that the pope cannot err in his consistory. The third, that personal succession is a mark of the Catholic church, which nevertheless may be severed from the Spirit of God, as we see.

Where our Savior Christ uses a repetition, saying, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem," He does three things therein. First, He signifies thereby that He takes it for a wonder and for a thing incredible that the Jews after so many blessings should be so exceedingly unthankful. Secondly, He testifies here by His detestation of their unthankfulness. Thirdly, by this repetition He does awake the Jews and stir them up to a serious consideration and loathing of this their sin and does (as it were) proclaim the same to us—and not without

cause, for in unthankfulness there be two grievous sins against God: false witness bearing and injustice. False witness bearing, because the unthankful person denies in his heart God to be the fountain and giver of the good things he has, and he ascribes them to his own wisdom, goodness, strength, endeavor. Injustice, because he yields not to God the duties which he owes to Him for His blessings.

The second point to be considered is the degree of the Jewish rebellion. David makes three degrees hereof. The first is to walk in the council of the ungodly. The second is to stand in the way of sinners. The third is to sit down in the scorner's chair [Ps. 1:1]. And this is the very top of desperate rebellion and the sin of Jerusalem. For when Christ says, "Which killest the Prophets, and stonest them which are sent to thee," He notes out three sins in this city: impenitence, whereby they persevered in their wicked ways without hope of amendment; sacrilegious and profane contempt of God and the means of their salvation; cruelty in shedding of blood. And by cruelty, I mean not one or two actions of cruelty, but a habit therein and the custom thereof, for the words are thus to be read: "Jerusalem killing the prophets, and stoning them that are sent to thee," where "stoning" and "killing" signify not one act, but a continuance and multiplication of acts—that is, a custom in shedding of blood.

It may be demanded how the Jews should grow to this height of wickedness. I answer thus: in every actual sin, there be four things distinctly to be considered: the fault, which is the offence of God in any action; the guilt or obligation to punishment for the fault; the punishment itself, which is death; a blot or spot, set in the soul of him that sins, and that by the fault or offence. And this blot is nothing else but a proneness to the sin committed or to any other sin. In the sin of our first parents, beside the fault, guilt, punishment,

there followed a blot or deformity in the soul which was the loss of God's image and the disposition of their hearts to all manner of evils. Since the fall of Adam, he that commits an actual offence, besides the fault, guilt, punishment, imprints in his heart a new blot, and that is an increase of his natural proneness to sin—even as the drunkard, the more he drinks, the more he may, and by drinking he increases his thirst. Thus, the Jews by custom in sinning attain to a height in wickedness, because every act of offence has his blot, and the multiplication of offensive acts is the continual increase of the blot or blemish of the soul until the light of nature be extinguished and men come to a reprobate sense. This must be a warning to all men to take heed lest they commit any offence against God in thought, word, or deed, considering every offence imprints a blot in the soul.

Secondly, it may be demanded how Jerusalem, grown to this height of rebellion, can truly be called "the holy City" [Matt. 27:53] or "the City of the great King" [5:35]. I answer, two ways. First, there were many holy men and women in Jewry and Jerusalem that truly feared God and waited for the kingdom of Christ, as Joseph, Mary, Zachariah, Elisabeth, Anna, Simeon, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, and many others. Now a church is named not of the greater but of the better part—as a heap of corn is so called, though there be more chaff than corn. Secondly, I answer that a people or church that have forsaken God remains still a reputed church till God forsake them, as a wife committing adultery remains still a supposed wife until her husband gives her the bill of divorcement. Jerusalem indeed had forsaken God, but God had not forsaken Jerusalem. For there He preserved still the temple and His worship. Yea, when Jerusalem had condemned and crucified Christ, St. Peter inspired by the Holy Ghost says still, "To you belong the promises, and to your children" [Acts 2:39]. And Jerusalem did not utterly cease to be a city or church of God until they contradicted and blasphemed the

apostolical ministry, for then and not before the apostles withdrew themselves from the Jews. Here we see a depth of mercy in God; for though the Jews for their parts had deserved a thousand times to be forsaken, yet God for His part did not forsake them, but still pursued them with mercy. And we are taught hereby not to give any sentence of the persons of evil men. For though they forsake God, yet know we not whether God have forsaken them or no.

In this example of Jerusalem's rebellion, we learn many things. First, in it we may behold the vileness of man's nature and our violent proneness to sin. For the Jews went to abolish and quench as much as they could the doctrine of salvation—yea, to quench it with blood, and which is more, with the blood of the prophets. And this shows that man drinks iniquity as the fish drinks in water.

Secondly, in Jerusalem we may behold the desperate condition of the Church of Rome at this day. For it follows in rebellion—nay, it goes beyond Jerusalem. If any man will indifferently consider, it will appear that by "the whore of Babylon" is meant the present Church of Rome; and this whore is said to be drunk with the blood of the saints. The locusts out of the bottomless pit go to the kings of the earth to stir them up to war against the church of God. And these locusts are in all likelihood swarms of monks, friars, and Jesuits of the Church of Rome. And we have found it by long and much experience that they of the Roman church have long thirsted for the blood of prince and people in this land.

Thirdly, we are here taught to exercise ourselves in the duties of meekness, goodness, peace to all men. The prophet Isaiah says that men in the kingdom of Christ shall not apply their swords and spears to the hurt of any, as the Jews here do, but shall turn them to instruments of husbandry, as mattocks and fishes [Isa. 2:4].

Whereby is signified that men truly regenerate shall lay aside all purpose and mind of doing any hurt and shall give themselves to do the good they can. Again, he says that "the wolf and the lamb shall dwell together, and that there shall be no hurt in all the holy mount of God" [65:25]. The devil by the sin of our first parents of men made us beasts, lions, wolves, tigers, bears, cockatrices¹; and Christ again of beasts has made us His lambs and sheep in respect of meekness and patience.

Fourthly, we are here taught not to oppose ourselves against the ministers of God, but without pride and fierceness to yield subjection and obedience to their ministry. Isaiah foretells that in the church of the New Testament a little child—that is, ministers otherwise weak and silly men—shall by their doctrine rule and guide wolves, leopards, lions, that is, fiery and cruel men by nature. "My people," said the Lord, "shall come willingly in the day of assembly," and the sheep of Christ hear His voice and follow Him. The Jews arraign and judge the prophets that are sent to them; but we must suffer them in their ministry to arraign and judge us, that we be not judged of the Lord. Again, the Jews kill their teachers, but we must permit our teachers after a sort to kill us—for their ministry must be as it were a sacrificing knife to kill the old man in us, that we may be an acceptable offering to God.

Lastly, ministers of the word must learn hence not to be troubled if they be hated and persecuted of men. For this befell the holy prophets of God, and that in the city of Jerusalem.

The third point is the manner or form of their rebellion. In it I consider four things. The will of God against which the Jews rebel: "I would." The will of the Jews rebelling: "ye would not." The concord of both: "I would ye would not." The manner of God's will—He wills

their salvation in love, "I would have gathered you as an hen gathereth her chickens"; in patience, "How oft would I?" Before I come to handle these points in particular, I will set down a general preamble touching the nature of will.

Will is a power of willing, nilling, choosing, refusing, suspending which depends on reason. By "power" I mean an ability or created faculty; and it is so properly in men and angels, but in God only by analogy or proportion, because His will is His essence or Godhead indeed. Secondly, I say it is a "power of willing," etc. because to will, nill, choose, refute, suspend, that is neither to will nor to nill are the proper effects of will, whereby it is known and discerned. Lastly, I say it "depends on reason," because it is incident only to natures reasonable—as God, angels, men—and because though it go against good reason, yet is it not without reason altogether. When a man knows and approves that which is good and yet does the contrary, it is because it seems good to him to do the contrary. And in every act of will, there are two things: reason to guide, and election to assent or dissent.

Will has his property, and that is the liberty of the will, which is a freedom from compulsion or constraint, but not from all necessity. From compulsion, because compulsion and will be contrary; and where compulsion takes place, there will gives place. And will constrained is no will. Nevertheless, will and necessity may stand together. God wills many things of absolute necessity, as the eternal generation of the Son, the proceeding of the Holy Ghost, the doing of justice, and such like; and He wills them with most perfect liberty of will. The good angels will their own happiness and the doing of justice, and that of necessity; for they cannot will to sin or to be in misery, and all this they will most freely. Nay, the necessity of not sinning is the glory and ornament of will; for he that does good so as

he cannot sin is more at liberty in doing good than he that can do either good or evil. When the creature is in that estate that it willingly serves God and cannot but serve God, then is our perfect liberty. Again, the liberty of will since the fall of man is joined with a necessity of sinning, because it stands in bondage under sin. In this respect, it is fitly termed of Augustine "the bond free will." Wherefore, we may not imagine in the will a liberty which is a freedom from all necessity. That this may the better appear, let us consider the kinds of necessity. There is a simple or absolute necessity, when a thing cannot possibly be otherwise. Thus we may say there is a God, and He is righteous, etc. This necessity stands not with the will of the creature; yet does it stand with God's will, in whom an absolute necessity of holiness and goodness is joined with absolute freedom of will. Again, there is a necessity by violence or compulsion, and this abolishes freedom and consent of will. Thirdly, there is a necessity of infallibility or of consequence, when something follows necessarily upon a supposed antecedent—as namely upon the determination and decree of God. This necessity and freedom of will may both stand together, for in the doing of a voluntary action it is sufficient that it proceed of judgment and have his beginning from within the will, though otherwise in respect of God's will it be of unchangeable necessity. The certainty of God's decree does not abolish the consent of man's will, but rather order it and mildly incline or draw it forth. And the thing that is directly contrary to freedom of will is compulsion, because it abolishes consent.

The liberty of will stands in double power. The first is when it wills anything of its own self to be apt and able to nill the same, and so on the contrary, and it is called in schools "the liberty of contradiction." The second is when it wills anything to be able to will another thing or the contrary, as for example when God willed the creation of the world, He could have nilled the same; and when He willed the

creation of one world, He could have willed the creation of more worlds. And this latter is called the liberty of contrariety.

Will by this liberty is distinguished from the inclinations of natural agents, which always show themselves in the same manner. Put matter to the fire, it burns always, and it cannot but burn. Cast up a stone into the air, it falls down always, and cannot but fall down. Secondly, will by this liberty is distinguished from the appetite of beasts, for it follows sense and in choosing or refusing keeps always one order. The sheep flees the wolf; and all sheep do so at all times and in all places. Bees gather honey. They do so always and in all places, and they can do no otherwise. When the beast in the field chooses one herb and refuses another, there is a show of liberty, yet no true liberty. For that which it chooses or refuses once, it chooses or refuses always in the same manner.

Thus much of the general nature of will. Now I come to the points in hand. The first is touching the will of Christ: "I would." According to the two natures of Christ, so be there two wills in Him: the will of His Godhead and the will of His manhood. Some think that these words are meant of the will of His manhood. For they suppose Him here to speak as the minister of circumcision and consequently as a man [Rom. 15:8]. This I think is a truth, but not all the truth, because the thing which He wills—namely, the gathering of Jews by the ministry of the prophets—was begun and practiced long before His incarnation. Wherefore (as I take it) here His divine will is meant, or the will of His Godhead, which is also the will of the Father and the Holy Ghost.

This will is one and the same, as God is one; yet may it be distinguished on this manner: it is either the will of His good pleasure or His signifying will. The truth of this distinction we may

see in earthly princes, who bare the image of God. A king determines within himself according to his pleasure what shall be done in his kingdom and what not. This is his will. Again, he signifies some part of his secret pleasure to his subjects as occasion shall be offered, and this is also his will. Even so the pleasure of God within Himself and the significations thereof to His creature either in whole or in part are His will.

The first is mentioned (Eph. 1:5), where Paul says the Ephesians were predestinated according to the good pleasure of His will. That it may rightly be conceived of us, I will set down four things. The first is that this will is God's purpose or decree according to counsel and His decree. His counsel sees all things and all the causes of them. His decree determines what shall be done, and what undone; and He determines according to His own eternal counsel. Yet is not counsel a rule to His will. For there is nothing higher than His will, and His counsel also is according to His will, which is goodness itself. And therefore by Paul "counsel" is called "the counsel of his will" [Eph. 1:11].

Secondly, in God's will there is a sovereignty—that is, an absolute power—whereby He is Lord of all the actions that He wills, willing of Himself without dependence from any, without impediment or controlment what He will and when He will and how He will. Thus much is signified in the parable, "may I not do with mine own as I will?" [Matt. 20:15]. And by Paul, alleging Moses, "I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy" [Rom. 9:15], teaching also that we are at God's pleasure, as clay at the pleasure of the potter. This must teach us when we think or speak of God's works and judgments to think and speak with modesty and sobriety, with admiration and reverence, not daring to search into the reason of them or think hardly of them when they sound not with our reason, contenting

ourselves with this, that we know God to have a sovereignty in His will to will at His pleasure, and His will to be good.

The third point is that the will of God is the beginning or first cause of all things without exception, and of all their motions and actions. And it is a beginning two ways: first, in regard of the existence or being of things; secondly, in regard of their goodness. That all things in particular have their being from the will of God as from the first efficient cause, I show it thus. God is of that power that nothing can come to pass which He wills or which is utterly against His will. Therefore, whatever comes to pass, comes to pass because He wills it either simply or in some part. A wise governor of a family or of an army, having all things in his own power, suffers nothing to be done without his will; and he desires in the very simplest matters to have a stroke. And nothing hinders his desire but his own weakness, which is not incident to the majesty of God. God by an unchangeable prescience foresees all things that shall come to pass, and therefore by an unchangeable will He wills the being of them. For God's foreknowledge depends on His will, not because God foresees things to come, therefore they come to pass, but because according to God's will they are to come to pass, therefore He foresees them. Indeed, there is in God a knowledge of things that possibly may be, though they never be; and this knowledge goes before God's decree. Yet the divine knowledge of things that certainly shall be follows the will and determination of God. To proceed further, in that God wills the being of all things, He makes them to be. For His will is operative, not severed from His power, but distinguished. And His willing of anything is His doing of it. And therefore it pleases the Holy Ghost to signify the will of God by an operative word or commandment: "In the beginning God said, let there be this and that, and it was so" [Genesis 1]. Now this commanding word was His will. Again, man lives by every word of God—that is, by anything that God in His

pleasure wills to be our food. Things in respect of being must have dependence on the will of God or on themselves, or on some other thing. If they depend on themselves for their being, they are gods. If they depend on any other thing without and beside God, that thing is god also. It remains therefore that all things and acts in the world considered as acts have their being by a dependence on God as on the highest cause or the cause of causes. This doctrine must be remembered. For it is the foundation of true patience when we consider whatever comes to pass befalls us according to the will of God. Upon this ground Job arms himself to patience [Job 1:21], and David says, "I held my tongue and said nothing; because thou Lord didst it" [Ps. 39:9]. Secondly, this doctrine is the means of all true comfort when we consider that all our afflictions are from the good pleasure of God. Thus did the primitive church comfort itself, when it considered that the Jews, Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the rest did nothing against Christ but that which the counsel of God had determined before to be done [Acts 4:28]; and it must be our comfort that we are predestinate to be made conformable to the image of Christ in afflictions [Rom. 8:29; Phil. 3:10].

