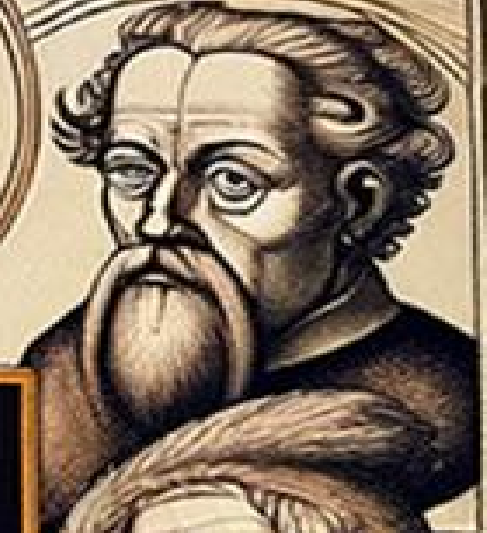
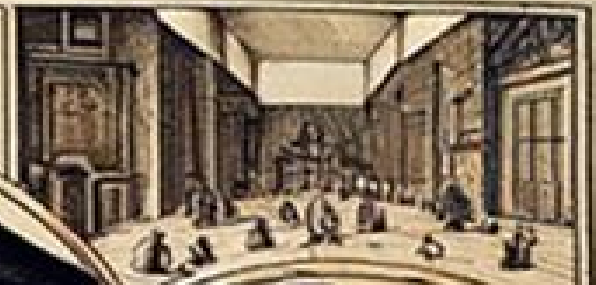


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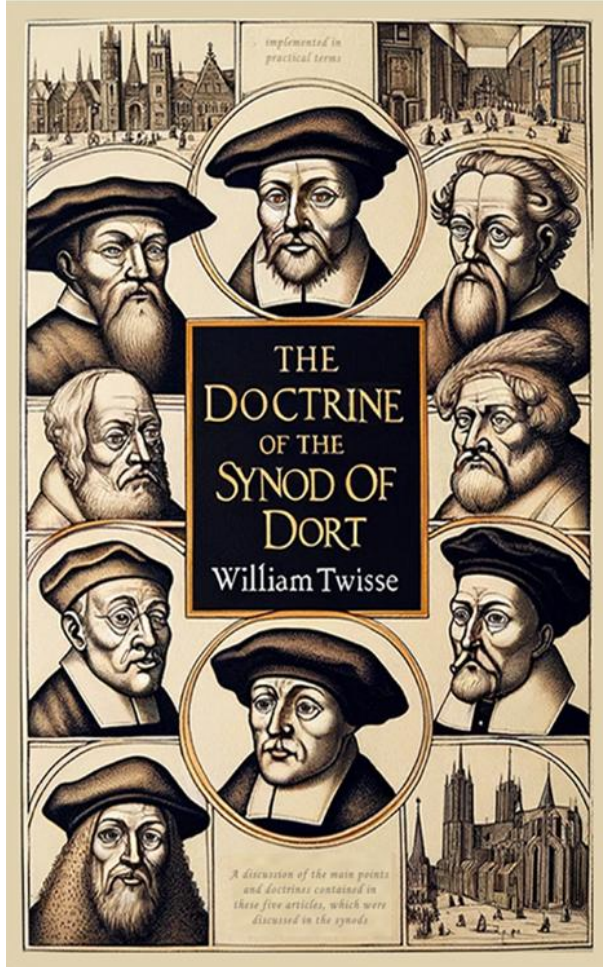


THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
SYNOD OF
DORT
William Twisse



*A discussion of the main points
and doctrines contained in
these five articles, which were
discussed in the synods*





The Doctrine of the Synod of Dort

implemented in practical terms.

William Twisse

TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Foreword](#)

[The Doctrine of the Synod of Dort - Preface](#)

[The Second Section](#)

[THE TREATISE, The First Section.](#)

[The Second Section.](#)

[The Third Section.](#)

[The SECOND PART. The first Section.](#)

[The Second Section.](#)

[The Third Section.](#)

[The Fourth Section.](#)

[The THIRD PART. The first Section.](#)

[The Second Section](#)

[The Third Section.](#)

[The Fourth Section.](#)

[The Fifth Section.](#)

[The Sixth and Last Section.](#)

Foreword

"The Doctrine of the Synod of Dort" by William Twisse is a thorough exploration and defense of the theological decisions made at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619). This treatise systematically addresses key doctrinal issues such as predestination, the extent of Christ's atonement, and human free will, in light of the controversies with Arminian theology. Twisse, a prominent Puritan theologian, provides a detailed exegesis of Scripture to support the Calvinist positions upheld at Dort. He engages with objections and alternate viewpoints, aiming to clarify and reinforce the Synod's affirmations. Readers will benefit from the comprehensive analysis of these foundational Reformed doctrines, gaining insights into the historical and theological context of the Synod, as well as its lasting impact on Protestant theology. This work serves as a significant resource for those studying Reformed theology, church history, or the complexities of early 17th-century theological disputes.

The preface of "The Doctrine of the Synod of Dort" by William Twisse introduces an unknown author whose views Twisse critiques throughout the book. This unknown author serves as a foil to

Twisse's arguments, representing alternative viewpoints on key theological issues. By contrasting his own Calvinist positions with the differing opinions of this author, Twisse effectively highlights the strengths and rationale behind the doctrines affirmed at the Synod of Dort. This method allows readers to see a clear delineation between Calvinist theology and its alternatives, thereby reinforcing the validity of the Synod's decisions. The presence of this unknown author's perspectives throughout the treatise provides a comprehensive understanding of the theological debates during that era.

The Synod of Dort, held in Dordrecht, the Netherlands, from 1618 to 1619, was convened primarily to resolve a serious controversy in the Dutch churches initiated by the rise of Arminianism. Jacobus Arminius, a Dutch theologian, had challenged the Reformed Church's doctrine, particularly regarding predestination and the nature of grace and free will. This led to significant theological disputes and division within the church.

The original purpose of the Synod was to examine the teachings of Arminius and his followers (known as the Remonstrants), in light of Scripture and the Reformed confessions. The Synod sought to defend the Reformed understanding against the Arminian challenges, affirming doctrines such as unconditional election, limited atonement, and the total depravity of man. The outcomes of the Synod, known as the Canons of Dort, were intended to provide doctrinal clarity and unity within the Reformed Church, establishing a definitive stance on key theological issues that were causing division in the church.

The Five Points of Calvinism, commonly known by the acronym TULIP, were formulated in direct response to the five-point critique

of Calvinism by the followers of Jacobus Arminius, known as the Remonstrants. The Remonstrants presented their views in the Five Articles of Remonstrance, which challenged traditional Calvinist doctrines on predestination, grace, and human free will. The Synod of Dort (1618-1619) systematically addressed each of these points, leading to the establishment of the Five Points of Calvinism as a counter-affirmation. Each point directly corresponds to and refutes the corresponding Arminian critique, thereby solidifying key aspects of Calvinist theological understanding. - ed.

Preface

The Doctrine of the Synod of Dort

Taking into consideration and recognizing the sober approach of the following text, I divide this discourse into two parts.

1. Preface.

2. Treatise.

I. The preface also has two parts.

1. A rule of trial, specifically by examining practical cases.

- Converting a stranger.
- Correcting a morally wayward Christian.

- Providing comfort to the distressed.

2. The doctrine to be examined.

The treatise itself is the examination of the aforementioned doctrine, in accordance with the previous rule. Therefore, it is divided into three parts, each of which I further divide into several sections.

Since the Gospel's teachings do not merely bind disciples to mere speculation and knowledge of historical events, but also compel them to practice and edify their neighbors, it is evident that its primary use consists of three essential aspects. Every Christian, especially a faithful pastor, should strive to fulfill these aspects to the best of their ability. They are:

1. Converting a stranger to the faith.
2. Correcting the behavior of a Christian who lives in a morally improper manner.
3. Providing solace to the sick or otherwise afflicted individuals.

2. If the doctrine established and sanctioned in the two synods, one held in Dort, Holland, in 1618-1619, and the other in Arles, Cevennes, France, in 1620, cannot serve any of these three purposes, and if they are in direct contradiction to them, then no Christian can doubt that it differs greatly from the doctrine of the Holy Scripture, which is inspired by God and useful for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness (2 Tim. 3:16).

I do not know who this author is, but based on certain passages mentioned in this discourse, he seems to speak more naturally in French than in English. I cannot determine under which category among the three mentioned he should be placed, for whose edification he claims the doctrine of the Gospel to be useful. Firstly,

he does not appear to be a stranger to the Christian faith, as he mentions a passage from 2 Tim. 3:16 regarding the profitability of Holy Scripture at the beginning. However, he does not quote any other scripture passages thereafter, nor does he seem unfamiliar with Calvin's doctrine, as he quotes a passage from him as well. I cannot recall him quoting from any other ancient or modern authors. It seems that he takes the liberty to condemn an intricate labyrinth of theology, perhaps those who seek to shape their faith in accordance with the Word of God first and then acknowledge the most widely accepted doctrine of the Church throughout its various ages. In this author's judgment, following such a course is akin to throwing oneself into a labyrinth or maze. I admit that it is a pleasant thing for playful minds to enjoy greater freedom. Perhaps human nature rebels more against the limits of faith than against the limits of life and conduct. Yet, when Adam was expelled from Paradise, he found more space outside than within, although I suppose his condition was not any more comfortable because of it.

It is unlikely that this author belongs to the category of morally wayward Christians, as they do not typically trouble themselves with matters of faith. They may rail against religion, but they do not engage in theological debates. Nor does he appear to be in need of a physician; rather, he seems to diagnose the conditions of others and profess, with deep judgment, the dangerous state they are in due to errors of faith in sensitive matters. Throughout his criticism, he presents himself as a confident theologian. From this, it follows that the doctrine of the Gospel is not primarily useful for the edification of someone like him. For if it were, I see no reason why such a condition should be overlooked, as I presume he would not argue that every doctrine of the Gospel should be equally beneficial to all people. There are good uses for terrors, and good uses for comforts.

However, comforts are not suitable for instilling fear, nor can terrors be of use for consolation.

Truly, our Church of England, in Article 17 of its articles of religion, teaches us that the devout contemplation of predestination and our election in Christ is full of sweet, pleasant, and indescribable comforts for pious individuals who experience the workings of the Spirit of Christ, mortifying the deeds of the flesh and their earthly desires, and lifting their minds to heavenly and exalted matters. This is because such contemplation greatly strengthens and confirms their faith in eternal salvation through Christ and fervently ignites their love for God. However, it is considered a most dangerous stumbling block for inquisitive and worldly individuals who lack the Spirit of Christ to constantly have before them the idea of God's predestination. It leads them into despair or into a carelessness characterized by immoral behavior, which is no less perilous than despair.

I also recall reading in the History of the Council of Trent that the first opinion mentioned there concerning predestination, attributed to the followers of Zwingli, was described as mystical and hidden. It humbled the mind and fostered reliance on God without self-confidence, recognizing the ugliness of sin and the excellence of divine grace (undoubtedly excellent for edification in a prominent manner). On the contrary, the second opinion was appealing and popular, promoting human presumption and making a great show. It pleased the preaching friars more than the learned theologians. The courtiers found it plausible and in line with political reasoning. It was advocated by the Bishop of Birono, and the Bishop of Salpi showed himself to be very biased. The proponents of this view, relying on human reasoning, prevailed over the others, but when it came to the testimonies of Scripture, they were clearly defeated.

Returning to the point, I had thought that the written Word of God primarily concerned believers and aimed at the edification of the body of Christ, as we read in Ephesians 4:11-12. For Christ gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers. Now, let us observe the purpose of their ministry in the following words: "for the equipping of the saints, for the work of the ministry, and for the edification of the body of Christ." As for morally wayward Christians, they have no delight in God's Word at all. The ministry of the Word is nothing but a burden to them, and they consider God's ministers as troublemakers, just as Elijah was seen as a disturber of Israel. And why is this? It is because they cannot prophesy anything good to such individuals, only evil. As for the sick, even though they may be weak in body, if they are not weak in faith, we can offer them abundant comfort in God, even assuring them of their election. If they are weak in faith and burdened by their sins, there is no reason for them to despair because of any doctrine we proclaim. On the contrary, there is good reason to hope that these troubled thoughts may be like the pains of childbirth, bringing forth their souls into the realm of grace.

Regarding any doctrine that was canonized either in the Synod of Dort, which we are aware of, or in the Synod of Arles, of which I have no knowledge, I am completely ignorant. The practice of formulating the Church's doctrine on certain matters into theses and designating them as canons has been employed in ancient Councils and Synods. However, I have never heard or read about canonizing any doctrine in this manner until now. Yet, if the Church is the pillar and support of truth, its authority holds significant weight in establishing that truth, even though we acknowledge no infallible rule of faith other than the Word of God.

The current question at hand is whether election is based on foreseeing human obedience or solely on God's pleasure. And ultimately, it comes down to this (as I will explain in due course): whether God shows mercy to whom He wills by granting them faith and repentance, and hardens whom He wills by denying them faith and repentance. Or rather, whether the distribution of these graces is based on people's works. Now, to me, it seems an odd approach that when a question arises regarding two opposing opinions, the determination of truth and acceptance is drawn from considering the usefulness of the questioned opinions or doctrines. It is as if the usefulness of an opinion automatically concludes its truth, rather than first establishing its truthfulness—whether it aligns with the very truth of God, which can only be measured by God's Word. Therefore, we should conclude that it is useful and be careful to employ it accordingly. Isn't it inappropriate for humans to presume to impose their opinions on God's Word based solely on the claim of their usefulness in human judgment, to serve their own purposes as they see fit? By taking such approaches to uphold their own beliefs, don't they reveal the desperation of their cause and the lack of substantial grounding for their opinions in the Word of God, resorting to such divinations to support their struggling and wavering stance?

For instance, if the Apostle clearly states that election is not based on works, should we not embrace this as truth unless we find the contrary doctrine more useful for the purposes specified here? And if, in our imagination, we seem to find the contrary doctrine more useful than this, shall we then directly contradict the Apostle or engage in mental gymnastics to force an interpretation that contradicts his own words? Similarly, if the Apostle says, "God has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens" (Rom. 9:18), and also makes it clear that obtaining mercy from God means

receiving faith (Rom. 11:30), which is evident enough in the former passage through its contrast with hardening—should we remain uncertain about understanding St. Paul's intention until we carefully consider the usefulness of this doctrine compared to the usefulness of the contrary doctrine? And based on the weight of each, using the scales of our judgment, should we then make a judicial decision either in favor of or against Paul? Or at the very least, should we manipulate the words of the holy Apostle in some way, causing him to contradict his own words, just as Saturn did with his children?

Indeed, in such a trial, a clever debater with a quick wit will find themselves well-equipped. They can, if they so choose, produce amusing remarks in praise of a bald head or folly, as Erasmus did, or even about a louse, like Daniel Heinsius. As our English sonneteers sing, "O the straw, the straw!" and then they proceed to take out the straw and singe it, saying, "Now here is a jolly course," says the minstrel. Others, likewise, will be prepared with equally witty remarks in opposition, highlighting the unnecessary nature of something. Just like someone who delivers an excellent speech praising justice, only to cleverly argue against it later, claiming that there is no justice in the world. I have heard of a gentleman who would argue against any necessity for fire, and in the end, he found himself at a loss because he couldn't figure out how his horse could be shod without it. Similarly, I have received an astonishing account of a gentleman in a parliamentary assembly who was undeniably the best speaker, yet held in no regard. The reason for this was quite clear—they knew very well that he could speak just as effectively and persuasively in favor of the complete opposite stance.

I must confess, the author of this discourse appears to be a witty gentleman who engages his readers with an entertaining interlude in the following treatise. It is no wonder that he chooses an appropriate

scene to showcase his cleverness. As for how well he carries himself when it comes to the examination of our doctrine and its usefulness for the three proposed ends, we shall, with God's help, explore that in due course. However, even if it is not useful for any of these ends, if it proves to be equally useful for other purposes, as indicated in the history of the Council of Trent and the 17th article of the Church of England, and if it glorifies God by acknowledging the prerogative of His grace as the only effective source of goodness, and the prerogative of God's sovereignty over His creatures in making vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath—by showing mercy to whom He wills and hardening whom He wills—then I hope this will be sufficient to maintain its reputation, even if it is considered contrary to other ends (which I deny). Just as comforts are contrary to the purpose of instilling fear, and terrors are contrary to the purpose of providing comfort, yet God's Word encompasses both forms of discipline.

Just as Martin Luther and Melanchthon had different dispositions, and Erasmus criticized them by saying that Melanchthon followed Luther like the *Litae* follow the *Atae* in Homer, Chytraeus, in his *Historiae confessionis Augustanae*, as far as I recall, professes that God, in His gracious providence, made good use of both Luther and Melanchthon for the service of His Church and the spread of the Gospel in these later times. I also note that in regard to the testimony of Saint Paul mentioned here about the profitability of Scripture doctrine (which is particularly noteworthy, as this entire treatise lacks any quotations from Holy Scripture apart from this), Saint Paul does not take the same approach as this theologian does. Saint Paul does not conclude that a doctrine is the doctrine of Holy Scripture based on its profitability; rather, he assumes that if a doctrine is indeed from Holy Scripture, then it follows that it is profitable for reproof, correction, and instruction in righteousness. It is only natural that if the doctrine being challenged here is indeed the

doctrine of Holy Scripture, instruction in it must be instruction in righteousness, serving as a just reproof to those who refuse to receive instruction, both in the entire Counsel of God and specifically in this matter. Moreover, it serves as a means of correction for those who do not live in accordance with their profession, not only in other matters but also with respect to this particular issue. For instance, when it comes to professing that God works in us both the will and the deed of every good work, not according to human preference, but according to His own good pleasure, they should be diligent in working out their salvation with fear and trembling, conforming to the holy Apostle's exhortation in Philippians 2:12-13: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

Having thus considered the rule of trial, I now turn to the examination of the doctrine to be tested, whether it is properly presented.

The Second Section.

The main points and doctrines contained in these five articles, which were discussed in the synods, are as follows:

1. God, through an absolute decree, has chosen a very small number of individuals for eternal life without considering their faith and obedience. He has excluded the rest of humanity from all saving grace and destined them, by the same decree, for

eternal damnation without considering their disbelief or lack of repentance.

2. Jesus Christ died solely for the elect and had no intention of making propitiation for the sins of the entire world, neither by His own will nor by the command of His Father.
3. Due to Adam's sin, all of his descendants have lost their free will and are bound by an unavoidable necessity to do or not do whatever actions, whether good or evil, they perform or omit. This is predetermined by God's eternal and efficacious decree.
4. In order to draw His elect out of this state, God produces faith in them with a power equal to that which created the world and raised the dead. Those to whom He grants grace cannot reject it, while the reprobates cannot obtain it even if it is offered to them through the preaching of the Gospel.
5. Those who have received this grace through faith cannot fall completely or finally, regardless of the most heinous sins they may commit.

Consider. When the Apostle says that Election is not of works, and proves it by this, that before Esau and Jacob were born, etc., it was said of them, the elder shall serve the younger; Let every sober Reader judge, whether it is not more agreeable to the Apostle, to profess, that election proceeds rather without any regard had to man's faith and obedience, than with any respect thereunto: as also whether by the same reason, which the Apostle uses, it be not apparent, that as election is not of good works, so likewise reprobation is not of evil works.

Yet that God did decree to damn no man, but for sin is the unanimous confession of all our divines. Neither is there any of them that I know, who denies that God did ordain to bestow salvation on none of ripe years, but, by way of reward for their obedience. And accordingly Tilenus himself, when he was on our side, took exception against Arminius his stating the decree of predestination and reprobation, according to our opinion, to proceed without any consideration of repentance & faith in those, or impenitence & unbelief in these. For mark, I pray, how he excepts against it, But this last part is wrongly & beyond our intention added to this sentence; And he gives his reason on both parts: on the part of reprobation thus: Since God condemns anyone, not for any other reason, than for impenitence & unbelief and therefore for sin, and hence did not decree to condemn without regard to this matter. On the part of election thus: Just as he saves no one in time except the repentant & believing (which yet is untrue, unless understood only of men of ripe years); So he has decreed to save no one from eternity except the repentant & believing. In like manner, Piscator does not deny, but that there is such a will of God revealed in the Gospel, as namely to save such as persevere in faith, & damn them that persevere in unbelief and impenitence; only he denies this to be the whole will of God revealed in the Gospel, as touching the salvation of some, and damnation of others. And accordingly in the conference at the Hague, when the first Article of the Remonstrants came to be discussed, which was: God from eternity decided to save faithful persevering individuals; Their adversaries did not deny this, nay they professed, that no Christian denies this, Preface to the Synod of Dort, fol. 10, p. 1. And therefore they urged them to declare, whether this Article of theirs contained the whole decree of predestination; which when they affirmed, herein their adversaries thought good to oppose them, and to encounter with them upon that point. But let us distinguish that which such, as this Author is, affect to confound. The

absoluteness of God's decree may be considered two ways, either on the part of the act itself of God's decree, or on the part of the things decreed. According to this distinction: Aquinas professes, that no cause can be assigned of the will of God, as regards the act of willing, but there may be assigned a cause thereof, as regards the things willed; His words are these: It has been said above that no cause of the divine will can be assigned on the part of the act of willing, but a reason can be assigned on the part of the things willed. And applying this doctrine to predestination in special adds, saying: No one was so insane of mind to say that merits are the cause of divine predestination on the part of the act of predestining. But this under question is considered, whether on the part of the effect predestination has any cause.

And whereas the distinction of '*voluntas absoluta*' (absolute will) & '*conditionalis*' (conditional will), is interpreted by Vossius as all one with '*voluntas antecedens*' (antecedent will) & '*consequens*' (consequent will); both Vossius himself interprets '*voluntas conditionalis*' as making the cause thereof to be only regarding the things willed ('*quoad res volitas*'). For he defines a conditional will in this manner: "He wills something with a condition, which do not come into effect unless the condition is fulfilled. In this way, he wills all to be saved, but through and for the sake of Christ grasped by faith." And Doctor Jackson, in his last book of providence, acknowledges that the distinction of '*voluntas antecedens*' & '*consequens*' is to be understood regarding the things willed ('*quoad res volitas*'); Now the consequent will is such a will as derives the cause thereof from man. But this, he says, is to be understood as touching the things willed; which we willingly grant, and accordingly acknowledge that some things willed by God have the cause of their being from man. As namely, faith, we say, is the disposing cause of salvation; final unbelief or impenitence are the meritorious causes of

damnation. Yet something there is willed by God which has no cause from man, but rather the cause thereof is from the mere pleasure of God, and that is the giving or denying of grace, according to that of the Apostle: "He has mercy on whom he will and whom he will he hardens." Rom. 9.18. As for the decree of God considered as touching the act of God willing, that it can have no cause from man, I prove, both as touching the decree of salvation, and touching the decree of damnation. And I willingly challenge all the nation of Arminians to answer it. And the argument is this; If faith be the cause why God ordains a man to salvation; then, either by the necessity of nature it is the cause hereof, or by the mere constitution of God. Not by necessity of nature, as appears manifestly, (and I have found by experience that Arminians themselves have confessed as much) therefore if any way it be admitted to be the cause hereof, this must be only by the constitution of God. Now mark the absurdity hereof; for hence it follows that God did constitute, that is, ordain, that, upon the foresight of faith, he would ordain men unto salvation; where the very eternal act of God's ordination, is made the object of God's ordination, a thing utterly impossible; and every man knows that the objects of God's ordination are things temporal only, and by no means, things eternal. In like manner, if sin be the cause why God ordains men unto damnation; then either by necessity of nature, or by divine constitution; not by necessity of nature, for surely God is not necessitated to damn any man for sin. If therefore by divine constitution, mark the absurdity unavoidably following hereupon, namely, that God did ordain that upon the foresight of sin he would ordain men unto condemnation; where again God's eternal ordination is made the object of his ordination. Yet do not I affirm, that in any moment of nature does the decree of salvation go before the consideration of men's faith and obedience; or the decree of damnation before the consideration of final unbelief or impenitence. For as much, as the decrees of giving faith and crowning it with

salvation; and, in like manner, the decrees of permitting final unbelief and impenitency, I make to be, not subordinate one to another, but simultaneous and coordinate one with another. I proceed to the second.

2. The Holy Scripture, in designating those for whom Christ died, uses different forms. Matthew 20:28, it is said that the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give His life a ransom for many, and 26:28, "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins." This is a very indefinite notion, yet nothing so prone to signify a comprehension of all, as an opposition to such universality. But in other places, these 'Many' are defined, and therewith all the benefit of Christ's death confined to some, as namely the people of Christ, Matthew 1:21, to the Church, Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25, Christ's sheep, John 10:15, the Children of God, John 11:51, Christ's friends, John 15:8, to Israel, Acts 13:23, to the body of Christ, Ephesians 5:23. And accordingly, our Saviour prayed for those only that His Father had given Him, John 17:9, and for those whom hereafter He should give unto Him, v. 20, and that with exclusion from the world, v. 9, and for their sakes, He sanctified Himself, v. 19, which, in like manner, is to be understood with exclusion of the world. Now, by sanctifying Himself, is understood the offering up of Himself upon the Cross, by the unanimous consent of all the Fathers, whom Marlorate had read, as he himself professes in his Commentaries on that passage in John. Yet we are willing to take notice of those places also, which extend the benefit of Christ's death unto all, as Romans 5:18, "As by the offence of one the fault came upon all unto condemnation; so by the justifying of one, the benefit abounded toward all men, to justification of life." But for the clearing of this, observe but the limitation,

going immediately before, v. 17, "If by the offence of one, death reigned through one; much more shall they, who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness, reign in life through one, Jesus Christ." It is further said that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, 2 Corinthians 5:19, that He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, John 1:29, that He gave His life for the life of the world, John 6:51, that He is the Saviour of the world, John 4:42 and 1 John 4:14. Yet this admits a fair exposition, without all contradiction to the former limitation, namely, of men in the world, which being an indefinite term, is to be expounded by other places, where it is defined who they are, as John 13:1, "He loved His own that were in the world, to the end He loved them." Now, who are Christ's own but those of whom He speaks, John 17:9, "For they are thine, 10:11, and all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and thou art glorified in them." Now, these are proposed with an exclusion of the world in that very 9th verse: "I pray for them, I pray not for the World, for they are thine."

It is further said that Christ is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but for the sins of the whole world; which may fairly admit this construction, for the sins of men dispersed throughout all the world, which is most true of God's Elect, like as John 11:50, they are called the Children of God, which were scattered; and Matthew 24:31, "God shall send His Angels with a great sound of a Trumpet, who shall gather together His Elect from the four Winds, and from one end of the Heavens to the other." But suppose it be understood of all and everyone, yet that place, John 3:19, gives a fair exposition of this also, whence it is said: "So God loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, shall not perish." And we willingly confess that Christ died to obtain salvation for all and everyone that believe in Him.

And indeed our adversaries do usually please themselves in the confounding of things that differ.

And in the stating of this thesis, we have a miserable confusion, as if these men delighted to fish in troubled waters. For when we say Christ died for us, our meaning is that Christ died for our good, and a benefit redounds unto us by the death of Christ. Now, it may be, there are diverse benefits redounding unto us by the death of Christ, and they are of so different nature, that, in respect of some, we do not hesitate to profess that Christ died for all, and, in respect of others, the Arminians themselves are so far from granting that he died to obtain any such benefit for all, as that they utterly deny them to be any benefits at all redounding to any by the death of Christ. Though we willingly acknowledge them to be benefits redounding to us by the death of Christ, albeit not redounding unto all, but only to God's elect. Now if this be true, is it not a proper course which this author takes in confounding things so extremely different? And that it is so as I have said, I now proceed to show in this manner. We say, that pardon of sin and salvation of souls are benefits purchased by the death of Christ, to be enjoyed by men, but how? Not absolutely, but conditionally, to wit, in case they believe, and only in case they believe. For like as God does not confer these on any of ripe years unless they believe, so Christ has not merited that they should be conferred on any but such as believe. And accordingly, we profess that Christ died for all, that is, to obtain pardon of sin and salvation of soul for all, but how? Not absolutely whether they believe or not, but only conditionally, to wit provided they do believe in Christ. So that we willingly profess, that Christ had both a full intention of his own, and commandment of his Father to make a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, so far as thereby to procure both pardon of sin and salvation of soul to all that do believe, and to none other being of ripe years, according to that Romans 3:24, "We are justified

freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." v. 25, "Whom God has set forth to be a propitiation (or reconciliation) through faith in his blood." But we further say, that there are other benefits redounding to us by the death of Christ, to wit, the grace of faith and of repentance. For like as these are the gifts of God wrought in us by his Holy Spirit, so they are wrought in us for Christ's sake, according to that of the Apostle, praying for the Hebrews, namely, that God will make them perfect to every good work, working in them that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ. Now, as touching these benefits, we willingly profess, that Christ died not for all, that is, he died not to obtain the grace of faith and repentance for all, but only for God's elect; In as much as these graces are bestowed by God, not conditionally, lest so grace should be given according to men's works, but absolutely. And if Christ died to obtain these for all absolutely, it would follow hence that all should believe and repent, and consequently all should be saved. And do our adversaries blame us for denying that Christ died to procure faith and repentance unto all? Nothing less; nay, it is apparent that the Remonstrants nowadays openly profess that Christ has not merited faith and regeneration for any. For when this is laid to their charge as they themselves profess in these words: "But (says the censor) if Christ has merited only this much, then Christ has not merited for us faith nor regeneration," mark their answer following, "Indeed it is so. Nothing is more foolish, nothing is more vain than to attribute this to Christ's merit." So that their plain meaning is that Jesus Christ died for none, so as to obtain the grace of faith and regeneration for them, no, not for God's elect, not having the least intention of his own, or commandment of his Father to purchase these gifts, these blessings for any. Proceed we to the third.

3. Of freedom of will in the creature we may dispute, and divines usually dispute in different ways, and upon different

considerations; as namely in respect, either of the state of the creature from within, as under corruption, or free from it; or in respect of the divine decree from without. This author very judiciously, Arminian-like, confounds these into one.

It is utterly untrue that any of our divines, to my knowledge, say that by the sin of Adam, his whole posterity has lost their free will. In the time of my minority in the University, in divinity disputations, we heard concerning free will such a distinction as this of common course. The actions of men are either natural, moral, or spiritual; the resolution of the truth, as touching free will, according to the aforesaid distinction, was this; we have not lost our free will in actions natural, nor in actions moral, but only in actions spiritual. So that the natural man perceives not the things of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned. And the affection of the flesh is enmity unto God, for it is not subject to the law of God nor can be. So that they which are in the flesh cannot please God. Of heathen men, the Apostle professes that their minds are blinded, their hearts hardened, and they are estranged from the life of God, Ephesians 4:18, that they are in the snare of the devil, led captive by him to do his will. That the Ephesians were dead in trespasses and sins before the time of their calling by the Gospel; and the like is affirmed of the Colossians, Colossians 2:11. Yet what follows in this Author is more untrue, imputing to us, as if we maintained that every man is subject by inevitable necessity to do or leave undone that which every man acts or omits, being good or evil. This imputation, I say, is utterly untrue; we say that everyone does freely whatsoever he does, and omits freely whatsoever he leaves undone. Only this is to be understood aright, to wit, in respect of means tending unto ends, wherein alone and in the election thereof consist the liberty of man's will, and not in the appetite of the end; it being natural for a man

to be carried to the liking of his end necessarily; according to that of Aristotle, "Qualis quisque est, ita finis apparet" (As a man is, so appears his end). And does it become these men to dictate to us, not only a new divinity but also a new Philosophy at pleasure? As for the reason here added, fetched from the eternal and efficacious decree of God, this is so far from confirming their premises as that it utterly overthrows them, and confirms ours. For we say, with Aquinas, that the efficacious will of God, is the cause why some things come to pass contingently and freely, as well as it is the cause why other things come to pass necessarily. Was the burning of the Prophet's bones by Josiah performed any less freely by him than any other action of his? Or the proclamation that Cyrus made for the return of the Jews out of the captivity, was not this as freely done by him as anything else? Yet both these were predetermined by God. Nay, I say more; that everything which comes to pass in the revolution of times, was decreed by God, I prove by such an argument, for answer whereunto, I challenge the whole nations both of Arminians and Jesuits. It cannot be denied but God foresaw from everlasting whatsoever in time should come to pass; therefore, everything was future from everlasting, otherwise God could not foresee it as future. Now let us soberly inquire, how these things which we call future, came to be future, being in their own nature merely possible and indifferent, as well not at all to be future as to be future. Of this transmigration of things out of the condition of things merely possible (such as they were of themselves) into the condition of things future, there must needs be some outward cause. Now I demand, what was the cause of this transmigration? And seeing nothing, outside the nature of God, could be the cause hereof; (for this transmigration was from everlasting, but nothing outside God was everlasting,) therefore something within the nature of God must be found fit to be the cause hereof.

And what may that be? Not the knowledge of God: for that rather presupposes things future, and so knowable in the kind of things future, then makes them future. Therefore it remains, that the mere decree & will of God is that which makes them future. If, to shift off this, it be said, that the essence of God is the cause hereof, I further demand, whether the essence of God be the cause hereof, as working necessarily, or as working freely. If as working necessarily, then the most contingent things became future by necessity of the divine nature, and consequently, He produces whatsoever He produces by necessity of nature, which is Atheistical: Therefore it remains, that the essence of God has made them future, by working freely, and consequently the mere will and decree of God, is the cause of the futuration of all things. And why should we doubt hereof, when the most foul sins that have been committed in the World, are in scripture phrase professed to have been predetermined by God himself? Upon supposition of which will and decree divine, we confess it necessary, that things determined by Him shall come to pass, but how? Not necessarily, but either necessarily or contingently and freely; to wit, necessary things necessarily, contingent things, and free things, contingently and freely. So that contingent things, upon supposition of the will divine, have a necessity *secundum quid* (in a certain respect), but simply a contingency; and that the same thing may come to pass, both necessarily *secundum quid*, and simply in a contingent manner, ought to be nothing strange to men of understanding, considering that the very foreknowledge of God is sufficient to denominate the most contingent things, as coming to pass necessarily *secundum quid* (in a certain respect).

I come to the consideration of the fourth.

4. As touching this Article here objected to us, we have no cause to decline the maintenance thereof, but cheerfully and resolutely to

undergo the defence, as of the truth of God clearly set down to us in the word of God. The illumination of the mind is compared to God's causing light to shine out of darkness in the creation, 1 Corinthians 4:6. "God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness, is he which has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ." And for God to say unto Zion, "Thou art my people," is made equivalent to the planting of the Heavens, and laying the foundation of the Earth, Isaiah 51:16. "I have put my words in thy mouth, and have covered thee in the shadow of my hand, that I may plant the Heavens, and lay the foundation of the Earth, and say unto Zion: Thou art my people." Psalm 51:10, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Yet was David a regenerate child of God, but when he fell into foul sins, and sought unto God, to restore him, he acknowledges this his spiritual restitution, to be a creation; giving thereby to understand, that the very children of God have savage lusts, and wild affections in them, the curing and mastering of which is no less work, than was the work of creation or making of the world, 2 Corinthians 5:17. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature"; and Galatians 6:15, "In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Now, this new creature is all one with faith working by love, Galatians 5:6. For there the Apostle expresses the comparison antithetically in this manner: "In Jesus Christ, neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but faith working by love." And Ephesians 2:10, "We are said to be God's workmanship, created in Jesus Christ (mark a new creation) unto good works, which he has ordained, that we should walk in them." God made the world with a word, but the new making of man cost our Saviour Christ hot water, the very blood of the Son of God, agonies in the garden, and

agonies upon the Cross, and he must rise out of his grave, to work this. The Schoolmen do acknowledge this, namely, that grace is wrought in man, by way of creation; Otherwise, how could it be accounted supernatural. And, as for the power whereby God raises the dead; It is expressly said, Colossians 2:12, that faith is "the operation of God, who raised Christ from the dead"; whereupon Cornelius de Lapide acknowledges, that faith is wrought by the same power, whereby God raised Christ from the dead. And Ephesians 1:19, the Apostle tells us of the exceeding greatness of God's power towards us, which believe, adding that this is according to his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, whom he raised from the dead. And therefore most congruously does the Apostle take into consideration that work of God in raising Christ, when he prays for the Hebrews, that God would make them perfect to every good work, working in them that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, Hebrews 13:20-21, "The God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant: Make you perfect in all good works to do his will, &c." It is called the work of faith in power, 2 Thessalonians 1:11.

And as for perseverance therein with patience, the Apostle requires such strength as is wrought by God's glorious power. Colossians 1:11 & 2 Peter 1:3, we are said to be called by divine power (διὰ δόξης καὶ ἀρετῆς). Piscator, not knowing well what good sense to make of it as it lies, interprets it unto glory and virtue, as if it were in the original διὰ δόξας καὶ ἀρετῆς. Daniel Heinsius in the preface to his 'Aristarchus Sacer' on Nonnus upon John, makes bold to censure this interpretation; and shows whence it proceeds, to wit, herupon, because he knew no other signification of ἀρετῆ then virtue, and that in the sense as we usually take it. But, saith he, in the Greek

Etymologicum we find that ἀρετή, in the notion thereof, is as much as potentia (power), and accordingly we are called as Saint Peter saith by glory and power, as much as to say by God's glorious power. And does not the scripture clearly profess that God found us dead in sin, Ephesians 2:1 & Colossians 2:13? And is not the work itself called regeneration, John 3 and 1 Peter 1, and in other places? Is it not a new life wrought in us? We were before estranged from the life of God, Ephesians 4:18, now we are not. And is not this life the life of faith according to that, Galatians 2:20, "The life that I now live in the flesh is by faith in Christ who loved me and gave himself for me"? Augustine, in plain terms, professes that God converts men with omnipotent ease; therefore he used his almighty power therein, though he did it with ease, like as he both made the world and shall raise the dead with ease: "For he spoke the word and they were made, he commanded, and they were created;" and, in like sort, the time shall come when they that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man, and shall come forth, some to the resurrection of life, some to the resurrection of condemnation. And power less than the power of God is not able to regenerate man; For can an Angel regenerate man, or can man regenerate himself, and make himself partaker of the divine nature (θείας κοινωνοί)? Or breathe the life of God, the life of grace, or the Spirit of God into him? Consider but soberly the importance of faith that is so much slighted by this generation; Consider it touching the object thereof, and the things believed; consider it as touching the form of it; and the confidence of the creature in his creator; and judge indifferently, whether any created power, can suffice to create faith in man. The things believed, are the mystery of the Trinity; the incarnation of the Son of God, God manifested in the flesh, and to what end? That his soul might be made an offering for sin, the just die for the unjust, that so God might justify the ungodly, (ὁ δικαίων τὸν ἀσεβῆ) Romans 4. What wisdom is there in this, by the judgment of flesh and blood? Are not

these things of God foolishness to the natural man, 1 Corinthians 2:14. Then the resurrection of the dead, the eternal judgement, the powers of the world to come; what reason can draw a natural man to the embracing of these? Then as touching our confidence in God and dependence upon him according to these mysteries. Is it in the power of nature a man should be brought to repose the fortunes of his salvation upon a crucified God? Which was a scandal to the Jews, foolishness to the Gentiles, but to us that are saved, it is the very power of God and wisdom of God. For a sinner to be assured that God is his Father in Christ, and receives us unto him as sons and daughters, and, if sons, then heirs also, even heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. To say, with Job "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," not only despite his judgements, by which he fights against us, causing his arrows to stick fast in us, and the venom thereof to drink up our spirits; but also, in spite of our own sins, whereby the best provoke him, too often, even the eyes of his glory.

Yet these disputers would not have it thought that they deny faith to be the work of God; but they have come so far as to deny, in express terms, that Christ merited, either faith or regeneration for any. "Censura Censurae," p. 59. A time may come for them to open their mouths a little wider, and deal plainly and openly profess that faith is merely the work of man, and not the work of God. But as yet they think it not seasonable to divulge this mystery of state. They pretend acknowledgment that it is the gift of God; only they will have it wrought in such a manner, that man may reject it; and they reproach us for saying that they, to whom God gives his grace, are not able to reject it. Forsooth, they will have God work faith in a man, no otherwise than by way of persuasion. For Arminius professes, that there are but two ways, whereby God works upon the will, the one, as he expresses it, is '*per modum naturae*' (in the manner of nature), the other '*secundum modum voluntatis et libertatis ejus*' (according

to the mode of the will and its liberty): The former he calls a Physical impulsion, the latter he says may fitly be called persuasion. By the former operation, the effect comes to pass necessarily; and this they cannot brook. So that it remains, that God's operation, in bestowing faith, is only by way of persuasion. Now, here they dash themselves upon a rock of manifest heterodoxy, even in Philosophy. For he that persuades works immediately upon the understanding, representing the object whereunto he persuades in the most alluring manner that he can; "Suadens agit" (the persuader acts), says Bellarmine, "per modum proponentis objectum" (in the manner of proposing an object). And consequently leaves it to the object thus set forth, to work upon the will. Now, the object works only 'in genere causae finalis' (in the category of final cause), not 'in genere causae efficientis' (in the category of efficient cause). And the end is well known to move only 'motu metaphorice dicto' (in a metaphorical motion), not 'vero motu' (in true motion); and hence it follows, that God, while he persuades only, is no efficient cause at all of faith; which indeed is the most genuine doctrine of these divines, though they are loath the world should know so much.

Secondly, scrutinize their language more closely; here is mention of God's bestowing grace, yet in such a manner that those to whom He bestows it can still refuse it. Furthermore, this capacity to refuse it is often exercised in such a way that even though God grants it, those to whom He grants it still reject it. Now, this can be understood in two ways: firstly, that after God has granted it and they have received it, they subsequently reject it; or secondly, that they reject it in such a way that they never truly receive it at all. The former interpretation holds some validity, although its truth may be disputed. However, in this interpretation, it pertains to the next article. In the latter interpretation alone, it relates to the current article. Now, I must assert that in this latter sense, there is no rationality; for it maintains

the existence of something given that is not at all received, which is unquestionably absurd. It is no wonder if, in opposing God's grace, they behave as if devoid of common sense. An offering may be made and rejected, but it cannot, with any credibility, be claimed to be given when it is not received. This is particularly applicable to gifts bestowed upon the soul: a gift bestowed upon the soul must either be a lasting attribute or an inherent action, both of which reside within the soul. Unless they are made intrinsic to it, and the latter also generated by it, they cannot be described as given to the soul. For instance, the present inquiry concerns the production of faith in the soul of a person. Now, this can be understood either as the quality and character of faith or as the action of faith. However, neither of these can be considered as given unless one becomes an inherent quality of the soul and the other an action of the soul. Assuming this, they are not rejected and cannot be rejected in such a way that they are never received at all. The author appears to have recognized this inconvenience and sought to avoid it. Therefore, in the third place, he does not state that those to whom God bestows faith are capable of (and sometimes do) reject it, as per our belief, which implies that, in his view, even though God grants faith to people, they sometimes reject it. Instead, he presents our doctrine as follows: those to whom God bestows His grace are capable of (and sometimes do) reject it, thereby suggesting that the grace given by God to humanity can, and is occasionally, rejected.

And indeed, this grace, not being faith itself but an operation leading towards it, and that no other than persuasion, can be said to be rejected in a positive sense. However, it is given by God and received by man, although the same cannot be said for faith, which is received only through belief. Unless it is received in this manner by man, it cannot be said to have been given by God. Similarly, if God exhorts a person to have faith, it cannot be argued that the person has not been

exhorted. Therefore, to whom God gives exhortation, it cannot be denied that the exhortation given has been received to the extent that the person can be rightfully said to have been exhorted.

Moreover, apart from receiving persuasion and exhortation in this sense, which cannot be reasonably denied wherever it is given, there is another sense of receiving it, namely, to obey it and yield to it. In this sense, we acknowledge that the grace of persuasion and exhortation, although bestowed by God, can still be rejected by man. Even though it cannot be denied that the person has received it to the extent of hearing it, which is sufficient to classify them as someone exhorted to have faith, they have not received it in a manner that entails embracing and obeying it. It is upon this ambiguity of meaning and equivocation that these impostors thrive. They willingly deceive themselves, as their affections are gripped by a love of error, which always tends to blur their judgment from the truth. Subsequently, they strive to deceive others, anyone who does not discern their deceit.

Now, we unequivocally declare that just as when the Sun enlightens the world, it is inevitable that the world is illuminated; similarly, when God enlightens the minds of individuals, their minds cannot help but be illuminated. For the understanding is a natural power, not a free one. Consequently, if God reveals to a Christian soul that He is not only the highest good but also their supreme good, it is inevitable that they should be illuminated by the light of His loving countenance. This light is referred to in Scripture as the glory of the Lord (2 Cor. 3:18), and it is signified to be the glory of His grace manifest in Christ (John 1:14). We are said to behold it in Christ with open hearts (2 Cor. 3:18). Furthermore, this glory of God's grace appearing to us as our ultimate good inevitably leads us to love it. "For we love Him because He loved us first" (1 John 4:19), and our

wills become fixed upon Him as our supreme end. The freedom of the will lies not in the desire for the end but only in the choice of means, a principle recognized by Aristotle and universally accepted without dispute, affirmed by the light of nature.

As we gaze upon the glory of the Lord with open hearts, we are transformed into the same image. This image consists of two aspects: Christ crucified and Christ raised from the dead, ascended into heaven, and seated at the right hand of God to intercede for us. Our transformation into this image represents our regeneration, involving both mortification, which aligns with Christ's death, and vivification, aligning with Christ's resurrection. Thus, we experience the power of His resurrection and share in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10). In this process of regeneration, which includes the illumination of our minds and the renewal of our affections, we are entirely passive. We are changed to the extent that we discern our supreme good and set our hearts upon it as our end. All of this is natural, not a matter of free will, for freedom pertains only to the choice of means to our end. In this regard, we often fail, partly due to the weakness of our judgment and partly due to the perverseness of our affections. For we are only partially regenerated, with darkness still clouding our understanding, and within our hearts and affections, there exists a principle of the flesh that inclines excessively towards the creature, alongside a principle of the Spirit that inclines towards God, our Creator.

And regarding the last point, when it is said that the Reprobates cannot attain this grace of God, even though it is offered to them in the Gospel, this either lacks sobriety or, when interpreted soberly, is entirely false. Only the ambiguous concept of grace suits their agenda and allows them to speak without understanding. As for faith itself, it is not offered in the Gospel at all; people are called upon to believe

and promised that, upon their faith, they shall obtain the grace of the forgiveness of sins and salvation. These graces can be said to be offered to all, contingent on faith. But faith itself cannot reasonably be said to be offered. Although, through the preaching of the Gospel, the Lord instills faith in the hearts of those He chooses, as it is said, "He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills, He hardens." However, persuasion and exhortation to have faith are granted to the reprobates in the Church of God, just as to God's elect.

Now, I move on to the fifth and final point.

5. That those who have once received this grace through faith can never fall completely or finally, regardless of the most heinous sins they may commit. Three aspects need to be considered here. Firstly, his expression of a particular grace received through faith in reference to the previous points. He refers to it as "this grace through faith," while there was no mention at all of any grace received through faith in the preceding statements. This is their manipulative approach; first, they talk about God producing faith, then about God giving His grace, and now they assume they've discussed a particular grace received through faith, even though such a grace was never mentioned before. We state straightforwardly that it is about faith itself, not some mysterious grace received through faith, which we claim cannot utterly or finally perish.

Scripture openly declares that it is impossible for the elect to be led astray by false prophets. The *modus operandi* of false prophets is to corrupt the faith of believers. However, they cannot prevail over God's elect in this regard. Here, by the elect, we mean the regenerated elect. Before regeneration, it is clear that they are as susceptible to errors of faith and life as anyone else. The reason they

cannot be seduced in this way is signified by our Saviour in John 10:29, that they are in the hands of God the Father. "My Father, who gave them to me, is greater than all" (now to be given to Christ by God the Father is to be brought to faith in Christ by God the Father—John 6:37, 44, compared with verses 35 and 47, and John 17:9, 20). "And none is able to take them out of my Father's hand." So when we say they cannot fall from grace, this is not spoken in terms of absolute impossibility but on the assumption of divine maintenance, i.e., God upholding them. They are said to be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation (1 Peter 1). In Scholastic terms, this impossibility of falling away from grace is a conditional impossibility. Just as we say it is impossible for Antichrist to fall or for the Jews to be called until the appointed time arrives for God to manifest His great and wondrous works, but the contrary is simply possible on both counts. Regarding the last clause, "notwithstanding the most heinous sins they can commit," this is maliciously added, as if we asserted that the children of God cannot fall from grace even if they indulge in sinful lusts and commit sins with great greediness. Contrary to this, we teach that God preserves them from falling by instilling His fear in their hearts, as Jeremiah 32:40 states, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall never depart from me." Therefore, our doctrine does not assert that God will keep them from falling in the face of their presumptuous actions, but rather that He will hold them close by instilling a holy fear, which means He will keep them from presumptuous actions. Accordingly, after David prayed for God to cleanse him from his secret faults, he entreated God to keep him from presumptuous sins so that he might be blameless of great offenses.

And just as this was David's prayer, so corresponding to this, was Paul's faith: "He will deliver me from every evil work" (whether through obedience or repentance or from every presumptuous

course), "and preserve me for his heavenly Kingdom." Accordingly, the Saints of God, as they are referred to as His called ones and sanctified ones, are also designated as His reserved ones in the Epistle of Jude. His practice is to make them suitable participants in the inheritance of the Saints in light. This doesn't mean saving them despite their unpreparedness, but rather first preparing them through holiness and then allowing them to partake in it.

None of our theologians have ever espoused such presumption among God's children as to declare, as stated in Deuteronomy 29:19, "I shall have peace even though I walk according to the stubbornness of my own heart," thereby adding recklessness to their thirst. Instead, their faith is akin to that of Paul mentioned earlier: "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for his heavenly kingdom." It is true that David once committed adultery, leading to a more grievous sin—planning to have Uriah killed to cover up the initial transgression. However, it's important to note that the initial occasion was due to an oversight as he happened to see Bathsheba bathing from the battlements of his house. Nevertheless, he never repeated such transgressions.

Regarding these sins of his, Bertius, the chief advocate of the Apostasy of Saints, acknowledges that he will not assert that David, through these sins, expelled the Spirit of God. He has weighty reasons for this.

Peter also sinned gravely during the temptation, denying his Master thrice in a peculiar manner. But if we examine the root of it, we'll find that due to a lack of foresight, he unwittingly walked into the devil's trap. However, our Saviour had prayed for him, that his faith would not fail. And recalling His promise (although Peter had not yet remembered the clear warning given by our Saviour about Satan's

desire to sift him like wheat), Peter looked back at Him, went out, and wept bitterly. Upon His resurrection, word of this was conveyed to the Apostles, specifically to Peter, so that he would not doubt the love of God and Christ towards him. As it is written, "He that is born of God does not sin" (referring to the sin unto death or the sin of apostasy), "for his seed remains in him, and he cannot sin (that sin), because he is born of God." However, as I mentioned, this impossibility is not absolute or simply so to be called, but only conditional, based on divine support.

Regarding the true status of our beliefs and the veracity of our doctrine, I can confidently assert that it has been sufficiently clarified to the world, and this with more authoritative backing than any they have presented to the contrary. There are as many of our writings left unanswered by them as there are of theirs left unanswered by us.

Nevertheless, if that were adequate for this author, why then does he take up the pen to write at all? I am here to address what he presents in this context and not to be redirected to the writings of others. I may engage with them on their own terms, one by one, as God grants the opportunity. So far, I have not entertained any intention or purpose of avoiding any of their writings, including the "Anti-Synod of Dordrecht" or Vossius' history of the Pelagian Heresy. I have chosen to begin with their principal figure, who stands against Perkins, and then proceed to his dialogue with Junius. Following that, I intend to contend with Corvinus, the chief of his adherents, and in doing so, address Arminius and his twenty reasons, as presented in his declaration of opinion before the States, which requires an extensive digression. I do not aspire to live and breathe on this earth for any higher reason than to engage with each of them to the best of my ability. I consider them to be nothing less than charlatans in Logic, Philosophy, and theology. They may boast, I

admit, but they lack genuine learning entirely. It pains me to witness the Christian world in danger of being deceived concerning their Christian faith, much like Celestinus was once in danger of losing his Papacy. However, it is just for God to let us face this predicament. Superstition is on the rise, and impiety has become brazen. Holiness and sincerity are treated as targets and are spoken against.

THE TREATISE,

Consisting of three parts.

The first part concerning the conversion of a stranger to the faith. This I divide into 3. Sections.

The first Section. Let us now consider what benefit arises from this doctrine and how it serves the 3. purposes and uses mentioned above.

Firstly, if someone of this persuasion attempts to convert an Infidel, the Infidel will tell them that they do not know how to love or believe in a God who, solely for His own pleasure, has predestined the majority of humanity to eternal torments without any consideration of their sins, or at least, solely for the sin of one man who, nonetheless, obtained forgiveness for himself after committing it willfully. In this, they see no trace of goodness, wisdom, or justice in treating those who lack certain graces and benefits, which this God has never willed to grant them, and these miserable souls could obtain in no other way. By an irrevocable decree, He has imposed on

them a necessity to sin without the ability to repent and to perish eternally – these are the very words of Zanchi, one of the chief Doctors of that Synod.

They will argue that it cannot be that God, in His word, presents Himself as the lover of humanity, desiring the salvation of all and the perishing of none, swearing by Himself that He does not desire the death of a sinner but that the sinner repents and lives. Moreover, they will further abhor that doctrine when it suggests that God uses duplicity and has a double will – one outward, inviting the sinner as if desiring their salvation, and another inward and hidden, always accomplished, leading them by unavoidable means both into sin and damnation.

The Infidel will say to their converter that Homer is more credible than them when he states that "he who speaks contrary to what he thinks should be regarded as an enemy and hated as the gates of Hell." According to the judgment of these Apostles of Dort and Arles, the most wicked hypocrite and traitor in the world would most vividly represent the image of the God they speak of.

Consid. We read of a strange judgment of God in sending strong delusions among men so that they should believe lies, 2 Thessalonians 2:11. And the reason for this is also revealed to us in verse 10, namely because they did not receive the love of the truth. This divine judgment seems to prevail in our times as much as ever, or rather in even greater measure. The Apostle tells us of false teachers in his days who were mere vain talkers, yet they prevailed all too often. Isn't it astonishing that our Churches, our reformed churches, and our Universities, our reformed Universities, should be influenced by such base and senseless discourses as these? Let us cease to be amazed at the simplicity of Savages who are content with

copper instead of gold, and who esteem glass beads as much as others value pearls. Consider, I pray, the strength of this author's argument, summed up briefly: An infidel is unlikely to accept our doctrine regarding absolute reprobation; therefore, this doctrine is unsound and not in line with God's word.

Is it possible that a Christian could be so deluded as to make an infidel's judgment the standard of his faith concerning matters of salvation and godliness? And if some French intellect, tainted with Arminianism, is swayed by such base fantasies, should it spread so far as to cloud the minds of our University scholars as well? If that were the case, why don't they simply turn atheists? It's well-known that the Gospel of Christ crucified was both a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles, 1 Corinthians 1:23.

What a low opinion the King of Assyria had regarding the religion of Samaria and Jerusalem, preferring all others to it, as stated in Isaiah 10:10: "As my hand has found the kingdoms of the idols, seeing their idols were above Samaria and above Jerusalem." Shouldn't his judgment then be used as the standard for our faith in matters of religion as soon as the judgment of any infidels? What was his judgment? First, concerning the Jews, Tacitus said, "Everything which is sacred with us is profane to them; on the other hand, they permit everything which among us is unlawful. And comparing their customs with those of Bacchus, he preferred those of Bacchus over those of the Jews. They believe that a free father is to be adored as the conqueror of the East, although their institutions are by no means congruent. For Bacchus instituted free and festive rites; the customs of the Jews are absurd and sordid." Second, concerning Christians, whom he described as "a race of men hated because of their vices." This was the view of Christians during the time of the holy Paul, who teaches us not to do evil in order that good may come

of it, not to repay evil with evil, but to overcome evil with goodness. He even commands every soul to be subject to the higher powers, even when souls were at their best and powers at their worst. Now, let us go a little further and become outright atheists, asserting that the world has existed eternally, and that all events occur by the necessity of nature, because, according to Aristotle's judgment, God, being goodness itself, not good by a derived name but essentially good and naturally and necessarily communicating itself, brings about all things by the necessity of nature, as Jacobus Naclantus observes in the first of his 4 Tractates on the creation of all things by God, according to Aristotle, but by the necessity of nature, which utterly negates all divine providence.

Again, Zosimus, that bitter Atheist and enemy of Christians who writes so poorly of Constantine the Great, does he not reproach our Christian profession on these very grounds, that we offer the free forgiveness of all sins to all those who embrace the Christian faith? And shall we think less of Christianity because he disapproves of the doctrine of free justification for all through faith in Christ? This disapproval of his is not something we have invented or merely presumed, as this author's practice is solely to represent the creations of his own mind. It is left on record by Zosimus himself in his history. I have read about an Arian executed in Norwich for blasphemy against Jesus Christ during the days of Queen Elizabeth. When moved to repent so that Christ might pardon him, he reportedly replied along these lines: "Is your God truly so merciful as to readily forgive those who blaspheme Him? Then I renounce and defy Him."

Shall the judgment of such a wretch as this move us to waver in our faith, whether it concerns the deity of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, or His willingness to pardon blasphemies spoken against Him when

accompanied by true repentance? Consider the Socinian doctrine today concerning Christ. Do they not openly deny that He came into the world to make satisfaction for sin? For they claim that God can pardon sin without any satisfaction. So, the preaching of satisfaction made by Christ is unfit to influence them as it is so distasteful to them. But should we then think less of our doctrine on this matter? Consider the general opinion of infidels regarding Original Sin. Do they consider it just for God to condemn an infant who dies in original sin to eternal fire? Can they accept our Christian doctrine concerning the universal condition of all mankind born in original sin and as children of wrath? Especially if the child's soul proceeds directly from God, who, by infusing it, creates and infuses it. Should we be swayed by their judgments from heeding God's word concerning both the sinful condition in which we are all born and the deserved punishment for it? No, rather, as the Apostle declares of the Gospel in general, let us boldly declare of each of its mysteries in particular that "if it is hidden, it is hidden from those who are perishing, in whom the god of this world has blinded their minds, including the minds of infidels, so that the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine unto them." Yet that same God, who commanded light to shine out of darkness, has caused the light of this truth concerning the absoluteness of reprobation to shine in the hearts of many who in their natural state were no better than infidels, being born children of wrath like others.

But let us grapple with this warrior and test the mettle he is made of. The infidel (he says) will tell the one who attempts to convert him that he does not know how to love or believe in a God who, for His own pleasure, has predestined the majority of mankind to everlasting torments, without the least consideration of any sin, or at least only for the sin of one man, etc. First, observe how this tragedian constructs his plea to serve his own purpose. (For when the poet first

sets his mind to write, he believes that his only business is to please the people with the fables he has created.) So, he pretends that before anyone sets out to convert an infidel, the infidel is already familiar with our doctrine concerning absolute reprobation. This is like making his own bed to lie in it more comfortably. Second, what if the infidel refuses to love such a God or believe such a doctrine? Does that make the doctrine any less true? In the sixth chapter of John, we read that some were offended by our Savior's doctrine concerning eating His flesh and said that it was a hard saying. As a result, many of His disciples departed from Him. Did that make our Savior's doctrine any less true or less worthy of belief? If a man were to preach to an infidel the doctrine of Paul, where he says, "Before the children were born or had done anything good or bad, in order that God's purpose in election might stand, not by works but by Him who calls, it was said to her, 'The older will serve the younger.' Just as it is written, 'Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.'" If an infidel does not believe this or love such a God as is presented in it, does that make us disbelieve it or deny that God is good and just, regardless of this? What Christian who is not deluded can fail to see the vanity and absurdity of this author's arguments? In the search for divine truth, we should not be concerned with how an infidel is likely to react to it in our imagination, but rather whether such a doctrine is consistent with God's word or not.

Now, according to the Apostle's argument, which is this: "Before Esau and Jacob were born or had done good or evil, it was said, 'The elder shall serve the younger.' Therefore, election is not based on works (specifically good works) but on the mere pleasure of God who calls whom He will," as later stated that "He has mercy on whom He will," it is just as evident that:

1. Concerning Election, it is not based on works, and neither is it based on faith. Before they were born, they were equally incapable of faith as they were of works. Consequently, God's ordaining men unto salvation is solely according to His good pleasure, without regard for works or faith.
2. Regarding reprobation, it is no more based on evil works than election is on good works. Before they were born, they were equally incapable of both good and evil deeds. The commission of evil is explicitly excluded, as is the commission of good. It therefore clearly follows that God's ordaining men unto damnation is purely based on God's pleasure, with little consideration of sin, just as God's ordaining men unto salvation is purely based on His pleasure, without any consideration of righteousness in man. Although human nature is more prone to rebel against this doctrine of reprobation than against the corresponding doctrine of election.

Thirdly, consider the fallacy in his elaborations on two specific points.

First, he emphasizes the matter by referring to the circumstance of the majority of mankind. However, it is evident through reason that if it is just for God to deal in this manner with the smallest part of mankind, or even one individual, it is equally just for God to deal the same way with the majority of mankind, indeed with all individuals.

Second, he accentuates it by mentioning the least consideration of sin, which he claims we deny has any place in reprobation. Yet divine consideration has no degrees; it cannot be more or less. Sin may have degrees in man, but divine consideration does not.

Fourthly, to get closer to the point and reveal their deceptive portrayal of our doctrine. Consider, I beg you, do any of our theologians maintain that God ordained anyone to damnation without sin? They do not; all of them acknowledge that just as God does not damn anyone without sin, He also does not ordain anyone to damnation without sin. For they all profess that the purpose God intends in the reprobation of certain individuals is to manifest His justice. If God intends this, how can it be otherwise than that those He ordains to suffer everlasting torments are ordained to suffer those torments for their sins and nothing else? Furthermore, to add one more point, not for the sin they sinned in Adam alone (for I prefer to express it in accordance with scriptural phrasing rather than as this obscure author does by calling it only "Adam's sin") but for those very actual sins and transgressions they are guilty of. This author presents the matter as if our doctrine states that God ordains men to be tormented not for sin but solely for His own pleasure. He handles this matter in a way that benefits his own cause, confusing the cause of the decree with the cause of its execution. He confounds the most accepted distinction of the Schools concerning the will of God as considered either in terms of the act of willing (*quoad actum volentis*) or as related to the things willed by God (*quoad res volitas*).

The act of God's willing can have no cause, as Aquinas says, and I find no contradiction to this among School theologians until the Jesuits emerged. The same Aquinas, applying the same distinction to predestination, which is essentially the will of God in a particular sense, does not hesitate to profess that no one was ever so mad as to claim that merits are the cause of predestination, *quoad actum praedestinantis*, regarding the act of God predestinating. It appears he was unaware of anyone so insane as to affirm this, but since his time, a sect of Jesuits has arisen, along with more than enough

Arminians, who are indeed so mad, yet they confidently promote this doctrine of theirs as if they were the only sane people in the world.

Furthermore, the things willed by God in predestination are of different natures, and so different that whatever is the sole cause of God's decree, that alone is the cause of the execution. Look at what is the sole cause of the decree quoad actum decernentis; that and that alone is the cause of the decree quoad rem volitam or decretam. However, this is not the case with the other, as for example, the things willed by God in predestination are grace and glory; by grace, I understand the grace of faith and repentance. Now, just as the act of God's decree is based on His mere pleasure, with no temporal thing being suitable as the cause of God's eternal decree, similarly, the granting of faith and repentance proceeds solely from the good pleasure of God, as indicated by the statement, "God has mercy on whom he will" (Rom. 9:18), and obtaining mercy from God means obtaining faith (Rom. 11:30). However, concerning glory and salvation, we do not assert that God, in bestowing them, acts according to His mere pleasure but according to a law: "Whosoever believeth shall be saved," a law that we readily admit He established according to His mere pleasure, but having established such a law, He acts in accordance with it. He has not made such a law for the dispensation of grace, faith, or repentance. Likewise, although God finds men equal when He bestows grace on some and not on others, He does not find them equal when He comes to bestow salvation on some and not on others. The same distinction applies on the side of reprobation, which is also the will of God in a particular sense. In this decree, we must distinguish between the act of God decreeing and the things decreed by Him. These things are of different natures and so different that whatever is the sole cause of the act is also the sole cause of one thing decreed by it, but not so for the other. For example, the things decreed by reprobation are:

1. The denial of grace (by grace, I mean faith and repentance, which cure the natural infidelity and hardness of heart found in all).
2. The denial of glory, along with the infliction of damnation. Concerning the first of these, whatever is the cause of reprobation regarding the act of God reprobating, that and that alone is the cause of the denial of grace, namely, the mere pleasure of God. The Apostle clearly teaches us that just as God has mercy on whom He will, granting them faith and repentance, He hardens whom He will by refusing to grant them faith and repentance.

But concerning the denial of glory and the infliction of damnation, God does not act solely according to His own pleasure but according to a law: "Whosoever believeth not shall be damned." And although God made that law according to His mere pleasure, no wise person would claim that God denies glory and inflicts damnation on individuals based solely on His own pleasure. The clear case is that God denies one and inflicts the other solely for the sins of those who are thus treated. Indeed, while men may be found equal in their morality when God denies the grace of faith and repentance to some while bestowing it on others, when it comes to denying glory and inflicting damnation, He does not find all to be equal. Instead, He finds that some have ended their days in the state of faith and true repentance, while others have concluded their days in sin, infidelity, or impenitence.

Accordingly, we distinguish between absolute election unto salvation and election unto salvation absolute, as well as absolute reprobation unto damnation and reprobation unto damnation absolute. We acknowledge absolute election unto salvation and absolute reprobation unto damnation, but we deny either election to be unto

salvation absolute or reprobation unto damnation absolute. However, there is a significant difference between them, as final infidelity and impenitence are the meritorious causes of damnation, while faith, repentance, and good works are merely the disposing causes of salvation. Nevertheless, God inflicts damnation as a form of punishment for the sake of the evil works committed, while salvation is not conferred as a reward for the sake of the good works performed, but solely for Christ's sake. This Author, as I mentioned, judiciously confounds all these distinctions to his advantage, paying no attention to them, whether deliberately concealing them or unknowingly failing to discern them. However, the genuine nature of our Tenet, when rightly understood, clearly includes these distinctions.