Furthermore, the will of God is the beginning of the goodness of things. For a thing is not first good and then willed by God; but it is first willed by God, and thus it becomes good. This is a manifest truth; I will not stand upon it. It may here be demanded whence the evil in the creature—namely, sin—has his beginning. I answer, it comes of the will of the declining creature and not from the will of God; yet is it not without the will of God. For though He will not sin properly because He hates it, yet does He will the being of it in the world. For in respect of the counsel of God, it is good that evil should be. And God wills the being of sin not because it is His will to effect, produce, or give a being to it, but because His will is to forsake His creature and not to hinder the being of evil when He may; and thus

evil not hindered comes to pass. And whereas God foresaw it in His eternal counsel and yet willed not to hinder it when He might, in effect He willed the being of it in the world, though simply He wills it not.

The last point is that this will of God's good pleasure being hidden from us is not the rule of our actions and of our faith. Moses says, "Secret things belong to the Lord our God, and things revealed to us and to our children" [Deut. 29:29]. Hence it follows that we do and may (with a submission) in our wills dissent from this will of God before it is known to us without sin. Paul would by virtue of his apostolic commission have preached in Asia and Bythinia, and God would not because it is said the Spirit withstood him—yet did not Paul sin herein. One good thing may differ from another, and that which the creature sometime wills without offence God wills otherwise by His most righteous pleasure. Samuel prays for Saul [1 Sam. 16:1] otherwise than the secret pleasure of God was; but when the decree of God was revealed to him, he then stayed his praying. Here sundry men are to be reprov'd that reason thus: if it be the will of God that I shall be saved, it shall so be, however I live; therefore, I will live as I like. They make the secret will of God the rule of their lives, which should not be, because the revealed will of God is the law or the only rule of things to be done and believed.

Thus we see what the will of God's pleasure is. Now this will is not meant in this text, "how oft would I?" For the pleasure of God cannot be withstood or resisted. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure" [Isa. 46:10]. But the will here mentioned may be resisted and withstood: "I would, you would not."

The signifying will of God is when He reveals some part and portion of His pleasure so far forth as it serves for the good of His creature

and the manifestation of His justice or mercy. This signifying will is not indeed the will of God properly, as the will of His good pleasure is; for it is the effect thereof. Yet may it truly be so termed. For as the effects of anger without the passion are called "anger" in God, so the sign and signification of His will may be termed "will."

This will is propounded sometimes more plainly, sometimes more darkly. It is propounded more plainly three ways: by His word, by His permission, by His operation.

His word is His will, for so Paul says, "Prove what is the good will of God" [Rom. 12:2]. And it is not His decree or pleasure, but His signifying will, because it serves to declare and manifest what is pleasing and acceptable to God, what is our duty, and what He requires of us, if we desire to come to life eternal. For this cause, both the law and the gospel and all the commandments, prohibitions, promises, and threatenings thereof are the signifying will of God. For commandments signify what we are to do; prohibitions, what we are to leave undone; promises, what good He will do to us; threatenings, what punishments are due to sin. Furthermore, by reason of the word, the ministry and dispensation thereof is the signifying will of God. For by it God signifies His pleasure touching the salvation of men. Divine permission is likewise the signifying will of God. For by it He signifies that He will not hinder the being of the thing permitted, and consequently that the thing permitted shall come to pass.

Thirdly, every operation or work of God signifies what God will have done, and what must come to pass. For when a thing is done, we know thereby what is and was the pleasure of God, considering nothing comes to pass without His will. When the signifying will is more darkly propounded, it is because some things appertaining to

the said will are concealed. And by reason of this concealment, sometimes there seems to be a contrariety between the signifying will and the will of His good pleasure; but indeed there is none. And the end why God does so darkly signify and propound His pleasure is not to hurt or deceive but to procure the good of His creature. Examples of this kind there be in Scriptures three sorts. First of all, God sometimes propounds a commandment to men and conceals the end of the commandment. For the ends of divine precepts are three. One is obedience, when God will have the thing commanded to be done precisely as it is commanded; the other of trial, when He wills not the thing commanded to be done absolutely, but only wills to make trial of the loyalty of His creature. The third is conviction, when by commanding God intends to convince His creature of disobedience. Thus parents sometime give precepts to their children that must be done. Sometime again they give a commandment the doing whereof they intend not, but only intend thereby to make experience of the affection and duty of their children. And sometimes one man commands another only in way of conviction, as when the creditor says to the bankrupt, "Pay your debt," which he never looks for and which peradventure he minds to forgive. Divine precepts therefore be of three sorts: precepts of obedience, as the commandment of the moral law; precepts of trial; and precepts of conviction. Now when the signifying will of God is propounded in a precept, and the end of the precept is concealed, the pleasure of God is darkly signified. God gives a commandment to Abraham, "Offer thine only son Isaac" [Gen. 22:2]. The end was only to try Abraham, and this end was concealed until Abraham was in doing the fact; for then the Angel of the Lord stayed him and said, "Now I see Abraham fears God" [v. 12]. And the very commandment, "Offer Isaac," seems to be flat contrary to the will of God's pleasure or decree; for as it appears by the event Isaac was not to be slain. Therefore, the not slaying of Isaac was decreed by God. Now then it may be said, why should God command

anything contrary to His decree? I answer, there is an apparent contrariety by reason the end of the commandment was concealed; but indeed there is none. For as it was the decree of God that Isaac should not be offered, so also was it His decree that Abraham should be tried in offering of Isaac. And with this decree does this commandment accord. For it is a commandment not so much of absolute obedience as of trial, and therefore it is a fit and convenient means to accomplish the decree of God. The Lord by the hand of Moses gave a commandment to Pharaoh, "Let the people go" [Ex. 8:1]; and yet the secret pleasure and purpose of God was that he should not let them go. Here is contrariety in show, but indeed none. For it was also the decree of God to convince Pharaoh of rebellion and hardness of heart; and to this end serves this commandment, because properly according to God's intention it was a commandment of conviction, though Pharaoh for his part was to accept of it as of a commandment to be obeyed and accomplished.

By this doctrine the public ministry of the word received a just defense. Some are of opinion it is a means to delude the world, because in it a commandment is given to all without exception to repent and believe, and yet grace to repent and believe is not. But they are deceived. For the command "repent and believe," though in the intent of the minister it has only one end—namely, the salvation of all—yet in the intention and counsel of God it has diverse ends. In them which be ordained to eternal life, it is a precept of obedience, because God will enable them to do that which He commands. In the rest, it is a commandment of trial or conviction, that to unbelievers their sin might be discovered, and all excuse cut off. Thus when the precept is given to believe and not the grace of faith, God does not delude but reprove and convince men of unbelief, and that in His justice.

The second example of the signifying will of God darkly propounded is when God propounds His promises, concealing the exception or condition thereof. "Ye shall rule over the fowls of the air, the fishes of the sea," etc. [Gen. 1:28]. And of Jerusalem the Lord says, "This is my rest for evermore" [Ps. 132:14]. The promises take no place now, and yet there is no contrariety in God's will, because the said promises must be understood with their exceptions: "Unless ye fall from me, and provoke mine anger by your sins."

The third example is when God propounds His threats, concealing the conditions and exceptions thereof. "I will," said the Lord, "deliver you no more" [Judg. 10:13]; and it was His pleasure afterward to deliver them again and again. "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot: for I will consume thee" [Ex. 32:10]; and He spared them at the prayer of Moses. "Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed"—for all this, Nineveh was spared and not destroyed [Jonah 3:4]. We may not here so much as dream of any change or untruth in God. For all threatenings denounced must be understood with this clause: "except ye repent and turn to me" [Ezekiel 18]. And this exception God conceals, that He may the better terrify the consciences of men and so prepare them to true repentance (Isaiah 38). First, the Lord says by the prophet to Hezekiah, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die and not live" [2 Kings 20:1; Isa. 38:1]; and yet he lived fifteen years after. Here God conceals His own pleasure in lengthening the days of Hezekiah and signifies what shall betide him in respect of nature and the helps thereof. In all these examples, we may not surmise any fraud or double dealing in God. For He does not speak one thing and mind another, after the fashion of hypocrites; but He conceals part of His will and reveals part. And this He does not for the hurt of any after the manner of the deceivers, but for the good of men.

Thus much for the signifying will of God. Now I come to the text in hand. The words, "I would have gathered you," are not to be understood of the decree of God, but of His signifying will, and namely of the ministry of the word. For when God sent His word to Jerusalem by His prophets, He thereby signified that it was His pleasure and will to gather and convert them. And He is said to will the conversion of the Jews in and by His word two ways. First, because He approved it as a good thing in itself, being agreeable to His goodness and mercy. Secondly, because He commanded and required it of them as a duty of theirs and as a thing necessary to salvation. Some may haply say it is a point of hard dealing for God to command the Jews to do that which they cannot do and to complain because they are not gathered, and that a master might as well command his servant to carry a mountain upon his back and complain because it is not done. I answer thus: if a master could give to his servant power and ability to carry a mountain, he might then command him to do it; and if he should by his own default lose this ability, the said master might still command him and complain if he did not the thing commanded. And this is the case with God. For He gave all men grace in our first parents to obey any of His commandments. This grace in them we have cast away and do not of ourselves so much as desire it of God, and God for His part is not bound to give us this grace again. He therefore may justly command us to turn to Him, though we now be unable to turn.

If we compare this text with Isaiah 6:10, they may seem to be contrary. For here Christ says, "I would have gathered you"; there, He says, "Harden them that they be not gathered and converted." God therefore seems to will and not to will one and the same thing. Answer. There is but one will in God; yet does it not equally will all things, but in divers respects it does will and nill the same thing. He wills the conversion of Jerusalem in that He approves a good thing in

itself; in that He commands it and exhorts men to it; in that He gives them outward means of their conversion. He wills it not in that He did not decree effectually to work their conversion. For God does approve and He may require many things which nevertheless for just causes known to Himself He will not do. The confirmation of the angels that fell God approved as a thing good in itself, yet did He not will to confirm them. A judge in compassion approves and wills the life of a malefactor, and yet withal he wills the execution of justice in his death. Even so God sometimes wills that in His signifying will which He wills not in the will of His good pleasure.

By this which has been said, we learn that where God erects the ministry of His word, He signifies thereby that His pleasure is to gather men to salvation. In this regard, the prophet Isaiah says that the preaching of the gospel is "a banner displayed" [Isa. 49:22], that all nations may come to it. All this is verified in this our English nation. For more than forty years has God displayed this banner to us, and more than forty years has He signified in the ministry of His word that His will is to give mercy and salvation to us. First, therefore, we owe to God all thankfulness and praise for this endless mercy. Secondly, we are to reverence the ministry of the word inasmuch as God signifies His good will to us thereby, and we are in all obedience to subject ourselves to it. And for this cause we must suffer ourselves to be converted and gathered by it. Subjects used to reverence the letter of their prince; how much more then must we reverence the letter of the living God sent to us—that is, the ministry of the word—and conform ourselves to it? Thirdly, hence we may learn to foresee our miserable condition in this land. For though God for His part has long signified His will to us touching our everlasting good, yet there is nothing to be found in the most of us but a neglect or contempt of the gospel; and in most places men are weary of it, as the Israelites were of manna. What? Weary of the goodness of God,

that offers and proclaims mercy to us? Yea, verily. And the more weary we are of this, the more weary we are of our own happiness and consequently hasten to our own perdition.

Secondly, it is to be observed that the rebellion of Jerusalem is against the signifying will of Christ, when He says, "I would, ye would not." And hence it follows that the signifying will of God is the rule of our obedience, and not the unrevealed will. And therefore, so often as God signifies to us His will and pleasure, we must yield ourselves in obedience to it. Now God signifies His will three ways (as I have said): by His commandments and prohibitions, by His permission, and by His operation. Therefore, when He commands, we must obey. When He forbids we must also obey. When He permits any evil, we must be content. Lastly, when God does anything and brings it to pass, He signifies His pleasure, and we must obey. We are bidden to say, "Thy will be done"; and this is not only the will revealed in His Word, but also His will revealed by any event. For when anything comes to pass, it comes to pass because it was the will of God. Furthermore, this signifying will must be the stay and ground of our patience and comfort. For when a thing is come to pass, the will of God is passed upon it, and He has signified His pleasure—as for example, when a man is slain, the will of God is passed upon his life, and He has revealed His pleasure touching his death. Upon this consideration and in all events, are we to stay our minds.

Thirdly, it appears hence what mind must be in the ministers and teachers of the word. They must put away all blind respects of profit and praise and simply with honest hearts apply themselves and their ministry to this end, that they may gather a people to God; for that which is the mind of the master in any business, the same must also

be the mind of the servant. The mind of the master is here set down: "How oft would I have gathered you?"

Thus much of the will of God. Now let us come to the second point, to consider what is the will of man. That this may appear, two things must be handled: the nature of man's will and the strength thereof. Of the nature of will, I spoke something before generally; there is yet somewhat more to be added. The nature of man's will may be gathered by the practice thereof. The practice of will stands in five things. The first is the action of the mind—namely, a consideration of the thing to be done and the end thereof. The second is deliberation of the divers means whereby the aforesaid thing may be done. The third is after deliberation a determination what shall be done. The fourth action is proper to the will, and that is election, whereby the will upon determination of the mind chooses or refuses—that is, wills what shall be done, what not. The fifth is that the will in all her elections keeps and maintains her liberty. Because when it wills or nills anything, it moves itself freely of itself to will or to nill without any external compulsion; and when it wills anything, it so wills as still retaining a natural aptness to nill the same. And when it wills any one particular thing, it remains still apt not to will it, but to will another thing on the contrary.

Again, the will of man must be distinguished from the power of man whereby he does anything. Will and power in God are only distinguished in our conceiving, being indeed one and the same thing—namely, the essence of God. And therefore, what God can will, He can do; what He wills, He does. And His willing of anything is His doing of it. It is not so in man, who can will that which he cannot do—as Paul says, "To will is present with me, but I cannot do that which I would" [Rom. 7:18]. Will therefore is one thing, and power to do the thing willed another.

The second thing to be handled is the strength of will—that is, what will can do, what not; and how far it extends itself. That this may appear, will must be considered according to the four estates of man: the state of innocence before the fall, the state of corruption after the fall, the state of regeneration after conversion, and the state of glory after this life.