If he were to honestly oppose our Tenet regarding the absoluteness of God's decree, he should leave aside the consideration of election and reprobation as regards those things willed by them, which we refer to as salvation and damnation, and instead focus on election and reprobation as regards those other things willed by them, which we call the giving of faith and repentance to some and the denial of faith and repentance to others. In this regard, we willingly profess that God acts absolutely throughout, not only decreeing these things according to His mere pleasure, without any consideration of anything in man, but also giving them to some and denying them to others according to His mere pleasure, without any consideration of anything in man. However, this Author chooses to remain silent on this point, as he does not find such harshness attributable to us in this aspect of our Tenet. Moreover, he cannot defend his own Tenet without openly embracing Pelagianism. If God does not grant faith and repentance to men solely according to His own pleasure but based on something found in man, then grace shall be given according to works, a notion that was condemned in the Synod of

Palestine over 1200 years ago and consistently opposed by the orthodox in opposition to the Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians.

But I am willing to proceed further with this Author and prove that God would not be unjust even if He were to inflict torment upon a creature, no matter how innocent. Consider, should it not be lawful for God to do as He pleases with His creature? Does not man have the power to do as he pleases with the workmanship of his own hands? And shall this power be denied to God? How did He afflict His most holy and innocent Son only to make His soul an offering for the sins of others? What power has God given us over inferior creatures that are not capable of sin but can experience pain through diseases and through our use of them for our faithful services? We put them to death in a manner that may prove beneficial to us, either for food or medicine, and we do not offend God in this. Although some forms of death may be more painful for them, as long as they prove more useful to us, we do not transgress.

And nowadays, all sides confess that it is in the power of God to annihilate the holiest Angel in heaven, and in doing so, He would execute nothing other than a lawful power. Who would not rather endure continual pain (if it is bearable) than to die, let alone having both body and soul turned into nothing?

When the old world was drowned, how many thousands of infants perished in that deluge, drowning in the waters, guilty of no other sin than what they inherited from our common Father Adam? Similarly, in the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by fire, how many infants were reduced to ashes, some in their mothers' wombs, some nursing at their mothers' breasts? When the earth opened and swallowed the congregation of Dathan and Abiram, their little ones were swallowed

up along with their rebellious parents. Shall we then say that God was unjust in executing these and similar judgments?

Yet Medina asserts that God, as the Lord of life and death, has the power to inflict any pain on any creature, even if they are entirely innocent, and he declares this to be the unanimous opinion of all theologians. Indeed, no reason can define the boundaries and limits of pain and sorrow, either in terms of intensity or duration, within which God must act in the execution of pain, and beyond which He cannot proceed while maintaining His justice. Will this Author deny that by the sin of one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin spread to all, including infants who did not sin in the same manner as Adam's transgression, that is, infants? Is this the result of God creating us in His image, that we should restrict and limit His exercise of power over us in comparison to others, and that only according to rules devised by human judgment? If He executes nothing other than a lawful power, can He be justly accused of cruelty? Since He ordains no one to damnation except for sin, and does so to manifest His justice, which is His glory, does this make Him any less good, wise, or just? The scripture clearly teaches us that God made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. Should we suspend our judgment concerning our adherence to this divine and sacred truth until we see how this doctrine is received by unbelievers?

What if they lack certain graces, and it was God's will never to bestow any such grace upon them? What dishonour (I say) is this to God's goodness, wisdom, or justice, in condemning men for sins they freely and voluntarily committed? Or is his intention to suggest that God damns them for being deprived of certain graces? Why did he not plainly state this? Was he ashamed to declare such an untrue statement? Did he prefer to lead the reader to infer this indirectly?

Has any of our theologians ever been known to assert that God damns a person because God did not regenerate them or due to a lack of regeneration? God damns no one except for their sins, and those sins are actually committed by them if they live to commit actual sins. It is true that all are born as children of wrath due to the sin that we all inherited from Adam. This is as true as the word of God is true, and the Epistles of Saint Paul to the Romans and to the Ephesians are part of God's word. If he has any objections to our doctrine concerning original sin, either its nature or its guilt, even the guilt of eternal death, why did he not demonstrate his strength in opposing it? However, what are these graces that God (he says) never willed to bestow upon those who are damned, according to our opinion, implying that according to his opinion, God did well to bestow them even on those who never enjoyed them? Why does he speak in this oblique manner and hide himself, out of fear of coming into the light? Is it because he nurses an evil conscience, harbouring some erroneous beliefs within himself, hence hating the light? Is faith one of those graces that God willed to bestow upon them, even if they never had faith? If God wills to give faith to someone, why do they not have faith? Is God not capable of granting them faith? Consider ourselves: whatever we will to do, and are capable of doing, we do; therefore, if God is able to work faith in anyone, and He wills to do so, how is it possible for such a person to lack faith? Who has resisted His will? Furthermore, to give a person faith is to show them mercy, for to obtain faith is to obtain mercy. If God will give faith to anyone, He indeed grants faith to them, for He shows mercy to whomever He wills, Rom. 9:18.

But let us try to discern this Author's meaning regarding God's willingness to grant faith to those who never have it. Perhaps his meaning is that God is willing to work faith in a person on condition; now, what could that condition be other than some work of man?

And what follows from this but that God grants faith based on people's works, which is pure Pelagianism, condemned as heresy in the Church of God throughout history? Or will they argue that God is willing to work faith in man, provided that man wills it himself? Let them speak plainly then and state that God is ready to work faith in man, provided that man first works it in himself. Even the will is God's work (Phil. 2:13), and God works in us everything that is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ. What can be the condition for God's work within us, even our very will? Yet they align themselves with the Pelagian doctrine, as if grace were given according to works, in direct contradiction to the teaching of Saint Paul (2 Tim. 1:9), "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according unto our works, but according to his own purpose and grace."

Lastly, is their intention this: God will cooperate with us in the work of faith, provided that we cooperate with Him? Do any of our theologians deny God's cooperation in every good work? Although we maintain that this cooperation is purely impossible. For similarly, it is just as true that man will cooperate in the work of faith if God cooperates with him, and this is upheld by Jesuits and Arminians, and God's foreknowledge of this is their middle knowledge.

Now, consider the absurdity of this. Based on this mutual supposition on both sides, it is utterly impossible for any action to proceed. For example, if one says they will go to London if the other goes with them, and the other says the same, as long as neither of them absolutely resolves to go to London, it is impossible for either of them to go there.

Furthermore, if God only cooperates in the work of faith, and this is sufficient to make Him the Author of faith, why may He not be

considered the Author of every evil act committed throughout the world? After all, do you not yourselves maintain that God similarly cooperates in the production of every evil act?

But perhaps by "God's will" in this context, what is meant is "God's commandment." For we live in a deceitful world, where equivocation suits the purposes of those who wish to play both sides.

Now, do any of our theologians deny that God commands everyone in the Church, everyone who hears the Gospel, to believe, whether they are the elect of God or reprobates? But does it necessarily follow from this that God's purpose is to grant them faith? Or will they deny that faith is a gift from God and oppose Paul to his face (Phil. 1:29, Eph. 2:8)?

Yet some may argue that God punishes them for refusing to believe; I concede that He does. For this refusal is the free act of their wills, and by the mere power of their nature, they could abstain from this refusal and believe, just as Simon Magus did, just as profane individuals do, just as many hypocrites do; which is only acquired faith. And it is well known that they believe many false legends.

But then he will say, such a faith shall never save them; and I willingly confess, it shall not; for it never brings forth any love of the truth, any conformity thereto in their lives. Yet they are not the less inexcusable for refusing to believe.

Secondly, why do they not believe but quia nolunt (because they do not want to), and Augustine, both in his book "De Genesi ad literam" (On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis), chapter 1, and his retraction thereof, both says and justifies as entirely true that even natural men may believe if they want to and, out of love for temporal things, convert themselves to keeping God's commandments if they

want to. Indeed, this incapacity, which is found in all people to do what is good, is not so much natural as moral, having its root chiefly in the human will. And if they can believe if they want to, is it not just for God to punish them for not believing? Therefore, if a question is raised about why the wicked do not do this or that which is good, his answer is "quia nolunt" (because they do not want to). But, he says, if you further ask, "Quare nolunt?" (Why do they not want to?), we go into a deeper inquiry, says Augustine, yet without prejudice to a more diligent search for the truth, I answer, says the same divine, that the reason is either because it does not appear to them what it is, or, if it appears what it is, it does not please them. But, that it may become known what was hidden and delightful that which was not pleasing, is the grace of God that aids human wills. But to pursue this argument further than this Author imagines, we say there are only three kinds of supernatural acts, and they are either divine faith, or divine hope, or divine charity. All other acts are natural and performable by a natural man, whether they are the acts of all moral virtues or external conformity to the means of grace. By this, some may progress toward the improvement of external life. But none of these acts are acceptable to God unless they proceed from, and are rightly qualified by, those three theological virtues: faith, hope, and love, all of which are divine and supernatural. The love of God is such that it is joined with the contempt of ourselves. As for faith and hope, it is evident how supernatural they are based on the supernatural condition of their objects. Now, suppose a person were so exact both in natural morality and in an outward conformity to the means of grace that they did not fail in any particular, as they have the power to perform any particular naturally. In this case, I say, if there were anyone like that, they would be in the same situation as those who are guilty of no sin except original sin. Yet the Word of God teaches us that even this is enough to make all people be born as children of wrath. Although, as Augustine says, their punishment is the mildest

of all. And perhaps some of them prefer to undergo this punishment rather than not exist at all. Regarding the necessity of sinning that Corvinus mentioned, which God has imposed upon them, he concedes that all men, by the sin of Adam, are drawn into the necessity of sinning, and this is out of Arminius' opinion. His words are these: "Fatetur Arminius hominem sub statu peccati necessario peccare, nisi Deus istam necessitatem gratiose tollat." And shortly after, he calls this necessity "necessitatem peccandi" (necessity of sinning). However, to clarify this necessity, which he does not, we do not say that any person necessarily commits any particular sin, such as lying, fornication, swearing, or stealing because undoubtedly a person has the power to refrain from any of these sins. But what we do say is that, regardless of what they do, they sin in some way or another, whether they commit fornication or refrain from it or refrain from any other forbidden act, because they do not abstain from it in a gracious manner that is acceptable to God. "For those who are in the flesh cannot please God." They do not abstain from it for God's sake, in conscience of His Word, in reference to His glory, out of a sense of His love toward them in Christ, in acknowledgment that all power to do things pleasing in His sight comes from Him, etc. As for imposing this necessity of sinning on man, when a person, through incontinence, brings some filthy disease upon themselves, which they pass on to their descendants, shall we say that God imposes this disease upon them and their offspring? Although it cannot be denied that even the course of nature is the work of God, in a similar way, when Adam, by sinning against God, corrupted his own nature and consequently the nature of all his descendants, shall we blame God for this and call Him the imposer of it, rather than Adam or even ourselves, who sinned in Adam, as the Holy Spirit teaches us to speak? We speak plainly when we say that the love of God, to the contempt of ourselves, is not natural to any person unless they are endowed with the Spirit of God. However, Adam was

created (and we in him) in a state of grace and endowed with the Spirit of God. By virtue of this, the soul of man was fixed on God as its end, to enjoy Him and to use all other things, including ourselves, for Him and in reference to His glory.

But when man, by the craftiness of Satan, was deceived and voluntarily turned away from God, he first turned inordinately to the love of himself and then to the eating of the forbidden fruit to attain a state of greater perfection. It was just for God to withdraw His Spirit from him and leave him in the condition he found him, turned away from God as his ultimate purpose, and instead turned toward self-love and the creature, not for God's sake but for his own sake and the satisfaction of his own desires. This is how we all were in Adam, turned away from the love of God to self-contempt, loving ourselves while despising God. Consequently, we were improperly turned towards the creature. This is the original corruption in which we are all born and justly deprived of the Spirit of God. Therefore, let us not blaspheme God or blame Him as the one who imposed this necessity upon us, but let us blame ourselves as the ones who corrupted ourselves. Or at least, if we cannot accept this, then let us be forthright and deny original sin and call Paul a liar when he says we were all born as children of wrath. However, we should know and consider that God's power in abandoning all of mankind for their sin in Adam is far inferior to the power He displayed in crucifying His own Son, His most innocent and holy Son, making His soul an offering for our sin. God has the power not only to annihilate the holiest (which is beyond doubt) but also to inflict any pain upon them. Medina boldly professes this, "Ex concordi omnium Theologorum Sententia" (according to the unanimous opinion of all theologians). And Vasquez the Jesuit acknowledges the same, although they say in this regard he should not act as a Judge but as the Lord of life and death.

I am not aware of the identity of Zanchi, who is mentioned here as one of the principal Doctors of the Synod of Arles (I presume this is his meaning, not the Synod of Dort). But if he had cited the book and provided the reference, I would have responded accordingly. I will be ready to do so as soon as I become acquainted with the specific details from the author Zanchi himself.

It is as clear as the sun that God, in His Word, declares Himself to be the lover of Jacob and the hater of Esau even before their births. Just as a potter, at his discretion, fashions vessels, some for honor and some for dishonor, God takes power unto Himself from the same lump to create some vessels of mercy and others of wrath. This is acknowledged in many places by Augustine.

All that is required is to show mercy to some and deny mercy to others. The scripture expressly testifies that God has mercy on whom He wills and hardens whom He wills.

There is no such scripture that states God desires all to be saved and none to perish. If this were true, then either all would be saved, or His will would be altered. None can resist His will (Romans 9:19). Augustine long ago declared that to say what this author does is to deny the first Article of our Creed regarding God's omnipotence.

The Apostle indeed states that God desires all to be saved and come to the knowledge of His truth, which is given as a reason why we must pray for all, even for kings and those in authority. Now, this "special" refers to a particular condition of people, and therefore the general term "all" must be understood to encompass all kinds of people, that is, some from every category. Just as Peter saw in the vessel let down to him "of all kinds" (Acts 10:12), meaning of all sorts. And in the same sense, it is said that "all Jerusalem and all Judea went forth to John" (Matthew 3:5), indicating that some from

all parts came to him. This should be sufficient to inspire every Christian to pray for their own king. For why may he not be among the number of God's elect just as easily as another?

Regarding reprobates, if they were known to us, following Augustine's advice, we should no more pray for them than for the devils themselves. "Si de aliquibus ita Ecclesia certa esset, ut qui sunt illi etiam nosset, qui licet adhuc in hac vita sint constituti, tamen praedestinati sunt in aeternum ignem ire cum diabolo: tam pro ijs non oraret quam pro ipso." (If the Church were so certain about some individuals that she knew who they were, and if, though they were still in this life, they were predestined to go into eternal fire with the devil, she would pray for them as little as for the devil.)

As Paul previously stated, Peter also professes of God that He is "οὐ βουλόμενος τινὰ ἀπολέσθαι" (not willing that any should perish). Is this to be the lover of all mankind? Then let that passage also testify that God is a lover of all mankind where it says, "They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." Yet, because we do not love to employ equivocation, as this author does, we openly consider the common doctrine. Passions are not attributed to God as regards His affection but as regards His effect. Accordingly, we distinguish the effects of God's love with respect to His creatures. These effects can be considered in terms of temporal life, spiritual life, or eternal life. The initial effects of love concerning temporal life, God bestows upon all who have life. He is said to save both man and beast, and the eyes of all creatures are said to wait upon Him. He hears the cries of ravens, and not even sparrows fall to the ground without divine providence. Even lions, while roaring after their prey, seek their food from God.

In this sense, He can be said to be both the Savior and lover of all humanity, but especially of those who believe. This pertains to the comfort of spiritual life and the joy of eternal life that He grants to them. This is essentially what Aquinas explained long ago: "Deus omnes homines diligit et etiam omnes creaturas, in quantum omnibus vult aliquod bonum, non tamen quodcunque bonum vult omnibus. In quantum igitur quibusdam non vult hoc bonum quod est vita aeterna, dicitur eos habere odio vel reprobare." (God loves all human beings and even all creatures in that He wishes some good to all, yet He does not wish every good to all. Therefore, inasmuch as He does not wish for some of them the good that is eternal life, He is said to hate or reprobate them.)

Regarding the assertion of swearing by Himself that He does not desire the death of a sinner, there is no such text at all. If there exists any such text in France, it is not fitting for our universities to follow foreign translations before the most authoritative translation of our own Church, which reads it as "I have no pleasure in the death of a sinner." As Piscator observes, a person may will something in which he takes no pleasure, just as a sick individual may not find pleasure in a bitter potion but is willing to take it to regain health. Similarly, a person may willingly part with a limb (although not taking pleasure in it) to save his life. As the words are presented, they directly contradict Christian reason. Does not God inflict death on thousands? Does not Scripture explicitly state that God works all things according to the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11)? Although He takes no pleasure in the death of the sinner, Scripture is just as clear in acknowledging that God delights in executing judgment, just as He delights in showing mercy. "I am the Lord who shows mercy, judgment, and righteousness in the earth, for in these things I delight," says the Lord. While it is said that He does not punish willingly or grieve the children of men, this must be rightly

understood. It means that He does not do these things for the sake of mere pleasure but is provoked to do so by something—namely, the sins of men. In contrast, He sometimes bestows favors solely according to the pleasure of His will, not so with punishments. In punishment, He acts as a tender Father chastising His beloved child. Though earthly fathers may sometimes chasten their children for their own pleasure, God always chastens us for our benefit, that we may share in His holiness. However, this is the way God deals with His children, not with others.

Indeed, God takes pleasure in a person's repentance but not in their death. As for the alleged double will that He pretends, we affirm in God only one will in proper speech, that is, His "voluntas propositi" (will of purpose or decree). In this sense, the Apostle speaks when he says, "Who hath resisted His will" (Romans 9:19), and the Psalmist declares, "Whatsoever the Lord will, that He doeth both in Heaven and in Earth." However, in scriptural phraseology, His commandments are also referred to as His will. But the object of one will is far different from the object of the other. This author and others like him seek to blur this distinction throughout, and it is no wonder that an evil conscience makes them hate the light.

Now, we assert that even God's commandment signifies the will of God in proper language, namely, what shall be our duty to do. Undoubtedly, whatever God commands us is His will, in proper language, that it shall be our duty to do. By the will of God, in distinction from the will signified by His commandment, we understand His purpose to have this or that brought to pass. For example, God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac; therefore, it is God's will to bind him to do this and make it his duty. However, it became evident in the sequel that it was not God's purpose for Isaac to be sacrificed. Similarly, He commanded Pharaoh to let Israel go;

this was Pharaoh's duty, and it was God's will to obligate him to do it. Yet, at the same time, God revealed to Moses that He would harden Pharaoh's heart, the consequence of which was that he would not let Israel go for a long time.

Now, let every reasonable person judge whether there is any deceit in this. If it is considered double-dealing, then they must charge the Scriptures with attributing such behavior to God, just as they charge us with the same.

As for desires and volitions, we acknowledge no such imperfections in God, as they are incompatible with His omnipotence.

Regarding God's invitation of a sinner to receive grace, we are unsure of what He means by grace, unless it refers to faith and repentance. Previously, by grace, he seemed to mean nothing less than faith and repentance. For as far as I could perceive, the more equivocal a term is, the more suitable it is for those who desire to play fast and loose. Now, God's invitation to this is nothing more than professing that through faith and repentance, they shall be saved; without faith and repentance, they shall be damned. And thus, through His ministers, He commands them, entreats them, and beseeches them to believe and repent, so that they may be reconciled to God and saved. But what is the minister's aim in this? Certainly, though they become all things to all people, their aim is only to save some by all means, even by entreating, exhorting, and beseeching. And who are these some? None but the elect, as in 2 Timothy 2:10, "I suffer all things for the elect's sake."

Paul learned this from the Lord Jesus when he came to Corinth. For there, the Lord spoke to him in a vision by night, saying, "Fear not, but speak and hold not thy peace, for I am with thee, and no man shall lay hands on thee, for I have much people in this city." Indeed,

Christ did not die for the Jews alone but to gather together into one the children of God who were scattered all over the world. He made this profession earlier: "Other sheep have I, which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, and they shall hear my voice: and there shall be one sheepfold and one shepherd."

In fact, how could it be otherwise than that God's ministers should treat everyone impartially, inviting all, entreating all, and beseeching all? Can they distinguish between the elect and the reprobate? Was God obligated to reveal to them who were elect and who were not?

Once again, we are well aware that humans are of a presumptuous nature, often presuming the power and liberty of their wills. As the saying goes, "Sifecissem fecissem," and accordingly, they are prone to say, "Si audivissem Evangelium &c didissem Evangelio."

The Arminians are familiar with this human nature. So what more can they expect from God than to have His Gospel preached to them? But if God also reveals to us the natural impotence that exists in man, contracted by the sin of Adam, it is to drive out such presumptuous thoughts from the hearts of humans. So that, as many as God is pleased to grant the grace of faith and repentance, they may give Him the glory for it. Shall proud individuals take advantage of the ministry of the Word, as if it proceeds indifferently towards all who hear it, to outface the prerogative of God's grace, which alone is effective in working both faith and repentance in us? Should they nourish the presumption of their own works, concerning the power and liberty of their own wills to do what is good? Whereas the revelations of our natural impotence should humble us and inspire us to wait upon God for its cure, not merely by heating, but through the sweet irradiation and inspiration of His Holy Spirit.

But even if Arminians continue to abhor this doctrine, we, by God's grace, shall continue to abhor the opposite. And why should their abhorrence of us be any better argument on their side than our abhorrence of theirs is an argument on ours? Yet, thanks be to God, our cause is not so desperate that we should resort to such base arguments or seek the approval of infidels. Though commonly, on the contrary, we are accused of having too great a correspondence with the Stoics of ancient times and with the Turks in these days. Indeed, I have read in Busbequins that when he explained to the Turks God's love for Jacob and hatred for Esau, they formed a favorable opinion of him, thinking he might embrace their belief. We are not ashamed to embrace the doctrine of Saint Paul in this matter. Not for the sake of the Turks, but for the sake of God's Word, we discuss with the Apostle about leading people to repentance. But where do any of our divines discuss leading people to damnation? As for the means of damnation, we know of none; we only know of the means of grace. On man's part, the means of damnation can only be sins, yet these cannot be called God's means or intended by Him as means. The intention of means arises from the intention of the end. But no man or devil intends to bring damnation upon himself as the end he intends to sin. Furthermore, the sin of man cannot be any means intended by God, for means are intended only by Him who is their Author. God is neither is nor can be the Author of any sin. As Augustine professed long ago, *malum (evil) lacks a causam efficientem but only has a causam deficientem*. And the cause of sin deficient is deficient culpably, which does not apply to God. He could indeed keep any creature from sin if He pleased, but if He chooses not to do so, it does not constitute any culpable defect on His part, for He is not obligated to preserve any person from sin. I willingly confess that the permission of sin is the work of God, and this He may and does intend, as a means to His own glorious ends, which is the manifestation of His mercy or His justice, not the damnation of

anyone. For the damnation of the creature is neither is nor can be God's end but His own glory. Solomon tells us that God made all things for Himself, even the wicked for the day of evil. He has created some, both angels and humans, and permitted them to sin and will damn them for their sin, to declare His glory through vindictive justice. Even less is the sin of man God's end, by certain means, leading them to it. This author dissembles this throughout, contenting himself (as I suppose) with his own ignorance in this matter, or, worse yet, dissembling what he means by the generality and indefiniteness of the term, allowing the affections of his favorably inclined readers to shape and specify them as they please. As long as it is congruously adapted to their own tenet, it will be accepted by him, even if their conceptions prove to be contradictory to one another.

The cause of sin, I know of none, except the will of the creature. There are many occasions for sin, all of which, as Arminius confesses, are brought about and administered by God's providence. God often uses these occasions to test and strengthen the virtue of His children, enabling them to resist the temptations of Satan, who seeks to corrupt their souls through such occasions. With others, God does not deal in the same way but leaves them to themselves, either according to His own pleasure, for He is not obligated to grant strength to resist temptation, or, in some cases, quite deservedly so. This is especially true when individuals, out of the pride of their hearts, believe they are capable of resisting occasions for sin and keeping themselves undefiled by them, as well as resisting the temptations of Satan.

It is just and fitting for God to treat His own children in a similar manner when they become careless, and the fear of God is not as vigilant within them as it should be. They ought to wait upon God,

committing themselves and their ways to God's providence, to be protected and guided by Him.

What Homer conveyed through the character of Achilles, speaking to Ulysses about Agamemnon, we are reasonably familiar with.

"But wherein can we be justly accused of imputing any such hypocrisy to God? Through His commandments, He reveals our duties, but through His purpose, He decrees what shall or shall not be done. God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac, making it his duty to offer Isaac, yet at the same time, He determined that Isaac should not be sacrificed. When Abraham was about to sacrifice him, God intervened to prevent it. Do we read that Abraham complained of any hypocrisy in God because of this, or of His double-dealing? Nothing but gross ignorance hinders our adversaries from recognizing such a clear distinction, which is entirely just and free from any hint of duplicity or hypocrisy. Or perhaps they are guilty of gross dissimulation in not acknowledging it."

The Second Section.

Now, if this new Evangelist tells him that the passages of Scripture which say that God would have all men to be saved ought to be understood as referring to some of every nation and condition, the Infidel will reply that then the Scripture should, with even more reason, say that God would have all men to be damned, because in every nation there are far more of these than of the former. It would be logical to take the denomination from the greater number. But then, perhaps, the Catechist may say that God indeed desires the conversion of all men but only approves of those things in

themselves, and does not provide all men with the necessary means to obtain them. Upon hearing this, our Catechumen will be more astounded and ask how it is possible that God, by an absolute and irrevocable decree, could ordain that those things which He naturally detests and hates should come to pass, while those things which He loves and approves should not. If it were possible, the Catechist would make him turn into a Manichee and believe that an evil God, the Author of all evil, is in constant conflict with the good God who loves righteousness and hates wickedness. An honest man would have just reason to be angry with anyone who interprets his words in the manner that this Catechist interprets those of Holy Scripture. This interpretation implies that God is the Author of all the wickedness that has been, is, or will be in the world. However, the other person will counter that he is confusing sin with the act, and that God causes the second but not the first. But upon understanding the mystery, he will argue that the greatest Doctors of both Synods have written that God has predestinated men to both the means and the end. The act is not the cause of damnation in and of itself but becomes so because of the sin. Those who are under the decree of reprobation are no more capable of abstaining from sin than avoiding their damnation.

Consideration: I have read that some in Scotland, at the beginning of the Reformation, suspected that the New Testament was the work of Erasmus and rejected it, calling for the old one. However, this Author, who calls us new Evangelists, seems to care little about whether it's new or old. Throughout his writing, there is very little resemblance to the Word of God. Yet here, he mentions passages of Scripture in detail, and all he attributes to it is the statement that God would have all men to be saved. He does not cite or quote any passages, and I am not aware of any Scripture passage that affirms this.

S. Paul says that God will have all to be saved in 1 Timothy 2, but nowhere does it say that God would have all men to be saved.

Regarding that passage in 1 Timothy 2, Saint Augustine, 1200 years ago, interpreted it as referring to "genera singulorum" and proved it to be in line with the analogy of scriptural language, rejecting the sense that this Author embraces, as it would undermine the first article of our Creed regarding God's omnipotence. Therefore, Saint Augustine, according to this Author's criticism, is the new Evangelist, and this Author is the old Evangelist, if he can be considered an Evangelist at all. What sober Christian would not prefer to be regarded as a new Evangelist with Augustine (if concurring with him is considered being a new Evangelist) rather than an old Evangelist or none at all, as this Author appears to be?

Furthermore, Gerardus Vossius, who is thought to have worked extensively on conveying to us the new Doctrine of Antiquity on these points, interprets God's will regarding the salvation of all as "voluntas conditionata" – that God will have all to be saved, namely, if they believe. This "voluntas conditionata" is not denied by Augustine, nor do we deny it. However, we believe it is not entirely in line with this passage from Paul, who attributes not only the salvation of all but also their coming to the knowledge of His truth to the will of God. Vossius does not explain the condition, as far as I remember. However, the same Vossius acknowledges that the Apostle, in that passage, by saying, "I will that prayers be made for all men, for Kings, &c.," includes the species in the genus. This implies that by the word "Kings," he specifies the general term "all men" that he mentioned earlier. Now, this specification is clearly a special condition, and consequently, by "all men," we can understand all conditions of men, as Piscator argues. Therefore, it is sufficient to justify that it is the duty of every Christian congregation to pray for

their rulers and governors because even among Kings, God has some who belong to Him. Hence, their own Kings may be among them, for all they know to the contrary.

So, "πάντα" (panta), which Peter in the linen vessel let down unto him, at the farthest extent, could only signify some of all sorts of four-footed beasts. And if we extend Saint Paul's words to mean all and everyone, we must necessarily fall into one of these two manifest absurdities: either to maintain that God's will is changed, or to deny that God is omnipotent, seeing He can be resisted. For it is most certain that not all are saved, and it is most certain that not all come to the knowledge of His truth.

Now, God cannot be changed (Malachi 3:6). "I the Lord am not changed" (James 1:17). With Him is no variableness, nor shadow of change, and His will cannot be resisted (Romans 9:19).

If this Author chooses to maintain the contrary, let the impartial judge which of us is to be regarded as the new Evangelist, this Author or us. Or rather, consider whether he is not to be reckoned as a plain Atheist rather than any Evangelist.

But then, he says, "The Infidel will reply that the scripture ought with much more reason to say that God would have all men to be damned, because in every nation and condition there are far more of these than of them, and how that in all reason the denomination should be taken from the greatest number." To this, I answer that the Infidel mentioned here is this Author, for he does not cite anyone else who has argued in this manner, whether Infidel or other. But I deny that the scripture ought, with much more reason or with any reason, to say that God would have all men to be damned, even if it were the case that in every nation and condition there are more of these than

of them. And his argument based on the denomination being taken from the majority is irrelevant to the present discussion.

The question here is about the interpretation of Saint Paul's phrase, whether the word "All" is to be understood as referring to all kinds or to all individuals. Thus, the rule of denomination taken from the majority is not pertinent to this discussion. The question is only whether "genera singulorum" or "singula generum" is meant here, not whether some of all kinds or all of every kind is implied. Once it is resolved that "genera singulorum" is meant, it can be further questioned whether "genera singulorum" implies every particular of these kinds or only some of them. For it is well known that the phrase is indifferent to either interpretation, and "genera singulorum" are preserved intact whether in some particulars, many, or all. It is like saying the species of the Sun is maintained exactly as well in the one Sun that shines by day in the Firmament as if there were twenty Suns.

Secondly, even if the reason given based on the majority were relevant, it is not pertinent to the Apostle's purpose in this passage to say that God would have all men to be damned. This would not be a convincing reason for them to pray for all, including Kings and those in authority. If the Apostle were to say this, it would be like saying, "I want you to pray for all because God wants all to be damned." As Saint Augustine said, if the Church knew who were predestined to eternal fire with the devil and his Angels, they would not pray for such individuals any more than they would pray for the devil himself. Therefore, this Author's subtlety fails miserably in this argument, and he exposes more weakness than any sober and wise Infidel would do. Furthermore, the instances from scripture are clearly against him. When every footed beast was seen by Peter in a vision, it is likely that they were not the majority of every kind but rather the

smaller ones of every kind. Accordingly, this Author might conclude that, considering denominations are taken from the majority, it is more accurate to say that Peter did not see every four-footed beast because certainly the majority of every kind was not present. Yet speaking of it in this sense in that case was irrelevant and rather contrary to what follows: "Rise, Peter, kill, and eat."

In a similar manner, since it is highly likely that more people stayed at home, both in Jerusalem and in Judea, than those who went out to John, and according to this Author's rule, it would be more appropriate to say that all Jerusalem and all Judea stayed at home when John the Baptist preached. Yet, this would be incongruous and contrary to the Evangelist's purpose. The Evangelist's intention was to emphasize the authority of John through the gathering of people from all parts to him. Therefore, when he writes that all Judea and all Jerusalem went forth to him, the meaning can only be that some people from various parts of Judea and Jerusalem flocked to him. Thus, we see how this Author's attempt to oppose the grace of God by adopting the perspective of an Infidel leads to a lack of common sense. Such is the result when individuals prioritize the dictates of their own minds over the oracles of God.

Next, he desires to address a distinction made by our divines regarding "voluntas approbans" and "voluntas decernens." However, this Author either does not understand this distinction correctly, especially as it pertains to the member he focuses on, or he is deliberately misrepresenting it. Part of the problem stems from his intellectual limitations, and part from the corruption of his intentions, which defile his writing throughout.

In our understanding, "voluntas approbans" is subordinate to "voluntas praecipiens." Whatever God commands to be done, He

approves of when it is done, and He would approve of it in anyone if it were done by them. In this sense, the will of approval is distinguished from the will of God's decree, just as the will of God's commandment is. The difference lies in the fact that God's commandment precedes the act that is commanded, while God's approval follows the act. However, this Author interprets "voluntas approbans" in a different sense, suggesting that it precedes the act as if it were synonymous with what the Scholastics call "voluntas beneplaciti" (the will of good pleasure). This is not the case, as "voluntas beneplaciti" is synonymous with "voluntas propositi" or "voluntas decernens," representing the will of God's decree. It denotes what God wills to come to pass, whether it is good or evil – good by His ordination and evil by His permission. Even the Jews and Gentiles, Herod and Pilate, when they conspired against the holy Son of God, did nothing except what God's hand and God's counsel had foreordained to be done. Therefore, taking "God's will of approval" as this Author does, as something that precedes the action, it is equivalent to "God's decree," and therefore, it cannot be a distinct element from it.