In the state of innocence, the will of man is a power of willing either good or evil. For God gave Adam a commandment, in which He forbade him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Adam therefore could either keep or break this commandment. This reason holds not in us since the fall, yet does it hold in Adam, because with the commandment he received the power to obey. And that he could not obey, it appeared by the event, because he did not obey. Ecclesiastes says, "God made man righteous" [Eccl. 7:29]. There is the power to will that which is good: "And they found many inventions" [v. 29]. There is also a power to will that which is evil. Moses says to the Israelites, "I set before you this day life or death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that thou and thy seed may live." These words are a sentence of the law telling what we ought to do and not what we can now do, but what we could do by the gift of creation before the fall. Here a difference of powers must be made: the power to will that which is good was a gift put into Adams heart by God; and the power to will that which is evil was in him before his fall, not a gift, but only a possibility to will evil if he should cease to do this duty. And thus had he power to will both good and evil.

In Adam's will, there were two things: liberty and mutability. Liberty was twofold. The first is a liberty simply to will or to nill or to suspend. And this is liberty of nature, because it is founded in the nature of will, from which it cannot possibly be severed. And

therefore it still remains in the damned spirits, because, where this liberty is wanting, there is no will.

The second liberty is a liberty of grace, which is a power to will or nill well, or to will that which is good and to nill that which is evil. This liberty is founded not in the nature but in the goodness of the will. By "goodness," I mean the holiness of the will, which is the image of God. And here we must take heed of the opinion of some who think that Adam was created and placed in such a condition in which he was neither righteous nor unrighteous, but in a mean between both. But this is directly contrary to the apostle, who says that man was created in righteousness and holiness [Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10]. And by this means in the first instance of Adam's creation he wanted liberty of grace. Again, by reason of this second liberty, Adam had a further liberty from sin and a liberty from misery.

The changeableness of Adam's will appears in this, that though it was created in goodness, yet was it made changeably good. For such was the goodness and inclination of his will to obey God as might be altered and changed by force of temptation. The cause of this mutability must be considered, and it is this: that a creature righteous by creation may remain eternal and constantly righteous, two favors or helps of God are required. The first is a power to persevere in goodness. Without this power the creature of itself ceases to be good. The second is an act or deed, and that is the will to persevere or perseverance itself. This also is required with the former, for God gives not only the power but also the will and the deed; and the creature does not the good which it can do unless God cause it to do the said good as He causes it to be able to do good. Both these helps the good angels have, and therefore they stand. And as for Adam, he received of God the first help and not the second. For beside the goodness of his will he received of God a power constantly

to persevere in goodness, if he would. Yet the act of perseverance was left to the choice and liberty of his own will. We may behold the like in nature. God creates the eye and puts into it the faculty of seeing, and withal He adds to the eye necessary help by the light of the sun. As for the act of seeing, it is left to man's liberty; for he may see if he will, and again if he will he may shut his eyes. The physician by art procures an appetite. This done, in the next place he provides convenient food. Yet the act of eating is in the pleasure of the patient; for he may eat if he will, and if he will he may abstain. And thus God gave Adam the power to persevere in righteousness, but the will He left to himself.

It may be said, if Adam received power to do good if he would and not the will to will that he could, he then received not sufficient grace. I answer, he received sufficient for the perfection of his nature for the full obedience of the will of God and for the attainment of everlasting happiness, if he would not be wanting to himself. But he received not sufficient grace for the causing of the immutability of his nature, neither was it of necessity to be given to a creature. A goldsmith intends to make a jewel of greatest value and price. He compounds it of gold, pearl, and precious stones. When he has brought it to perfection, he does not put this condition to it, that if it fall, it shall not be bruised or broken. And God created Adam in all perfection and gave him a power and ability to continue in the said perfection, if he would. Yet did not He put to his nature this condition, that he should be unchangeable and unalterable, when it should be assailed by the force of outward temptation.

The use of the former doctrine. In Adam's example, we see the weakness of the most excellent creature in itself without the grace of God. For Adam, having power to persevere, could not for all this act or put in execution the said power without the further help of God.

He could fall himself; he could not stand or rise again. He could not avoid the least evil, but as he was helped of God. We therefore being sinful wretches much more are to acknowledge our infirmity and to ascribe all we do or can do that is good to the grace of God. Thus have the godly always done. The Jews in their repentance say, "Convert thou me, and I will convert" [Jer. 31:18]. The spouse of Christ says, "Draw us and we will run after thee" [Song 1:4]. David says, "Incline my heart to thy commandments; turn mine eyes from the beholding of vanity, and quicken me in thy precepts" [Ps. 119:36–37]. Augustine says, "Give that which Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt." We are to God as the sick man to his keeper, who says, "Take me up, and I will rise; hold me, and I will stand." In regard of this our frailty, it is the best for us to deny ourselves and by faith to depend on the providence and mercy of God.

Again, such as believe in Christ have great cause to be thankful to God. For they have the beginnings of further grace than ever Adam received. He received only the power to persevere in his happy estate, if he himself would. But they that believe beside the power of perseverance receive the will and the deed. Paul says, "Work your salvation with fear and trembling": and then he adds, "It is God that works in us the will and the deed" [Phil 2:13], whereby we run the race to eternal life.

In the estate of corruption, two things are to be considered of man's will: the first, what it can do, and how near it comes to the doing of a good work; the second, what it cannot do. For the declaration of the first, two things must be considered in corrupt will: a liberty and a possibility. The liberty is a certain freedom to will or nill or to suspend. For this liberty is remaining since the fall of Adam and is natural to the will, from which it cannot possibly be severed. This

liberty is large and shows itself in three kinds of actions: natural, human, ecclesiastical. Natural actions are such as are common to men and beasts, as to eat, drink, sleep, smell, hear, taste, move. Common experience declares a freedom to will in all these actions. Human actions are such as are common to all men, and I may fitly reduce them to three heads. The first is the study and practice of arts, trades, or occupation, and professions of all kinds. And that man has freedom to will in all these, experience testifies. The second is the government of societies—namely, of families and commonwealths. The Lord said to Cain of Abel, "His appetite shall be subject to thee" [Gen. 4:7]—that is, "In freedom of your will you shall rule over him, and his will shall be subject to yours." Peter said to Ananias that the giving or the not giving of his lands was before he gave them in his own liberty [Acts 5:4]. And Paul says that the father has "power of his own will" [1 Cor. 7:37] to give or not to give his child in marriage, as he shall see occasion. The third is the practice of civil virtue, justice, temperance, liberality, chastity. To this purpose Paul says that the Gentiles "do the things contained in the law" [Rom. 2:14], and that "by nature." For outwardly to be chaste, just, bountiful, and so forth is in the power of natural and corrupt will. It may be said that these things are the gifts of the Holy Ghost. I answer thus: the gifts of the Holy Ghost are twofold—gifts of restraint and gifts of renovation. Gifts of restraint are such as serve only to keep in the corruption of nature and not to mortify or abolish it. And they are common to all men both good and bad and serve only to maintain outward peace and comely order in the societies of men. Of this kind are civil virtues. Gifts of renovation are such graces of the Holy Ghost as serve not only to restrain the corruption of the inward man, but also to mortify it in the root and to make a change of our sinful nature. Now virtues of this kind are only incident to such as are in Christ.

The third kind of actions are ecclesiastical—namely, such as pertain to the outward duties of the worship of God. And there is also a liberty of will in them. For corrupt and sinful man has power and liberty to think of God and to think many things of Him good in themselves [Rom 1:21]; power to read and search the Scriptures [2 Cor. 3:14]; power to speak and talk of the word of God [Ps. 50:16]; power to come to the congregation and hear a sermon, as the Athenians did [Rom. 9:31]; power to conceive a zeal (I say not a good zeal, but only a zeal I say) for the maintenance of outward duties of religion. Paul says that the obstinate Jews had "a zeal of God, and were followers of the justice of the law," and that himself being a Pharisee unconverted was "unreproveable in respect of the law of God" [James 2:19]. Thus far can man proceed by the freedom of corrupt will. And the devil by natural strength goes somewhat further. For he is said to believe; and he conceives his faith not by illumination of the Spirit of God, as man does, but by the remainders of the light of nature and by the power which yet remains in his corrupted will. For we may not suppose that since his fall he is enlightened by the Spirit of God in anything.

Thus we see what is the liberty of corrupt will. We must yet further conceive it to be full of weakness and imbecilities, which I will express in three rules.

The first, that which the will can will it cannot do, unless God will. Hereupon St. James bids us say, "We will do this or that, if God will." And Paul, wishing that he might have a prosperous journey to Rome, adds this clause, "By the will of God" [Rom. 15:32]. Herod, Pontius Pilate, and the Jews did nothing against Christ but that which the council of God had determined before to be done [Acts 4:28].

The second, that which the will can will, it cannot do without the help of God; for "in him we live, move, and have our being" [Acts 17:28]. This help is twofold: preservation of the will both for power, and act and the direction thereof, whereby it is ordered and applied to the things it wills.

The third, often the will neither wills nor does the things it can will and do, because it is hindered. It is hindered sometimes by the mind, that misleads the will; sometimes again by the work of Satan. Thus Paul says that Satan hindered him from coming [1 Thess. 2:18] to Thessalonica.

The use of this doctrine is twofold. First, the liberty of the will is the condemnation of the world. For in civil and ecclesiastical actions men do not that which they can do—so far be the most from doing that which the gospel requires, that they do not that which nature can do. Some plead that if they be ordained to salvation, they shall certainly be saved, otherwise not. And therefore they say they will leave all to God and live as they like; but this shall be their condemnation, that they have not lived according to civil virtue as they might. They come not to the church; they search not the Scriptures; they hear not sermons. In a word, they use not the good means of salvation so far as they are able to use them by the strength of nature.

Secondly, the weakness of will in his liberty must teach us to abate our pride and to humble ourselves, because we cannot do anything, no not so much as move hand, foot, or finger without the help of God. Jeroboam, when he had stretched out his hand to lay hold on the prophet, could not so much as pull it in again [1 Kings 13:4]. And this consideration must likewise move us to be thankful to God, because the actions we do, we do by Him.

The second thing to be considered in the corrupt will is a possibility of willing that which is good. This possibility is a certain condition of the will whereby it can will that which is good, after that God has prevented us with His grace. A stone is not of this nature, neither is the beast, because they are creatures unreasonable, wanting both will and understanding and therefore no way capable of grace. Whereas man, in that he has will and understanding, has a possibility of doing that which he cannot do. The fathers in this sense say, "To be able to have faith is nature; to have faith indeed is grace."

Hitherto I have showed what will can do in the corrupt estate of man. Now let us see what it cannot do. And because here the main differences come to be considered between us and the Church of Rome, I will first lay down a sure ground and then build upon it. The ground is this: though liberty of nature remain, yet liberty of grace—that is, to will well—is lost, extinguished, abolished by the fall of Adam. I prove it thus. Liberty of grace is founded in the goodness of integrity of the will. Now this goodness of the will is abolished by the fall of Adam, and therefore the liberty itself that founded thereon. That the goodness or integrity of the will is lost, I confirm it thus: that which we put on in our conversion, we want by nature. We put on this goodness in our conversion. For in it we put on the new man created according to the image of God in justice and holiness [Eph. 4:2], as Paul says. Again, if all the motions and inclinations of the heart be evil and only evil and continually evil, there is no goodness in the heart; but the first is true. For the Lord says that He "saw the frame of the thoughts of the heart to be only evil continually" [Gen. 6:5]. Paul makes three parts of man in the estate of innocency: the body, the soul, and the spirit—that is, the image of God wrought by the Spirit, being the ornament and glory of both the former. Now since the fall, the spirit is turned to flesh; for "whatsoever is born of flesh is flesh" [John 3:6], says Christ—that is, wholly flesh, and only

flesh. And the natural disposition of the flesh is to lust against the spirit. What goodness then can be in the will? He that must enter into the kingdom of heaven must first be born again. Now look as it is in the first birth, so is it in the second. In the first and imperfect man is not made a perfect man, but that which is no man is made a man; even so in the second birth, he that is a sinner and has nothing in him to please God is made just and righteous. For regeneration is not in respect of substance of body or soul or in respect of the faculties of the soul, but only in respect of the goodness thereof, which is a conformity to the will of God. And if there be any part or portion thereof yet remaining, there cannot be a new birth, but only a repairing of that which decayed with a confirmation and increase of it.

The second reason. There is no power of aptness in the will corrupted to will that which is truly good. Therefore, liberty of grace to will well is lost. The minor I prove thus: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you and I will take away the stony heart of your body, and I will give you an heart of flesh" [Ezek. 36:26]. Here two things are set down distinctly. The first, that the new and fleshy heart is the gift of God—that is, a heart ready and apt to give obedience. The second, that there is in us no aptness or ability to receive this gift of God, because our hearts are stony. God therefore gives the fleshy heart and the aptness to receive this gift by taking away the stony heart. Christ says that none can come to Him, unless the Father "draw him." Now if there were in us by nature the least power or aptness to come to Christ, then drawing were needless (for that argues obstinate rebellion); and it were sufficient to succor, help, and confirm the aforesaid power, without any more ado. Saint Paul says that the "wisdom of the flesh"—that is, the best inclinations and motions of the mind of a natural man—are not only enemies, but even "enmity to God" [Rom. 8:7]. Now in enmity, there is nothing

but hatred and contempt of God. And in the hatred of God, what inclination or aptness can there be to love and obey Him? Again Paul says the natural man "is not capable of the things of God: for they are foolishness to him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned" [1 Cor. 2:14]. In the mind of a natural man, there be two things to be considered: the act and the power of knowing and approving that which is truly good. And here Paul gives his sentence of both: of the act, that the mind cannot know the things of God; of the power, that the mind has no capableness or aptness to acknowledge or approve them—as a little vessel has no aptness to receive a great quantity of liquor. Again, we are not "apt or sufficient of ourselves" [2 Cor. 3:5] to think a good thought as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. Therefore, nature corrupted wants ability so much as to think a good thought, much less to will that which is good. Again, Paul tells the Ephesians that they were "dead in sins and trespasses" [Eph. 2:1]. And this deadness is not only in respect of the performance of that which is good, but also in regard of power to perform it. For if the least power to do good remain since the fall, man is not dead as yet, but dying or drawing on, because as yet some portion of spiritual life remains. And if this be so, how are we quickened together with Christ [v. 5]? And how is it a wonder that the "dead hear the voice of Christ" [John 5:25]? Again, Paul says to the Ephesians that they were "once darkness" [Eph. 5:8], but now are light in the Lord. Now in darkness there is no aptness at all either to give or to receive light. But how were they made light? Without any work or cooperation of theirs—even as in the creation light was taken not from some other precedent beginnings of light, but out of darkness [2 Cor. 4:6], which conferred nothing at all to the being of light.

The third reason. There is not only an impotency to good, but such a forcible proneness and disposition to evil as that we can do nothing

but sin. Jeremiah says that "the heart of man is wicked above all things" [Jer. 17:9], "who can know it." Paul says that the Romans were once "servants of sin, and free in respect of righteousness" [Rom. 6:20]; and of himself, that the law was spiritual, "he carnal and sold under sin" [7:14]. And of unrepentant sinners, he says that they are in the "snare of the devil, according to his will" [2 Tim. 2:26]. And this disposition of which I speak is not some few sins, but to all sins without exception, because as every man takes of Adam the whole nature of man, even so he takes the whole corruption of man's nature. And where this huge and horrible mass of corruption takes place, there all inclination and power to goodness must needs give place. It may be objected that if the will be in bondage under sin, it has lost his liberty quite. I answer, not so, for both may stand together. The prisoner, though he have lost a great part of his liberty, yet has he not lost all; for within the prison he may (as he will) either sit, stand, lie, or walk. And though he which is captive to sin can do nothing but sin, yet may he in sinning use his liberty and in the divers kinds of evils intended show the freedom of his will.

The fourth reason. All the goodness we have and all we can do that is pleasing to God is wholly in Scripture ascribed to God. He that is the child of God is born of God: "not of blood," that is, not of natural generation; "not of the will of the flesh," that is, not of the power and inclination of natural will; "not of the will of man," that is, the heroic inclination of excellent men [John 1:13]. We are the workmanship of God created in Christ to good works [Eph. 2:10]. Now the creature confers nothing to his creation, which is wholly from the Creator, because to create is not to make something of something, but something of nothing. Christ says, "Without me ye can do nothing." And the reason is there rendered, because Christ is the vine, and they which believe are vine-branches—which branches, that they may

bring forth good fruit, must first be set into Christ and then draw their sap, that is, power to do good from Him.

Patrons of nature against the grace of God allege four special reasons for liberty of will in moral acts—that is, in things and actions good according to the moral law. The first is this: God has given sundry commandments to man since his fall, some pertaining to the law, some to the gospel, as commandments to turn to God, to believe, to repent. And all commandments are given in vain unless there be freedom of will to do them or not to do them. I answer first, these commandment set not down what we can do, but what we should do. They signify not our ability but our office and duty whereby we should please God and come to salvation. And if the commandments be impossible, it is not God's fault, but ours; for they are not impossible to created but to corrupt nature. Secondly, though we cannot will to do that which God commands, yet are not His commandments idle. For they are the instruments and means of the Spirit of God whereby He effects in us the good He commands.

The second objection. We are bound to give to God an account of all our doings in the day of judgment, and this were not equal unless we had power to will both good and evil. I answer, it suffices to bind us to a reckoning, that once we had liberty in Adam to will either good or evil. And all men since the fall have some measure of liberty of will: the wicked liberty in sin; the righteous liberty in duties of righteousness.

The third objection from testimonies of Scripture. It is alleged that the Samaritan which lay wounded between Jericho and Jerusalem [Luke 10:30] is a figure of mankind half dead in sin. I answer that in parables nothing may be gathered that is beside the scope thereof; and the scope of this parable is nothing else but to show who is our

neighbor. Again, we grant that liberty of will is not abolished, but wounded. Because though liberty of grace to will well be lost, yet liberty of nature to will still remains. Again, the words of Christ to the angel of Laodicea are objected: "Behold I stand at the door and knock: if any man open, I will come in" [Rev. 3:20]. Here, say some, to "knock" is the work of grace, and to "open" the work of free will. I answer that the words "if any man open" are conditional and therefore determine nothing of power of will to or fro. Again, the words set not down what the angel is able to do, but what his office is and what he can do by grace. Furthermore, the place of Deuteronomy is objected, "The word which I command thee, is near thee, that thou mayst do it" [Deut. 30:14]. But in these words Moses set down what the Israelites can do by the grace of a mediator, who fulfilling the law for us and giving grace to obey the same makes the commandments of the law (which otherwise are impossible) to be easy. Thus Paul has expounded this text (Rom. 10:8) where he signifies that sentences of the law must not legally but evangelically be understood of them that are in Christ and fulfill the law by Him.

The fourth objection. When man is converted, he is not converted against his will; for then God should deal with a man after the manner of a stone or a beast. Therefore, he which is converted is converted with the consent of his own will. Answer. This consent is not of ourselves, but of God. For as the conversion is of God, so is the will to be converted. Of this point, more afterward.

Upon the ground formerly delivered, sundry questions of great moment are resolved. The first is whether a natural man or an infidel can by the freedom of his will without faith and without the help of God do any work morally good—that is, a work in which there is no sin. They of the Church of Rome for many hundred years have answered, yea; for they confidently teach that a man pressed with no

temptation may without faith by the special help of God and without it by his own strength so do that which is morally good that no sin at all be committed therein. We answer, no—and that upon sufficient warrant. For such as the beginning of an action is, such is the action itself. Now the mind and will of man are the beginnings of all their actions; and in them there is no ability to think or to will that which is truly good, but a continual disposition to the contrary. All actions therefore proceeding thence are only and continually evil. Upon this ground Paul says that all is unclean, the use of all things is unclean [Titus 1:15]. And Christ says that an "evil tree cannot bring forth good fruit" [Matt. 7:18]. And, "Whatsoever is not of faith"—without exception—"is sin" [Rom 14:23]. To this doctrine always subscribed the orthodox and ancient church. The Ararsican Council² says it is from the gift of God, "that we keep our feet from injustice"; and "that a man does no good things, which God enables him not to do." Cyprian says, "All we can do is God's." Jerome said: "Without Christ every virtue is but a vice." Gregorie: "If faith be not first wrought in our heart, other things cannot be good, though they seem to be so." Augustine says expressly that "all the works of unbelievers are sins, because whatever is not of faith is sin." And he says thus of Pelagius, the heretic: "Sometimes he poised the power of the will with such equal weights in even balance that he might determine how it availed somewhat to cause us not to sin, which if it be so, there is no place reserved for the help of grace, without which we say free will has no force at all in causing us not to sin." In this speech, there are two things worthy of observation. One, that (in Augustine's judgment) free will of itself has no force at all to cause man not to sin. Of the same mind is the master of the Sentences who says that man before he be repaired by grace cannot but sin, though the schools afterward for the most part dissent from him. The second, that it was the heresy of Pelagius to teach that free will somewhat avails to cause us not to sin. With this jumps the determination of the Council of Trent,

when it says, "Let him be accursed that says all works done anyway before justification are sins indeed." For thus it insinuates closely that will, before the grace of justification, partly helped and partly of itself can do that which is good, at the least morally, as they speak. And this is the resolute sentence almost of all papists. I doubt not therefore to avouch that the present religion of the Church of Rome revives in part the heresy of Pelagius, and in these last days propounds it again to the world with new varnish and fresh colors. To avoid this charge, they answer the place of Augustine before alleged thus: when Pelagius says the will is of force not to sin, his meaning (say they) was that will was of force to cause us never to sin throughout the course of our lives. I answer again: Augustine, who knew the meaning of Pelagius, speaks not only of the life of man, but even of particular actions, as appears by these words: "He that prays, 'Lead us not into temptation,' prays that he may not do any evil." Vincentius Lyrinensis took this to be the heresy of Pelagius, that man by his own free will might do some good things. For these are his words: "Who before that profane Pelagius did ever presume that the virtue of free will was so great that he did not think the grace of God was necessary for the helping of it in the doing of good things according to every act?"

It is objected to the contrary that infidels can do things of the law which are good, and that they have been and are indued with many virtues which are the gifts of God. Answer. Infidels may do things good in their kind, but they cannot do them well, because they apply them to wrong ends, as honor, profit, pleasure. And a good thing done to a wrong end ceases to be good and is evil in the doer. Again, the virtues of the heathen, as they are of God, are good; yet as they are used or rather abused of men, they are turned to sins.

It is alleged that wicked Pharaoh did a good work, when he said, "I have sinned, the Lord is righteous, I and my people are sinners: pray for me," etc. [Ex. 9:27]. Answer. This confession is good in his kind, but not good in Pharaoh, because it proceeded not of love to God but of fear of punishment, and it was made in hypocrisy, because afterward he hardened his heart.

Further, it is alleged that Nebuchadnezzar, a heathen man, was rewarded of God for sacking of Tyrus [Ezek. 29:20], and that God would not have rewarded him if his work had been a sin. Answer. The reward was temporal; and he was rewarded for his labor only, and not for the goodness thereof.

Lastly, it may be objected that if we cannot do good works by freedom of corrupt will, then all our actions, our eating, drinking, sleeping, buying, selling, and whatever we can do is sin; and no sin may be done, and therefore nothing must be done. Answer. Actions before named incident to the life of man are not sins of themselves, for then they might not be done at all; but they are sins only in respect of the manner of doing, because they are not done in obedience to God and referred to Him as to their right end, but by-ends are propounded. And this is the condition of every man until he be converted, that he can do nothing but sin and displease God, even then when the action is praiseworthy before men.

The consideration of this doctrine serves to correct the erroneous opinion of many who think themselves in good case and highly in the favor of God because they are no thieves, murderers, blasphemers, adulterers, etc. But alas, they are deceived. There is matter enough of condemnation within them, though they be no outrageous malefactors. For all they do is sin before God, till they be renewed by grace. In eating, drinking, sleeping, buying, selling, in all they do,

they sin. Not that eating, drinking, sleeping, buying, selling are sins in themselves, but because they fail in the right manner of doing these actions.

Secondly, in that we can do nothing but sin till we be regenerate, we are taught to acknowledge our bondage under sin and Satan. Yea, we must labor to feel this bondage and to groan under the burden of it. This being done, we must go further yet and with hungering and thirsting hearts seek to the Mediator Christ, who preaches deliverance to captives and withal gives deliverance from sin, Satan, hell, death, condemnation, to all such as with touched and bruised hearts fly to Him.

The second question is whether a natural man by the power of his will may be able to resist and overcome a temptation. The papist answers that he is able to overcome lesser and easier temptations of himself, yea, and greater too, if he be helped by God; and that sundry temptations do not exceed the strength of man's nature. But we are to hold and we teach the contrary, that the will of man since the fall of Adam cannot overcome so much as the least temptation. Because the power whereby a temptation should be overcome is lost and abolished—that is, the power to will that that is evil, and to will that that is good. And where is no power to resist, there can be no resistance. When we pray to God and say, "Lead us not into temptation," we acknowledge that there is no temptation at all that we can of ourselves withstand without the help of God. Peter bids us "resist Satan our adversary" [1 Peter 5:9], and he shows the right means when he adds these words: "steadfast in faith."

It is objected that a natural man can either sin or not sin. I answer, 'tis true in regard of actions pertaining to outward government, and in regard of open sins, murder, theft, adultery, etc.; yet not always

true, but only at some times. For even the righteous sometime fall into open offences. And though the natural man occasioned to sin, abstain from open offence, yet gets he no victory. For though he avoid the outward act, yet can he not avoid the wicked inclination of his heart. And the abstinence from outward sin is not without sin, because it proceeds from a person unreconciled to God. It has not his beginning from faith. Again, it is for by-respects, for the getting of praise, the avoiding of open shame, and not for the honor of God.

The third question is whether an unregenerate man by the power of his will can observe the law, though not fully, yet in respect of the substance of the act. The doctrine of long time has been in schools and church, that he can, and that by his own strength he may keep all the moral precepts so as no sin can be committed for some short space of time. But the truth is, he cannot. For if we grant and suppose an action, we must presuppose the ground and beginning thereof. Now the integrity or vanity of will whereby it was able to will that which is good is the ground of a good act and is lost, and therefore there can be no keeping of the law in respect of substance. The substance of the first table is to love God with all the heart, soul, strength; the substance of all negative commandments is, "Thou shalt not lust." And the natural will cannot possibly reach to the doing of these. It is alleged that a natural man may give alms and do justice to others, and such like. I answer, in the substance of any duty commanded there be two things: the act to be done and the manner of doing it. And that is to do it in faith with a mind to obey God, and to intend His honor thereby. And this manner of doing a work is the form of every work that makes it to be good indeed; and without it works commanded in the law are but as a body without life or soul, or as matter without form. Will therefore is unable to observe any one commandment in his own entire substance.

And it must be remembered as a main ground that the law beside external duties requires inward obedience in knowledge of God and His will, in faith, hope, love, patience, and the subjection of our thoughts, wills, and affections to the will of God. In respect of this inward and spiritual obedience, the Holy Ghost says the law is impossible (Rom 8:3), and that the wisdom of the flesh cannot be subject to the law of God (v. 7), that this is the yoke which neither we nor our fathers could bear (Acts 15:10).

Again, it was the heresy of Pelagius that a man by the strength of his own free will may keep all the commandments of God, though (as they say) he does it somewhat hardly. And the papists are not far from this when they say that man by natural strength may keep the whole law for some little time.

The fourth question is whether natural corrupted will can any way prepare and dispose itself to his own conversion and justification—that is, take away the impediments and make himself apt and capable of his justification. The doctrine has been for divers hundreds of years that will can do it; and the doctrine of papists now is that the will, so it be stirred up by God, can do it. But the certain truth is that will cannot. The conversion of a sinner is a creation, and no creature can prepare itself to his own creation. That very thing whereby a man should prepare himself to any good duty is lost by Adam's fall, and therefore the work of preparation is God's and not ours, unless it be possible for a man dead in his sins to prepare himself to his own spiritual justification. By nature we are servants of sin, and our liberty begins in our justification. Therefore, before we are justified, we cannot so much as will that which is good. Indeed, the Israelites "prepared their hearts to seek the Lord" [1 Sam. 7:2], and Ezra "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord" [Ezra 7:10]. But this was the work of men regenerate, whereby they renewed in

themselves the purpose of obeying God and of persevering in duties of godliness.