Certainly, the sacrifice of Isaac would have been accepted by God, and Abraham's obedience in this matter would have been approved by God if God had not restrained Abraham from carrying out what was commanded. However, God's restraint indicates that He had determined that when it came to the actual moment, Isaac should not be sacrificed. This is what is called "voluntas beneplaciti" by the Schoolmen – the will of God's good pleasure. Similarly, if Pharaoh had let Israel go in obedience to God's command, God would have approved it. Nevertheless, it is evident from the revelation made to Moses that God had hardened Pharaoh's heart so that he would not let Israel go. This is the truth we uphold, regardless of this Author's

new Evangelist-like ideas, derived solely from the dictates of his own mind.

Moreover, the teaching that God ordains that many things which He naturally detests and hates should come to pass is not a new Gospel from us but is the very doctrine of the New Testament. For instance, the ignominious treatment of the Son of God and Saviour of the world, carried out by Herod and Pontius Pilate along with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, was as naturally detested and hated by God as any actions ever have been from the beginning of the world to this day. Yet, the holy Apostles unanimously proclaim that both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together against the holy Son of God to carry out what God's hand and counsel had determined and predetermined to be done. Thus, the doctrine that God ordains that things He naturally detests and hates should come to pass is as old as the teachings of Saint Augustine and even as old as the doctrine of the Holy Ghost. This Author should be cautious about how he portrays us as inventing a new Gospel, as there is no evidence of this in the New Testament, the Old Testament, or in any credible ancient sources. His ideas appear to be concoctions of his own imagination.

However, we are not lacking clear evidence of the truth of this, which clearly demonstrates that they must either deny God's foreknowledge of evil or be forced to admit that God decrees it shall come to pass by His permission. Evil cannot be foreknown by God as future, and that from eternity, unless it is indeed future, and that from eternity, as all confess. Now, let us rationally inquire how the crucifixion of the Son of God became future, and that from eternity. It did not occur by its own nature, for if so, then all things, even the most contingent, would become future by the necessity of their nature. However, if these things, by their own nature, were merely possible, their

transition from the state of mere possibility to the state of being future could not have occurred without a cause. What could be the cause of this transition? Certainly not anything external to God, as this transition existed from eternity. From eternity, God foreknew them as future; therefore, from eternity, they were indeed future. But apart from God, nothing existed from eternity, and hence, nothing could be the cause of that which existed from eternity. Therefore, the cause of this transition must be found within the nature of God, or nowhere. Let us inquire, then, what within the nature of God could be a suitable cause for this. The knowledge of God alone cannot be the cause, as it presupposes things to be future rather than making them so. It follows, therefore, that the decree of God, and that alone, is the cause of this transition. If, to avoid this conclusion, they attribute this cause to the essence of God, I further argue that if the essence of God is the cause, it must act either necessarily or freely. Not as working necessarily, for then all things would proceed from God as a result of the necessity of His nature, which would be atheistic and would utterly negate divine providence. If it acts as working freely, then this is tantamount to confessing that God's free will is the cause, which is indeed true. However, this Author, like his counterparts, is quite cautious. He does not deny that God has ordained that those things detested and hated by Him should come to pass; he only seems to deny that God has ordained it by an absolute and irrevocable decree. So, he appears willing to confess that whatever evil exists or has occurred in the world comes to pass by God's decree. His objection is primarily about the nature or manner of this decree – whether it is absolute or conditional (for I do not understand what other category they invent in this case as distinct from an absolute decree), and similarly, whether the decree is irrevocable or revocable.

Now, regarding this latter distinction, to justify some of God's decrees as revocable, he must not only create a new Gospel but also a new understanding of God's Word throughout. For if God's decrees are revocable, then He is also changeable, which contradicts the testimony of both the Old and New Testaments, as has been previously demonstrated.

Similarly, Bradwardine demonstrated long ago that no will of God is conditional but absolute throughout, which I understand in terms of the act of willing or decreeing. His demonstration is as follows: If there were any conditional will in God, then the condition of that will is either willed by God or not. If it is not willed by Him, then it must be acknowledged that something can occur in the world without the will of God, which he considers a great absurdity. But if that condition is also in some sense willed by God, then either absolutely or conditionally. If absolutely, then the thing conditioned shall also be absolutely willed by God.

For example, if God wills that a man shall be saved on condition that he believes and also absolutely resolves to give him faith and make him believe, this is effectively an absolute resolution to save him.

But if it is argued that the condition spoken of is willed by God, not absolutely, but conditionally, then a path is opened to an infinite progression, which all disclaim. Regarding that second condition, I will renew the previous argument, inquiring whether it is willed at all by God or not, and if it is, whether it is willed absolutely or conditionally. So either we must rest in something that is absolutely willed by God, and consequently, all that depends on it as conditioned shall likewise be absolutely willed by God, or a progression from one condition to another, endlessly, cannot be avoided.

Lastly, if any will of God is not absolute but conditional, then surely the decrees of salvation and damnation are conditional, even regarding the very acts of God's decrees. But I will clearly demonstrate that, in Christian reasoning, this cannot be. For if anything is the condition of the decree of salvation, then either by necessity of nature or by God's constitution. Not by necessity of nature, as is evident of itself and acknowledged by all; but neither by God's constitution, as I prove thus: If by God's constitution, then God constituted or ordained that upon the establishment of such a condition (namely faith, etc.), He would ordain men to salvation.

Please take note of the glaring absurdity here. God ordained that He would ordain, or God decreed that He would decree. In this case, the eternal act of God's decree and ordination becomes the object of His decree or ordination, whereas it is well known that the objects of God's decrees are only temporal things, not eternal things.

The same argument can be applied with equal clarity to disprove the conditional decree of condemnation. As for this Author's reasoning on this matter, namely, that in this way the things God hates will come to pass, and the things He loves will not, observe the fallacy of this argument, which is only plausible to the ignorant or those who close their eyes to the evident truth. The things mentioned here are not considered in their general nature but only in the specific instances of certain kinds.

God desires obedience to every commandment of His to come to pass, but not every possible particular act of obedience. For if God were to prolong the lives of His children, more specific acts of obedience would occur than there are currently.

Similarly, if Saul had been converted many years earlier, which was undoubtedly not impossible for God, many more gracious acts would

have been performed by him.

Likewise, if God had shortened the lives of wicked individuals, many evil actions of theirs would have been prevented.

But would any wise person then challenge God for allowing those things to come to pass which He detests or for decreeing them to come to pass by allowing them? Or for hindering many specific good acts that He loves? Especially considering that He is able to make even evil actions suitable for demonstrating His glory, either through mercy or justice. On the other hand, His glory is sufficiently manifested through the obedience performed by His children.

Lastly, if God loves obedience, does He not most of all love perfect obedience? Yet it is not His pleasure to grant any of His children, in this life, such a measure of grace as to keep them from all sin. And even if He grants them not longer life, they cannot perform more, though, as long as they live, they lack not the means of grace, nor do reprobates, living in the Church of God where the Gospel is preached, lack the means of obeying God. I know of no other means of obeying God.

Now, will any wise and sober person find this anything strange in the course of God's providence? But such are the arguments of this Arminian sect, much like the fruit of Sodom, fair to see on the outside, but if you crush them, they turn to ashes and scattered soot, as Solinus wrote. Yet this Author is so enamoured with his own invention, like Ixion with his cloud, that he adds furthermore that if it were possible (and why not possible for an Infidel to become a Manichee, and an Arminian to become an Atheist, if he is not one already?), His Catechist would make him turn Manichee and think that this evil God or evil beginning, who is the Author of all evil, has continual war with that good God who loves righteousness. This is

like cheating in a game of dice, which he sneaks in when substantial material fails him, to deceive his reader when he cannot inform him, and to flatter his proselyte when he lacks all good means to strengthen his faith. He assumes an evil God, as the author of all evil maintained on our side, and that he wars with the good God who loves righteousness, even though no such accusation was made before. Yet here he introduces it as if it had not only been mentioned before but proven. This is the froth of his passion, by which he is enamoured with his previous argumentation, even though it is as vile as any that a sober person has ever encountered. Apparently, Augustine was a Manichee when he boldly professed that, "Nothing happens unless God wills it to happen, either by allowing it or by doing it Himself." The Apostles were all Manichees when, with one accord, they declared that both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, gathered together against the holy Son of God to do what God's hand and counsel had predetermined to occur. Perhaps Arminius himself, in this shallow cap's judgment, was a Manichee when he said, "God willed to fulfill the measure of his sins for Ahab," and that when God permits a person to will something, whether good or evil, "it is necessary that no argument can persuade him not to will it." Bradwardine, no doubt, shall be considered a Manichee in this Author's deep and judicious judgment when he professes that, "Regarding whatever God permits, His actual will is concerned with the same." Yet the Manichees denied that the books of the Old Testament were the word of God, or at least the word of the good God. Indeed, they provide ample testimony of God's secret providence in evil. In my opinion, the Arminian faction is far more likely to agree with the Manichees in this regard than we are. As for the interpretation of the passage of Scripture he alluded to but misrepresented, I have already addressed it and justified our interpretation through the analogy of the text of Scripture phrase, clear reasoning, and the authority of

Augustine, who concurs with us on this matter. Regarding his implied argument that an honest person might be angry at having his words interpreted in such a manner, I readily agree. Truly, my desire is for everyone in my congregation to believe and repent so that they may be saved. However, I have no power to bring this about, but God is armed with the power to accomplish it. Therefore, if it were His will or desire to save all, all would be saved. For who has resisted His will?

But this is the usual course of Arminians, to compare man with God; and not only that, but to build arguments upon such a comparison, as if the weak desires of man were to be attributed to God. Yet this Author does not directly present us with such conclusions but insinuates them cunningly, attempting to creep into a person's affections like a serpent to infect them.

He talks about how it follows that God is the Author of all wickedness, yet provides no premises from which to draw this conclusion, leaving it to us to pick them out of his flawed arguments, perhaps from God's decree, by which things are decreed according to our opinion, but he introduced it without citing the author or place where it is stated.

Indeed, these individuals are so zealous in opposing God's decree that they seem inclined (from the tone of their discourse) to deny that foolish repentance and obedience are decreed by God. Some have not hesitated to profess that God decreed contingency but not the contingent things themselves, which is essentially the same as professing that God does not decree anyone's faith and repentance.

However, Augustine is clear: "Nothing happens unless God wills it to happen, either by allowing it or by doing it Himself." The Scriptures are explicit regarding the betrayal, mocking, scourging, buffeting,

and crucifixion of the Son of God; specifically, that they did what God had foreordained to be done.

Hence, he deduces that God is the Author of all wickedness. I have encountered many dissolute discourses from this sect, but I have not come across one quite like this before. Regarding wickedness, we agree with Augustine that none can be the Author of it as an efficient cause; the cause of wickedness is merely a deficient one. Now, man may be the Author of wickedness by doing what he ought not to do or failing to do what he ought to do. However, this cannot apply to God in any way, such as that He would do what He ought not to do or fail to do what He ought to do. Therefore, to determine that the crucifixion of the Son of God is equivalent to being the Author of the wickedness committed in the crucifixion of the Son of God, Scripture makes God the Author of wickedness, according to the understanding of this divine.

The distinction between the sinful act and its sinfulness, and the understanding that God is the cause of one and only the permitter of the other, is not unique to our doctrine but is also found in Arminius' teachings. As for the objection proposed here by the Doctors of the Synods, namely, that God has predestined men to both the means and the end, it is of such a lowly condition that if this Author did not come primarily to dispute, but to vent his spleen and gall, he may not have cared much about speaking sense or nonsense, as it is more convenient to confuse things and he little or nothing cares to clarify anything. The one who intends an end also intends the means, a truth suggested by the very light of nature. Now, the end that God aims at is His own glory, for He made all things for Himself. If He intends to manifest His glory through vindictive justice, it is necessary for Him to create, permit sin, allow individuals to persist in sin, and condemn them for their sins. Here we have both the end

and the means intended by God, as this Author puts it in his own words. The sinful act is the cause of damnation when it is committed freely by individuals, and although the sinfulness is solely from man, the act is as much from God as it is from man, as all sides nowadays confess, even Arminius himself. However, this Author behaves as if he would deny that the act itself is from God, not by presenting a strong argument but through loose discourse. I have long expected that they would come to this point, but I expected them to bring reason with them, not to beg the question in such a base manner, as this Author does. We acknowledge that reprobates have no power to abstain from sin, as reprobation signifies the denial of grace. By denying this, this Author must be willing to confess that people can abstain from sin without grace and that they can regenerate themselves. Yet the Apostle tells us that those who are in the flesh cannot please God, and our Savior said that no one can come to Him unless the Father draws him. Therefore, individuals do not hear His words because they are not of God. This discourse, at its core, seems to maintain that neither faith nor repentance are gifts of God but rather the works of man's free will. However, we do not agree with the comparison that a person can no more abstain from sin than avoid damnation. Although a person cannot avoid damnation even if they wanted to, if a person wanted to abstain from sin, they could certainly, to some extent, do so. Sin primarily resides in the will, as does the act of abstaining from sin. However, such foreign comparisons are frequently seen among Arminians, just as lice are commonly found among beggars.

The Third Section.

The Catechumenist will then add further: If the Gospel, according to the doctrine of the Synods, is preached to most people only for the purpose of increasing their damnation, then he will no longer listen to it. He believes that he is most likely among the majority, not the minority. He recalls reading in Calvin's works that God directs His word to them, making them more deaf and showing them the light of the Gospel to blind their eyes. Thus, those who never heard the word are less miserable than those who could not believe because God did not grant them sufficient grace to believe. Finally, our Catechumenist will argue that if God's decree is as the Catechist proposes, it must necessarily follow that both of them labor in vain. This is because every person, before coming into the world, is already enrolled in one of two registers, either of life or death. It is no more possible to be erased from one register or the other than it is for God to deny Himself.

The Catechist, fearing that his proselyte will turn away from him, tells him further that it is not for them to investigate these secrets. There is no visible mark to distinguish the elect from the reprobate. Even the elect themselves do not know of their election before their calling, which is sometimes delayed until the last hour of their lives. Every person should be ready to answer and obey God when He calls. Only the profane and reprobate claim that people labor in vain because those whom God has elected to salvation are also elected to faith and good works.

However, these arguments will only provoke our Catechumenist further. He will not say, or at least think, that it does not matter to distinguish the elect from the reprobate in particular. He believes that it is sufficient to know in general that everyone is necessarily either one or the other since no one can do anything (before their calling) that may avail them. Therefore, they should postpone all

things until then. Our saving calling works with such force that disobedience is impossible. It would be extreme folly to hasten God's plan through human industry and study. Even our prayers would be in vain since nothing can please God without faith, which is not obtained before our calling. The question is not about the character of the speaker, whether they are profane or not, but about the quality of the doctrine, which inevitably makes them so.

"Universus mundus exercet histrioniam," says one; this was never more true (I think) than of the Arminian nation today. And this Author seems to be a master in this art. It's a great pity he wasn't chosen to be the master of the Revels. Here he invents his Catechumenist (an unbeliever) to be well-versed in the Synods of Dort and Arles and well-read in Calvin's institutions, thus advancing his present drama.

But where, I pray, do these Synods of Dort and Arles teach that the Gospel is preached to the majority only for the purpose of their greater damnation? I am entirely unaware of this in the Synod of Dort, and as for the Synod of Arles, this writing is the first time I have heard of it. Had he cited their words without mentioning the source, we might have had something to work with. We all know that the Gospel is preached by humans, but at the command of God. Is the minister's purpose in preaching it the damnation of those to whom they preach it? Or is he attributing this solely to God's purpose? Did it become him to confuse these? I cannot believe that any of our theologians would ever claim such a thing about God's purpose in preaching the Gospel. God's purpose is so explicitly stated in Scripture to be His own glory that even when He professes that God made the wicked for the day of evil, He does not indicate in any way that damnation is the intended end but rather His own glory. In

the same passage, it is stated that God made all things for Himself, which is equivalent to saying for His own glory.

Indeed, I find that God's manifestation of His eternal power and Godhead through His works was so that they might be without excuse. Similarly, the preaching of the Gospel may justly aim to remove all excuses, as explained by Augustine in "De Gratia et Libero Arbitrio," Chapter 2. Augustine asks, "How can they be said to be without excuse, except in that excuse which human pride is accustomed to offer, saying, 'If I had known, I would have done it. Therefore, I did not do it because I did not know.'" Likewise, by preaching the Gospel, the excuse is taken away, whereby a person might say, "If I had heard, I would have believed or repented. Therefore, I did not believe or repent because I did not hear or receive admonition." Now, this excuse is not taken away only from the majority but from everyone who hears the Gospel. Just as God sent Ezekiel to the Jews, saying they would know that a prophet had been among them, by this, they cannot be ignorant that some preacher or another has been sent to them. It is true that not everyone needs such an excuse, namely those who obey it, but only those who, in the hardness of their hearts, resist it. However, the excuse is removed from all indiscriminately.

Again, I agree with Augustine's view that the Gospel may be preached to many reprobates so that they may make greater improvements in their lives and be punished more leniently. Furthermore, I see no reason why we should assume that in every congregation where the Gospel is preached, the majority of them are reprobates. In fact, I see no reason why we should despair of anyone in orthodox congregations, even if the majority of those to whom the Gospel is preached are reprobates. Consider how many different

sects there are among Christians, with some, if not most of them, holding dangerous, even damnable heresies.

There are Christians in Egypt and the Abyssinian Empire, all of them Copts, combining circumcision with the Gospel of Christ. And Saint Paul has declared to the Galatians, "If you are circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing." Then there are Nestorians and Armenians in the East.

The Greek Church denies the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son. Furthermore, they are filled with superstition.

As for the Church of Rome, how do they diminish the role of Christ? What corruption of God's truth with error and heresy can be found among them? What corruption of the worship and service of God with superstition and idolatry? Yet, despite all this, the Gospel is preached among them. What valid reason is there to assume that by joining us, anyone should suspect themselves to be among the reprobates rather than God's elect, even if the majority of those to whom the Gospel is preached were reprobates? But let's assume that in every congregation, the majority are reprobates. If they are already reprobates before the Infidel joins us, with the number of reprobates exceeding the elect, what reason does he have to believe that he belongs to the reprobate rather than God's elect? Moreover, his situation is different from all the others, as all the rest have been born and raised in the Church of God. Therefore, it is more difficult to distinguish between true faith and hypocrisy among them. However, in the case of an Infidel converting to Christianity, this transformation is so significant that it is more likely to provide him with better evidence and assurance of his election than others who have not undergone such a conversion from Infidelity to Christianity. For all who are raised in the Church of God, whatever their inner

thoughts, have always professed Christianity. Additionally, why should it be more probable that he belongs to the reprobates than anyone else simply because the majority are reprobates? If it is equally probable for everyone, then it would be most likely that everyone is a reprobate, which contradicts the assumption. Lastly, even if it were more likely, as he claims, should this be a sufficient reason not to listen at all to the Gospel's doctrine? The common practice of the world proves this to be false, as seen in people's willingness to participate in lotteries, where it is certain that the majority will experience losses. At the pool of Bethesda, many waited for the stirring of the waters by an Angel, yet only one could be healed, the one who managed to get into the pool first. We even read of a cripple who waited among the rest. It seemed unlikely that he could get in before the others, yet he waited in hope. And what if some become more hardened upon hearing the word? Is this any reason for us to be discouraged from presenting ourselves before the Lord and humbling ourselves at His feet to hear His word?

In his narrative, he invents that his proselyte recalls something from Calvin, specifically, that God directs His word to them in such a way as to make them more deaf and shows them the light of the Gospel to blind their eyes. However, he does not specify where Calvin says this. But aren't these Calvin's words that he criticizes? "Behold, he directs his voice to them, but that they may become more deaf; he kindles the light but to make them blinder." Now, Calvin is not speaking out of his own mind here, but rather represents the Word of God as signifying this in his judgment. He refers to the passage immediately related by him, starting with the word "Ecce" (Behold), and the passages quoted by him earlier from Isaiah 6:9 and John 12:34. His words are as follows: "But Isaiah's prophecy presses us still more. For thus he was commissioned by the Lord: 'Go and say to this people, "Hearing you will hear, and shall not understand; and seeing

you will see, and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." (Isaiah 6:9-10). Based on these passages, Calvin says, "Behold, he directs his voice to them, but that they may become more deaf; he kindles the light, but to make them blinder."

Now, this Author does not criticize Calvin either for a false translation of the Prophets or for a false interpretation of them. He merely takes Calvin's words out of context, as if Calvin had expressed this doctrine at length based on his own teaching, without referencing any particular passage of Holy Scripture. By concealing the place where Calvin wrote this, he thought he could avoid exposing his unethical behavior in this matter.

Yet Calvin does not say that God, by His word, makes them more deaf or blinds their eyes, as this Author wrongly attributes to Calvin's words. He merely indicates God's intention that they would become more deafened and blinded. Saint Peter, in express terms, essentially confirms this when he speaks of some who stumble at Christ, calling Him a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. These individuals stumble at the word due to their disobedience, and they were ordained for this purpose. But how do they become more deafened and blinded upon hearing the word? As in Acts 19:9, it is mentioned that some were hardened and disobeyed, speaking evil of the way of God before the multitude. It happens in the same way that Saint Paul says some are worsened by God's law, as he mentions in Romans, "Sin, he says, took occasion by the commandment and wrought in me all manner of concupiscence." So, it is their own corruption that increasingly blinds, deafens, and hardens them, along with the influence of the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:3). God only

refrains from curing their natural infidelity and impenitence, which He finds in them. In this regard, He is said to harden and blind them, meaning that He withholds mercy, as stated in Romans 9:18, "God hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth." Our Savior was not hesitant to proclaim to the Jews, "Therefore we hear not My words because ye are not of God" (John 8:47). Additionally, in John 12:39, it is written, "Therefore they could not believe because that Isaiah saith again, 'He hath blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, that they should not see with their eyes nor understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.'"

Yet this Author, revealing his antagonism to the Spirit of Christ and His Apostles, reproaches us with this very doctrine, which implies that some cannot believe because God would not give them sufficient grace to believe. Essentially, he reproaches us for asserting that all men are born in sin, and that infidelity and impenitence are innate in all, and only God can remedy it. One might wonder why they do not hold Moses accountable as well and reproach him for saying to the Jews, "Ye have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the Land of Egypt unto Pharaoh, and unto all his Servants, and unto all his Land: The great temptations which thine eyes have seen, those great miracles and wonders. Yet the Lord hath not given you an heart to perceive, and eyes to see, and ears to hear unto this day." (Deuteronomy 29:2-4). How can men see when they have no eyes or hear when they have no ears? Nevertheless, it remains true, according to God's Word, that it would have been better for some never to have known the way of righteousness than, after knowing it, to depart from the holy Commandment given to them.

The practice of this Author is to juxtapose these doctrines of Holy Scripture in opposition to one another simply because it does not align with the Spirit of this Evangelist.

Indeed, if people wanted to believe but couldn't, or wanted to repent but couldn't, or wanted to obey but couldn't, then their impotency would not worsen their condemnation by resisting the means of grace. However, we assert that this impotency is purely moral, arising from the corruption of their will. They find so much delight in this corruption that they are ready to confront anyone who points it out to them. They refuse to acknowledge any such impotency, believing themselves perfectly capable of understanding the things of God and submitting to His law. In their various pursuits, they perceive they have ample will, perhaps even too much. As it is said, "Libertas sine gratia non est libertas sed contumacia" (Freedom without grace is not freedom but obstinacy).

And in all the sins that we commit, we find ourselves free enough, yet we have learned to give God the glory of governing our wills and keeping us from sin by His grace. That everyone is already enrolled in one of the two registers, either of life or death, before coming into the world, I thought no Christian would have the audacity to deny.

Doesn't the Apostle profess that God chose us before the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)? And isn't reprobation as ancient as election, as they are intimately connected? But this Author, perhaps wishing to appear as an old Evangelist, or even an Atheist, disputes against this concept. Yet what he does is essentially argue against the explicit word of God. Surely, God's decrees cannot be changed any more than God can deny Himself. Nor does it follow that labor is in vain, for God, who ordains man unto salvation, also ordains him unto faith, which is brought about by certain means.

Had not God ordained what children a man should have before he came into the world? Is it, therefore, in vain for him to be with a

woman, as if by virtue of God's decree he would have children whether he associated with a woman or not?

This fallacious sophistry was refuted long ago, as Cicero shows in his book "De Fato," acknowledged even by Carneades himself, despite being a staunch opponent of the Stoics. Origen also discussed this after them, as Turnebus notes in relation to Cicero's "De Fato." In Acts 27:22, Paul tells those sailing with him, "Be of good cheer, for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, save of the ship only." This was spoken to heathen men, but did they consider all their efforts in vain to save themselves? Far from it. The mariners sought to provide for themselves by stealing away from the ship. S. Paul declared in verse 31, "Except these men stay in the ship, ye cannot be safe." In verse 42, the Centurion commanded that those who could swim should cast themselves first into the sea and go to land. The others used boards and pieces of the ship, and as a result, they all safely reached the land. It appears that these heathens had a better understanding of God's providence than this old Evangelist.

This is our answer, not as this Author falsely portrays it to suit his narrative. For what is the secret in believing that all are enrolled in one of the two registers of life and death before they come into the world? The mystery lies in who belongs to which register. However, the fact that our names are written in heaven is knowable in this life; otherwise, why would our Savior admonish His disciples not to rejoice that demons were subject to them, but rather to rejoice that their names were written in heaven? Why would S. Peter exhort us to make our election and calling sure if it were impossible for a person to be assured of it in this world? The Apostle was assured of the election of the Thessalonians through their faith, love, and hope. The Evangelist also professes in Acts 13:48, "as many as believed were ordained to everlasting life."

As for assurance of reprobation, we know of none except through final infidelity or impenitence, and the sin against the Holy Ghost.

What the infidel or the Arminian Catechumenist will say or think, we have no reason to regard, but we must assess the judgment and soundness with which he conducts himself in his discourse. We assert that it is essential for a person's conscience to be able to distinguish themselves in particular from a reprobate, and this can be achieved through faith, repentance, and holiness, and by no other means. It is not sufficient for a person's comfortable walk to know only in general that everyone is necessarily either of one group or the other. We willingly profess that before God calls a person out of darkness into light and from the power of Satan to God, they are incapable of doing anything that may please God or advance their salvation. In that state, they are led captive by the devil to do his will (2 Timothy 2:26), and the devil effectively works in the children of unbelief (Ephesians 2:3). S. Paul has testified that those who are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8), and the natural man does not perceive the things of God, considering them foolishness. He cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned. The affection of the flesh is enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, nor can it be.

Regarding the postponement of all things until then, if it refers to an outward calling by the word of God, it is a very absurd statement, as man neither knows God, nor Christ, nor the powers of the world to come until such a calling arrives. It is also untrue that man knows the time of his calling when he speaks of delaying his labor until then. Why should he defer the hearing of God's word, which is the means of our calling, though not everyone who hears it is effectually called to faith and repentance? A person may hear it with the intention of opposing it, either in general or in some specific truth.

Yet this inclination to oppose cannot hinder God's word and the operation of His Spirit where He wills, despite the conceits of those who thought the Apostles were filled with new wine when three thousand were converted that day. Augustine acknowledges that God converts not only those who are averse to true faith but also those who are hostile to genuine faith. We read in John 7 that some who were sent to take Christ were taken by Him. Father Latimer observed that some came to Church only to take a nap; yet he said, "Let them come, for it may be they may be taken napping." If it is impossible for a person to disobey, it is just as impossible for them not to be industrious when God wills them to be industrious. However, no industry of man is required for their effectual calling except the hearing of God's word. The execution of God's goodness toward them is not hastened by their hearkening to God's word. Although people hear it daily, they are not immediately brought to faith. Concerning effectual calling, we consider it to be essentially synonymous with regeneration. This Author, however, believes that God should work in such a way as to allow man to decide whether he will be regenerated or not. This is their viewpoint, but Augustine clearly professes, saying, "God, with omnipotent ease, turns unwilling people into willing ones."

This Author, in his discourse on prayers, appears to be either poorly versed in Antiquity or greatly inclined to disregard it. He implies that men can be effectually called through their prayers. The Apostle, however, says, "How can they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?" But this Author seems to suggest that through his prayers, he can obtain faith, even before his calling. He is not hesitant to assert that grace can be obtained through men's works. Yet the opposite was condemned in the Synod of Palestine, and even Pelagius himself was compelled to subscribe to this condemnation. We pay no heed to the quality of the person speaking in order to

condemn his doctrine. Instead, we judge his doctrine, and thereby, we assess the quality of his person. Here, he seems to have exhausted himself in addressing the first part of his discourse. Now, we proceed to the second part.

The SECOND PART.

The first Section.

Let us now see whether the practice of this doctrine has more power over a debauched Christian to bring him to repentance and amendment of life.

To him, the censurer will reveal the filthiness of his sin, the scandal to his neighbor, the ingratitude to his Creator and redeemer, the threats of the law, and the vengeance of God prepared for all impenitents, etc.

Upon hearing this, a man with more knowledge of our Doctrine of the Synods than of a good conscience will direct his censurer to the Maxims and Principles of that doctrine. He will marvel at how the other person could be ignorant that everything done by men on Earth, whether good or evil, occurs by the most efficacious decree and ordinance of God, which governs all. The first cause moves and directs the second, including the will of man, in such a way that they cannot act otherwise than they are compelled. He is convinced that he is inclined towards such a vice, but his comfort lies in God's secret will, which predestined him to it, just as God willed and orchestrated

the treachery of Judas as well as the conversion of Paul. He has no power to retain grace when the One who gave it decides to take it away. The Spirit acts as it pleases, inspiring whom it wills, withdrawing when it desires, and returning when it wishes. If this return is intended for his amendment, it will be as impossible for him to resist or delay it as it is now to achieve or hasten it.

Consideration: We have examined how well this Author has instructed an infidel to play his part in opposing the doctrine of the Synods of Dort and Arles. Now, we must consider how he shapes a debauched Christian to take on the same attitude of opposition.

In such a case, it is appropriate to apply the hammer of the law, which has the power to break bones. We will use it to make him understand not only the nature of sin but also its power. He will come to recognize the power of that sin which, as the Apostle speaks (Romans 7:8), takes the opportunity through the law to stir up all sorts of desires within man. Additionally, we will endeavor to acquaint him with the wrath of God and how, in the course of it, a fire is ignited that burns to the depths of hell. We shall now consider how he strengthens his disciple using our doctrine.

Here, he first assumes that his associate has more knowledge of the doctrine of the Synods than of a good conscience. Consequently, he lumps together all debauched Christians worldwide, cleverly portraying them as being on our side. This serves as part of his own fabricated interlude.

He is probably not from Derbyshire, for their tales often end with a woodcock on one side, just as they do on the other. We willingly confess that our doctrine teaches people not to trust in themselves for any good deeds but solely in the grace of God. It encourages us to give glory to God for working in us everything that is pleasing in the

sight of our heavenly Father. Now, our adversary believes that this teaching leads to licentiousness because we have learned from Saint Paul that God is the one who equips us for every good work and works in us that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ. However, these old Evangelists have a higher opinion of their own sufficiency. Aristotle has taught them a different lesson, and they must maintain their credibility and reputation in this regard by strictly adhering to their morality, so they do not appear as mere talkers but doers of good deeds. They strive to uphold the credit of their doctrines and very skillfully and dramatically align all the debauched Christians in the world with our side. We must claim them or, at least, our parish must support them. It makes sense since there is no better place for them to be sustained conveniently than at our tables. We must not be unaware that everything done by men on earth, whether good or evil, occurs solely by the most efficacious decree and ordinance of God, which governs all things. Now, what logically follows from this author's cunning is that there is either no sin's filthiness, no scandal to our neighbor, no ingratitude to our Creator and Redeemer, and that the threats of the law and God's vengeance are presented in vain. Or, at the very least, those in sin should not be rebuked. Since, according to this author's admission, we maintain that good deeds also occur by God's efficacious decree, it similarly follows that there is either no beauty in goodness or obedience, no benefit to our neighbor, no thankfulness to our Creator and Redeemer, or at least no commendation for anyone. The promises of the law and God's rewards are also presented in vain. People are either not motivated by them to obey or cannot find comfort and joy in them upon obedience.

To avoid such inconveniences, if we were to heed this old Evangelist's advice, it would be appropriate to deny that evil or good comes to pass by God's efficacious decree but is left to human will,

allowing them to believe and repent as they choose. A person would be just as able to repent with Paul as to commit treason with Judas. Although obtaining mercy clearly involves believing (Romans 11:30), and the Apostle plainly states that God has mercy on whom He wills and hardens whom He wills, Aristotle and these old Evangelists do not seem to acknowledge such an oracle, and this does not satisfy their argument.

Now, Peter confronted the Jews and convicted them of crucifying the Son of God in Acts 2. But this author did not appear in that assembly or exhibit any of his spirit. However, if they had been indoctrinated by this author, they might have directed Saint Peter to his own principles and maxims, wondering how Saint Peter could be ignorant of his own faith. The faith that both Herod and Pontius Pilate, together with the Gentiles and people of Israel, were gathered together against the holy Son of God to do what God's hand and counsel had predetermined to be done (Acts 4:28).