The fifth and principal question of all is whether a natural man can will his own conversion or regeneration. The learned among the papists teach on this manner: that will alone by itself cannot; yet that will can, if it be prevented and stirred up by some good cogitation cast into the mind and some good desire stirred up in the heart, and be withal helped and directed by God. They use to open their minds by these comparisons. The eye in darkness sees nothing and is as it were without the faculty of seeing; yet if an object be set before the eye, and light be brought in, then can it see. Again, a man lies asleep in a dungeon, and he does not so much as think of coming forth; yet let a man come and call him and reach down a cord to him, he will then awake, take hold of the cord, and put it under his arm holes, as Jeremiah did, and hang thereupon. And being thus helped he both can and does come forth of the dungeon. The doctrine we teach is the plain contrary, that will before it be turned and converted cannot so much as will his own conversion. This follows upon the former ground, for the power to will that that is truly good is lost. A power to will our conversion is a power to will that which is good. Therefore, the power to will our own conversion is lost. Beside preventing and exciting motions that serve to stir up and help the will, there is further required that the will be regenerate before it can will that which is good; and without this gift of regeneration (which is the true preventing grace), all external motions and excitations to that which is good are of no effect. For the cause must go before the effect. Now that the will may affect and do that which is good, the cause is the regeneration thereof in which is given to the will not only a new action whereby it wills well, but also a new quality whereby it is able and can will well. And this ability of willing well goes before the act of good will, as the cause before the effect. When a man is dead, chafe

him and rub him; put aqua vita into him to warm him at the heart. When this is done, take him by the hand, pluck him up, and bid him walk. For all this, he will not stir the least joint, neither can he. All chafing and rubbing, all speech and persuasion, and all helps in the world be in vain, unless the soul be restored to the body. Even so, no persuasion offered to the mind nor good desires to the will are of any moment until the image of God standing in holiness, which is a conformity with the will of God, and the very soul of our souls begin to be restored. Nay, the mind is incapable of any good thought, and the will of a good desire, until God once again create[s] in them a new quality or property of holiness, that the mind in thinking may think well, and the will in willing may will well, or, will that which is good. For though it be the nature of the will to will or nill, yet the power and formal beginning of well-willing is the integrity or goodness of the will. It is objected that the will to accept and receive grace is in us before grace be received. I answer thus: the first act of will whereby the will in his regeneration begins to assent to God and begins to will to be converted is indeed the work of the will (because it is the will that wills), yet does it not arise of the natural strength of the will, but from the grace of God that renews it. For to will to be regenerate is the effect and testimony of regeneration begun. Paul, handling the point of the predestination and justification of a sinner, compares God to a potter and us to clay. Now the clay before it is framed to a vessel of honor and while it is in framing is merely passive and does nothing at all for the framing of itself. When a man is to be regenerate, God takes away the stony heart [Ezek. 36:26] that is by nature disobedient and altogether unapt to obey, and He gives a fleshy heart that is pliable and flexible to obedience. Now to will to be converted is a good thing and one point of true obedience; and therefore it proceeds not from the heart of man until it be mollified and framed by God to that which is good. "What hast thou," says Paul, "that thou hast not received? And if thou hast received it, why

dost thou boast?" [1 Cor. 4:7]. Now if to will to be healed were of us, we have matter of boasting in ourselves. Again, he says we are not sufficient or able to think a good thought as of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of God. Much less then can we of ourselves will or desire to be regenerate. The health and life of the soul is of God, who raises us from death to life. Now to will to be healed and to will to live to God is the beginning of health and life. A certain council says, "If any man do avouch that God does expect our will that it may be purged from sin and does not confess that it is the operation of the Spirit of God in us that does make us to will to be purged, he resists the Holy Ghost, saying by Solomon, 'The will is prepared by God.' " Augustine says, "It is not in him that runs, but in God that shows mercy, that all may be given to God, who both prepares the will of man to be helped and helps it being prepared, who prevents him that wills that he may will and follows him with help that wills, that he will not in vain." They which are bodily sick can will to be healed before they begin to be healed, because they be alive; but they which are spiritually sick in sin before their conversion are dead in their sin, and therefore they can neither think nor will nor desire their conversion. When Christ was about to cure a sick man, He moves this question to him, "Wilt thou be healed?" [John 5:6]. And so when God is about the work of regeneration in any man, He inwardly moves the question in the heart whether he will be regenerate or no and by this means stirs up a desire to be regenerate. If any man think that by this doctrine men are regenerate against their wills, I answer, when God begins to regenerate us, He makes us then willing, being otherwise by nature unwilling. And thus He regenerates us not against our will, yet so as the willingness to be regenerate is not of us, but of God. It may be alleged further that the act of the will whereby it wills to be converted goes before the act of God whereby He turns us to Himself, and that otherwise we are converted without our consent and that God works upon us as upon a block of stone.

Answer. In respect of time, they are both done together; but in respect of order of nature first the will begins to be turned of God before it can will to be turned. For every cause is before his effect, if not in time, yet in priority of nature. The will converted, so soon as God has begun to renew it, wills to be renewed; and it could not will the conversion of itself unless it had formerly tasted the goodness thereof. And though we first feel the desire to be converted before the grace of conversion, it is nothing; for sometimes we perceive the effect before the cause, as we see the light of the sun before the sun, and we see the light of a candle in a house before we see the candle. Therefore, to will to be regenerate may be the effect of regeneration begun, though it first of all appear. For the better clearing of this our doctrine, I will propound two other questions.

The first, whether the will of man by his natural strength be any cause of his own conversion. The answer of the papists is that the will is a cause with the grace of God, and that both together work our conversion—grace as the principal, will as the less principal, and both as causes formally. But we teach and hold (as truth is) that will in the act of working, effecting, producing of our conversion or regeneration is no cause at all, but in itself considered a mere patient or subject to receive the grace of conversion given and wrought by God. It is absurd to think that a creature should be the cause of his creation, or a dead man of his quickening. Therefore (as I think), the doctrine of them that teach that there are three efficient causes of man's conversion—God's Spirit, God's word, man's will—has his defect. The Spirit is the principal cause; the word in his right use is the means or instrument whereby the operation of the Spirit is effectual. And for the will of man, it stands only as a patient or object of divine operation. It is alleged that men which repent are worthy [of] praise therefore, and this cannot well be unless repentance proceeds from freedom of will. I answer, repentance is praised

because it is a thing that pleases God and in that respect praiseworthy; and the repentant person is praised not because he is the cause of his own repentance, but because he repents, being thereto enabled by the mercy of God.

The second question is whether the conversion of a sinner be in the power of man's will anyway. The answer of the papist is that our regeneration and conversion is in part in the power of man's will, so as the will stirred up can either apply itself to the grace of God or reject the same. Contrariwise, we teach that regeneration is not within the power of man's will, but that it wholly depends on the will of God; and that when God will convert and renew us, though will for his own nature be apt to resist. Yet in respect of God's unchangeable will and respect of the efficacy of His inward operation, it cannot resist and repel the work of God. For when God Himself works anything, His work cannot be resisted. For His working of a thing is only to will it to be, and His will cannot be resisted. Now in man's conversion, He works the will, and He works the deed, and He causes men to walk in His commandments [Phil. 2:13; Ezek. 36:26]. Resistance therefore cannot be made. Secondly, the Scripture everywhere teaches that our conversion and salvation wholly depends on God's will and not on the will of man. Of the distinction of man and man in the matter of salvation, Paul alleges the testimony of Moses: "It is neither in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that sheweth mercy" [Rom. 9:16]. Our Savior Christ teaches that the secrets of the kingdom of God are revealed to some, and to others concealed, "because the pleasure of God is so" [Matt. 11:17], and because this gift of understanding is given to some and not to others [Luke 8:10]. Our conversion is termed a "new generation" and a "new creation." For this cause it cannot depend on the will of man at all, because a creature has not his creation or regeneration in his own will, so as he may either accept or refuse it.

And it is a great overshadowing of God's grace to make the having or the not having of it to be in the choice of man's will. But the text in hand is objected. When Christ would have converted Jerusalem, they resisted and would not. I answer, there is a double work of God. One is outwardly in the word and sacraments to offer grace, and this indeed may be resisted. Of this Christ speaks here when He says, "They would not," and Stephen when he says, "they resisted the Holy Ghost" (Acts 7:51). The Lord says in Genesis 6:2, "My spirit shall not always strive with man"; and Peter applies this striving to Noah's ministry, saying that "Christ went in Spirit and preached" (1 Peter 3:19). The second is when God inwardly by His Spirit turns, renews, sanctifies the whole man; and this work cannot be resisted by the will of man, no more than Lazarus could resist the work of Christ when he was raised from the dead. If it be said that this doctrine abolishes liberty because it cannot choose and refuse the grace of God, I answer, the angels of God, which will good and cannot will evil, have nevertheless perfect liberty of will. And it is greater perfection of liberty freely and only to will that which is good than to be able to will both good and evil. He is at more liberty that cannot be a servant than he which may be either a free man or a servant. And a necessity of yielding to the will of God is no hurt to our will, for it is a special liberty to will that which God wills and nothing else. By all this which has been said, it appears what is the difference between us and the Church of Rome in the point of free will. They say liberty of grace to will well is only weakened, diminished, and held captive by sin; we say it is quite lost and abolished by the fall of Adam.

Again, by the former doctrine the common question is easily answered—namely, wherein lies the efficacy of God's grace. Some papists answer that it lies ordinarily in the free consent and cooperation of free will joined with grace. And this seems directly to be the opinion of the Council of Trent. But this is much derogatory to

the divine grace of God to place the efficacy thereof in man's will, and it ministers much matter of boasting to men. Others place the efficacy of grace in the congruity of the object—that is, in moral persuasion, which God knows to be apt and fit to move and allure the will according to the condition thereof, even as a beast is moved by the sight of a bale of hay. But there is no efficacy in these persuasions presented to the mind, because the will lies in thralldom and bondage under sin and Satan. And the will must not only be helped but also be delivered from this bondage before any persuasions can move it. Lombard in his time much declined from the purity of the former days, and yet he is far sounder than the Jesuits of our days. For he says thus: "Free will now is hindered by the law of the flesh from doing good and stirred up to evil, so as it cannot will and do good unless it be delivered and helped by grace." We leaving the Papists in their dissentions place the efficacy of grace in the grace itself. For says Christ, "Every man that has heard and learned of the father, comes to me." Again, we place it in this, that God adds the second grace to the first. For having given the power, He stays not there but proceeds further and gives the will, and with the will, the deed. And thus is the grace of God effectual.

The consideration and use of this and the former doctrines is of great consequence. For if liberty of grace be lost, great is the necessity of our redemption by Christ, and great is the excellency thereof. Secondly, this doctrine cuts off the excuse of all sin, for though we sin necessarily because liberty of grace is lost, yet we sin freely because liberty in evil remains. Thirdly, it appears hence that man of himself cannot have or retain any goodness but that which God gives and preserves in us. This thing must move us to pray earnestly for the grace we want and to give hearty thanks for the graces we have. Fourthly, we are taught deeply to humble ourselves for the loss of our liberty, and for the bondage under sin: and to pray instantly for

deliverance by Christ. Fifthly, seeing of ourselves we cannot prevail against the least temptation, we must pray to be guided and assisted continually by God. Lastly, seeing our conversion dependeth on God's mercy, and not on our will, we are taught to deny our own wills, wisdom, power and to ascribe our justification and salvation wholly and only to God.

The third estate of man is the estate of regeneration, in which the will has power to will partly that which is good and partly that which is evil, as daily experience declares in the lives of just men. And the reason is because the will of man renewed has in it a threefold liberty. The first is the liberty of nature to will or nill, which is in all men. The second is liberty of sin, whereby the will, when it wills any evil, wills it freely. And this liberty is diminished according to the measure of grace which God bestows. The third is liberty of grace, to will that which pleaseth God, and it is restored in part in regeneration, so far forth as liberty to sin is diminished. And because these three always remain in the will to the death, therefore sometime it wills well, sometime evil, sometime both. And in the best actions we do, there is a mixture, because they are not perfectly good for the time of this life, but partly good and partly evil.

That this power of the will may the better appear, I will propound four questions. The first is whether the will prevented or renewed have any stroke, action, or operation in the first regeneration of a sinner. I answer, in the renovation or conversion of a sinner I consider two things. First, the beginning or ground thereof, and that is the setting or imprinting of the new qualities and inclinations in the mind, will, affections of heart. And this is the entire or mere work of God in us and upon us, and we in it are merely passive, not active. The second is the evidence of the former in new and spiritual actions, as namely in thinking, willing, and defining that that is good. Now

these actions are works of God in and by man's will, and man's will is not only a subject of them, but also an instrument: a subject, in that God is the first and principal worker of these works in the will; an instrument, because it pleases God to use the will and to move it by His grace for the acting and effecting of the things which He appoints. And thus the will is not merely passive, but passive and active both—first passive, and then active. For being acted and moved by God, who works the will and the deed, it also acts and moves. And we do not utterly deny the cooperation of man's will with God's grace. It is necessary indeed that God first regenerates us and makes us His children and new creatures. And in this thing we do not cwork with God, but stand as patients, that God may work upon us and reform us, even in the same manner as when He made us in the beginning without any help of ours. Yet after our regeneration, by faith we are brought from death to life, and to will is present with us, though in weak measure by reason of the remainders of corruption; and then we begin to be coworkers with the grace of God, moved to will, and so indeed willing that which is good. In this sense have the learned said that which is repaired in us is not repaired without us, and that God in them whom He calls prepares the will that it may be a receiver and handmaid of His gifts.

The same answer, in effect, I propound another way. In the work of our regeneration, three graces be required: the preventing grace, the working grace, and the coworking grace. The preventing grace is when God of His mercy sets and imprints in the mind a new light, in the will a new quality or inclination, in the heart new affections. The working grace is when God gives to the will the act of well-willing—namely, the will to believe, the will to repent, the will to obey God in His word. The coworking grace is when God gives the deed to the will—that is, the exercise and practice of faith and repentance. The first gives the power of doing good; the second, the will; the third, the

deed. And all three together make the work of regeneration. Now the will of man in respect of operation concurs not with God's preventing grace, but is merely patient as a subject to receive grace. For it is the proper work of God to set or imprint a new faculty or inclination of the will, and that without any action of the said will. Nevertheless, the will being once renewed and prevented concurs by his operation with the working and co-working grace of God. For the will being moved by grace wills and does indeed that whereto it is moved. And the will to obey God or to perform any like duty proceeds jointly from two causes: from grace, in that it moves and causes the will to will to believe; from the will of man, in that being prevented and moved by God it wills to believe or to do any like duty. And therefore the ancient saying has his truth, "He that made you without you does not regenerate or save you without you," because our conversion is not without the motion and consent of will, as our creation was. And that we do not mistake in this point, the order that is between man's will and God's grace must here again be remembered. In respect of time, they are both together and concur in the very first moment of our regeneration; in respect of the order of nature, the will does not first begin that which is good and then after borrow aid from grace, but grace prevents, renews, and moves the will, and then the will moved or changed wills to be converted and to be healed in the first instant of conversion.

This operation of the will to will to believe, to will to repent and to obey is the least grace and sign of God's favor, for nothing can be less than to will to do that which is good, yet is it of great and excellent price, for it has the promise of God annexed to it. The prophet says to the rebellious Israelites, "Wash, and make you clean: cease to do evil, learn to do well" [Isa. 1:16]. Now they might peradventure say, "Alas, we cannot wash ourselves." He therefore adds, "If ye will and obey" [v. 19]—that is, if you do but will to be cleansed and testify this will

by your endeavor to obey, "ye shall eat the good things of the land." And Christ says that the heavenly Father gives the Holy Ghost to them that desire Him [Luke 11:13]. And to them that are in Christ God accepts this act of good will for the deed itself. Mark the comfort that flows from this doctrine. The full obedience to the law of God is impossible to all men, except Christ in this life; yea to them which are converted and sanctified, and greatly desire the fulfilling of the law in themselves. And therefore no man can be justified by it before God and obtain salvation thereby. Nevertheless, faith in Christ and repentance is so far forth possible to all that will and have a desire that those who but will in earnest to believe and to be converted do indeed believe and are converted and please God and shall not perish eternally, though the beginning of faith and conversion be weak, so it be in truth and not counterfeit. And yet such is the naughtiness of our nature that faith and conversion is impossible to us unless of the singular mercy of God it be stirred up in the hearts of the elect by His Holy Spirit. In this respect Christ says in Matthew 11:30: "My yoke is easy, and my burden light." And again, "His commandments are not grievous" [1 John 5:3]. It may be objected that the will and desire of renovation and reconciliation with God may [be] where there is a mind and purpose to sin and where is no true hatred and detestation [of] iniquity. Answer. The serious and instant will or desire to believe in Christ and to repent includes in it the hatred of sin and the purpose of not sinning. For he that truly desires to believe does so, because he detests his unbelief; and he that desires to repent does so, because he hates his own evil ways and purposes to sin no more.

The second question is whether the will, after it is renewed, be able to cause and bring forth good works of itself, or no? I answer two things. The first, that will cannot unless God further give a double grace. The one is assisting grace, and it stands in three actions: preservation, confirmation, protection. Preservation is whereby God

continues the being of the will renewed. For that which is good does not continue good the least moment, unless God make it to continue. Confirmation is when God fixes the mind in that which is good and causes the will constantly to follow the good inclination thereof, it being otherwise mutable and apt to decline. Protection is whereby God defends His grace in us against the violence of temptation. Of this He says to Peter, "Satan has desired to sift you, but I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" [Luke 22:31]. And God promises that "he will not suffer the faithful to be tempted above that they are able to bear" [1 Cor. 10:13]. The second grace may be called exacting grace, whereby God moves and stirs up the will that it may indeed will and do the good to be done. And this grace is ordinarily required to the effecting of every good work. David's will was exceedingly renewed by the Holy Ghost, yet he prays still, "Incline mine heart to thy testimonies" [Ps. 119:36]. The Christian soul that is already drawn to Christ prays still, "Draw me, and we will run after thee" [Song 1:3]. Paul says they which are the children of God are guided, moved, or stirred by the Spirit of God [Rom. 8:14]. Again, he says of the Philippians, after they were renewed and wrought their own salvation with fear and trembling, that God did still "work in them" [Phil. 2:13] beside the power the act of willing and of doing that which is good. And He works the will by moving it to will and to do indeed that which it can will and do. And this moving cause is the good will of God. It may not seem strange that I say new grace is required to stir up the will to the doing of every new work. For grace in the will is like a fire of green wood, which hardly burns and continues not to burn, unless it be continually stirred up and blown; even so the good inclination of the will, because it is joined, nay mixed with contrary corruption that presses down, tempts, incites, and draws away the will from God, and all goodness has need continually to be excited, stirred, and moved. The man regenerate is able to pray to God, yet can he not pray sometime by reason of the

weight of corruption, unless the Spirit help to bear the infirmities of nature and make request in us by stirring and moving us to make request. The doctrine of the ancient church has been that "new grace is to be given to the doing of every good act," and that we do not that good which we can do unless God makes us do it, as He made us able to do it. This doctrine must the rather be remembered, because the stream of popish doctrine runs another way by teaching that our wills assisted by grace can do good without the concurrence of new grace to excite and stir up the will. Indeed, for the doing of natural actions, the general cooperation of God suffices; but the effecting of actions supernatural, the special help of God is required. A child that can go up and down in an even floor, being stayed by the mother's hand, for all this he cannot go up a pair of stairs unless he be lifted at every step. Like is the case of the children of God in things which concern the kingdom of heaven.

The second part of the answer is that when [the] renewed will does a good work, it does it not perfectly. "To will," says Paul, "is present with me, but I cannot perform the good I would" [Rom. 7:18]—that is, "I cannot perfectly do it as I would." It may be objected thus: the works of God are perfect; good works done by us are works of God; therefore, they are perfect. I answer to the major or first part of the reason, it is true of such works as are works of God alone and of such works are jointly both of God and man, God being the principal agent and man the instrument. For then the work done takes to it the quality and condition of man, considering it proceeds from God through the sinful mind and will of man. The scrivener,⁶ when he writes by himself, he writes a perfect hand; but when a learner and he write both together, he taking the learner's hand into his own, then that which is written will carry the imperfection of the learner. Like is the case in all such works as are from God in and by us.

The third question is whether the relics of corruption be of that force in sinning that they can utterly quench the Spirit of God in the renewed will. The answer is that corruption remaining is of itself apt to do it, and the grace of God's Spirit is apt to be extinguished, because of itself it is mutable. Nevertheless, it wholly and utterly cannot be lost for four causes. The first is the promise of God in the covenant of grace: "I will put my fear into their hearts, that they shall not depart from me" [Jer. 32:40]. And this promise particularly belongs to all them that truly believe, because it is the promise of the evangelical covenant. The second is the intercession of Christ in the behalf of all the elect. Christ says to Peter, "Satan has desired to sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee Peter, that thy faith fail not" [Luke 22:31]. And this He did especially in the solemn prayer made (John 17), in which He prayed not only for Peter but for all the apostles and for all that did or should believe in Him. The third cause is the omnipotent power of God in preserving all them that are in Christ. "No man" says Christ, "taketh my sheep forth of my hand" [John 10:28]. And mark the reason: "My Father is greater than all." The last cause is the efficacy of God's Spirit. Saint John says, "That the seed of God remains in him that is born anew," and that this seed "keeps him that he neither does nor can sin in two respects" [Rom. 7:19]. First, if he sin, yet he sins not with full consent of will. For he hates and nills in part the evil which he wills. Secondly, if by human frailty he fall, he makes not a trade of sin, neither does he keep a course in wickedness; but the seed of grace remaining within causes him to return to God and to recover himself by new repentance.

The last question is whether the renewed will can of itself persevere in doing good. I answer that our perseverance depends and proceeds only from the will of God. That we may persevere two things are required: the power to persevere and will of perseverance. And both these being good things are of God. "Because every good giving, and

every good gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" [James 4:17].

This former doctrine is of great use. In that the new birth and regeneration of a sinner is not without the motion of his own will, we are taught that we must, if we desire our own salvation, use the good means and strive against our own corruptions and endeavor earnestly by asking, seeking, knocking. It will be said that faith, repentance, and the rest are all gifts of God. I answer, there is no virtue or gift of God in us without our wills; and in every good act God's grace and man's will concur—God's grace as the principal cause; man's will renewed as the instrument of God. And therefore, in all good things industry and labor and invocation on our part is required.

Secondly, this doctrine ministers true comfort to all true servants of God. For if when they use the good means of salvation, the word, prayer, [and] sacraments, the will [does] lie not dead but [will] begin to oppose itself against unbelief and other corruptions and withal do but so much as will to believe, will to repent, will to be turned to God; they have begun to turn to God, and God has begun to regenerate them—so be it, this will in them to do the good they ought to do, be in good earnest, unfeigned, and they withal be careful to cherish this little grain until it come to a bigger quantity.

Thirdly, seeing to every new act that pleases God new grace is required, we are taught not to presume of our own wisdom, will, and strength, nor to glory in anything we do, but always to acknowledge our own impotency and in every good thing we do to give all the glory to God and to be watchful in prayer continually, because we stand by grace so long as we stand. And having done one work, we do not the second but by a continued supply of new grace.

Lastly, seeing God's preventing and working grace turns our wills and makes them of unwilling most willing wills, all our obedience must be voluntary and come from such freeness of will as if there were no bond in the law of God to force and compel us thereto [Ps. 110:3]. The people of God that are turned and guided by the free Spirit of God must be a voluntary people and with all alacrity and cheerfulness do the duties that pertain to them of a ready mind, even as if there were neither heaven nor hell, judge nor judgment after this life. The Spirit of life that is in Christ must be a law unto them.

The last estate is the estate of glorification after this life. In this estate the liberty of will is a certain freedom only to will that which is good and pleasing to God. For it is the continual voice (as it were) and cry of the glorified will, "I do no evil, and I will not do it. I do that which is good, and I will do it." And this indeed is the perfect liberty in which man's will is conformed to the free will of God and good angels, who will only that which is good and cannot will that which is evil.

By this which has been said it appears that the words of the text in hand—"and ye would not"—are spoke of the will of man according to the estate of corruption. For the voice of the regenerate will is, "I do that which is evil, but I would not do it. I do that which is good, but I cannot do it as I would." And the voice of the corrupted will is, "I do that which is evil, and I will do it. I do not that which is good, and I will not do it." And this last voice is plainly expressed in the words, "And ye would not."

The third point comes now to be considered—namely, the harmony or consent of both wills. For the words are "I would, ye would not." Here it may justly be demanded whether there be a harmony or consent between God's will and man's will, and how it stands with

this text. I answer, there is an excellent harmony, and generally it stands in this: that God's will has a sovereign lordship over the will of man, and man's will stands subject to it absolutely and simply depends upon it. And by this means where man has a will, God has an antecedent will; and where man's will has any stroke or action, there God's will formerly had his stroke and action.

Furthermore, man's will depends on God's will in respect of three things—namely, sustentation, determination, ordination or government. It depends on the will of God in respect of sustentation, because man for his nature, strength, and all his motions depends on the will of God and could not have being for the space of one moment, unless it were upheld by God. It may be objected that if God sustain the will which is sinful He sustains not only the will, also the sin thereof. Answer. God sustains nature and not the sin of nature; and therefore He only sustains will as will and not as it is corrupt or sinful will. The like we see in nature: when a man halts in walking, the motion of the body is from the soul and is preserved by it; but the halting which goes with the motion and disorders, it is not from the soul neither has it his preservation thence, but from a defect in the leg or foot. By this we are taught to acknowledge the endless longsuffering of God, who sustains the members of our bodies, our souls, the faculties and actions thereof, even in the works in which men offend and dishonor Him. Secondly, we are taught to acknowledge the vile abomination of every sin, for we sin in the very hands of God, sustaining and preserving us, and in the very actions which we could not do, unless we were sustained by Him, we offend Him and provoke Him to anger against us.

Secondly, man's will depends on God's will in respect of determination, because we neither can nor do will anything without the will of God. A sparrow, says Christ, lights not on the ground,

"without the heavenly father" [Matt. 10:29]—that is, without His decree or will. The malicious and wicked will of the Jews could not so much as will, much less do anything against Christ, but that "which the hand and council of God had determined to be done" [Acts 4:28]. Moreover, God determines the will two ways. In good things, He inwardly moves and inclines the will to the willing and doing of the good it wills. For in that God's will is the first cause of all good things, man's will depends on it in respect of virtue, in respect of application, and in respect of order of working. In respect of virtue, because the virtues of second places proceed from the first. In respect of application, because God uses the will of man as an instrument of His own will, and He applies it to the doing of things which He intends, even as the carpenter uses, moves, and applies his tools. In respect of order of working, because always the first cause begins the work, and the second moves not without the first. Upon this ground it follows that the good things which man wills, he so wills because God first willed them. And therefore Paul says that good works "are prepared of God" [Eph. 2:10] for us to walk in; and this preparation is made because God decrees and determines with Himself the doing of all works to be done.

In evil things, the determination of God is to will not to hinder them as He may. Upon this will in God follows sin in the will of man as a consequence, not as an effect. As a consequence, because when God suspends or withdraws sustentation and government from the will, it cannot of itself but will amiss—as the staff in my hand presently falls when I do but pull back my hand. To avoid evil is good; and therefore we cannot avoid the least evil, unless God make us able to avoid it. And evil is not the effect of God's will, because God puts nothing into man's will to cause it to will amiss; but He only ceases to confer to it help and direction, which He is not bound to confer.

Here long and tedious disputes are made by many touching the concord of God's decree and the liberty of man's will. And it is alleged that man's will loses his liberty and ceases indeed to be will if it stand subject to the necessary and unchangeable decree of God. I answer, first, that when the will of man determines in itself to one thing, it does not lose his liberty—much more then may the liberty of will stand with the determination of God. Secondly, God's decree does not abolish liberty, but only moderates and orders it by inclining the will in [a] mild and easy manner with fit and convenient objects, and that according to the condition of the will. That Christ should die when He died, it was necessary in respect of God's decree; yet if we respect the constitution of His nature, He might still have prolonged His days. And if we consider the will of Christ, He died most freely and willingly. Otherwise, His death had been no satisfaction for sin. God Himself does some things of an absolute necessity, and yet with perfect freedom of will. Now then if absolute necessity does not abolish freedom of will, much less shall conditional necessity, depending on God's decree, do it. Lastly, the decree of God establishes the liberty of will. For His determination is that the agency of second causes shall be according to their condition, so as natural causes shall work naturally; free causes, freely; necessary causes, necessarily; contingent causes, in contingent and variable sort. And therefore the necessary decree of God is that man shall will this or that, not necessarily in respect of himself, but freely.

Thirdly, man's will depends on God's will in respect of government. This government is of two sorts. First, He governs the wills of the righteous by working His own good work in them and by them. In them, because He moves and inclines them by His Spirit. By them, because they are holy instruments of His will.

Secondly, He governs the wills of the wicked and ungodly by six actions. The first is permission, when God withdraws His grace from the will, not enlightening the mind nor inclining the will but leaving it to itself—as when a man gives the rein to a wild horse. The second is a delivery of the will to Satan [1 Cor. 5:5; 1 Tim. 1:20], and that is when God gives the devil liberty to tempt, assault, and vex the will of man, being left to itself. And this thing is incident to obstinate sinners, and we pray against it these words: "Lead us not into temptation." The third action is a ceasing to refrain corruption of will either in whole or in part—as when He restrains all sins save one, or having refrained for a time for the punishment of former sin He omits restraint, permitting man to the lusts of his own heart. The fourth action is the bending, moving, or inclining of the wicked will. And thus God does not by inward inspiration (for then He should be the cause of sin), but by presenting to the mind and will objects good or at the least indifferent in themselves, upon which objects the will takes occasion to be willful, obstinate, and rebellious, not moved thereto by God, but freely moving itself. The heat of the stomach in the winter season is increased not by the heat of things taken inwardly, but by the cold of the air every way compassing the body. An unbroken horse being spurred, because he goes out of order, he flings out and casts his rider. And thus the sinful will of man, urged by commandments, threatenings, judgments, allured by promises and blessings, grows more sinful and wicked. Paul says that "sin took occasion upon the good commandments of God" [Rom. 7:8, 13] to ruin and to be sinful out of measure. David says that God "moved the hearts" of the Egyptians "to hate his people" [Ps. 105:25]. But how? He blessed the Israelites exceedingly more than the Egyptians. And upon this work of God, they took occasion to envy and to hate the Israelites.