Indeed, Peter feared no such contradiction. He was so far from fearing it that he told them directly in that very sermon (Acts 2:22-13): "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know—this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men." Peter simultaneously convicted them of crucifying Christ and acknowledged that Jesus was delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God. The meaning of this is made clear in Acts 4:28: they did all the injurious acts they committed against the Son of God in accordance with God's predetermined plan and counsel.

Similarly, Moses did not fear the kind of opposition that appears plausible to this old Evangelist, who claims his Gospel is derived from antiquity, surpassing even Paul and Moses. He dismisses anyone who agrees with them as nothing more than new Evangelists. When Moses reproved the Jews for their unprofitability and hard-heartedness, indicating that neither God's word nor God's works had brought them to repentance or obedience so far, he had no fear that some might retort in a similar fashion, saying: "Good Sir, consider this: why do you blame us for this? Do you expect those without ears to hear, or those without eyes to see, or those without hearts to perceive? Are you not aware that God has not granted us any of these until now? And if He has not given us any of these, then He has determined by His efficacious decree that we neither hear, see, nor perceive until now."

I say, Moses was so far from fearing such opposition that he seemed more concerned that they might not recognize the hand of God in this. Therefore, he explicitly informed them: "You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the Land of Egypt, to Pharaoh, and to all his servants, and to all his land—the great trials your eyes saw, those mighty miracles and wonders. Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive, eyes to see, and ears to hear until this day" (Deuteronomy 29:2-4).

However, let us not allow this Author to go unconvicted of his ignorance and lack of learning. First, regarding the notion that nothing happens without God decreeing it, we are willing to engage in a debate with this Author, which he consistently avoids by taking the opposite principles as his foundation, fitting for a corrupt cause to have a corrupt foundation. We can prove our belief with clear and invincible arguments, demonstrating that by denying the decree in

relation to any future event, they must also deny God's foreknowledge and become outright atheists.

Moreover, we do not speak of God's decree in the manner this Author assumes, as if it applies indiscriminately to all things. First, we distinguish between good and evil. We assert that God decreed good things to occur by His effective will, but He decreed evil things to occur only by His permission. Therefore, it is false to attribute to us the belief that God works all things, including both good and evil.

We agree with Augustine that evil does not have an efficient cause but a deficient one. If God chooses not to work a person towards faith or what is good, this is sufficient to leave them in unbelief or to engage in evil.

Furthermore, we distinguish between good things: whether they are good by nature or spiritually. Things that are good only by nature occur by God's effective will, with a single influence that we call general influence, concerning the act itself. However, for things that are good spiritually, we say God decrees them to occur by His effective will with a double influence, one general concerning the substance of the act and another special regarding the manner of performance.

Lastly, as for the manner in which all things come to pass by virtue of God's decree, this Author intentionally obscures it under a pitiful confusion, which we clarify as follows: We say that all things come to pass by God's decree, whether they are events that necessarily occur due to second causes working necessarily, or events that occur contingently by second causes working contingently and freely.

And accordingly, upon the assumption of God's decree, we say it is necessary that such things as God has decreed shall come to pass, but

how? Not necessarily always, but either necessarily or contingently and freely, depending on the condition of second causes. Some of these causes work necessarily, while others work contingently and freely.

All of this, this Author confuses very astutely, as his aim is to serve his own purpose and the advantage of his own cause, rather than the cause of God in the sincere and faithful pursuit of His truth. As in the very next sentence, he shows himself deeply mired in this confusion when he says:

"That the first cause does in such a manner move and direct the second, among which is the will of man, that they cannot otherwise stir than they are stirred." Here, he confuses the different ways in which God moves and directs second causes, as if there were no distinction, when in fact, there is a vast difference. For among second causes, some work necessarily, while others work contingently. God moves and directs them not in the same manner but differently, according to their different natures.

Second causes working necessarily, He moves and directs to act necessarily, in such a way that they cannot move otherwise than they are moved. But as for second causes working contingently and freely, He moves and directs them to act accordingly, that is, contingently and freely. They have the power either to suspend their operation, which is their freedom concerning exercise, or to produce another operation, which is their freedom concerning specification. Thus, He moved Cyrus to build his city and release his captives, as He had foretold long before. He moved Josiah to burn the bones of the false prophets on the altar, as prophesied during Jeroboam's reign hundreds of years earlier. No sensible person doubts that these actions, though predetermined by God, were performed as freely by

them as any other of their actions. Similarly, He moved the soldiers to refrain from breaking Christ's bones, foretold about a thousand years prior. He influenced the neighboring nations to abstain from invading the land of Israel when all the males went up thrice a year before the Lord in Jerusalem, in accordance with the promise made to them (Exodus 34:24). "I will cast out the nations before you and enlarge your borders so that no one will covet your land when you go up to appear before the Lord your God three times a year." Yet who doubts that they freely refrained from this, just as they freely broke the bones of those crucified with Him? But these evaders of light revel in confusion, like owls that adore darkness, as it is their prime time for prey.

In what follows, I admit he speaks clearly, saying that even if a man is inclined towards sin, in case he knows God would have it so by His secret will, and that God has predestined him for it, this is a comfort to him. Truly, I do not begrudge him such comfort, and I see no reason why amid the torments of hell, it should not also be a comfort to him that God predestined him for it by His secret will. However, he prefers to use his own terminology when discussing predestination unto sin. The Ancients spoke of predestination unto damnation, acknowledging such a predestination.

But they acknowledged no predestining unto sin, as they believed predestination to apply only to those things which were orchestrated by God, not to sins, which are merely permitted by God. However, even foul sins, such as those committed by Herod and Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the people of Israel when they conspired against the holy Son of God, are acknowledged by the Apostles to have been predetermined by the hand and counsel of God. We understand this as follows: God determined that they would occur by His permission, regarding their sinful nature. Now, regarding the

spirit of this Author, how well it aligns with the spirit of God's Saints can be easily assessed through the Word of God. When they question God in this manner, "Lord, why have you made us stray from your ways and hardened our hearts against your fear?" it seems apparent that they do not find comfort in the fact that God has hardened their hearts against His fear and led them astray from His ways. When the Lord revealed to Moses that He would harden Pharaoh's heart, so that he would not let Israel go for a long time, I do not perceive that any comforting condition was implied for Pharaoh, had he known. Similarly, Saint Paul did not seem to take notice of any such comforting condition when he taught that God has mercy on whom He wills and hardens whom He wills. Someone questions him in response, "Why then does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?" The Apostle does not attempt to pacify him by presenting any comforting condition, specifically that God has hardened him toward disobedience. Instead, he takes a different approach to silence him, saying, "Who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, 'Why have you made me like this?' Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?" (Romans 9:19-21). Despite whatever a debauched Christian might imagine, for my part (and I believe I can speak for everyone of our profession whose hearts God has seasoned with His fear), I may boldly profess a truth. Although I am aware of God's hand sometimes hardening me against His fear, God knows that I do not find comfort in it. Instead, my comfort lies in the fact that God knows how to work it for my good. As Augustine said, "I dare to say that it is useful for the proud to fall into some manifest sin," etc. When I find that my sins do not create an ultimate or complete separation between my soul and God, this strengthens my faith and convinces my soul that nothing will be able to separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And I have good reason to find comfort in this.

However, it is untrue that God has equally willed the treachery of Judas as He did the conversion of Paul, despite Bellarmine's long-standing calumination of us. For although Judas's treachery in betraying his master is one of the actions included by the Apostle, actions taken by Jews and Gentiles against the holy Son of God and which, they claim, were predetermined by the hand and counsel of God. Augustine boldly confessed that "Judas was chosen to betray the blood of his Lord." Nevertheless, as another Father remarked, "even Judas could have found a remedy if he had not hastened to the noose." Yet there is a vast difference between God's willing Judas's treachery and Paul's conversion. Concerning Judas's treachery, God's will was only that it should occur by His permission. Arminius boldly stated that "God desired Ahab to complete the measure of his wickedness." However, regarding Paul's conversion, it was not only God's will but His action, achieved in an extraordinary manner. God appeared to him on the road, striking him down with a light from heaven and forcefully turning him away from his persecuting ways. While he was fierce in his wickedness at first, filled with the blood of Stephen, he marched against the Church of God. As for the belief that there is no power in man to retain grace when God will take it away, where man is willing to hold onto grace, I see no reason to complain about a lack of power in this regard. When there is no desire to retain it, there seems to be no reason to complain about a lack of power to retain it. Yet just as man is not the master of his own spirit and is unable to retain it, I am surprised that it should seem strange that men have no power to retain the Spirit of God in case God withdraws it from them. Regarding the grace of sanctification, which God might take away from man, we are unaware of any such possibility, as we believe that God will deliver His children from every evil work and preserve them for His heavenly Kingdom. They are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. "The

Spirit blows where it wishes" is the doctrine of our Saviour to Nicodemus (John 3).

That God inspires whom He will with the Spirit of faith and repentance, we consider equivalent to Romans 9:18, which states, "He has mercy on whom He wills." Accordingly, He withholds this inspiration from whom He wills, as if to say, "He hardens whom He wills." However, as for any actual withdrawal of the Spirit of sanctification, we do not acknowledge it. It is true that even His own servants are sometimes hardened against His fear, as the Scriptures say in Isaiah 63:17. As a result, their peace of conscience is disturbed, and they have cause to pray to God to restore them to the joy of His salvation, as David did in Psalm 51. However, David did not pray for God to restore His Spirit but rather that God would not take it from him. Bertius professes that he will not assert that David, through his grievous sins, was completely deprived of God's Spirit, and that for weighty reasons. Regarding God's permission of men to sin for their correction, Arminius himself acknowledges this implicitly in the particular case of David. His words are as follows: "God permitted him to fall into negligence and to commit that sin so that he might more diligently observe himself, grieve over his sin as an example to others, provide an excellent model of humility and repentance, and rise more gloriously from his transgression." As for the impossibility of resisting God's operation, the Scripture explicitly justifies it in Ezekiel 20:32, 33, 37. It is stated, "Neither shall that be done which comes into your mind, for you say, 'We will be as the Heathen, and as the families of the countries, and serve wood and stone. As I live,' says the Lord God, 'I will surely rule you with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm,' etc." The consequence follows, which is this: "I will cause you to pass under the rod and bring you into the bond of the covenant." However, what is the implication of this impossibility? Is it only in regard to the thing that God will bring

about, as these Arminians superficially conceive? Is it not also with regard to how it will come about? Quite the opposite. Just as God intends it to occur and happen contingently, voluntarily, and freely, it is impossible, based on this assumption, for it to occur in any other way. And as it thus occurs, and no other way, when the appointed time has come, before that time, it will not occur in any other way. But how? Contingently, voluntarily, and freely. It is impossible for it to be otherwise.

The Second Section.

That it is not for him to prescribe the time and hour of his conversion, in which a living man does no more than a dead man in his resurrection. That God is able to quicken him and endow him with His Spirit, even if he were already dead for four days, as Lazarus was, stinking in the grave. Yes, and perhaps it will not be until the last hour of the day. That God has not yet given him the grace to cry, "Abba Father." That he detests the doctrine of those who are called Arminians so much that he dares not make the slightest effort to do good, for fear of obscuring the grace that works irresistibly and attributing anything to the will of man. Yet he recalls that he has at times had good inclinations, undoubtedly proceeding from the Spirit of God, which has given him the true faith, which can never fail. For the present, he likens himself to trees in winter, which appear dead even though they are alive. Being among the Elect, as everyone is obliged to believe by the two Synods, if they do not want to be declared perjurers by the one at Arles, his sin itself, no matter how enormous, contributes to his salvation. He has already obtained pardon for it.

That his Censurer cannot deny this since he instructs him in repentance, which is of no value without faith, just as faith itself is of no value if it does not believe in the remission of all sins, both past and future. And even if he were among the Reprobates (something he will not affirm, for he fears being considered such by the Synod), his Censurer would not gain anything from it. Through his exhortations and threats, he could not in any way change the decree of Heaven but would only trouble him with the torments of Hell and awaken a worm in his conscience to gnaw at him fruitlessly.

Consideration: If it were within man's power to change his own heart, who is not able to change even one hair on his head, then he might well dictate the time and hour of his conversion. But since it is God's work alone to circumcise our hearts (Deuteronomy 30:6), to remove the stony heart and give us a heart of flesh, and to place His own Spirit within us (Ezekiel 36:27), to revive us when we are dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:15), surely it belongs to God alone to determine when a person shall be converted. Our Saviour also makes it clear that some are called at the first hour of the day, some at the third, and some not until the last.

The Apostle exhorts Timothy, effectively through his meek demeanor, to wait for God to grant repentance to those who are outside, so that they may come to know His truth and escape the snare of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will (2 Timothy 2:25-26).

And even though men live like beasts, why should they be thought to possess any more power to raise or quicken themselves to spiritual life than a dead man has to resurrect himself to natural life? It is evident from Scripture that men are dead in sin, and the work of conversion is called regeneration. But Scripture is a foreign language to these Arminians; they are *diserti lingua sua*, speaking fluently in their own language. Among Christians, they speak as if they were talking to cannibals.

However, there is a difference between one who is dead naturally and one who is dead spiritually. One who is dead naturally cannot perform any natural action, but one who is dead spiritually can perform natural actions without difficulty. Yet some natural actions are required for conversion. For example, it is necessary for a person to be acquainted with God's word, which is the ordinary means by

which the Spirit works in a person's conversion. It is within a person's power to hear the word, and although they cannot listen to it in a gracious manner pleasing to God, it will not hinder the effectiveness of God's word if God chooses to show mercy to them. Even if they approach it with a wicked mind, as those who came to take Christ but were taken by Him when they heard Him (John 7), the word can still have the power to change their hearts.

Similarly, it is within a person's power to read the word. If they read it with an aversion to it, the word may still prove powerful in changing their heart. For instance, Vergetius took Melanthon's writings with the intention of refuting them, but in reading them, he was himself refuted and converted from Popery to the Protestant confession.

This Author speaks in such a manner as if the power of God to revive a man, even if they were dead for four days and stinking in the grave like Lazarus, were being ridiculed by him. Such is the tone and strength of his discourse, in the most disdainful manner that I believe could come from a reasonable person. Our Saviour has made it clear that some are not called until the last hour, and we have an example of this in the thief on the cross. If God has not yet granted him the grace to cry out "Abba Father," the Spirit of adoption, which requires a spirit of bondage to precede it (Romans 8:15), then through our admonition and conviction of his sins, God may humble him, instill fear in him, and thereby prepare him for the Spirit of adoption. For God's word is like a fire and a hammer that breaks the bones. The unbeliever experiences this firsthand when, upon hearing one prophecy, he is rebuked by all, judged by all, and the thoughts of his heart are laid bare. He falls to his knees, confessing that God is truly in His ministers (1 Corinthians 14:24).

The Jews also experienced the power of the word when they heard Peter speak about how God had made the One they had crucified both Lord and Christ. They were deeply affected in their hearts and asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2).

As for the portrayal of his character in his fictional narrative, where he suggests that his "Factor" is unwilling to strive for goodness due to his aversion to Arminian doctrine, this is not in line with our beliefs. We deny that there is such a will in a carnal person. We assert that the main reforming of a person lies in changing their will from evil to good, and we know that God accepts the will as equivalent to the deed. The saints of God commend themselves to Him in this manner: "We that desire to fear thy name" (Nehemiah 1), and "The desire of our hearts is towards thy name" (Isaiah 26). We desire to live honestly (Hebrews 13).

Saint Augustine, if I remember correctly, maintained that the saints of God fulfill the Law of God not otherwise than through desire and effort.

Although this Author may, at will, have his character embrace our tenets, if they are but a carnal Christian, they cannot truly embrace them or any doctrine of true and infused faith, but only a faith acquired.

Furthermore, it is within anyone's power not only to desire and strive to do good but also to actually do it in terms of outward moral improvement. All moral virtues, as found in heathen individuals, are attainable by a natural person. Even heathens were known and celebrated, not only for their good principles but also for their virtuous practice of morality. However, this did not prevent Augustine from passing judgment on their best actions, declaring them to be no more than splendid sins. To make a proper distinction,

he tells us that virtues should be distinguished not by their actions but by their purposes.

Therefore, there is no reason for such a superficial notion concocted in this Author's mind that striving for such morality in any way diminishes the prerogative of God's grace, which is solely effective in producing what is pleasing in God's sight. Such morality will not in any way commend the will as being good in the sight of God, no more than the morality of Socrates, Plato, or Aristides did, even though their damnation will be far less severe than that of those among the heathens who lived a debauched life and had corrupt behavior.

Good impulses, undoubtedly, can be stirred by God's Spirit in the heart of even the most wicked individuals within the Church of God. However, just as the devil's suggestions are not our fault if we resist them, these good impulses from God do not commend us in God's sight if we do not act upon them. Instead, they may one day rise up in judgment against us, leading to greater and more inexcusable condemnation. It is worth noting that portraying a carnal man as possessing true faith in him that will never fail is a theatrical element added by this Author to suit his audience's preferences, as the saying goes, "populo ut placerent quas fecisset fabulas" (to please the audience with the stories he created). Nonetheless, I have no doubt that a carnal Christian may maintain orthodoxy in belief and persuade themselves of possessing true faith. However, if their life does not align with their beliefs, we can boldly declare that their faith is in vain. True faith is evidenced by its work through love (Galatians 5), and faith working through love is tantamount to being a new creation (Galatians 6). Those who are in Christ are new creatures (2 Corinthians 5), and those who belong to Christ have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. Therefore, when a new creation is absent, when the flesh is not crucified with its affections and lusts,

one does not belong to Christ, is not in Christ, and does not possess faith working through love. Moreover, we cannot predict how soon someone who once showed penitence may turn to other beliefs, such as becoming a Muslim or an atheist. For Jesus stated that those who hear His words and do not obey them are like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand, and when the rain fell, the floods came, the wind blew, and beat against the house, it fell with a great crash (Matthew 7:26-27).

The Corinthians were renowned as believers, yet Saint Paul urged them to examine themselves and determine if they were truly in the faith. He said, "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5). There is a hidden hypocrisy by which a person can deceive themselves, as the human heart is deceptive. Everything may appear to be in order, with no obvious sins that defile one's conduct. Nevertheless, it is crucial for individuals to examine their faith carefully. While it is true that children of God may occasionally fall into grievous sins, as David did, and they may remain in sin for an extended period without demonstrating clear and full repentance and satisfaction to the Church as required by the seriousness of their sin, during such times, they may resemble trees in winter. However, applying this to every carnal Christian who lives in sin and continues in a corrupt way of life is more suitable for the kind of dramatist we are dealing with, who is purely theatrical throughout, and it is not suitable for a sober theologian. The theologian's objective should be to discuss the truth and not to entertain readers or listeners with his own fabricated tales and poetic fiction.

I have not found anywhere in the Synod of Dort the notion that everyone is obligated to believe they are elected, and this Author seems to enjoy lengthy discussions as if his only purpose is to narrate

a story. As for the Synod of Arles, I am not acquainted with the details of its proceedings.

However, I have encountered this doctrine related from the works of Zwingli and Bucer. I understand the meaning to be that everyone in the Church of God is obliged to believe that God has elected them to obtain salvation if they believe. Indeed, just as God has ordained that no one of mature age will obtain salvation unless they believe, He has also ordained that everyone who believes will obtain salvation. Nevertheless, God has not ordained to grant faith to everyone, either unconditionally or conditionally. I have never read in the works of any of our theologians that everyone is obligated to believe that God has elected them to receive faith, whether absolutely or conditionally. This Author's tendency to confuse distinct concepts is quite compatible with his level of learning and judgment, as he appears to be more suited to writing plays than handling theological controversies.

It is unquestionably true that all things work together for the good of those who love God, just as the Apostle Paul's letter to the Romans is the word of God.

Bishop Cooper, a Scottish bishop, also applies this principle to men's sins among other things, demonstrating how sins can work for a person's good. However, the idea that the sins of a carnal person or a debauched Christian work for their good is a notion that a poet may concoct. I do not deny this. Such a notion can be pinned on the confession of anyone the poet chooses. "*Pictoribus atque Poetis, quidlibet audendi semper fuit aequa potestas*" (Painters and poets have always enjoyed the right to dare anything). Under the influence of Satan's deception, it is possible that a carnal person may be carried away by such thoughts. However, if this Author believes it is

good to justify such a belief, he may do so. It is important to note that we and our doctrine do not endorse such a belief, just as we do not endorse the idea of obtaining pardon for one's sin while continuing to live in sin.

Indeed, he takes it upon himself to justify these beliefs with unwavering confidence, boldly asserting that his critic cannot deny them. What am I hearing? Can it really be that we are unable to deny that someone who lives in sin, persistently indulging in the lusts of the flesh, can justly be convinced that their sins (no matter how egregious) contribute to their salvation, and that they have already received forgiveness for them? I had assumed that even impudence itself could not be so shamelessly audacious as to attribute such notions to us. However, perhaps he possesses some tricks of wit and cunning to thrust upon us, even if it goes against his own conscience.

And what might those be? His critic cannot deny that the sins of a debauched Christian (no matter how egregious) work together for their salvation, and that they have already secured pardon for these sins because, after all, he exhorts them to repentance, which is worthless without faith—just as faith is worthless if it does not believe in the remission of all sins, both past and future. Here, we are presented with a spectral discourse, yet at least it is an argument of sorts to contend with. I suspect this Author still needs to learn what it truly means to obtain pardon for sins. We exhort such individuals to repentance so that they may obtain remission for their sins; we do not presume that these wicked individuals have already received pardon for their sins. It is true that repentance does not solely hinge on obtaining forgiveness for our sins; rather, it is the sense of God's love in sending His Son to die for our sins and pardoning them for His sake, through His free grace, that renews our repentance. As witnessed in the case of David, his repentance became even more

fervent after Nathan conveyed to him the Lord's message: "The Lord has put away your sin" (see Psalm 51). Therefore, we emphatically reject this conclusion: "We exhort a wicked wretch to repentance; therefore, we acknowledge him to have obtained pardon for his sins."

However, he subtly implies proof for his argument in the following manner: "Whomever we exhort to repentance, we assume that they already possess faith, by which they believe in the remission of their sins." Once again, we completely reject this line of reasoning; we do not presume any such faith in these individuals. In fact, it is more probable that someone engaged in a debauched lifestyle and blatant impiety possesses no genuine faith at all. If the Apostle urged the Corinthians, who were among the better members of the Church, to examine themselves and determine if they were in the faith, why should we assume that a wicked person living in evident profanity and impurity possesses any true faith? Perhaps he may retort, "Why then do you exhort him to repentance, since without faith, he cannot repent?" To which I reply, "Why did Peter exhort the Jews to repentance when they had crucified the Lord of life, as he tells them in Acts 3:14-15, and even requested the release of a murderer? But Peter goes on to say in verse 18, 'But those things which God before had shown by the mouth of his Prophets, that Christ should suffer he hath thus fulfilled. Amend your lives therefore, and turn, that your sins may be put away, when the time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord.' Did Peter assume that they had faith in Christ when he exhorted them to amend their lives? Surely he did not, and neither do we. By Peter's ministry, God may have been pleased to work faith and repentance in them, and so He did, as many who heard the word believed, and the number was about five thousand. Similarly, God may and often does work through our ministry as well."

There are two kinds of repentance: legal and evangelical. Legal repentance can lead to despair, as in the case of Judas. However, it can also be a result of the Spirit of bondage, preparing one to hear the Gospel and receive the Spirit of adoption through it. When the Gospel is preached, revealing God's tender mercies and His readiness to pardon sin freely, our repentance is improved. As we gradually progress towards the Spirit of adoption, crying out, "Abba Father," our repentance becomes more perfect, as I mentioned earlier. When we gaze upon Him whom we have pierced and can confidently profess with the Apostle, saying, "I live by faith in Him who loved me and gave Himself for me," this has the power to open a deep vein, causing us to pour out our repentance before our gracious God, whom we have offended but who, despite our sins, loves us with unwavering affection.

However, it is indeed true, as he claims, that repentance is worthless without faith. What does he think of Ahab's repentance when he put on sackcloth and rolled in ashes upon hearing the Prophet Elijah's pronouncement of judgment against his house? Do we not remember what the Lord said to Elijah in response to Ahab's humility before Him: "See how Ahab has humbled himself before me? Because he has humbled himself before me, I will not bring the disaster in his days" (1 Kings 21:29). The Ninevites' faith was minimal, as seen when they said, "Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" Yet their repentance was so profound that when God observed their actions, seeing that they had turned from their wicked ways, He relented from the disaster He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it (Jonah 3:9-10). Certainly, the morality of some pagans was of such a nature that their damnation will be lighter than that of those who lived in all manner of impurity and uncleanness.

By faith, we assert, the children of God are assured of God's eternal and unchangeable love towards them. Consequently, they believe that God will never forsake them but will continually pardon their sins, as seen in Paul's faith: "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and preserve me to his heavenly Kingdom" (2 Timothy 4:18). We do not teach any other faith concerning the remission of sins, and as far as I know, neither do any of our theologians.

This Author, foreseeing that his Synodical opponent will likely challenge the election of someone who does not walk in the Spirit but in the flesh, confidently states that even if he were among the reprobates, his censurer would gain nothing by it. He claims that his exhortations and threats could not alter the decree of heaven but would only torment him with the pains of hell and awaken a worm in his conscience to gnaw at him to no purpose.

To this, I respond that according to our doctrine, we neither have the encouragement to assume such a person, as portrayed here, to be elected by God, nor do we have grounds to consider him a reprobate. There can be no ordinary evidence of a person's reprobation except through final impenitence or the sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Therefore, if we observe a person's faith, love, and patience in hope, we may reasonably infer that he is one of God's elect, as Paul did with the Thessalonians (1 Thessalonians 1:3-4). However, if we find these qualities lacking and instead witness a life of carnality and sensuality, we should not conclude that such a person is undoubtedly rejected and reprobated by God. Before God's grace quickened us with His Holy Spirit, we were also carnal and sensual.

Consider the examples of Manasseh, who lived a sinful life filled with idolatry, bloodshed, and sorcery for a long time but repented before his death. Similarly, Paul was once a fierce persecutor of the Church

but became a chosen vessel, not only to profess but also to preach the very faith he had formerly opposed. Whether a person is elect or reprobate remains a secret known only to God. Given that God's longsuffering is said to lead to salvation, we ought to remain hopeful. Our duty is to become adaptable to all people to win some, as Paul declared (2 Corinthians 6). Those whose salvation he aimed at, he identified as God's elect (2 Timothy 2:10). We do not entertain thoughts of altering heaven's decrees, as this Author imagines in his theatrical scenario. Instead, we aim to guide individuals away from ungodly ways and towards godly sorrow, which leads to salvation.

If it turns out differently, and we have cause to lament that our efforts were in vain, we should not be surprised, as even better and more eminent servants of God than us have faced such situations. Our consolation lies in the words of the prophets and Paul: "Yet my labour is with the Lord, and my judgment with my God," and "Though we have laboured all night, yea, and many days also, and caught nothing." We serve as a sweet savour of Christ to God in those who are saved and in those who perish. To the latter, we are a savour of death unto death; to the former, a savour of life unto life. By doing so, we serve God in removing their excuses and making them aware that a prophet has been among them. By troubling them with the torments of hell and stirring up a worm in their conscience to gnaw at them, we may, in a way, douse their sinful passions and lead them towards external improvement in life so that they may be more gently punished.

Now, judge the validity of this Author's argumentation, who, aware that he provides little genuine satisfaction, attempts to amuse the spirit of his kind reader with a jest. He claims that his fictitious Actor will not assert himself to be a Reprobate, for fear of being genuinely considered one by the Synods.

But where do either of these Synods teach that anyone who believes themselves to be a reprobate should be held as such by them? Even though either of them may affirm that every Christian is obligated to believe they are elect (for which we have no stronger evidence than the integrity of this Author's word, which deserves to be evaluated by impartial judges), it is entirely unbelievable that they would consider anyone who perceives themselves as a reprobate to be one in reality. Nevertheless, despite these and similar immodest and shameless claims, some may still applaud this Author as a resolute champion of their cause. Although he portrays his Actor as someone who does not fear God, to suit his purposes, he must also depict him as one who fears the censure of Arles and their harsh judgment of him.

The Third Section.

IF the Censurer proceeds with his argument, stating that although the Spirit alone produces repentance in the heart of a sinner, exhortations and threats are the means and instruments it uses in this work, the other will ask him for further clarification, pointing out a clear contradiction. On one hand, repentance is directly attributed to the Holy Ghost, while on the other hand, these exhortations and threats are considered means and instruments of this work, suggesting that the operation is not immediate when these means are employed. If these exhortations are necessary or at least ordinarily required in the process, how is it possible that those who resist and reject them do not, or cannot, also resist the principal cause, which is the Holy Ghost? Would someone who refuses the razor, the instrument of their cure, not also be rejecting the Surgeon?

The Censurer might argue that the elect do not reject either, as the Holy Ghost pierces their ears to make them hear and opens their hearts to receive those admonitions, which are entirely in vain and unprofitable until the Holy Ghost works in them. The other person will then press him to confess that, for the most part, the preached word lacks the operation of the Holy Ghost, evident from the disregard that most people have for it. This should not be the case if the efficacy of the Spirit accompanies it. It follows, then, that the entire ministry is like a dance, contributing no more to a person's conversion than the clay that Jesus applied to the blind man's eyes did to his sight, or the mere voice calling upon Lazarus did to his rising from the grave. The other will also ask why, considering that nature does nothing in vain, the Author of nature appointed the ministry of the word, and why those things which the Censurer attributes solely to the Holy Spirit are also attributed to the preached word in Scripture. How is it that we are said to be begotten, renewed, edified, nourished, and purified by it, etc.? The new doctrine of the Synod reduces it to merely serving as an object and representation of what the Holy Spirit has already worked within us, in both will and understanding, without any cooperation of the word. It not only becomes unprofitable without the Spirit but also dangerous, increasing the condemnation of those who reject it, even though it would be impossible for them to add the efficacy of the Spirit, as it is not in their power.

Consideration: Here, the Censurer is brought into the discussion without a proper occasion, to talk about the sole operation of the Spirit in producing repentance. However, the Censurer also mentions that exhortations and threats are the means and instruments used in this work, setting the stage for some arguments he has prepared.

By the way, it's worth noting that while the Author calls his character in this scene a Censurer, he could just as well be called an exhorter and threatener. The term "Censurer" is not typically associated with the Word of God. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that it is the sole operation of the Spirit that changes the heart, while also recognizing that exhortations, accompanied by promises for obedience and threats for disobedience, are means used by God, in accordance with the nature of all things.

Now, having created man in His own image, endowing him with an understanding heart and rational affections, making him capable of being influenced towards good and away from evil through instruction, exhortation, and persuasion, it pleases God to lead him towards faith, repentance, and obedience. Let's now consider what he has to say against this. He claims that the other person will demand further explanation from him, pointing out an apparent contradiction. On one side, repentance is attributed directly to the Holy Ghost, while on the other side, these exhortations and threats are considered means and instruments of this work, suggesting that the operation is not immediate when these means are employed.

We read of Jonathan, who took off his robe and gave it to David, along with his garments, sword, bow, and girdle, because he loved him as his own soul. In a similar way, this poorly behaved Christian, whom the Author represents as playing a part, is someone he has some affection for, though not for his faith. It seems he is willing to dress him with his own ability and bestow his own armor upon him, even his intellectual sword, bow, and girdle. The truth is, he plays his part on his behalf, even though the scene requires another to impersonate him. The Arminian now takes on the persona of a debauched Christian on our side. I must admit he makes the most of his arguments, delivering them with great confidence, which,

although not always well-placed, is usually his greatest strength. I've heard of a French Gentleman who, during the troubles in France, invited some bandits into his house inadvertently. Realizing his mistake too late, he sought to rectify it with his wit and acted with such boldness and confidence that he actually managed to overcome them. They left without harming him and, upon parting, told him to thank his confidence for his fortunate escape. While this might not be entirely applicable here, we could let him enjoy the benefit and comfort of his confidence if the matter allowed it. However, we are in the process of investigating divine truth, and sparing him here would be detrimental to him and others. It is far more profitable for him to be thoroughly disabused of his misconceptions rather than allowing him to continue in his errors, corrupting others in the process. Regarding the request for further explanation, we do not see the need at all. The plain truth of the matter is so clear that anyone who does not deliberately close their eyes to it will readily grasp it. This is a way of repaying confidence with confidence, for is it not fitting to pay him back in his own coin?

Now, consider this: let exhortation be made for repentance, let this exhortation be reinforced with the most compelling motives drawn from divine promises, offering nothing less than eternal life, and divine threats, warning of the wrath of God and the fiery torments of hell. Yet, is it not within the power of man to either assent to or dissent from this exhortation? And in the event of his assent, after some time of deliberation, according to his own discretion, should he not be considered, and his will be regarded as the sole and immediate cause of this decision? I maintain that the exhortation itself does not hinder a person's will from being the sole and immediate cause of their choice, even if they remain indifferent to it. I believe the exhortation does not obstruct a person's will from being the sole and immediate cause of their consent, which, if it cannot be

denied, as I believe it cannot, and if the Spirit of God eventually works on the will to yield to it, why should that not be considered the sole and immediate cause thereof? Even if the term "immediate" was not explicitly mentioned in the premises. As for addressing the alleged contradiction introduced later by adding the term "immediate" in place of the word "sole," there seems to be no need for clarification.