The fifth action is ordination, whereby God uses well the wickedness of the will of man and directs it against the nature thereof to good ends, even as the learned physician sometimes of poison makes a remedy. In this sense Assyria is called the "rod of his indignation" [Isa. 10:5], and the Medes and Persians "his sanctified ones" [13:3]. The Jews in the crucifying of Christ "willed and minded" nothing but His death and destruction; yet God willed and by them wrought the redemption of mankind. He works His own good work by man's will as by an active instrument, and withal He leaves the will to itself to work his own evil work. The last action of God is when a man is going in on his own wickedness He turns him to Himself, of His exceeding mercy; sometimes again He opens a way that that person who of himself runs into wickedness may rush headlong to his own destruction for the further execution of divine justice—as when a house is falling, the owner thereof will not under-prop it, neither will he push it down; but he takes away all impediments and digs away the earth round about it, not touching the foundation, that when it falls, it may fall down right.

Thus we see briefly the harmony of man's will and God's will. Now let us come to the use, which is manifold. First of all, by the former doctrine we are brought to a right understanding of many places of Scripture. The Lord says of Pharaoh, "I will harden his heart" [Ex. 4:21]. And this He is said to do not because He sets and imprints hardness in his heart, but because by sundry actions He orders and governs his wicked will—and they are four. First, He permits Pharaoh to his own ill. Secondly, He leaves him to the malice of the devil and the lusts of his own heart. Thirdly, He urges him with a commandment to let the people go. And Pharaoh, the more he is urged, the stiffer and more stubborn he is, and the more he rebels against God—whereas he ought indeed to have been the more obedient. Lastly, God uses the hardness of Pharaoh's heart to the

manifestation of His own justice and judgment. And therefore He opens him a way that he may run headlong to his own destruction. In this manner, and no otherwise, are the places to be understood when the Scripture says that "God put a lying spirit into the mouths of the prophets of Ahab" [Ezek. 14:9; Rom. 1:28; 2 Thess. 2:11]; that, "if a prophet be deceived, the Lord deceived him"; that "he gives up men to reprobate minds"; that "he sends strong illusion to believe lies." In the book of Samuel, it is said, "The Lord commanded Shimei to curse David" [2 Sam. 16:10], because about this cursing there is a twofold action in God. One, that He refrains the wicked heart of Shimei in respect of all other sin and not in respect of this sin of railing, to which God leaves him. The second, He uses him as an instrument to correct and to humble David. And thus likewise must the places be understood when it is said that "God delivered the wives of David to Absalom" [2 Sam. 12:11; 24:1], and "that he stirred up David to number the people" [Gen. 45:5]. Lastly, Joseph says that "the Lord sent him into Egypt," and that for two causes. One, because when his brethren were about to make him away, God by His providence caused merchants to pass by in their sight, whereupon they took occasion to sell him into Egypt. The second, because God disposed this fact of theirs to the good of Jacob and his family in time to come. And thus are all like places of Scripture to be understood.

Again, some school divines, following Damascene, make and ascribe to God an applied or depending will, on this manner. God for His part would have all men without exception to be saved—why then are they not saved? They themselves will not. And because they will not, God therefore chooses some and refuses others. But according to the former doctrine, I take this kind of applied will to be an invention of man's brain. For the contrary is the truth—namely, that man's will wholly depends on the will of God. That vessels be some of honor, some of dishonor. It is not in the power of the clay, but in the will of

the potter. The first cause orders the second, and not the second the first. To make God's will depend on man's will is to put God out of His throne of majesty and to set the creature in His room. Others set for the depending will of God in this manner. God, say they, decrees nothing in particular of things that are casual and contingent, but He foresees within Himself what the will of the creature will do or not do when things are thus or thus ordered. And upon this foresight, He consequently determines what shall be done. But this opinion, as it gives to God a common or general providence, so it takes away the certain determination of God touching all particular events. And it is absurd to think that God should foresee the future acts of man's free will, when as yet He has determined nothing; for things that shall be are therefore to come to pass, because God by decree has determined their being. And therefore the foreknowledge of things that shall be follows the decree of God. And if God's decree presupposed man's willing of this or that, and thereupon determine, how shall that speech of the Lord stand, "I will cause them to walk in my statutes" [Ezek. 3:6]? For hereby is signified that God does not attend on the will of man, but brings man's will in subjection to Himself. And therefore this attending will ascribed to God is improved even of the papists themselves.

Thirdly, in that man's will stands subject absolutely to the pleasure of God, our duty is to yield voluntary subjection to Him in all things when His will is manifest to us.

Lastly, this doctrine of the consent and concurrence of man's will and God's will must be the stay and ground of our patience and comfort. For there is no calamity or misery that betides us by and from the will of man without the will of God. The creature can will nothing against us, unless it be first the will of God; and it can do neither more nor less than God wills. The devil could not touch Job without

leave, and he could not enter into the herd of swine without leave. Upon this ground David speaks to this effect: "Let Shimei curse, for he curseth because the Lord bid him do so" [2 Sam. 16:10]. Joseph comforts himself and his brethren in this, that not they so much as the Lord sent him into Egypt.

As there is a harmony between God's will and man's will, so there is a dissent between man's will and God's word or His signifying will, as appears by the text in hand. Schoolmen upon this dissent make a distinction of God's grace into sufficient and effectual. Sufficient they call that whereby a man may be saved, if he will not be wanting to himself. Effectual, whereby a man is indeed saved. The first, they say, is given to all men at one time or another; the second is not. And this distinction of grace they gather on this manner. When Christ would have gathered the Jews, they would not. Therefore, they had not effectual grace; and because they would not, they are blamed and rebuked by Christ. Therefore, says the papist, God gave the sufficient grace to be converted, if they would, else could He not have blamed them. I answer, this proves that once God gave them sufficient grace to obey any commandment of His—namely, in the creation. But hence cannot be gathered that when God called the Jews by His word, that then, then I say He gave them sufficient grace. Secondly, it is objected that God did all that might be done to His vine to make it bring forth good fruit, and yet for all this it brought forth nothing but wild grapes. Therefore, it is said there must needs be a grace sufficient to salvation which is not effectual. I answer, God did that to His vineyard that was sufficient to make a good vine bring forth fruit (and that is the meaning of the place in Isaiah), though not sufficient to change the nature of an evil vine and to make it a good vine. It is urged that the Lord says He waited for grapes, which He would not have done unless there had been hope by reason of sufficient grace given. I answer again that the Lord waited for fruit

not because God then gave them sufficient grace when He waited, but because the church of the Jews was in show and pretense a good vine and thereby gave hope of good fruit. Thirdly, it is objected that Adam received sufficient grace, and that he had not effectual grace because he fell. I answer, Adam had sufficient to the perfection of a creature, but not sufficient to unchangeable perseverance, especially if he should be assaulted by temptation. Likewise, he had grace effectual in respect of righteousness and happiness, but not in respect of perseverance in both. Grace in him so far forth as it was sufficient to happiness, it was also effectual. Lastly, it is objected that God forsakes no man until he first forsake God and therefore that God for His part gives grace sufficient to salvation. Answer. There is a double kind of forsaking in God: one is for trial; the other, for punishment. The forsaking which is for trial's sake goes before man's sin in which he forsakes God. In this regard, Adam was for order of nature first forsaken of God before he forsook God. The forsaking which is for punishment always follows after sin, and of this must the rule be understood that they which are forsaken of God did first forsake God. Now the truth which we are to hold in this point is thus much. There is a grace which is sufficient to the conviction of a sinner which is not effectual to salvation; and again, there is a grace which is sufficient to the leading of a civil life which is not effectual to salvation. Yet the grace which is indeed sufficient to salvation is also effectual—namely, the gift of regeneration, in which God gives not only the power to be converted, but also the will and the deed.

Thus much of the harmony. Now comes the fourth point to be considered—namely, in what manner Christ willed the conversion of Jerusalem. He willed it first in love; secondly, in patience. His love is set forth by two things. The first, albeit He was God, full of majesty and we vile wretches, His enemies by nature, yet was He content to take upon Him a vile and base condition to be to the Jews as a hen.

The second was that He takes to Him the fashions, the disposition, and tender affection of the hen to her young ones.

That all this may the better be conceived, three questions are to be propounded. The first is, whether there be such an affection of love in God as is in man and beast? I answer that affections of the creature are not properly incident to God, because they make many changes, and God is without change. And therefore all affections and the love that is in man and beast is ascribed to God by figure, and that for two causes. First, because there is in God an unchangeable nature that is well pleased with every good thing, and a will that seriously wills the preservation of every good thing; and of this nature and will of God, the best love in the creature is but a light shadow. Secondly, the affection of love is ascribed to God because He does the same things that love makes the creature do, because He bestoweth blessings and benefits upon His creature as the lover does on the person loved. In this sort are all other affections ascribed to God, and no otherwise.

The second question is, whether there be in God a hatred of His creatures, for God is compared to the hen which loves her young ones. Answer. If hatred be taken for a passion incident to man, it is not incident to God. If it be taken for a work of God's providence and justice, it is in God—and that in three respects. First of all, in Scripture, hatred sometimes signifies a denial of love and mercy, as when it is said that he which will follow Christ "must hate father and mother" [Luke 14:26]—that is neglect them or not love them in respect of Christ. In this sense, hatred agrees to God. For He is said to love Jacob and to hate Esau [Rom. 9:13]—that is, not to love Esau with that love wherewith He loved Jacob. Again, there is in God a nature that abhors and detests iniquity. Thus says the psalmist that "God loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity" [Ps. 45:7]. And thus

God hates man not simply, because he is the handiwork of God, but because he is a sinner and by reason of the work of the devil in man—namely, sin, which is simply hatred of God. Thirdly, God plagues and punishes offenders, and in this regard He is said to hate them. Thus says David that "God hates the workers of iniquity, and destroys them that speak lies" [Psalm 56]. By this which has been said, it appears that there be two degrees of hatred in God. One is negative, when God as an absolute lord bestows His special love on some and denies it to others because His pleasure is so; the second is positive, when He hates and detests His creature. And this second always follows sin and is ever for sin, but the other goes before sin. And whereas it is said in this text that God is as the hen that loves all her chickens and gathers them all together, it must be understood that our Savior Christ here sets down His dealing not with all His creatures and with all mankind, but only His dealing toward His own church, in which He calls all outwardly by the sound of His word and receives all outwardly into the covenant. By this which has been said, we are taught after the example of God to hate and detest iniquity, and yet always to make difference between the person and the sin.

The third question is, in what thing is Christ as a hen to His church? Answer. In temporal blessings and deliverances; in afflictions and manifold corrections; but especially and principally in His word published in the ministry of the prophets. For it is the wing which He spread over His people, and it is the voice whereby He called and (as it were) clucked them to Him.

Thus we see the meaning of the similitude that Christ would have gathered Jerusalem as the hen gathers her chickens. Now follows the use. By this we see the tender love of God to this church and land. For it has pleased Him to propound to us the gospel of salvation, and that now more than forty years. And in so doing He has offered long

to embrace us in the arms of His mercy, and in spreading His wing over us to become our God and our Savior. For this tender love our hearts must be filled with love to Christ, and our mouths with praise. Again, we learn hence that the gospel brings all other blessings of God with it. For God in it communicates His own self to us, as the hen to her young ones. The kingdom of God brings all things else with it that may serve for the good of man, and where the gospel is embraced, there is God's kingdom. The peace and protection of this church and land, whereby we have been preserved from being a prey to our enemies, comes by means of the gospel of life. Therefore, foolish and false is the conceit of sundry popish persons that say there was never such plenty in the world as when the old learning (as they say) or old religion was. Secondly, by this we are advertised if we would have all necessary blessings for this life first of all to embrace the gospel of Christ. Thirdly, if Christ take to Him the disposition of the hen, we likewise must take to us the disposition of the chicken in respect of Christ, and that in three things. First, we must suffer ourselves to be gathered to Christ—that is, to be turned to Him from all our sins, to believe in Him, to be of the same mind and disposition with Him, to suffer Him to quicken us with His heavenly and spiritual life, as the hen cherishes her chickens by sitting on them. Secondly, we must attend upon the word and will of Christ as the chicken upon the call of the hen, and suffer Him to rule us both in heart and life for all things. The third thing is that we must depend on the sweet and merciful promises of Christ and shroud ourselves under His wing against hell, Satan, death, damnation. And verily all such among us who are not careful to perform these three things to Christ are no better than monstrous rebels, considering He has in His merciful and tender love sought to win us to Himself for these forty years.

Thus much of the love of Christ. Now I come to His patience, in these words: "How often would I?" The meaning whereof is this: "You have continually from time to time provoked Me by your sins; yet did I not withdraw My love from you, but sent my prophets from time to time to you, to call you and gather you to Me." And this patience of God is here expressed to aggravate the rebellion of Jerusalem; I will therefore speak a little of it. And first it may be demanded whether the virtue of patience that is in men be also in God. I answer, properly it is not. For where this kind of patience is, there is passion and sufferance. Now God is not subject to any passion or sufferance, because His nature is unchangeable. Again, that which is in God properly is in Him eternally. This patience is not in Him eternally, but for the time of the continuance of this world. Nevertheless, Scripture ascribes this patience to God for two causes. The first is, because there is in God an infinite goodness of will and nature, whereby He never simply wills the perdition or destruction of any creature. Ezekiel says, "God wills not" [Ezek. 18:32]—that is, "takes no delight in the death of a sinner." And whereas it is said that vengeance is God's, and He will repay [Rom. 12:19], it must be thus taken: that God in revenge does not absolutely intend to destroy, but only to execute justice in the punishment of sin. It may be objected that God is said to "make vessels of wrath prepared to destruction" [9:22]. I answer, this place must circumspectly and warily be understood, and I take the meaning of it to be this: that God makes vessels of wrath or vessels for wrath by His will and decree, whereby He decrees to pass by some and to forsake them in respect of His love and mercy. And this act of God in passing by and in forsaking of men, [served] as it were to set them apart to become vessels of wrath. And though God in secret and just judgment does this, yet He never fills any of these vessels with His wrath until they have been tainted with iniquity. And though they be prepared to destruction, yet they are never indeed destroyed but for their sins. Thus then, by reason of

this excellent and incomprehensible goodness of God, whereof the virtue of patience is but a shadow, God is said to be patient.

The second cause why God is said to be patient is because He does the same things that patient men do. First, He invites men to repentance; secondly, He promises pardon; thirdly, He defers punishment; fourthly, at the first He only inflicts less punishments—when they do no good, He inflicts greater—and lastly, when there is no hope of amendment, He inflicts everlasting death and destruction.

The end of God's patience is twofold: one, that the elect of God may be gathered and called; the other, that all excuse might be taken from the ungodly [vv. 22–23].

The patience of God is either universal or particular. Universal, which pertains to all men. The decree of divine justice was set down to Adam and in him to all mankind: "When thou shalt eat of the forbidden fruit, in dying thou shalt die" [Gen. 2:17]—that is, presently die the first and second death. Dathan and Abiram, presently upon their rebellion, went down into the earth quick [Num. 16:23]. The captains with their fifties were presently upon their coming to Elias destroyed with fire from heaven. And so oft as any man sins, he deserves present destruction; and so many sins as we have committed, so many damnations have we deserved. Here it may be demanded why God does not execute His decree accordingly. I answer, God in justice remembers mercy; yea His justice gives place to mercy. For there is another decree of mercy which He will have as well to be accomplished as the decree of justice, and that is "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Again, "Ask of me and I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth for thy possession." That mercy then may be showed upon

mankind, justice is executed in great patience by certain degrees. And this patience pertains to all men without exception that come of Adam by generation.

Special patience is that which concerns particular men or countries. Thus God spared the old world 120 years before He sent the flood. He spared the Amorites until their iniquities were full. He spared the Egyptians four hundred years. He deferred the punishment of the idolatry of Israel 390 years, and then He punished it with seventy years' captivity. He winked at the ignorance of the Gentiles four thousand years. Antichrist shall not utterly be destroyed until the coming of Christ. When men blaspheme God and Christ, swearing wounds, blood, heart, sides, nails, life—if they had their defeat they should descend to hell quickly, and that presently. But God forbears them, and sundry such persons are vouchsafed the grace of true repentance. The very least offender upon earth is partaker of the great patience of God. For He sustains the members of our bodies, the powers and motions of the soul in such actions in which we offend Him. And no creature can sufficiently consider the greatness of this longsuffering.

The use to be made of the patience of God follows. First, it serves to teach all men to turn to God by true repentance. Romans 2:4, "Despisest thou the patience and long suffering of God, knowing that the goodness of God leads thee to repentance? God is patient toward us and would have no man to perish, but would have all men to come to repentance." To come more near to ourselves and this English nation, now is the day of our visitation, and has been for the space of the forty years and more in which God in great patience has continually called upon us, knocking at the door of our hearts and stretched out the arms of His mercy to us. Wherefore, the common duty of all English people is to turn to God with all their hearts

according to all the law of God, as it is said of Isaiah. And that this duty may indeed be practiced, I will use certain reasons that may serve to stir up our dead minds. First, the time of the continuance of the patience of God is hidden and unknown to us. And hereupon, when men abusing the patience of God shall say, "Peace, peace," then, then shall come sudden destruction, as travail upon a woman. And therefore the time is to be redeemed, and as Peter says, "We must watch and make haste for the coming of the Lord" [1 Thess. 5:5; Eph. 5:15; 2 Peter 3:12]. Secondly, the greater patience of God is and has been, the greater shall His anger be. A blow, the longer it is in coming, the greater it is. Yea, the very wrath of God in itself is most horrible. The wrath of a lion, of a prince [Micah 1], yea, the wrath of all creatures to the wrath of God is but as a drop of water to the whole sea. At His indignation the very mountains melt. The heavens and the elements shall melt at His coming. Much more shall our rocky and stony hearts melt. Thirdly, God has His treasury and storehouses for judgment, and they which go on in their sins from day to day fill this treasury of God with wrath and judgments against the day of wrath [Rom. 2:5]. And when men turn heartily from their evil ways, this treasury is emptied, as appears by the example of the Ninevites. Wherefore, let us all from the highest to the lowest bethink ourselves what evil we have done, and how we have abused the merciful patience of God, and make speed to turn to God and Christ, our merciful Savior. Some will say we abuse not God's patience; we have repented long ago. I answer, the number of them that truly turn to God in their hearts is but small in comparison, even as the gleaning is to the whole harvest. It will be said again, we are not as the Jews that deny Jesus Christ to be the Messiah. I answer, we confess Christ in word, but there is a great multitude among us that deny Him in their deeds and naughty lives. For to omit the sins of the second table, there be five notorious sins that are common among us. Willful ignorance, in that men have little or no care to

know God and to know the way of life. The second is the profane contempt of the gospel. For now the obedience to this blessed doctrine of life, yea, the very show of it, is in common reputation "preciseness." And now adages under this name the profession of the gospel comes otherwhiles upon the stage to help to make us the play and to minister matter of mirth. Upon this we may justly fear the gospel is going from us. The third sin is worldliness, which reigns and bears sway in all places as though there were no other world, and as though heaven were upon earth. The fourth sin of our days is lukewarmness. For commonly men are not lost in themselves that they might be found of Christ; they feel not their own poverty; they know not in what need they stand of the blood of Christ; and therefore they make profession of the faith formally, not seriously, only because they are forced to so do by the good laws of a good prince. The last sin is hypocrisy, for all among us come to the Lord's Table and thereby enter into the highest degree of Christianity that can be upon earth. For thereby they make profession that they are united to Christ and have fellowship with Him and grow up therein—and yet the most being departed from this holy sacrament take liberty to live as they like, despising all others that will not say and do as they do. These and many other are the common fruits of all our English vineyard [Song 4:16]. It stands us all in hand to pray to God that He would blow upon His vineyard that we may bring forth better fruit and prevent the judgments that otherwise are like to fall.

Secondly, in that God is so patient toward us, we are taught to exercise ourselves in patience and respect of God when we are afflicted and corrected by Him. For when He lays His hand upon us, we may not be angry, fret, chafe, and rage, but quiet our hearts in His will, though the cross be grievous for measure and long for continuance. This patience to Godward is termed in Scripture by an excellent name, "the silence of the heart," whereby the heart without

repining subjects itself to the will of God in all things. Psalm 4:4: "Examine your hearts upon your bed, and be still." And 37:7: "Be silent to Jehovah."

Thirdly, if God be thus patient toward men, we again must be patient one toward another, as Paul says, "Forebear one another, and forgive on another, as God for Christ's sake forgave you" [Eph. 4:31; Col. 3:13]. The faith of the merciful patience of God cannot but breed and bring forth in us patience and longsuffering in regard of anger and revenge.

Lastly, in that God calls us to salvation with great patience, we must suffer ourselves to be called and run the race of our salvation with like patience. We must hear the word and "bring forth fruit with patience" [Luke 8:15]. We must pray without fainting, and without taking repulse, as the woman of Canaan did [Matt. 15:26], and therefore with patience. "Our hope must be by patience and through comfort of the Scriptures" [Rom. 15:4]. In a word, we cannot obtain the "promises without patience" [Heb. 10:36].

The fifth and last point to be considered is what is meant by "the children of Jerusalem." I answer it thus. Children in Scripture are taken four ways. First, some are children by generation—of them read Luke 3, where a long genealogy is set down from Adam to Christ. Secondly, some are called children by adoption without generation. Michal that never bare a child to her death is said to bear five to Adriel, because she did adopt his children and bring them up as her own [2 Sam. 6:13; Num. 21:8]. Thirdly, some are called children in regard of legal succession, in title to this or that thing. Thus Zedechias, who indeed was uncle to Jehoakim, is said to be the son of Jehoakim [2 Kings 24:17; 1 Chron. 3:16], because he did succeed Jehoakim as being the next of the blood in the kingdom.

Jeconia or Conias was childless [Jer. 22:30], and yet he is said to beget Salathiel [Matt. 1:12], because Salathiel was to succeed him in the kingdom of Judah in that he was the next of David's house. Lastly, men in that they appertain to anything or place as children do to their parents are called children thereof. Thus men are called children of light, of darkness, of sin, of wrath. Thus Jerusalem is called the "daughter of Sion." And in this text citizens, the inhabitants of Jerusalem, are called the children thereof.

Thus much of the rebellion of Jerusalem. Now follows the punishment in these words: "Behold, your habitation shall be left to you desolate"—or thus, "Your house, that is, both city and temple" (as it is in the next chapter) "shall be left to you as a wilderness."

Here we must first observe that the punishment of Jerusalem's rebellion is a decreed desolation both of city and temple. And the right consideration of it is of great use. For this desolation is as it were a looking glass to this our English nation, in which we may see our future condition, except we repent of our unthankfulness to God for His mercies and show better fruits of the gospel than commonly we do. The old world little regarded the ministry of Noah, the preacher of righteousness, and was destroyed by a universal flood. It is a general decree of God: "The Gentiles and kingdoms that will not serve thee, shall perish, and be utterly destroyed" [Isa. 60:12]. If God spare not the natural branches, He will much less spare us that are but wild branches if we neglect and lightly esteem the Gospel of life, as men everywhere commonly do.

Secondly, the desolation of Jerusalem may be a glass to every one of us who in these days of God's merciful visitation set the ministry of the gospel at naught or lightly respect it; for unless such persons amend, and that betimes, utter desolation will befall both them and

their families. God has passed His sentence: "They that withdraw themselves from God shall perish" [Ps. 73:27]. Now they withdraw themselves from God that cannot abide to have fellowship with Him in His word and to bring themselves in subjection thereto. Thirdly, it appears hence by the contrary, that the stability of all kingdoms stands in the obedience of the gospel of Christ; for God's kingdom is most sure and stable, against which nothing can prevail. And when the gospel is obeyed in any kingdom, it is (as it were) founded in the kingdom of God.

Moreover, this desolation is both perpetual and terrible. It is perpetual, that is, to the last judgment. For Jerusalem must be trod under foot, "till the time of the Gentiles be fulfilled" [Luke 21:24]—and this is till there be signs in the sun and moon, and the powers of heaven be shaken, and that is immediately before the last judgment. Hence I gather that there is no city of Jerusalem nor temple now standing. It will be said that since the destruction thereof they might have been redesigned. I answer, by reason of the curse of God, it cannot so be. Three hundred and thirty years after the death of Christ, the Jews by the leave and help of Julian the Emperor went about to build again their temple and city, but their work was overthrown, and they hindered by thunder and lightning and earthquakes, and many of them slain thereby. Again, it may be said that there is a city now standing that is called Jerusalem. I answer, it is either Jerusalem in her ruins or the city Bethara, fenced and walled by Elius Adrianus. Secondly, by this it appears that the wars that were made heretofore for the recovery of the Holy Land and of Jerusalem were in vain. This enterprise was the policy of the pope, that he might the better seat himself in Europe. And there was little good to be looked for in the place that God had accursed with perpetual desolation. Thirdly, by this it appears that pilgrimages made to the Holy Land are superfluous. And lastly, I gather hence

that antichrist shall not reign in the temple at Jerusalem. This is but a popish fiction. For how is it possible for him to sit in a temple that is utterly destroyed in such sort that stone does not lie upon stone? It is objected that antichrist shall destroy the two prophets of God "in the city in which Christ was crucified" [Rev. 11:8; Acts 9:5]. I answer, Christ is as well crucified in His members as in His own person; and thus He was and is still crucified in Rome—and in respect of His members more crucified in Rome than in Jerusalem.

Again, this desolation was most terrible and the tribulation thereof so great that the like was never since the beginning of the world [Matt. 24:21]. Histories written thereof declare as much. For the city was the first besieged by the army of Titus Vespasianus, called "the abomination of desolation"; and it was withal compassed with a wall that had thirteen castles on it, to command the whole city. In the time of the siege, the Jews were oppressed with a grievous famine, in which their food was old shoes, old leather, old hay, and the dung of beasts. There died partly of the sword and partly of the famine eleven hundred thousand of the poorer sort; two thousand in one night were emboweled; six thousand were burned in a porch of the temple. The whole city was sacked and burned and laid level to the ground, and ninety-seven thousand taken captives and to be applied to base and miserable service. This horrible desolation must teach us to dread and fear God and to yield unfeigned subjection to Christ, and as the psalmist says, "to kiss the Son lest he be angry" [Ps. 2:12] and we perish in the way, when His wrath shall suddenly burn.

Touching this desolation, there be three things done by Christ. First, He determines it, saying, "Your house shall be left to you desolate." Hence I gather that there is a providence of God touching things that come to pass. That is one point. The second is that the disposition of kingdoms for the beginning, continuance, and end is of God. "The

God of heaven," says Cyrus, "has given me all the kingdoms of the world" [Ezra 1:2]. And Daniel to Nebuchadnezzar: "The God of heaven has given thee kingdom, power, and glory" [Dan. 2:37]. And the handwriting upon the wall in the sight of Belshazzar was to this effect: "Thy kingdom is numbered" [Dan. 5:26], for continuance of years; "it is weighed" [vv. 27–28] and found light in respect of the sins of the people; and "it is divided" to the Medes and Persians. This must teach all good subjects in England to lift up their hearts to God for the continuance of peace and protection to this church and land.

Secondly, Christ reveals the desolation of Jerusalem, and that certainly. Yea, He determines the very particular time. "This generation," says He, "shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled" [Matt. 24:34]. And according to this revelation and prediction of Christ, all things came to pass. For within the compass of forty years after it was destroyed. Hence I gather that this Gospel of Matthew and the rest are the very word of God, on this manner: that which foretells particular things to come certainly and truly is of God; but the Gospels foretell particular things to come certainly and truly, as in this place we see; therefore, they are of God.

Thirdly and lastly, Christ labors to bring the Jews to a serious consideration of their punishment, when He says, "Behold." For He does as it were take them by the hand and bring them to a present view of their misery. And thus He has always dealt with His people from the beginning. Yea, thus he dealt with Adam before his fall, when He said, "If thou eat the forbidden fruit, in dying thou shalt die" [Gen. 2:17]. This serious consideration of deserved punishment is of great use. It is an occasion of repentance to man [Amos 4:12]. It is a means, if not of repentance, yet of restraint of open vices. Again, the consideration of everlasting punishments is a means to make us patiently bear lesser crosses that befall us in this life. And therefore it

were to be wished that men nowadays would seriously speak and think of hell and of the pains thereof. For then there would be more amendment than there is. But this good is hindered partly by blindness of mind and partly by false imaginations [Isa. 28:18], that the judgments and punishments of God may easily be escaped.

Deo Gloria.

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