I respond that as man is a rational agent and acts upon deliberation, the judgment must first be informed before he can act deliberately. The immediate work of exhortation extends only as far as informing the judgment.

Just as reasons are given from God's word to emphasize the necessity of repentance, reasons are also given on the other side, partly by human desires and thoughts, and partly by the suggestions of Satan, to portray repentance as an unnecessary condition, either entirely or at least for the present. The will freely chooses to follow either side, sometimes yielding to divine exhortations and at other times to contrary suggestions, whether they be carnal or diabolical.

If God is pleased to rebuke Satan, discredit the promptings of the flesh, and make the will yield to the minister's exhortations to repentance, what would prevent Him from being the sole and immediate cause of this?

Furthermore, this Author either does not consider or deliberately conceals the fact that exhortations are only a moral cause. However, God's immediate working on the will, after the judgment has been influenced by exhortations and instructions (for Augustine encompasses both under one, saying that if there is any difference between teaching and persuading or exhorting, even this is included in the general teaching), is a physical cause. Therefore, although a

preceding moral cause is presupposed, it is clear that the Spirit of God works immediately on the will in conversion, as a physical cause. The ignorance of this distinction is what makes this Author so audacious and confident in talking about an apparent contradiction. Ignorance begets boldness, but I wish the scales would fall from their eyes so that they might see the shaky foundations upon which they base their opposition to the precious truth of God. We willingly admit that understanding is necessary for both faith and repentance, otherwise, they would not be rational acts. But this understanding being provided by the minister is, I confess, usually required by the virtue of God's ordinance, though not absolutely necessary. Whether this Author acknowledges this or not, I do not know, for I find him somewhat oblivious to such distinctions. We are willing to concede that whenever people resist divine exhortations, even when delivered by God's minister, they may rightly be said to resist God who is working on them morally and beseeching them, as the Apostle says, "as though God were pleading through us" (2 Cor. 5:20). The Jews, along with their forefathers, resisted the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51) because the words delivered to them, which they resisted, were sent by the Lord of hosts in His Spirit through the ministry of His prophets (Zechariah 7:12). Accordingly, God is said to have testified among them by His Spirit through the hands of the prophets, but they would not listen (Nehemiah 9:30). However, they do not resist, nor can they resist, the Holy Spirit working immediately and physically on their wills in the act of conversion, a physical or rather hyper-physical transformation.

We willingly confess that the elect resist neither when it comes to their initial conversion, provided the appointed time for their conversion has come. Until then, they resist all exhortations leading to it, just like others. However, as for any divine act causing a physical transformation of their wills, they do not partake in it until

the time of their effectual calling. Nevertheless, after their effectual calling, even though they too often disobey God in His specific exhortations, they also sometimes have cause to reason with God for hardening their hearts against His fear.

In their initial conversion, God not only opens their ears (the word of the minister being sufficient for that), but He also gives them ears to hear, and likewise grants them the ability to see. Regarding the opening of the heart, I consider it synonymous with giving them a heart (Deuteronomy 29:4).

Now, the Author here tells us that we must acknowledge that, for the most part, the preached word lacks the operation of the Holy Ghost (as evident from the disregard that most people have for it), but this is not something we are forced into admitting; rather, we willingly acknowledge it, when understood correctly. Specifically, we acknowledge that God, in the ordinary course of the outward ministry of the word, does not usually add the efficacy of His Spirit to bring people to faith and repentance. This is evident through experience and is also taught by our Saviour in the parable of the sower. The Prophet Isaiah, when prophesying about the times of the Gospel, begins with the question: "Who has believed our report?" and then offers the reason: "And to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

However, with regard to the conclusion drawn from this, namely, that the entire ministry is akin to a dance, contributing no more to a person's conversion than the clay that Jesus applied to the blind man's eyes did to his sight, or the mere voice that called upon Lazarus contributed to his rising from the grave, the Author is mistaken both in his formalities and his realities. This does not imply that the ministry is a dance but rather an invitation to dance, as our

Saviour implies in the Gospel when He says, "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: 'We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.'" Yet piping is a natural encouragement to dance. However, the exhortations of the word, without a more specific operation of God's Spirit, do not serve as an encouragement to believe. How could it be for natural man, to whom it appears as foolishness? Wisdom is naturally more appealing to people than honesty, for "qui velit ingenio cedere rarius erit" (he who wishes to yield in wit will rarely do so). The Italians have a proverb that states, "Wit is equally divided," and the example is given as follows: "Let a proclamation be made that all tailors should stand up at an assembly, and tailors alone will stand up; the same goes for shoemakers and other trades. But if a proclamation is made that all wise men should stand up, everyone will be eager to stand up, even those from the lowliest trades, thinking they are just as wise as the best." Nevertheless, with all due respect to this Author, the ministry of the word contributes more to a person's conversion than clay did (as far as I know) to curing the blind man's eyes. The word informs about what should be believed and practiced, although understanding the wisdom of God in the former and having an affection for the latter, as well as experiencing God's power in both, requires another operation of the Spirit of God, which enlightens the mind and renews the will.

The one who said, "Nature does nothing in vain," also said, "God and nature do nothing in vain." Thus, there was little need for such a graduated argument as presented here. Neither is the ministry of the word in vain, even though not all or most are converted by it. It informs everyone and removes excuses from all. They cannot say, "If we had heard, we would have believed." By this, they know that a prophet has been among them, although those who obey it have no

need for such excuses. It is primarily intended for their sake, as evidenced by the revelation given to Paul (Acts 18): "Fear not, and hold not thy peace, for no man shall lay hold on thee to hurt thee, for I have much people in this city." This aligns with the Apostle's purpose in his ministry. Although he professed that he became all things to all men to save some (2 Corinthians 6), he reveals who those "some" are when he says, "I endure all things for the sake of the elect" (2 Timothy 2:10).

Lastly, it is not in vain for anyone, since the ministers of the word are a pleasing aroma to God, both in those who are saved and those who perish. To those who perish, it is a scent of death leading to death, to those who are saved, it is a scent of life leading to life. In both cases, it is a pleasing aroma to God in Christ.

Regarding the things we attribute solely to the Spirit of God, we attribute them to the Spirit of God alone in the capacity of a physical cause. We also attribute them to the word in a moral way, as it informs the understanding about them and persuades towards them. However, the Spirit of God alone opens the eyes to discern them and the heart to embrace them as the things of God.

Due to the aforementioned reason that the Spirit of God enlightens to discern the things of God only as revealed in His word and inclines towards anything only as proposed in His word, the word is called the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6). Hence, it is justly said that we are begotten by the word, renewed by the word, edified by the word, nourished by the word, and cleansed by the word.

It's quite strange that when these individuals insist that everything preached in the word ultimately depends on the free will of man to believe or not, to repent or not, to obey or not, they still claim that it is the word that converts them and leads them to faith, repentance,

and obedience. Moreover, they criticize us for attributing these effects to the word of God in one form of operation while attributing them solely and immediately to God's Spirit in another form of operation. This is especially odd considering that it is God's word, not theirs, sent by God in His Spirit through the ministry of the Prophets, not sent by them in their spirits. The word is the means by which God's Spirit works, as I have explained previously, and not a means appointed by them through which their spirit operates.

However, it is not surprising that those who oppose God's grace ultimately lack even common sense.

The Synod (as this Author says) assigns it no other function than to serve as an object and to represent it. When Bellarmine states that "Suadens agit per modum proponentis objectum," he presents this as a universally recognized principle, known by the very light of nature.

I would add that anyone who persuades should aim to represent that which they are persuading in the most alluring manner to attract the party they are persuading and encourage them to support and work towards it.

Furthermore, I assert that we attribute to the word as much as they do, or even more, in truth. In pretence, I do not deny that they may deal with it as they do with God's grace, giving the appearance of ascribing their faith and repentance to it when, in reality, they attribute it to their own free wills, daring to mock God if He allows it. Just as the Jews once crowned Christ with thorns, these individuals mock the grace of God with scorn.

However, the true difference between us lies not in ascribing or denying anything to God's word, but in the fact that we ascribe to the Spirit of God what they ascribe to the freedom of their wills.

I assert that the difference between us lies in whether what I profess here is indeed true, and I am ready to defend it. However, when he claims that we make the word of God only to represent that which the Holy Spirit has already worked within, both in the will and in the understanding, without any cooperation of the word, this passage is either falsely copied or falsely translated from the French. The word "without" is out of place, as the intended sense is subsequently presented more clearly in the words "without any cooperation of the word." Therefore, I omit it entirely and read the passage as follows: "to represent that which the Holy Spirit hath already wrought within, as well in the will as in the understanding, without the cooperation of the word."

Now, this presents a curious mystery that requires elucidation: he accuses us of suggesting that the word persuades and exhorts to that which the Spirit has already accomplished in both the will and the understanding. I am eager to understand what this refers to, according to our perspective, as he suggests. Frankly, it remains a mystery to me, as it appears that we advocate that God sends His ministers to persuade us to that which God has already worked within us, possibly long before we heard the word. If this were the case, it would indeed seem that the ministry of God's word is unprofitable and vain. Thus, I find this concept quite perplexing and mysterious.

Let me attempt to unravel this mystery through a series of questions. What does this Author mean by what the Holy Spirit has already wrought, and when, according to our viewpoint, as he asserts? I readily admit that I find this interpretation mystifying. It seems to imply that God sends His ministers to persuade us to accept something that God has already accomplished in us, possibly long before we encountered the word. This leads to the conclusion that

the grace of regeneration is conferred in Baptism, as Baptism is the point of entry into the Church for many of us. This interpretation aligns with the perspective of English Arminians, although it contradicts the views held by some Arminians abroad. Despite these differences, they find common ground in opposing others.

I would encourage our English Arminians to respond to this interpretation. I, for one, do not uphold such a belief. While Master Montacute attempts to attribute this view to our Church from the Book of Common Prayer, it is worth noting that he himself acknowledges that not everything in the homilies should be accepted as the doctrine of the Church of England. Bishop Carleton has also refuted Master Montacute on this issue, referencing Augustine to distinguish between being truly regenerate and being regenerate in the sacramental sense. I believe that Baptism serves as the seal of the righteousness of faith for us Christians, assuring us of the forgiveness of our sins for all who believe. It functions as a sacrament, defined in our Church's smaller catechism as an outward and visible sign of an inward and invisible grace. Baptism assures us not only of justification for believers but also of the grace of regeneration. However, this grace is not conferred instantly but at the appropriate time when God effectually calls a person. I find it perplexing that regeneration would precede vocation.

Therefore, we are not guilty of promoting the idea that the word persuades us to accept something that God has already worked within us, especially in our understanding and wills, as suggested here. This charge appears to lack a basis, as far as I can discern. It is untrue that our doctrine renders the word dangerous, but rather it is dangerous for anyone to disregard or despise God's goodness found therein. The word only occasionally aggravates their condemnation; it is their own corruption that causally heightens their damnation.

When the Lord calls to them and they refuse to listen, or when He admonishes them and they do not heed, it is their own obstinacy that amplifies their guilt. It is indeed accurate to state that it is beyond man's power to add the efficacy of God's Spirit to the word, and it is equally true that a carnal person lacks the desire for God to supplement His Spirit's efficacy to it.

The discipline of Christ's Kingdom acts like cords and bonds upon them, as they desire to break free from them and cast off the yoke of obedience to Him. It is also true that no one is condemned for failing to add the efficacy of God's Spirit to His word.

They are condemned for disregarding God's word and not heeding His gracious admonitions. However, they could have acted differently, as this Author suggests. What kind of impotency is this? Is it rooted anywhere other than in their wills? This distinction between natural impotency and moral impotency seems to elude this Author. If they were willing to listen but couldn't, then their impotency would be excusable. However, they take pleasure in their stubborn ways. If they were willing to change, I have no doubt that they would have no more reason to complain about their impotency to do good than the servants of God do, or even the holy Paul himself. Our Savior Himself acknowledged a certain impotency in believing when He said, "How can you believe?" (John 8:47). But what kind of impotency is this? Consider what follows: "You receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God." Therefore, you do not hear my words because you are not of God. This statement by our Savior is as true as His word itself, despite this Author's attempts to oppose this doctrine throughout. However, one must also consider, do they lament this impotency? Does the thought of it humble them? On the contrary, they seem to take pleasure in it, as the Prophet Jeremiah notes: "Their ears are

uncircumcised ears, and they cannot listen. Behold, the word of God is like a reproach to them; they take no pleasure in it." (Jeremiah 6:10).

The Fourth Section.

There now remains no other instance for our Censurer than to exhort this profane fellow to pray unto God that He would be pleased to give him the grace to leave his lewdness, promising that if he prays as he ought to do, he shall be heard and receive what he demands. But upon this, this profane individual, well-instructed in the doctrine of Dort, will demand of him how it is possible to pray as we ought if God does not grant him the grace beforehand, and that too effectually, so that it would be impossible for him not to pray. Therefore, seeing that he fails to do so, the Censurer must acknowledge that God will not be invoked by him any more than He has given him the grace to do it.

It is quite evident that God sent this Corrector to him with no intention of improving him through his ministry when he encounters more confusion in the speaker's doctrine than improvement in the hearer's practice. To the hearer, he either brings the pillow of Epicurus to lull him to sleep in his complacency, or the halter of despair with which he may hang himself like Judas.

But above all, this profane individual will find yet another unique benefit, in flattery to his flesh, from the answer that Synodists typically provide to those who inquire about what would have

happened to David had he died in his adultery. They assert that it was impossible for David to have died before he had repented because he was to beget a Son from whom the Messiah must descend.

To this, our profane individual will reply that the impossibility of dying before repentance, according to the doctrine of the Synods, is based on the general promise made to all the Elect, not on any specific promise made to David regarding the Messiah. God, in His foreknowledge, could have sent the Messiah into the world through other means had He anticipated David's impenitence as He foresaw his repentance. If the Synod is not mistaken, he is assured to never die without repentance, just like David. Therefore, following this doctrine, the true means to avoid death is to commit and continue in some mortal sin forever. It would be impossible for him to die in adultery or perish in any other sin before making his reconciliation with God, who is not eternally angry (to speak in the language of the Synod of Dort) but only against the Reprobates. Thus, behold the invention of immortality, created to satisfy the Paracelsians and similar individuals who seek a remedy against death through drugs and natural causes. Our Synods present the Antidote as a moral cause, so easy and agreeable in execution to their compliant Audience that the charms of Ambrasia and Medusa are mere fables compared to it.

Therefore, our Corrector will either abandon his endeavor to reform this man's debauchery, or he will forsake his own principles and correct the doctrine of his Synods.

Consideration: Surely, we have little reason to exhort a profane individual to pray to God for the grace to abandon his wickedness as long as we find that he takes delight in his profanity and derives

pleasure from his unrighteous ways. If he had a desire to forsake it but found himself unable to cast off this yoke of sin or break the bonds of iniquity, then, in such a case, it would be appropriate to advise him to cry out to God in mercy to set him free from what Satan has bound for so many years. This should be done for the sake of His Son, whom He sent into the world to release the works of the devil and grant him the freedom of His children. Just as the children of Israel cried to the Lord because of their severe bondage, and the Lord heard their cry, considered their sorrows, and descended to deliver them. We are not compelled to follow the course that this Author fabricates. He persistently opposes the secret providence of God in showing mercy to whom He wills and hardening whom He wills, in granting understanding hearts and perceptive eyes and ears to hear to whom He wills, and denying this grace to others. He opposes this throughout, with no regard for God's judgments or His power to harden those who refuse to acknowledge His grace. It is only these and similar spiritual judgments that are of such a nature that they are least felt where they are most tolerated.

And as he opposes this, he also challenges the doctrine of God's word concerning the impotence that is found in everyone to believe and repent until God is pleased to cure the infidelity and impenitence that is derived to us all through the propagation of nature, and made as inherent to us as flesh and bone.

For where it is stated that men cannot believe, cannot repent, those in the flesh cannot please God; that the natural man does not perceive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot know them because they are spiritually discerned; that the inclination of the flesh is enmity against God, not subject to the Law of God, nor can be; that we are all naturally dead

in sin; and that our resurrection from it is no less a work than regeneration or rebirth.

He deliberately sets himself to oppose all of this, and in a contemptible manner, through base insinuations aimed at undermining this doctrine rather than using any valid arguments to overthrow it. However, when it comes to reforming someone like him, we will pray to God to accept our efforts and to demonstrate His power in making His word in our mouths effective, not only in convicting him of his sin but also in humbling him and acquainting him with the Spirit of bondage, making him fearful and pricking his heart, just as the Jews experienced when Peter's sermon brought their grievous sin home to them—the crucifixion of the Son of God. If this leads him to perceive sin as a heavy burden and cry out to us for words of comfort for his weary soul, then we will offer the consolations of God in Christ, for our Savior calls all those who labor and are heavy laden, promising to give them rest. Nevertheless, if we exhort him to pray, it does not follow that this exhortation is in vain, just as exhorting unbelievers to have faith in Christ is not in vain. While neither can be accomplished without grace, upon our exhortation, God can work this grace in him if He pleases.

Many come to church with profane hearts, yet in the hearing of it, God is pleased to convert some of them. Ekron may be like the Jebusite, and God can transform Lebanon into Carmel, making the most desolate places flourish like the garden of the Lord. Even Saul was converted in the midst of his fervent and violent persecution of the Church of God. God can convert not only those averse to true faith but also those with contrary intentions against true faith, and make them willing even when they were unwilling, with omnipotent ease, as Augustine observed. It is untrue that grace compels a person to pray in such a way as to make it impossible for them not to pray,

for that would not be to induce free prayer. Assuming that God, by His Spirit, induces a person to pray, it becomes impossible for them not to pray, but how? Contingently and freely. Therefore, this impossibility is not absolute but conditional, and it is associated with a possibility that is absolutely contrary. Otherwise, it could not occur contingently and freely. For to produce something contingently implies the presence of a possibility to the contrary, and to work something freely means to do so in conjunction with an active power that can either refrain from and suspend the action or produce a contrary operation. In this way, Aquinas most learnedly explained how the efficacious will of God is the cause behind both necessary events happening necessarily and contingent and free events occurring contingently and freely. Accordingly, He ordained various secondary causes, some working necessarily and others operating contingently and freely. However, it appears that this is more than what this Author has been previously acquainted with. And just as he has displayed his provincial wit in opposing the doctrine of God's word in the most untheological manner that the world has ever seen, I wish he would maintain this course and exhibit as little scholasticism in refuting Aquinas on this particular point.

Although God does not grant him grace to mock Him, the duty of prayer binds man no less than any other duty. God bestowed this grace upon all of us in Adam, and in Adam, we all sinned. Through that sin, our nature became devoid of grace until God, in His mercy and for His Son's sake, chooses to have compassion on us and restore it. However, God determines the timing and bestows this grace on some sooner, others later, and on some not at all. When God sent Ezekiel to His people, it appears, based on what we read in Ezekiel 2:3-5, that He sent him not to improve them, but merely to eliminate their excuse of not having a prophet among them. Yet I hope that this Author is not so stubborn as to claim that there was the same

confusion in Ezekiel's doctrine as he accuses ours of. This confusion is entirely of his own making, and I have endeavored to demonstrate the lack of success in his attempts to deceive impartial and fair-minded readers. We teach that no one can have certainty of their reprobation except through final impenitence or by committing the sin against the Holy Ghost. In either of these cases, there is just cause for despair, even for Pelagius himself, let alone his followers who oppose God's grace after its truth has been so clearly revealed. They should examine their own consciences on whether they are acting contrary to their own inner voice and conscience. As for security, can the fear of God lead to it? Do we advocate any form of perseverance in the state of grace other than through the fear of God, as stated in Jeremiah 32:40, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall never depart away from me"? In response to the question of David's state had he died in his adultery, he mentions an answer commonly given by the Synodists, as he claims. However, he does not specify who these Synodists are, whether from Dort or Arles, and much less the exact location. As for the Synod of Arles, I have never heard of it, except through this manuscript. I have had some familiarity with the Acts of the Synod of Dort, but I have not come across this particular response there, nor had I ever heard of it before reading it in this pamphlet. In my view, it is deficient in two respects, neither of which this Author acknowledges. Firstly, it alters the premise without providing any reason for why the premise is unlawful. Nonetheless, King James did present a similar answer to Dr. Overall during the Hampton Court Conference, according to an account I received from someone who participated in the conference. Secondly, it fabricates the idea that David must beget a son after his repentance from whom the Messiah would descend, a fabrication for which I find no basis. However, this Author's objection is quite vain and frivolous. Those who provided this answer certainly did not intend it to apply to anyone other than David. There might have been specific reasons for

David's repentance besides the general ground that applies to all. As for the argument itself, I found it in Arminius in the theses he wrote "ad Hippolytum de collibus." I am aware of how our English Arminians take pride in it. However, I respond that the supposition is highly unjust, separating two decrees of God that He has combined. In such cases, it is no wonder that absurdities arise from such wild assumptions. For example, if God has ordained both that no sin will remove a regenerated person from the state of grace and yet that no sin will be forgiven without repentance, then, in this scenario, for a person to be saved, they must not only remain in the state of grace but also repent. Therefore, it does not follow from this fictitious supposition that David, dying in the sin of adultery without repentance, will die outside the state of grace. Instead, it follows that, despite dying in the state of grace, he will be condemned. However, this only results from our imaginative supposition and not by any ordinance or decree of God. Yet how can he die in impenitence when he possesses the Spirit of repentance? Although, based on this representation, actual repentance is not exercised, the situation remains the same for any sin. According to this assumption, they would have to deny that every sin is mortal.

To contrast their argument with one of ours to the contrary: consider the worthy act of Abraham in sacrificing his son, the martyrs in sacrificing themselves. Now, combine all the heroically virtuous and religious acts ever performed by the Saints of God, and suppose they were all accomplished by a single child of God. Even then, this could not eradicate the flesh, the unregenerate part. How unlikely is it, then, that a single act of adultery could uproot the Spirit, the regenerate part, in a child of God? However, this Author presents an argument against the doctrine that a regenerate person will not die in any unrepented sin. He takes great pride in it, but it is one of the wildest arguments, in my opinion, ever known to the world. This

kind of absurd dispute deserves to be placed in the Stocks in the Parvis, where young sophisters might gaze upon it, much like smaller birds do at a broad-faced fowl during the daytime. There was a time in Rome when wits flourished, and while some produced excellent work with admirable expressions that impressed their audiences, others, seeking applause and striving to exceed expectations, occasionally revealed absurd notions. Seneca criticized these as corrupta and corruptissima in his declamations. Sometimes, however, base flourishings were applauded by the people. Porcius Latro, observing this, decided to mimic those absurdities when he delivered his declamation. On one occasion, he concluded an absurd gradation, similar to some mountebank orators who had spoken before him, with the phrase "Inter sepulchra monumenta sunt." The people burst into acclamation and applause, prompting him to abandon his oration and turn on the audience, exposing the absurdity of his flourish and reproaching them for lacking judgment, as they applauded passages that were worthless and devoid of art, wit, or judgment. Now, let's examine the quality of this argument and whether it is as base as any sober person has ever uttered. First, if this were a means to prolong one's life, why would a person need to strive to sin when the corruption of their nature inclines them to sin more or less, leading them to confess with Paul, "For what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I"? Paul continues, "For I find that when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man. But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." Do we not have daily cause to pray to God for the forgiveness of our sins, both in the morning and evening, and even every hour? Should we not pray for the pardon of the sins of weakness that occur even during our prayers as soon as we finish praying? When Abraham was sacrificing to God, he had to drive away the birds that came upon his sacrifice. Gregory interprets this

as evil thoughts that arise within us even while we are in prayer. In Zechariah 3:1, we read how while Joshua stood before the Angel of the Lord, Satan stood at his right hand to resist him. Certainly, if the Lord were exacting in marking what is done amiss even in our best performances, we would not be able to withstand it. To address this flaw in the argument, the Author makes it proceed not from sin in general, but from mortal sin. If this is presented only "amplificandi causa," considering all sin as mortal, then my response remains fully valid. However, if it is presented "distinguendi causa," as if, in his opinion, not all sin is mortal, does it befit him to assume what we generally oppose as an untruth when arguing against the Papists?

Secondly, will he impute unto us, by way of reproach, our doctrine concerning God's decreeing all things, and will he not allow us to make use of it? Or does he not perceive that, upon this supposition, his argument holds no force? Even if we acknowledge that God has the power to prevent any sin, his argument still lacks force. For God can prevent them from carrying out such vile thoughts as this Author (very prolific in wild inventions) fabricates and attributes to a regenerate person. Just as in Ezekiel 20:32, the Lord declares that what they had in mind shall not be done, for they said they would be like the heathen and serve wood and stone. The Lord professes that He will rule them with a mighty hand, and the outcome is mentioned in verse 37: "I will make you pass under the rod and bring you into the bond of the covenant." Thus, the Lord deals with them in their initial conversion, turning them away from their ungodly and willful ways, just as He turned Saul from his persecuting ways when Saul was breathing out threats against the Saints of God and had received a commission from the high priests to go to Damascus and bind all who called on the name of Jesus. However, after their conversion (which is my third response), He instills His fear into their hearts so that they shall never depart from Him. By restraining them from sin

and preserving the steps of His Saints, He keeps them with Him, not allowing such wild thoughts as those invented by this Author to take root in them. Fourthly, what he suggests is inappropriate for a natural man with even a spark of natural decency in him. Suppose a father were to decide not to disinherit a disobedient and rebellious son, even if the son continued in his disobedience and rebellion until the end. If the son were to take this as an opportunity to become even more riotous and disobedient, would not most natural men condemn such a son as highly unnatural and devoid of any trace of common decency?

How much more inappropriate is such a disposition for someone who is guided and governed by the Spirit of God? An earthly father is unable to change the heart of his rebellious child, but our heavenly Father, God, is sufficiently armed with the power to do so. He has gifts even for the rebellious to make them a suitable dwelling for Him so that the Lord God may reside among them. Fifthly, even if this Author's spirit perhaps serves him to love this temporal life so much that he tries to prolong it by any vile means, such as committing one mortal sin (as he calls it) after another, why should he be so charitable towards us, his adversaries, as to think so highly of us as he does of himself and those of his own sect? We consider it our duty to be so filled with the love of Christ and to enjoy Him that we desire to be dissolved and to be with Christ. If given the choice between living Methuselah's years in all happiness to serve and glorify Him or, for the trial of our Christian faith, to be burned at the stake and, as it were, carried to Christ in a fiery chariot, we should regard God as bestowing greater honor upon us in the latter option than in the former. We have good reason to choose suffering for Him, who was willing to set aside the glory He had with His Father, empty Himself for us, take on the form of a servant, and be crucified on the cross between two thieves so that He might conquer death and open the

gate of eternal life for us. Let this mountebank of discourse go forth, applauding himself for the subtlety of his invention, sacrificing to his wit, and burning incense to his artifice. He may exclaim "Eureka!" and amuse himself in the company of his associates, making merry with their Ambrosia, which surpasses Paracelsian drugs. For these are his inventions, not ours. He reveals how agreeable they might be to his affections, but he lacks the faith to embrace our doctrine.

It is no wonder if their faith matches their unwise declarations about their affections. "That God is not angry forever" is, in substance, a phrase of the Holy Ghost. It is just as true for some that their worm shall never die, their fire shall never go out, and there is no greater form of God's anger than that. Consequently, His anger shall never end towards them. If we divide the world of men into the Elect and reprobates, who can be the latter but reprobates? Therefore, those towards whom God is not always angry must be His elect, not reprobates. Yet I am not surprised by this Author's spirit, which continually mocks and scorns what is the clear doctrine of the Word of God, as well as what he perceives to be the doctrine of the Synods of Dort and Arles.

And therefore I commend his wisdom that, to avoid the appearance thereof, meddles so little with taking notice of any passage from God's word alleged by any of us to address any answer thereto. For if he had, his blasphemous scoffs had been more evidently directed at the doctrine of the Holy Ghost as well as at the doctrine of Dort and Arles.

I find that this Author is a very self-indulgent Gentleman towards himself and to the Helena he cherishes in his bosom. Regardless of his premises, he will always ensure that he is entirely in favour of his own cause in the end. Nevertheless, we will neither forsake our own

principles by the grace of God nor give up our course of reformation for anyone under our care to draw them away from their profane ways. We take our precedent and direction from the holy Apostle's admonition to Timothy: "The servant of the Lord must instruct those who are opposed with meekness, in the hope that God will grant them repentance, leading to a knowledge of the truth, and come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, after being captured by him to do his will." (2 Timothy 2:25-26)

The THIRD PART.

The First Section.

Perhaps he will perform better in the role of a Comforter to one who is afflicted than he did in playing the role of a Converter of an Infidel or Corrector of the profane Christian.

The foundation of all comfort and consolation for every afflicted soul has always been sought and found in the death and passion of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. By satisfying the justice of His Father, He obtained reconciliation for all mankind, actually applicable to all those who, acknowledging the infiniteness of the benefit, embrace the Author of it with true and lively faith. Our Comforter cannot find any other foundation by which to console and assure his patient against the terrors of God's justice, the condemnation of the law, and the accusation of his own conscience. However, the sick or otherwise afflicted can never reconcile this true foundation of God's word with the false foundations of the second article of the Synod of Dort,

namely, that Christ died not for a very small number of persons already elected for salvation by the heavenly Father, who in His decree considered no more the death of His Son than the faith of the elect.

The patient might then ask, "How can I truly know if I am among the small number rather than the great, given that you, my Pastor and Comforter, insist that the promises of salvation in Christ are made universally to all, and that those passages of Scripture which seem general, according to your opinion, should be restricted only to the universality of the elect? In all the rest of Holy Scripture, there is no special promise or mention of me in particular. I also lack any testimony, whether from Angel or Prophet, to assure me of this. When our Saviour said to His Apostles, 'One of you shall betray me,' even though this concerned only one of them, they were all greatly troubled by it. So, if there were but a small number of Reprobates for whom, as you said, Christ did not die, I would still have just reason to fear or think that I might be one of them, especially given the large number of Reprobates as you say."

Consid. Now, we are to proceed to the third Act of this Author's Comedy, and the several scenes within it. We have considered how well he played the part of an Infidel, refusing to be converted by us, as well as that of a poorly behaving Christian, refusing to be reformed by our guidance. Now, we are to see how well he performs the role of an afflicted Christian, rejecting all the consolation we can offer him. He possesses a good wit, and, like Proteus, can transform himself into the likeness of any condition, and play more roles than many.

In this final act, he is nearly as extensive as in both the previous ones. Whether this arises from greater confidence in his cause in this

particular, making his wit more exuberant, or from encountering more difficulties in this passage than in the former, and therefore exerting greater effort to master them, I do not know. He introduces us to this, perhaps capable of performing better in the role of a Comforter, but the fictions of poetic and comical minds are not to be taken seriously as revealing their true meaning.

As for us, we do not claim to convert, reform, or comfort anyone. We only aim to offer words of comfort to a weary soul, words of admonition to humble a debauched Christian, and words of conversion to an Infidel. We leave it to God and pray for the powerful operation of His Spirit to bring about conversion, reformation, and consolation in individuals. Our doctrine of predestination and reprobation is not the word we administer for the conversion of one, the reformation of another, or the consolation of a third. Instead, we use the terrors of the law to humble individuals, preparing them for the grace of the Gospel. Once humbled, we employ the gracious promises of the Gospel to raise them by leading them to faith in Christ. We then instruct them in the duties of Christianity, exhorting them to live in accordance with their profession. If they fail in this, we present the wrath of God before them and demonstrate how it would have been better for them never to have known the way of righteousness than to have known it and then departed from the holy commandment given to them.

If, during their Christian journey, they walk uncomfortably, we will tailor our consolations to address the specific cause of their distress. If affliction is the cause, we will explain that this is a common experience for Christians and that through various trials, we must enter the Kingdom of God. We emphasize that this reveals God's acceptance of us as His own children and not as bastards. If it is a guilty conscience and a sense of falling short of our profession, we

will point out that self-examination can prevent the Lord's judgment, and grief for sin reflects a desire for righteousness. We assure them that God accepts the intention behind the deed and promises forgiveness if we confess our sins. If a lack of faith causes their unrest without any other reason, we will remind them that God's merciful approach is not to break the bruised reed or quench the smoking flax, and we encourage them to pray for increased faith or help with their unbelief. We highlight that this uneasiness is a clear indication of a desire to believe, and God has promised to fulfill the desires of those who fear Him. If they have achieved faith and holiness, our doctrine can confirm their election, unlike the Arminian doctrine. Even if they have neither, there is no reason for despair, as their condition is no worse than that of Saul before his calling or even the holiest servant of God. God calls some early in the day, others not until the last. Only final impenitence or the sin against the Holy Ghost assures reprobation.

Now, let us proceed with this Author's discourse and examine it as we go.

This Author has only one source of consolation, while I have recently dealt with another of his Spirit who presents three sources of consolation: the universality of God's love, the universality of Christ's death, and the universality of the covenant of grace. This shows that he considers a Christian capable of no better consolation than a Turk or Saracen, an elect no better than a reprobate. If he fares no better with all three sources in his quest for consolation, what shall we think of this Author's success when he insists on only one of those three?

However, I commend him for being aware of the untimeliness of his consolation. Had he rested, as the other did, on the idea that Christ,

through His death and passion, satisfied His Father's justice and obtained reconciliation for all mankind, it would have been more discreet. But this Author is not so subtle, for he adds that this reconciliation is applicable only to those who, by acknowledging the infiniteness of the benefit, embrace the Author of it with true and lively faith. Hence, in this Author's view, consolation arising from the death and passion of Christ is only applicable to those who believe in Him, which he terms the embracing of the Author of the benefit with true and lively faith. We willingly acknowledge that we cannot find any other foundation to console and assure an afflicted soul against the terrors of God's justice, the condemnation of the law, and the accusations of their conscience.

But when he claims that the afflicted cannot reconcile this true foundation of God's word with the second article of the Synod of Dort, which he labels false foundations, without providing proof, we reject this assertion as entirely untrue. Even though the second Article of the Synod of Dort does proceed in the terms he presents, stating that Christ died not for anyone except a small number of persons who were already elected unto salvation by the heavenly Father, who, in His decree, considered nothing more than the faith of the elect, we can prove otherwise. Despite this Author's habit of proving nothing but instead, like a comedian, inventing objections and answers out of his own imagination, often unrelated to the subject at hand, I will address them with God's help in due course. However, first, I will prove what I affirm here: that the second Article of the Synod of Dort, stating Christ's death for a very small number, does not undermine the true foundation of consolation applicable to those who believe.

No matter how small the number may be for whom Christ died, according to the doctrine of that Synod, they do not deny but rather

affirm that Christ died to satisfy divine justice for all believers and to procure their reconciliation with God. They draw as much consolation from this foundation and apply it as generously as this Author does. He claims that it is applicable only to those who, acknowledging the infiniteness of the benefit, embrace the Author of it with true and lively faith. He dares not explicitly state that it is applicable to anyone else, only using a verbose paraphrase to obfuscate what could be expressed in one word: Believers. Concerning reconciliation for all mankind, that is concisely and clearly expressed, the focus of his desire. Yet, as he was likely to face an embarrassing outcome had he rested there, as it offered no greater comfort to a Christian than to a Turk, and no greater comfort to the Virgin Mary than to Judas, he added that this comfort is only applicable to believers, effectively undermining his own argument. We willingly confess that this foundation of consolation, or consolation based on this foundation, is most generously applicable to all believers, but to none others. He expresses one and behaves as if he dares not deny the other, namely, the exclusive application of this comfort to believers. Therefore, it is evident that our doctrine not only provides as much abundant consolation as theirs but also offers the same consolation to as many people as theirs does, namely, to all believers. However, I am not finished with this passage; I must hold my Author accountable for something else. I read of Christ's satisfactory obedience in this Author's writing, but nothing of His meritorious obedience.

Similarly, this Author discusses obtaining reconciliation for all mankind, but he says nothing about obtaining salvation for all or any. Nevertheless, we know that it pleased the Father that in Him, meaning in His Son Christ, all fullness should dwell.

Now, let us consider the satisfactory nature of Christ's death as acknowledged here. I presume His death satisfied God's justice by making amends for sin (I say I presume this because I am uncertain about their use of terms and phrases of Art).

If Christ indeed made satisfaction for all the sins of all people, in such a way that God's justice is satisfied, I ask how it can be just for God to demand satisfaction from so many for their sins, including eternal damnation in hellfire? Whether Christ's death and passion are satisfactory for all sins, for everyone, by their inherent nature, by God's constitution, or by both, I fail to comprehend how God can, in justice, require damned individuals to satisfy their own sins in the flames of hellfire.

Secondly, if Christ's obedience is also of a meritorious nature, by which He has earned both forgiveness of sin and eternal life, and if He has earned this for all, whether His obedience is meritorious by its own nature, by God's constitution, or by both, how is it just for anyone in the world to be deprived of both forgiveness of sin and eternal life? Should not God deal with His Son Christ according to the demands of His merits?

Now, as for reconciliation, which this Author claims Christ has obtained for all mankind, that is, I suppose for all and everyone, we have a word from him; however, the mystery of his meaning remains elusive. In 2 Corinthians 5:19, it is stated that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their sins to them. Here, reconciliation seems to be synonymous with non-imputation of sins, and non-imputation of sins appears to be the same as forgiveness of sins. Thus, redemption that we have in Christ through His blood seems to be synonymous with forgiveness of sins (Ephesians 1:7). If reconciliation is obtained for all, and everyone,

through Christ's death, then likewise forgiveness of sins is obtained for all, and everyone. Since it cannot be said to be obtained unless it exists, it follows that all individuals throughout the world are reconciled to God in Christ and have all their sins forgiven. In this case, how is it possible for any of them to be damned for their sins, especially if none of their sins are imputed to them?

I presume that this Author's answer may be that the reconciliation obtained for all mankind is potential reconciliation, not actual. He states that this reconciliation is actually applicable to believers, not just believers (as he desires to confuse his readers as much as possible), but I assume he dares not profess the opposite.

I have two objections to his approach: First, why did he not express this and call the reconciliation obtained for all mankind "potential reconciliation" if that was his meaning? Why did he allow his distinction, somewhat obscurely hinted at here, to remain unclear? Especially considering that while reconciliation can be extended liberally to signify potential reconciliation, when expressed without limitation, it naturally denotes something actual. This should be taken according to the rule of schools: "Analogum per se positum stat pro significatione famosiore."

However, I must excuse him to some extent because Arminius, his Master, was prone to such confusions before him. My second objection is that the words "actually applicable" do not sufficiently imply a distinction between potential reconciliation and actual reconciliation; instead, they imply a distinction in the nature of applicability, either potential or actual. This is indeed in line with the nature of the former distinction because something must exist in actuality before it can be applied, such as a plaster or medicine. Consequently, all individuals throughout the world must be actually

reconciled to God by Christ before their reconciliation can be applied to them. This reconciliation may be said to be applied when God reveals it to us through His Spirit, working faith within us.

One more point I must address before moving on from this section is the clarification of our doctrine regarding Christ's death for all. In my judgment, confusion of distinct concepts only benefits the Arminian cause and obstructs the clear revelation of God's truth, both what is true and what is false.

But first, allow me to touch on an argument for the support of our doctrine in general. It is evident in John 17 that Christ professes He did not pray for all but only for those whom God had given Him (verse 9) or those who would believe in the future, meaning they would be given to Him (verse 20). It is equally clear that just as He prayed for them alone, He also sanctified Himself for them alone (verse 19). What does it mean to sanctify Himself if not to offer Himself on the cross? This is the unanimous consensus of all the Fathers, as acknowledged by Maldoatte, as he himself professes regarding that passage in John.

Now, for the clarification of this matter, when we say Christ died for us, the meaning is that Christ died for our benefit. These benefits that Christ obtained for us through His death may have different conditions, some ordained to be conferred only conditionally, and some absolutely. Therefore, it is appropriate to consider them separately. For example, it is unquestionable (I suppose) that Christ died to procure pardon of sin and salvation of the soul, but is this unconditional, regardless of whether individuals believe or not? No, it is only conditional, specifically conditioned on their faith, so that for Christ's sake, their sins shall be pardoned, and their souls saved, provided they believe in Him.

I willingly admit that Christ died for all in terms of procuring these benefits, conditionally, based on the condition of their faith. If all and everyone were to believe in Christ, then all and everyone would obtain pardon for their sins and salvation for their souls through Christ's sacrifice. I presume no Arminian on the other side would assert that Christ died for all and everyone in such a way that all and everyone would have their sins pardoned and their souls saved for Christ's sake, whether they believe or not. So, what is the cause of any difference between us on this point, as explained here? It is clear that the benefit of the remission of sins and salvation of souls for Christ's sake will ultimately be given to none but those who believe, as this Author seems to acknowledge.

But now, let's turn to faith and regeneration. Are these benefits granted to us through Christ's merits, yes or no? If they are, as our English Arminians seem to acknowledge thus far, then I ask whether these benefits are granted to us absolutely or conditionally based on Christ's merits.

If it is only conditional, they should tell us upon what condition God bestows faith and regeneration upon us for Christ's sake. They should also try to avoid manifest Pelagianism by suggesting that grace is conferred based on people's works. If it is absolute, then is it granted to all and everyone, or only to some? If it is granted to all and everyone, it follows that all and everyone will receive faith and regeneration for Christ's sake, and consequently, all will be saved. If it is granted to some only, who can they be but God's elect?

However, if they wish to avoid these pitfalls and deny that faith and regeneration are among the benefits Christ has merited for man, let the impartial observer consider who is narrowing the scope of Christ's merits more, us or the Arminians. When the question is

about for whom Christ has merited pardon of sin and salvation of the soul, we all agree, as previously shown, and none of us extends Christ's merits farther than the other; none of us narrows them more than the other. But when the question is whether Christ has merited faith and regeneration for us, we readily assert that Christ also merited these benefits for His elect. Arminians, however, do not hesitate to profess that Christ has not merited these benefits for anyone at all.

Indeed, this is expressly found in their Apology or Examen Censurae, page 59. When such an objection was raised to them, "Si hoc tantum meritus est Christus, tum Christus nobis non est meritus fidem nec regenerationem," note their response: "Sane ita est. Nihil ineptius, nihil vanius est, quàm hoc Christi merito tribuere. Si enim Christus nobis meritus dicatur fidem & regenerationem, tum fides conditio esse non poterat, quam peccatoribus Deus sub comminatione mortis aeterna exigeret, imo tum Pater ex vi meriti istius, obligatus fuisse dicatur necesse est ad conferendum nobis fidem." ["If Christ has only merited this much, then Christ has not merited faith or regeneration for us," note their response: "Indeed, it is so. There is nothing more foolish, nothing more empty than to attribute this to the merit of Christ. For if Christ were said to have merited faith and regeneration for us, then faith could not be a condition that God requires from sinners under the threat of eternal death. In fact, it must be said that the Father, by the force of that merit, was obligated to confer faith upon us."] Now, I shall continue following this Author in his own manner.

His objection is as follows: "How shall I truly know (will the patient then say) that I am rather of the small number than of the great, seeing that you, my Pastor and comforter, will not accept that the promises of salvation in Christ are made universally to all? And that

those passages of Scripture which seem general, according to your opinion, are to be restricted only to the universality of the elect?"

I answer, you shall truly know it by acknowledging the infiniteness of the benefit wrought by Christ and embracing the Author of it with true and lively faith. For this Author who prompts you to object in this way essentially professes that no comfort from Christ's death and passion is applicable to you unless you embrace Christ with true and lively faith.

Secondly, even if you do believe in Christ, this Author cannot assure you that you are among the small number who are God's elect rather than among the great number who are reprobates. I say he cannot assure you of this by his doctrine, even if you were to adhere to it. However, we can assure you of this by our doctrine if you embrace it, and there is a reason for you to embrace it because it aligns so well with the Word of God. For example, Acts 13:48 states, "As many believed as were ordained to eternal life," and Acts 2:47 mentions, "God added daily to the Church such as should be saved." Additionally, the Apostle Paul indicates the Election of the Thessalonians in 1 Thessalonians 1:3-4, saying, "We remember the work of your faith, the labor of your love, and the patience of your hope. Knowing, beloved brethren, that ye are Elect of God." Similarly, 2 Thessalonians 2:13 states, "We ought to give thanks always to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord because that God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and faith of the truth."

Likewise, your prompter does not want the promises of salvation in Christ to be made universally to all without conditions. We extend this universality to all and everyone, provided they believe in Christ. Therefore, unless you believe, this Suggester cannot grant you any

interest in these promises, as previously indicated. However, if you believe in Christ, our doctrine allows you as great an interest in them as he can provide.

If it is indeed the case that only God's elect believe (which this Author will not deny, provided that by faith we understand final perseverance in it), then it follows that ultimately only God's elect shall see these gracious promises fulfilled in their lives.

This Author, I presume, will not claim that there is any specific mention of you in scripture more than of himself. Neither will he argue that any testimony from an Angel or Prophet is needed to assure you that these promises are particularly directed towards you. Only if you believe in Christ, then he can assure you that they belong to you. In that case, we can also assure you of the same. Moreover, by faith, you shall receive the Spirit of God, which shall testify that you are a child of God and that this Spirit seals you until the day of redemption, indicating your assurance of perseverance until the end. This means you are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, which the Arminian doctrine cannot provide assurance of. Therefore, even if the number of reprobates were greater than it is, by faith, you can be assured that you are not among them according to our doctrine. No Arminian can assure you of this, not even through faith.

Nevertheless, consider that there is mere sophistry in all of this. You are born into the world under God's guidance and within the embrace of His Church. Even if the number of reprobates were many times greater than the number of God's elect, when you account for heathens, savages, Turks, Saracens, and Moors, you will find that Christendom comprises only a small portion of the world, despite the Gospel spreading farther today than ever before.

Then, consider among those who bear the name of Christians how many sects there are, miserably estranged from the true doctrine of Christianity. There are the Coptites, Nestorians, Armenians, the Greek Church, and the Church of Rome here in the west. Only a small handful of them adhere to the truth of God, free from the same corruption and the holy worship of God undefiled by the same superstitions. What reason do you have to trouble yourself with thoughts about the small number of God's elect and the great number of reprobates?

To receive comfort, the path is straightforward and brief: if you believe in Christ, a wellspring of consolation is opened to you through our doctrine. As long as you do not believe, this Author has essentially indicated that no comfort can be applied to you from the death of Christ. Additionally, we assert that through faith in Christ, you may be assured of your election according to our doctrine, but not according to the doctrine of Arminians.

The Second Section.

Therefore, our consoler (educated in the School of Dort) will present to him the judgment of charity, which presumes well of everyone, given that God reveals as little about the decree of reprobation as about the decree of election.

However, this patient will not find the slightest assurance there, and for many reasons. 1. Firstly, because this judgment of charity, which presumes well when applied generally to all, inevitably proves false.

The comforter, not daring to uphold these two propositions together—that Christ died for all men and that He died for a very small number. 2. Secondly, the judgment of charity has no place when we must have the certainty of faith to believe or do anything with a clear conscience. 3. Thirdly, the judgment of charity does not extend beyond the suppression of unfounded opinions and lightly conceived suspicions about one's neighbor, commanding us to conceal their weaknesses without preaching any falsehood to them. When I see someone presenting themselves at the Lord's table, in the judgment of charity, I think they are properly prepared, seeing nothing to the contrary. But that those who are thus well-prepared partake to the health of their souls, this I believe with the judgment of faith, which allows nothing that is, or may be, false. Likewise, when I see a dying man calling upon Jesus Christ, I believe in charity that he died as a Christian. But that God blesses those who depart in the true faith of our Lord and Savior, this I believe with the certainty of faith, and in such a way that it is impossible for me to be deceived, although it often happens that both can be mistaken in the judgment of charity.

In short, the judgment of charity has a place only in matters between man and man. But when it concerns divine promises, which are based on divine truth, then a certainty of faith is required, in which nothing false or doubtful can be found. If everyone were to say that we should presume everyone to be among the elect until proven otherwise, the patient will reply that by outward appearance, we can know nothing about election or reprobation, even by the judgment of the two Synods. Therefore, it is not sufficient to presume; we must also have full and perfect assurance that Christ died for the person whom we are trying to console. This assurance cannot be found in the doctrine authorized at Dort, as it denies that Christ died for all men.

This Author may prove a valiant champion and a cunning strategist in battle against his enemies by prescribing how they should strike. However, his approach is consistent throughout. I commend his wit more than his bravery in this matter, for he would be a madman to prompt his opponent to strike where he cannot defend. I have already refuted his earlier argument without resorting to the judgment of charity.

I have clearly demonstrated that, according to this Author's own grounds of consolation, we are sufficiently equipped to offer comfort to an afflicted soul, just as well as he. He admits that the benefit of Christ's death (the sole source of comfort, as he claims) is actually applicable only to those who rely on Christ with a true and lively faith. In this case, we can assure not only of God's favor at present but also of final perseverance, election, and salvation through our doctrine. They cannot provide such assurance based on the tenets of their doctrine.

Indeed, if a man has no faith at all, no more than a Turk or Saracen, we cannot assure him of his election any more than we can assure a Turk or Tartar of it, nor can any Arminian, I believe. But suppose a Christian in profession is nevertheless devoid of all true faith; can such a person be assured of God's favor for the pardon of their sins and the salvation of their soul by any Arminian? I doubt no Arminian can or will undertake to assure any person of this without faith. Yet we can boldly say that even if someone lacks faith today, they may come to have it in due time, and there is no reason to consider themselves reprobate. We do not claim that someone without faith should be considered to have faith in the judgment of charity. But whatever evidence we have of a person's faith, we have the same evidence of their election in the judgment of charity. For the Apostle clearly concludes the election of the Thessalonians based on his

observation of their faith, etc. (1 Thessalonians 1:1, 3, 4, and 2 Thessalonians 2:13).

Let us consider in this strange discourse of his, which proceeds from his own imagination, how well he undermines that which he alone has constructed, as if he were building castles in the air. First, he says that this judgment of charity, which presumes well when applied generally to all, necessarily proves false. I wonder why he does not see how this directly contradicts his own argument, for has he not previously suggested that the number of reprobates, being far greater than the number of the elect, gives people just cause to suspect that they belong to the greater number rather than the lesser? When applied to all, this must prove that everyone must suspect themselves to be reprobates rather than elect, as if there were no elect at all. Now, the same way he uses to escape from this argument will serve our purpose to answer this argument as well. We are talking about comforting this or that particular person, and we have nothing to do with all men throughout the world.

Furthermore, we are involved in comforting an afflicted Christian, and the soul's affliction for sin is often like the pangs of childbirth, by which many are brought into the world of grace. Now, without the Church, there are enough people to complete the number of reprobates, not to mention the profane individuals within the Church who continue in their sinful ways without any remorse of conscience. And when he tells us that we dare not maintain these two propositions together: 1. that Christ died for all men, 2. and that he died for a very small number. First, note his backward movement; for at first, he indicated that the consolation arising from Christ's death is applicable only to those who believe. We do not deny that an abundance of consolation in Christ's death is available to all who believe. Now, he reverts and discusses the consolation arising from

Christ's death for all, whether they believe or not. It is as if everyone is to be comforted in Christ's death because, according to their doctrine, Christ died for all and everyone, which is clearly to provide no more comfort to a Christian through Christ's death than to a cannibal.

Secondly, concerning these two propositions, we can and do maintain them in a better manner than they do because we express the truth clearly and distinctly on our part, but they do so in a most confused manner, as if they were the children of confusion.

Regarding the benefit of the pardon of sin and salvation procured by Christ's death, we say that Christ died to procure these for all and everyone, but how? Not absolutely, for then all and everyone would be saved. But conditionally, namely, on the condition of faith, so that if all and everyone were to believe in Christ, all and everyone would be saved. However, as for faith itself, we say that Christ also merited this (which the Arminians expressly deny in *Examen censurae*, page 59). Not conditionally, for if so, grace would be given according to men's works, which was condemned in the Synod of Palestine over 1200 years ago and has been consistently condemned in the Church of God as pure Pelagianism. Therefore, He merited this absolutely, not for all and everyone, for then all and everyone would believe, and consequently all and everyone would be saved. Thus, He merited this only for some, and who can these "some" be but God's elect?

And if it appears that only a small number believe and persevere in true faith, it is evident in the end that only a few are saved. Even though Christ died to save all and everyone conditionally, He only died to merit faith for a very few. Now, what has become of this Author's riddle and the alleged contradiction between these two propositions? I move on to his second argument.

Be it so that the judgment of charity never has a place when we must have the certainty of faith to believe or do anything with a good conscience. But, I say, this is irrelevant to the case we are discussing. Are we required to believe about ourselves or our brothers that we are the elect of God? Is this the Arminian doctrine? A person born in the Church and professing the Gospel, we are obliged to believe has true faith (and consequently is one of God's elect) if we know nothing to the contrary. This, I say, is required in the way of charity, which interprets everything in the best light. So did Paul conceive of the Thessalonians, and based on the leaves of their profession, we must judge them to be plants of the Lord's planting as long as we have no just cause to think otherwise. As for the third point, even if the judgment of charity extends only to the suppression of unfounded opinions and suspicions about our neighbor, it is good that it extends that far. Therefore, without just cause, we must not think of them in any other way than that they are in a state of grace, and consequently, they are among the elect. And no other kind of certainty is required in the case we are discussing. So this Author carries himself miserably outlandish in his very eccentricities.

As for an afflicted soul, we have reason to think better of them than of civil Christians because their state is not so susceptible to hypocrisy as the condition of Christians who are not exercised with the terrors of God and the frights of a tender conscience.

Even if the judgment of charity only applies between man and man, that is the case we are dealing with. As for the afflicted soul, we do not say that in the judgment of charity, they are obliged to believe that they are one of God's elect any further than they have reason to believe that they are in a state of faith. But we come to the application that he makes of this to divine promises. We willingly profess that divine promises are to be believed with certainty of faith.

We do not say, nor I presume, was any of our divines known to say, that the truth of divine promises is to be believed through the judgment of charity. "Whoever believes will be saved," we understand this with certainty of faith, not through any judgment of charity. What a wild path this Author takes in his meandering discourse?

We will confidently affirm that everyone is to believe that they are among the number of God's elect as far as they know themselves to have faith in Christ. Faith is a gift from God (Philippians 1:29, Ephesians 2:8), and God gives us His Spirit through the hearing of faith so that we may know the things given to us by God (1 Corinthians 2:12). However, whether a person has true faith or not, even if known to the person who possesses it, is not known to others except through the judgment of charity. Yet Paul was confident in the truth of the Thessalonians' faith, and consequently, in their election (1 Thessalonians 1:3, 4, and 2 Thessalonians 2:13). It is untrue that we must have complete assurance that Christ died to procure the pardon of sin and salvation of the soul absolutely for the person we are trying to comfort. It is enough that Christ died to procure these benefits for them conditionally, namely, if they believe and repent. And we have ample assurance of this. But these disputants, like owls, only fly about in the darkness and confusion of night; but when the light of distinction comes, it's time for them to hide in their closed harbours out of shame.

Furthermore, we can discuss with our patients not only Christ's death to procure pardon of sin and salvation of the soul conditionally, provided they believe and repent but also for procuring the gift of faith and repentance for them as well. We have greater hope in this when we consider their afflicted condition because it is God's usual way to transform them into the image of

Christ crucified first and then rising from the dead. This is done by making them experience the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and the power of His resurrection. Now, this way of consolation is completely outside the Arminian's element.

The Third Section.

The minister or Comforter will then ask the patient if he ever felt the witness of adoption, which the Spirit of God bears with the Spirit of the elect. And if he is certain that he once had faith, he may be sure that he still has it, even though it produces little fruit. To this, the patient will reply that even Calvin himself troubles and obscures this doctrine of certainty in his Institutes, Book 3, Chapter 2, paragraph 10. There he says, "The heart of man has so many secret corners of vanity, is so full of so many hiding holes of lying, is covered with such guileful hypocrisy, that it deceives itself and persuades him that he has true faith when he has it not."

If the patient acknowledges that he never found this testimony in his heart, his comforter will answer him in the same way as he did to the profane when he took on the role of a censor and corrector, namely, that not all are called at the same time.

But if the patient then asks for some assurance that he will be called efficaciously before his death, the comforter will find none for him either at Dort or Arles. He will only tell him that Christ died for him if he believes in Him, which would either make him a prevaricator of his own side and an underminer of the doctrine of the Synods or that

he is lacking common sense. For if he gives the same consolation to all who are sick, to all who are afflicted, and even to those who are led to execution for their greater offenses, and if this consolation is based on the truth, does it not then follow that Christ died for all and everyone?

If he understands it in such a way that this becomes true through the faith that the patient adds to the minister's discourse, he has lost his sense in affirming that the object of faith or the thing proposed to be believed receives its truth and depends on the consent and belief of men. By his approval and faith, he has no more power to make what is false in itself true than to make what is true false by his incredulity. The incredulity of man may deprive him of the benefit of Christ's death, yet it cannot make it so that Christ did not suffer this death to testify His love to all mankind universally, just as all are bound to believe in Him, and yet no one is bound to believe in what is false.

The Apostle says that God will send the Spirit of error upon those who have not received the love of the truth. And yet, according to the Doctrine of Dort, he would have all men first believe that Christ died for them, which is false in the judgment of the Synod, and then afterward, for believing this falsehood, he shall be punished with the Spirit of error for giving credence to a lie.

Consider that there is a Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba Father," which is as true as the word of God itself. Likewise, His Spirit testifies together with our Spirit that we are the Sons of God. We are ready to maintain that there is no falling away from the state of sanctifying grace according to God's word, whenever we are called upon to do so. Concerning some Apostates, St. John writes plainly, saying: "They went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us." By faith, we are

built on Christ as on a rock, and our Savior has told us that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against those who are built upon it. No one can prevail against them, for they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. Consequently, whoever is assured that he once had faith may be just as sure that he still has it.

Peter sinned foully in denying his Master, yet Christ had prayed for him that his faith should not fail. And not for Peter alone did our Saviour pray, but for all those whom His Father had given Him, and that in this form: "Father, keep them in Thy name," (John 17). Not only for those whom His Father had given Him at that time but also for those who would believe through their word in the future (John 17).

We are well aware of the little fruit that Peter's faith bore at the time when he denied his Master, and also in the case of David when he sinned in the matter of Uriah. Yet Bertius would not profess that David, by those sins of his, had deprived himself of the Spirit of God, for grave reasons. Neither does it follow that because true faith brings forth little fruit at times, such as in the hour of temptation and when a man falters under it, it therefore brings forth little fruit altogether, as this Author presents the matter.

It is untrue that Calvin troubles or obscures this doctrine of Certitude, and for the Patient to say so is merely this Author's fiction. If he were to say so, we would be just as ready to disprove it.

Calvin's words are these: "Tot vanitatis recessus habet, tot mendacii latebris scatet cor humanum, tam fraudulenta hypocrisi obiectum est, ut seipsum saepe fallat." He might as well have said that the Holy Ghost troubles and obscures this doctrine of Certitude by saying: "The heart of man is deceitful above all things; who can know it?" But the Apostle makes this use of it (2 Cor. 12:5): "Examine

yourselves, whether you are in the faith, prove yourselves; know ye not yourselves that Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

There is indeed a secret hypocrisy unknown to a man's own heart, as when he presumes that all things are going well between him and God when indeed they are not. Their righteousness, such as it is, is not simulated or feigned by them, but they deceive themselves as well as others. From such a state, a man may fall, as Augustine acknowledges. Nevertheless, he clearly professes his belief that no one falls away from the state of spiritual and wholesome repentance, which is a condition into which God never brings anyone whom He has not predestined. "Istorum (that is non praedestinatorum) neminem adducit ad spiritualem & salubrē paenitentiam, qua homo reconciliatur Deo in Christo, sive illis ampliorem patientiam, sive non imparem praebeat." (Contra Julianum Pelagianum, lib. 5, cap. 4).

This is not the case of an afflicted soul. The hypocrite is secure and without suspicion of the integrity of his condition in the state of grace. But the afflicted soul is too suspicious of himself, conceiving his faith at best to be counterfeit. This is his sorrow, and this is the cause of the disquietness of his mind. We can take advantage of this for his consolation because he judges and condemns himself. In this case, the word of God assures us that we shall not be judged by the Lord. Moreover, it is clearly evident that he desires to be free from hypocrisy, to be in a comfortable condition through true and sincere faith in Christ. These are manifest evidences of the life of grace, not to mention general grounds of consolation, such as: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted," and "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled."

It is true that all are not called at the same hour. Seeing affliction, especially when it is of a spiritual nature, is the ordinary introduction into the state of grace in the course of God's providence. Just as the valley of Achor was a door of hope for the Children of Israel, and our Saviour, on His way to Jerusalem (the vision of peace), commonly passed through Bethany (the house of mourning). We have cause to hope that these pangs may be like the pangs of childbirth to an afflicted soul. However, we will not conclude from our Patient's statement that he never felt the testimony of adoption in his heart that he is still in a state of nature and unwashed from his filthiness. We will take into account all the circumstances of his conduct in this condition and the observations we have made of them during our conversations in the past. We will not allow a melancholy passion to obscure God's mercy towards them, and we will be reluctant to be limited in our proceedings by the wit of a comedian who approaches sensitive subjects as if he were performing on stage, providing amusement for his Arminian audience. In the next place, he puts a most absurd demand in the mouth of his Patient, requiring some assurance that he will be efficaciously called before his death. I am convinced that such a demand has never been made except through Arminian invention.

Can any Arminian assure their Patients of any such condition? We willingly profess we can assure none thereof. However, when we find men afflicted in soul through the conscience of sin and a fearful apprehension of God's wrath, this Spirit of bondage gives us hope that a child is now coming to birth, and that there will be enough strength in due time to bring him forth. We are not inclined to tell him that Christ surely died for him if he believes in Him. This is a proposition of this Author's making, to toast his companions.

By the way, it seems that although this Comedian initially professed that consolation in Christ's death was not actually applicable to anyone except those who believe in Christ, and consequently that a person can have no comfort in Christ until they believe in Him through a true and lively faith, he now presents the matter as if merely believing that Christ died for him, even without possessing true faith in Christ, is sufficient comfort. However, it is evident that in this case, no more consolation can arise for a Christian than for a Turk, a child of God than for a child of the devil, or an elect person than for a reprobate. Their doctrine states that Christ died indiscriminately for all. Even though this practice is base enough to impose whatever cause of consolation he deems suitable, I will not hesitate to examine how judiciously he handles this feigned suggestion of ours. Suppose we were to say that whoever believes Christ died for him, I am prepared to defend it, despite this Author's attempt to portray its absurdity. I have no doubt that the charge of absurdity will fall heavily upon his own head, revealing his shameful ignorance, which he willingly nurtures for the sake of his cause by muddling distinct concepts. He claims that in doing so, we either show ourselves as prevaricators of our own side and underminers of the Synods' doctrine or as lacking common sense. All of this, I hope to demonstrate to impartial and reasonable judges, is mere evidence of his own ignorance.

First, he says that if we offer the same consolation to all who are sick, to all who are afflicted, and even to those who are led to execution for their greater offenses, and if this consolation is based on truth, does it not follow that Christ died for all and everyone? I willingly confess that I am greatly encouraged by the confidence in our cause when I observe the desperate state of the adversary's argument. He takes delight in such flimsy supports as this Author's discourse and magnifies them as unassailable, calling on others to take note of

them as if they were notable achievements. But who does not see that we are currently engaged in the ministry of consolation to an afflicted soul? Is this the condition of all and everyone? Alas, how few mourn in comparison to the jovial Ned's of the world! How few hunger and thirst for righteousness compared to those who are full! But even if it were applicable to all, namely, that if they believe in Christ, Christ certainly died for them, can any Arminian deny this? Do they consider it less certain that Christ died for those who believe in Him than that He died for all, without exception, including Turks, Saracens, Tartars, and Cannibals?

Lastly, how does it benefit their cause that Christ died for all and everyone? In truth, this does not benefit them at all. Their doctrine's confusion and indistinct consideration of its true meaning are what gives them some advantage.

To die for us means to die for our benefit. We prefer to speak plainly and distinctly and, accordingly, distinguish between the benefits Christ has procured for us. Some of these benefits are conferred by God upon adults not absolutely but conditionally. These include the remission of sins and the salvation of souls. We say that Christ merited the forgiveness of sins and the salvation of souls for us, to be granted to us only conditionally, provided that we believe in Him. Thus, we can affirm that He died for all and everyone, meaning that He died to procure forgiveness of sins and salvation for everyone if they believe in Him. In essence, this implies that He died for none except those who, at some point, believe in Him. However, whether we believe or not, God's word assures us that He died to procure the forgiveness of sins and salvation for all who do or will believe in Him. Apart from these benefits, there are other benefits that Christ has procured for us, merited for us—faith and repentance. These are not conferred by God upon man conditionally, based on some condition

performed by man. If that were the case, these graces would be conferred according to men's works, which is undoubtedly pure Pelagianism.

And these, we say, Christ has merited for us, to be absolutely bestowed upon us. Now, will Arminians assure any man who does not yet believe that Christ has merited for him not only pardon of sin and salvation in case he believes, but also the very grace of faith and regeneration? I believe none of our English Arminians would undertake this but would rather acknowledge that it cannot be determined for whom Christ has merited faith and regeneration until they believe, until they are regenerated. As for foreign Arminians, they utterly deny that Christ merited faith and regeneration for anyone. Now, in what way do we become prevaricators of our own cause, underminers of the Synods' doctrine, or devoid of common sense in all or any of this? Does not this Author, rather, reveal his miserable ignorance throughout, emboldened and confident in his profound ignorance in which he indulges himself and rests as if on his Arminian pillow, through miserable confusion in the interpretation of the phrase "Christ died for us," taking it hastily and generally, without due consideration of the specific benefits signified by it, which Christ is said to procure for us? But let us continue with him as he proceeds.

However, if he understands it in a way that it becomes true through the faith added by the patient to the discourse of the Minister, he has lost his sensibility. In affirming that the object of faith or the thing proposed to be believed receives its truth and depends on the consent and belief of man, who, through his approval and faith, has no more power to make that true which is inherently false than to make that false through his incredulity which is inherently true. The incredulity of man may deprive him of the benefit of Christ's death,

yet it cannot make it untrue that Christ suffered this death to testify His love to all mankind universally, as all are bound to believe in Him, and yet no one is bound to believe what is false. Thus, he meanders through a vast field, entirely unrelated to the matter at hand. This argument belongs to Bellarmine from long ago, but what is it against? Surely, it is against the doctrine of our Protestant Churches concerning the specific object of faith, which we maintain to be the remission of our sins. Yet, it is absurd on Bellarmine's part, though admittedly quite plausible upon a superficial consideration of things. He assumes that God first pardons sin, and then we believe that God has pardoned them. But can Bellarmine explain what it means for God to pardon sin or where He pardons them in this manner? I am certain that the details are rather unclear regarding the formal act of pardoning sin. I truly believe that Bellarmine did not ponder these details seriously. If he had, and had considered well that justification, especially in Scripture, is a judicial act and is synonymous with absolution or pronouncing a sentence for a person, and that the pronouncement of this sentence is not in heaven (even though His love and purpose are eternal actions within Him), for to whom would God announce it there? Would He tell the Angels? And when would that be, I wonder? At the initial conversion of each person? This would be a very fanciful notion, suitable for such a comedian as this Author.

But if God pronounces it nowhere else but in the conscience of man, where He has established His tribunal, and does so through the testimony of His Spirit, which can be no other than making the Spirit of man apprehend it through faith, I say, if Bellarmine had seriously contemplated this, "all the heads of the hydra would fall," and he would not have been so eager to expose his ignorance with an argument plausible only through a lack of understanding about what he was discussing. This argument, which is employed here by this

Author, is from Bellarmine, but it has nothing to do with his present purpose. We do not assert here that something becomes true by the faith of the one who believes it. Rather, we only assert that the benefit, which is procured for all and everyone upon a condition, becomes the sole possession of the one who fulfills the condition.

Christ died to procure pardon of sin and salvation to be obtained through faith. So, if everyone were to believe, everyone would be saved. In essence, this means that Christ died in this regard only for believers, and through the faith of man, the benefit of Christ's death is appropriated to him. However, until he believes, it is not known either to himself or anyone else that he will benefit from Christ's death. Only God knows from eternity who will benefit from Christ's death and who will not, as He has determined to give faith in Christ to some and not to others. Accordingly, He sent Christ into the world not only to merit pardon of sin and salvation if they believe but also to merit faith and regeneration for them. Therefore, God's love for all extends only to the extent that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3). However, God's special love for His elect goes further, as He sends Christ into the world to merit not only that which is conferred upon the condition of faith but also faith itself, which is conferred upon them absolutely and without condition. We do not claim that anyone is obligated to believe what is false. Regarding believing in Christ, to which all who are called by the Gospel are bound, this is not a belief in something capable of being true or false, as this Author erroneously confuses things.

The Apostle indeed speaks of God's judgments in this manner, and we have ample experience of it today. God strikes such individuals with a spirit of confusion, making them err in their counsels and discourses, just as a drunken man errs in his vomit. Yet, they consider themselves the only sober individuals in the world and take

pride in their delusions, which are most pleasing to them, much like the dream of a hungry man who eats and drinks and rejoices (as he thinks) but awakens with an empty soul. Surely the doctrine of Dort does not teach that God would have a man first believe something false when He commands everyone to believe that Christ died for him. Perhaps it is false in the judgment of the Synod that Christ died for everyone, but where do they say or acknowledge that God commands everyone to believe that Christ died for him? If he can provide evidence of this, why does he not do so? But he only came on stage to perform some antics, and having done that, his discourse comes to an end. They maintain that not everyone but only everyone who hears the Gospel is bound to believe in Christ. It is unbelievable to me that they should profess that everyone is obligated to believe that Christ died for him. However, it is not surprising for this Author to confuse these concepts, as if there were no difference between believing in Christ and believing that Christ died for us. Indeed, Arminians often conflate these distinctions. The truth is, we deny that Christ died for all in the sense that He died not to procure the grace of faith and regeneration for all but only for God's elect. Consequently, only God's elect will have such an interest in Christ's death as to obtain pardon of sin and salvation, for even Arminians confess that this is the portion only of believers. However, since pardon of sin and salvation are benefits merited by Christ to be conferred not absolutely but conditionally, namely upon the condition of faith, we can confidently say that Christ died for all and everyone in some sense. He died to procure forgiveness of sins and salvation for all and everyone if they believe. This is true, and therefore we can say, as the Synod of Dort did, that everyone who hears the Gospel is obligated to believe that Christ died for him in this sense, namely, to obtain salvation for him if he believes. But what do Arminians think? Are we obligated to believe that Christ died for us in such a sense as to purchase faith and regeneration for

us? Surely, none of them will affirm this, because they do not believe that Christ, by His death, merited faith and regeneration for all and everyone. In fact, the Remonstrants profess that He merited faith and regeneration for no one. We acknowledge that Christ merited this for God's elect, and therefore, as soon as they believe and are regenerated, they are bound to give God the glory for bestowing these graces upon them for Christ's sake. It is He who makes us complete for every good work, working in us that which is pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 13:21).

But before God has bestowed faith and regeneration upon them, it is entirely uncertain by ordinary means whether God has determined to grant such grace to them and whether Christ died to procure such a benefit for them.

Regarding the phrase used by this author, "believing falsehood," there is a significant difference between believing something that is false and believing in falsehood. When God commanded Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, Piscator believed that Abraham was obligated to believe that it was God's will for Isaac to be sacrificed, even though it turned out to be false, as seen in the outcome. Nevertheless, I hope Abraham had no reason to fear punishment for believing this to the extent of being led astray by the Spirit of error.

I also hope that this Author will reconsider and be cautious about passing judgment on Abraham for believing in a lie in this matter. However, he continues to press forward, more like a blind man than one who, as Solomon said, has his eyes in his head. Nevertheless, I do not share Piscator's view on this matter. It is possible that Abraham was inclined to think in that direction, but I see no reason to assert that Abraham was obligated to believe what Piscator claims he was obligated to believe.

The Fourth Section.

See, then, if this isn't a perplexing maze of extraordinary theology, which turns obedience into punishment. If the Synod speaks the truth and Christ did not die for those who do not believe in Him, how can they deserve to be punished for not believing something false? And those who have obeyed His command by believing in His death, why should they suffer the punishment meant for the disobedient and unbelieving, which is to believe in lies.

In a nutshell, to deny the universality of the merit of Christ's death is to dishonor God outrageously, as if the Author of truth commanded all people to believe in a falsehood. To better discern the inconsistency of this Spirit that presided over the two Synods, it is worth noting that on one hand, this doctrine forbids believing in what the Scriptures affirm as most true and explicit. On the other hand, it commands everyone to believe that they are elected to eternal life, even if they are effectively reprobate. It also asserts that one cannot lose their faith, once acquired, no matter what sins they commit, a claim that the Scriptures deny in the strongest terms.

If this doctrine, which denies that Christ died for all, deprives the afflicted of all consolation, the other point, which denies that a person can fall from grace and faith, completely undermines the ministry of preaching. Preaching consists of exhortations through promises and warnings, which can only be effective through the immediate operation of the Holy Spirit, as mentioned earlier.

Furthermore, there is not a single promise in all of Scripture that supports the perseverance in faith as implied by the Synod. Instead, the Scriptures are full of exhortations that directly contradict the supposed promise. They admonish believers to be careful not to fall, not to harden their hearts, not to receive God's grace in vain, and to remain steadfast, among other things. Yet, the imagined promise of the Synod declares that they cannot fall, they cannot harden their hearts, they cannot receive grace in vain, and they cannot lose their steadfastness. Thus, these admonitions, which warn of danger and instill fear, contradict the promise that says there is no danger or cause for fear. Unless the Synod wants us to believe that the faithful, who fear a danger that cannot happen, are more foolish than certain melancholic individuals who fear that the heavens will fall, which will eventually pass away.

We read of a person who, upon losing his eyesight while sleeping, wondered why there was no light when he woke up and had been lying in bed for a long time. He imagined that the reason was because the windows were closed and cried out to have them opened.

In a similar manner, this Author cries out about the labyrinth of prodigious divinity, when in reality, it is his prodigious ignorance that makes our doctrine appear as prodigious divinity to him. It is untrue that we turn obedience into punishment, but he imagines the object of obedience and imposes it on others before he thoroughly understands it himself, wishing that others would be like him in believing in something they do not fully comprehend. We willingly admit that Christ did not die to procure faith and regeneration for those who never believe in Him, who are never regenerated. I have no doubt that this Author believes this as well as we do. Furthermore, we believe that Christ died to procure the grace of faith and regeneration for some, namely, God's elect. I doubt whether this

Author (who boasts so much about Christ dying for all according to his faith) believes this to the same extent. In this regard, I am confirmed in my belief that the Remonstrants openly profess that Christ did not merit faith and regeneration for anyone. Examination of Censures, page 59. However, concerning Christ's death for all men to procure forgiveness of sins and salvation for them absolutely, I am not aware of any Arminian who affirms this. On the other hand, we willingly admit that Christ died for all and everyone to the extent of procuring both forgiveness of sins and salvation if they believe. In all of this, we do not claim that anyone is obligated to believe something false, let alone deserving punishment for not believing something false. I dare say even Impudence itself can be the judge between us in this matter. It can decide which of us attributes more to the efficacy of Christ's death and which of us believes more that Christ died for us. Let one's own conscience be the judge now that the difference between us has been clarified. Regarding the benefits of forgiveness of sins and salvation, in their conditional extension to all and everyone, we are on equal ground. However, concerning the benefits of grace and regeneration, we attribute these to Christ's death as the meritorious cause for all who enjoy these benefits. In contrast, the Remonstrants have openly professed to the world that Christ did not merit faith and regeneration for anyone. So, how do we deny the universality of Christ's merit when, on one hand, we extend it as far as they do and, on the other hand, much farther than they do? Let the world judge upon a fair hearing of both sides who should be censured for dishonoring God outrageously. It is a false accusation that we charge God, the Author of truth, with commanding a falsehood. Not only because we believe there is a significant difference between believing in Christ, which we acknowledge is commanded, and believing that Christ died for us, which is not commanded anywhere. But also, even if we were commanded to believe that Christ died for all and everyone, we would not be

commanded to believe something false. In a positive sense, we believe that Christ died for all and everyone, just as much as the entire Arminian faction does. In another sense, when believing that Christ died for us, we go much further than them in extending the merit and efficacy of Christ's death and passion. Therefore, it is entirely untrue for this Author to repeat the charge that we deny what the Scriptures affirm in explicit terms. However, since the Scriptures do not explicitly affirm what this Author claims, namely that Christ died for all and everyone, even if it did, we would not deny it. Instead, we maintain it, not only to the same extent as they do but much further. I am not aware of any command from the Synod of Dort instructing everyone to believe that they are elected to eternal life. I have only recently read such an objection raised against us, as stemming from the particular opinions of Zanchi and Bucer. Nevertheless, they only make this assertion concerning Christians, who are those that believe in Christ, and for whom they make no doubt that Christ died. So, the consistency here is precise without any apparent contradiction. Even if it were proven to be contradictory, I have never observed such a condition being criticized for fickleness in those who embrace such opinions until now. Fickleness is demonstrated by changing from one opinion to another, not by holding the same opinions consistently, even if they may seem contradictory to some malevolent adversaries. Yet Zanchi, who says that everyone is obligated to believe (speaking of Christians) that they are elected to eternal life, has never been known to assert that everyone is obligated to believe they are elected to faith and regeneration. We know that eternal life is ordained by God to be the portion of individuals, not based on whether they believe or not, or whether they persevere in faith, holiness, and repentance, but only of those who believe, repent, and strive for good works. It is ordained to be bestowed upon people as a reward for their faith, repentance, and good works.

And will any Arminian deny that everyone who hears the Gospel (whether he believes or not) is obligated to believe that eternal life will be his reward if he believes, repents, and engages in good works? Although this Author currently attempts to belittle our doctrine as entirely insufficient for comforting an afflicted soul, he does not hesitate, almost in the same breath, to denounce our doctrine regarding perseverance in the state of grace and promote the Arminian belief in the Apostasy of God's Saints. As if their doctrine on this particular matter were more suitable for consolation than ours.

The sins of David were indeed grave, involving adultery and murder. Yet Bertius, that zealous advocate of the Apostasy of God's Saints, would not claim that David, through these grievous sins, expelled the Holy Spirit from his heart, especially for grave reasons. In fact, the Scripture teaches us that while David prayed in his penitential Psalm concerning these sins, asking God to restore him to the joy of his salvation, he did not pray for God to restore his Spirit but rather that God would not take His Spirit away from him. Similarly, Peter sinned greatly and shamefully by denying his master with curses and oaths, even in His presence. Nevertheless, our Saviour had previously told him that He had prayed for him, ensuring that his faith would not fail.

We also know the promise the Lord made to David in Psalm 89:30-33: "If his children forsake my law and walk not in my judgments, if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Yet my loving-kindness will I not take from him, neither will I falsify my truth."

The scripture, as this Author claims, denies our doctrine as a thing most false in explicit terms. However, he provides no specific references or citations and does not even hint at any passages where this alleged denial is expressed explicitly.

On the contrary, in Matthew 24:24, our Saviour describes the effectiveness of false prophets in deceiving many, stating that "if it were possible, they should deceive the very elect," clearly indicating that it was not possible for the Elect to be deceived. Now, this cannot be understood of the elect while still unregenerate, for in their natural state, it is evident that they are susceptible to the same errors as others.

In John 10:29, Jesus plainly conveys that His sheep are in the hands of His Father, and no one is able to snatch them out of His hands. Likewise, in 1 Peter 1, it is stated that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. When we assert that this faith cannot be lost, we do so based on the premise of God's purpose to preserve them in a state of grace against all the forces of darkness. This purpose is evident through His promise, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall never depart away from me." The Apostle, on behalf of God, also promises that He will perfect the good work He has begun in us (Philippians 1:6) and that He will not allow us to be tempted beyond our strength but will provide a way out when we are tempted (1 Corinthians 10:13).

Although their opposing doctrine of the Apostasy of Saints lacks a consolatory nature, he still attempts to criticize it, albeit out of place in this context. He raises an objection, claiming that it undermines the ministry of preaching, which relies on exhortations through promises and threats. According to him, these can no longer serve as means to accomplish any good work if good works are brought about

by the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost, as previously mentioned. This argument seems out of place here, especially since we are discussing matters of consolation. I presume that no Arminian would regard their doctrine on the Apostasy of Saints as a very comforting one.

Furthermore, whether good works result from the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost is not relevant to the current discussion. His assertion is that the doctrine of perseverance undermines the ministry of preaching, not the immediate working of perseverance by the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, if this were his current assertion, I have already sufficiently refuted it earlier. In Psalm 89:12, the Lord professes that He keeps and waters His vineyard of red wine day and night. God both keeps and waters it, and by watering it, He keeps it. Can anyone with sound judgment find any contradiction here? God can keep it even without the preaching of the word, and where this means is lacking, the Lord is capable of keeping it, and He will keep it. Even where these means are abundant, they do not hinder the immediate operation of the Holy Ghost in directing the will to assent and yield obedience. It is foolish to suggest that the preaching of the word obstructs the immediate operation of the Spirit of God in moving the will to agree and obey.

He claims that there is not a single promise in all of Scripture regarding perseverance in faith as indicated by the Synod. However, he must be ignorant to not know that many passages of the Holy Scripture are cited to support this doctrine, even in the Acts of the Synod itself. Yet, this Author, with his whimsical wit, does not find himself suitable for a serious debate. Instead of engaging with any specific passages of Scripture typically cited by our theologians to support this doctrine, this astute Author attempts to outdo them all,

claiming that all exhortations, which are plentiful in Scripture, directly oppose the alleged promise.

We vehemently reject this claim. Only a shameful lack of consideration allows this Author to make such bold assertions, which were rejected even in the days of Augustine, both by him and others during their debates against the Pelagians. He fails to realize that as God works individuals toward perseverance, He does so in a manner that aligns with their nature, namely, through admonition and exhortation. In Acts 27:24, God promised Paul that He would grant safety to all those sailing with him. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Paul from exhorting the Centurion to keep the mariners in the ship, warning them that their safety depended on it (Acts 27:31).

It is absurd to assume that by instilling fear through admonition, we negate the promise when the promise itself can only be fulfilled through this fear. Jeremiah 32:40 states, "I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall never depart away from me." God instills this fear in us to remove presumption, teach us to rely on Him, and allow us to give Him alone the glory for our preservation. He wants us to acknowledge our weakness and respond with fear, which is why He explicitly exhorts us to "work out our salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:13). This fear does not undermine our confidence in God but ensures that all our confidence is in Him, not in ourselves. It leads us on the holy path to salvation with trust in Him but with no self-confidence, and it encourages us to approach with fear and trembling regarding ourselves.

The promise does not declare that there is no reason for fear in regard to ourselves. Instead, it conquers those fears by urging us to lift our eyes toward our Creator. In doing so, we become a people saved by the Lord, for He is the shield of our strength and the sword

of our glory. We fear the Lord, as mentioned in Hosea 3:5, which means we approach Him with fear and trembling. In Hosea 11:10, it is written, "They shall walk after the Lord; he shall roar like a Lion: When he shall roar, then the Children of the West shall fear" (trepidabunt), which means they shall hasten with fear and trembling to the Lord.

Even if the danger cannot occur due to God's ordinance, if God has ordained that it shall not occur because we fear it out of a sense of our own inability to protect ourselves and are thus prompted to make the Lord our strength, whose grace we know is sufficient for us, are we foolish for fearing it? Our fear leads us to flee and cling to God, who alone can and will preserve us from it.

We have no role in preventing the heavens from falling, but we do have a part in preventing our own spiritual downfall. Part of that role is to fear lest we fall. The heavens will eventually pass away, and God's covenant with day and night will come to an end. However, God's covenant for the perseverance of His Saints will never end. There will come a time when perfect love will replace fear in our enjoyment of God, and that love will be everlasting.

The Fifth Section.

For the sum of all, it will come to pass that to believe, it would be better to direct our admonitions to God, for Him to complete His work in men, to convert, correct, and comfort them by His omnipotence, which no person is able to resist. It is His fault that so

many persons continue faithless, profane, and desperate because He refuses to give or takes away the necessary grace, as well for their conversion as for their repentance and perseverance in the faith. If any of these Synodists were sick of the palsy and presented themselves to a physician who, by means of an excellent potion, promises to make them leave their bed soon and go wherever they please, would they further bind their physician to carry them on their shoulder from place to place to spare their legs and indulge their sloth, while they lie lazy in bed and continue the excess that brought them to their sickness? Yet, notwithstanding, these men are not contented that God should furnish them with necessary and sufficient grace to preserve and keep them from all temptation, from the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to continue in that faith, thereby conserving this grace in watching, fasting, and praying. They also want God to produce all these things in them immediately and irresistibly.

What remains but to say that God Himself believes, repents, and perseveres in well-doing, just as Servetus said that the Fire does not burn, the Sun does not shine, and bread does not nourish, but only God does all these things immediately in His creatures, not having given them their properties.

Consideration: In a similar manner, there were some who opposed the grace of God 1200 years ago in the days of Augustine, and he wrote his book "De Correctione et Gratia" in response. Again (he says), I wrote another book to the same people, which I entitled "De Correctione et Gratia," when it was reported to me that someone there had said, "No one should be corrected if they do not obey God's commands; instead, they should only be prayed for."

And in the book itself, in the 4th chapter, he presents their discourse more fully in this manner: "Tell me what I should do, and if I do it, give thanks to God on my behalf, who has given me the ability to do it. But if I do not do it, I am not to be corrected; instead, I should be prayed for, so that He may give what He has not given, that is, the faithfulness of God and love for one's neighbor by which His commandments are fulfilled. Therefore, pray for me to receive this, and through this, I will do what He commands with a good will from the heart. I would be corrected rightly if I did not have it through my fault, that is, if I were able to give it to myself or take it for myself and still did not do it, or if, when He gave it to me, I refused to accept it. So, since even the will itself is prepared by the Lord, why do you correct me because you see that I do not want to obey His commandments, and why don't you ask Him to work in me both to will and to act?"

In Augustine's days, I read of such an objection as this: "*Quomodo meo vitio non habetur quod non accepi ab illo, à quo nisi detur, non est omnino alius unde tale ac tantum munus habeatur.*" They said it is he alone that gives grace, and thereupon they built that objection. They said, as this Author does, that it is he who takes away the grace necessary, as well for their conversion as for their repentance. We acknowledge that where God gives the grace of perseverance, thereby perseverance is wrought, and consequently, it is impossible for grace to be taken away.

Likewise, for conversion and repentance, we do not maintain that there is any falling away from this grace.

I willingly confess that the Physician does not usually carry his Patient upon his shoulder after he has cured him, neither does the Patient expect it, or even consider it a courtesy, for it would prove

unnecessarily cumbersome to them both. That would be not to use his own legs in going, but to have the soundness of them restored to him in vain.

Man, if naturally sound, is able to go without the help of any Physician. And is man so spiritually sound, taken at the best, that he is able to do anything that is good without the help of God?

What is it if this is not contradicting the Apostle to his face, who professes that it is God who works in us both the will and the deed, and that according to his good pleasure (Philippians 2:13)? Yes, God who works in us everything that is pleasing in his sight. Does the Physician set the man's legs, whom he has cured?

I think he has enough to do to set his own legs and members going according to their several motions. Was holy Paul nourished in his sloth, who both professes that he labored more abundantly than they all, yet in the same breath acknowledges that nevertheless it cannot be, but rather the grace of God in him? No, how is it possible that God should bring a man to a sermon while he lies lazy in his bed? How is it possible he should continue in that excess which brought him to his sickness when God works in him that which is pleasing in his sight and fulfills the good pleasure of his goodness towards him and the work of faith in power? But we may easily perceive the spirit of this Author; he would not be a child still; he would go on high alone and not have any need of the leading of his heavenly Father. His own spirit serves his turn to perform any holy duty, any gracious work. And as Plato discerned the pride of Antisthenes through his patched coat, so may we discern through these wild expressions, as if God did man's work for him while he lay in sleep, the pride of his heart requiring no more succor from God for the performance of both willing and acting that which is good than Pelagius of old did.

Yet the Lord by his prophet plainly professes of himself that he causes us to walk in his statutes and judgments and to do them, and the Apostle as plainly teaches us that God works in us both the will and the deed according to his good pleasure, yes, that he works in us that which is pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ. The meaning whereof Pelagius' opinion was only this, "suadet omne quod bonum est," and in all likelihood, no other is the meaning of the Apostle in the opinion of this Author, though he does not go as far as discussing it and treat of God's concurrence. For which kind of exercise, this comical wit of his is nothing accommodated, and likely enough, this discourse of his is plausible to none but such comical wits as he himself is, and it's no wonder if it is magnified by them. For "Lactucas similes labra simillima habent," like lettuce, like lips.

This Author wrongly accuses us of not being content with God providing us with the necessary and sufficient grace to preserve and keep us from sin. While we do require that God should immediately and irresistibly work all our good works in us, we certainly acknowledge this as necessary for every good act. There can be no grace without this sufficiency for willing and doing, though there may be a grace sufficient for enabling. We acknowledge that the Word of God itself is sufficient in its kind, namely, in the way of instruction. However, we willingly admit that the ministry of the Word goes no further than planting and watering, and unless God grants the increase, we will remain unfruitful. There is a sect that holds a higher opinion of their activity in doing good works than us. The Apostle tells us that God fulfills the good pleasure of His goodness in us and the work of faith with power. If God fulfills the work of faith with power, does He not also fulfill the work of love, repentance, obedience, holy conversation, and godliness, all with power?

Molina believed that God's concurrence should be simultaneous with the will, not antecedent in nature to the will's operation, to ensure God's immediate cause of the act. But Suárez, a fellow Jesuit, disagreed with Molina's concept and believed that even though God works the will towards its operation, this does not hinder the immediate condition of God's causality. Thus, they all stand for the maintenance of God's immediate causality, which this Author, in his deep scholastic manner, rejects. He scorns the idea of God performing an immediate operation in producing any good work, as he would rather leave that to the will of man. Not that he wants to boast, for he will readily profess that he gives God the glory of all. However, he wants man's will to be the immediate operator in all good works. Otherwise, God would work irresistibly, which is a phrase they find disagreeable. They are convinced that such a concept would not be conducive to their humility, fearing it might lead them to ascribe too much to God and too little to themselves. They believe it might impede their free will, something they are not yet willing to accept.

Allow me to ask this Author one question: Can he not tolerate that God should work so powerfully in them towards good that the world, the devil, and his angels of darkness have no ability to resist Him? We know the world's ways and the devil's practices and suggestions are always eager to hinder us in the ways of the Lord, just as the Angel of God hindered Balaam in his wicked plans. So, why should you be so zealous in maintaining the power of the world or the devil to corrupt your soul and undermine your faith? Would it not be more desirable for God to work us by His Holy Spirit irresistibly in everything that pleases Him, so that not even the gates of hell could prevail against us? In other words, to work us irresistibly, so that the world and the devil cannot resist God's operation, even though they may desire to.

I would think it is not the nature of this Author to oppose the divine operation being irresistible in this sense, though it may be he has never encountered this distinction until now.

So, in respect of whom does he want this divine operation to be resistible?

Is it in respect of the flesh?

But if he is perfectly content that the power of the world or the devil should not be able to resist God's operation in working us towards good, why does he desire to have the flesh retain such power?

1. Consider this: If the flesh has the power to resist divine operation, then it is also within the power of Satan. For when we fulfill the desires of the flesh and the mind, we are said to follow the prince who rules in the air, as stated in Ephesians 2.
2. Why should any person be so zealous about upholding the power of their flesh? Could it be a sign that they still have an affection for it?
3. Or is it, rather, a zeal for the honor of their own achievements, as if they were doing good deeds in spite of such a formidable adversary?

If that's the case, then let hell be unleashed, and let the devil and the world both be armed with similar power. Resisting them under these circumstances might earn you greater honor, and you would have even more reason to rejoice. But where is your consideration for the glory of God in all of this?

Or, in conclusion, would you prefer your regenerated part to be so strong and capable that neither the flesh within nor the world or

devil outside could resist its path in grace? Would you only desire that it be free to yield or resist divine exhortations?

But please consider this: Isn't your unregenerate part, your flesh, already free and eager—indeed, very inclined—to resist them? Shouldn't you rather wish that your regenerated part be just as free, eager, and inclined, but towards doing what is good?

Otherwise, what a wretched state humanity would be in even in a state of regeneration, when its worse part is still inclined towards sin and is not lacking the world and the devil to lead it into temptation, while its best part, the regenerated part, is not as inclined towards good, but remains only indifferent between good and evil.

Besides, have you not considered how you diminish the significance of the grace of regeneration, making it inferior to moral goodness? Moral goodness does not leave a person indifferent to good or evil; it naturally inclines them towards what is good and nothing else. However, according to your view, the grace of regeneration merely brings a person to an indifferent disposition, allowing them to choose between good and evil. But you may argue that if regeneration and its grace naturally lead a person only towards what is good, where is their freedom? I reply that they have as much freedom as someone with a morally virtuous disposition. Who has ever claimed that moral virtues take away a person's liberty? Furthermore, why should anyone be so eager to have the liberty to do evil? Wouldn't it be better to have the liberty to choose among many good things, as we see fit? Must we insist on having the liberty to choose evil if we wish? Do you not perceive the contradiction that creeps in before you realize it? This is clear evidence of the unreasonableness of your desires.

Let me add one more thing to help you understand what might appear as a mystery to you in moral philosophy. Some people might be so preoccupied with worldly matters and forget their philosophy. So, I say that just as moral virtues aim to guide the rational soul correctly towards its right end as revealed by natural light, the grace of regeneration aims to guide the fallen soul correctly towards its right end as revealed by the light of grace. Now, freedom of will does not lie in the desire for the end; when human nature is properly ordered, it is naturally inclined towards it. But freedom of will resides in the choice of means.

Therefore, even if my right end is discovered, and my nature is so qualified as it should be in relation to that end, I am still free to choose among many options that seem most suitable for achieving that end. Whether this appears as parables and mysteries in the eyes of this Author, I do not know. However, I do know that God can open his eyes, as well as the eyes of those who are enamored with these frivolous discussions. He can help them discern the emptiness of their opposition to the grace of God and His judgments upon them, which may lead them into such confusion that they close their eyes to the light of grace and engage in behavior contrary to common sense. What a foolish objection follows, and what a dissolute consequence this Author draws! Namely, because we say that God works in us both the will and the deed, therefore, it is not man who wills, but God; it is not man who performs this or that good deed, but God; God repents, making us repent; and God obeys His own commandments, making us obey them? God has given all creatures their natural properties and bestowed supernatural qualities on some, moving them all effectively to act according to their properties. Although their operations come from Him as the efficient cause, as in Him we live, move, and have our being, and thus far, even the Arminians themselves have claimed to concur with us in this matter.

Nevertheless, these operations are not formally attributed to Him but to the second causes, whose proper operations they are, just as it is natural for a lion to roar, a horse to neigh, an ass to bray, an ox to low, a dog to bark, and so on.

The Sixth and Last Section.

The preaching of the word, as made ineffective by the doctrine of these Synods, renders the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper useless and unprofitable, unless the Ministers themselves, in their administration, contradict this unfortunate doctrine. When they baptize individuals, they apply the promises of the covenant of grace to each person, in direct contradiction to their own doctrine, which states that these promises do not pertain to the Reprobates of the World.

Likewise, the Eucharist is given to all with the assurance that Christ died for all who receive it, even though their doctrine affirms that He did not die for those who receive Him unworthily, leading to their condemnation. According to their own admission, the number of such individuals is substantial in the Reformed Churches. So, what remains? Even their prayers, which are a common exercise for both the Pastor and the Flock, cannot be of any benefit to either party. This is because, according to the Synod's view, all are either elect or reprobate, and they gain nothing from these prayers, as God has supposedly written their names in the book of life from all eternity without giving more regard to their prayers than to their faith. Furthermore, it is impossible for them to be removed from this book.

As for those who are reprobate, they are equally incapable of having their names registered through their prayers as they are of undoing God's unchangeable decree.

By examining this practice, one can see how little esteem we should have for a religion that opposes the conversion of Infidels, the reformation of the scandalous, and the consolation of the afflicted. This religion nullifies the preaching of the word, undermines the use of the Sacraments, and diminishes the value of prayers. In essence, it overturns the foundation of the ministry, which relies on sound doctrine and good discipline.

Consider this: if the preaching of the word, as described by the doctrine of these Synods, is reduced to such a shallow and superficial discourse, then we have very little, or perhaps no reason at all, to view their doctrine negatively. We are confident that the use and significance of the Sacraments will also be weakened in a similar manner. As for how ministers, in administering the Sacraments, contradict this doctrine, which the author considers unfortunate, we will address that shortly.

The author claims that we apply the promises of the covenant of grace to every person we baptize, which he believes contradicts our own doctrine. He asserts that our doctrine teaches that these promises do not belong to the reprobates of the world. I wish he had specified these promises of the covenant of grace, as I am not familiar with the baptism practices of their Churches, only our own. According to the biblical rule, there are two types of promises assured by baptism: some are related to benefits secured for us by Christ, which are to be conferred conditionally, and others are related to benefits bestowed upon us unconditionally.

The first type includes justification and salvation. For example, Abraham received circumcision as a seal of the righteousness of faith, indicating that circumcision was an assurance of justification through faith. If circumcision served as such an assurance for the Jews, then it is reasonable to assume that baptism serves as a Sacrament of regeneration for us Christians. It is only fitting that the Sacraments, being seals of the covenant, should assure us of what the covenant's word promises.

Now, the word of the covenant of grace promises us both the forgiveness of sins and salvation upon faith in Christ.

By our doctrine, we promise and assure these to everyone, just as they do with theirs. If everyone were to believe, we have no doubt that they would be justified and saved. Conversely, if not a single person of mature age were to believe, I presume our adversaries would admit that not a single one of them would be saved. However, there are other benefits, promised in the covenant of grace and consequently assured by the Sacraments, which are commonly referred to as the seals of the covenant. There may be a question regarding whether these benefits are conferred on man by God absolutely or conditionally. The correct answer to this question is undoubtedly significant for resolving all the controversies and bringing a happy end to them. However, this question is entirely avoided by this author and generally by the Arminian party, as they cannot withstand the clear evidence of faith.

These benefits include regeneration, referred to in Holy Scripture as the circumcision of the heart in connection to the Sacrament that sealed it. In the New Testament, it is described as the washing, cleansing, or sanctification of our souls in reference to our Sacrament of regeneration, which is Baptism. Under regeneration,

we include the illumination of the mind and the renewal of affections, often represented as faith and repentance.

Now, the question arises as to whether regeneration and faith, typically considered by us as gifts of God, are granted to men conditionally or absolutely. If conditionally, then just as the word of the covenant promises these gifts upon the condition to be fulfilled by man, so too shall the Sacrament of Baptism confirm and assure us that upon the fulfillment of that condition, we shall obtain from God both faith and regeneration, just as justification and salvation are promised in the word and confirmed in the Sacraments upon the fulfillment of a condition on man's part.

We all acknowledge that faith is the condition of justification and salvation, but we are uncertain about the specific condition upon which it is granted, and the Arminians are unwilling to provide a definition. This author completely avoids the question, although it is the most appropriate and crucial to resolve all the controversies that have recently disrupted the peace of God's church.

No matter what condition is devised, it must, in general, be some work of man, and consequently, it must be acknowledged that grace, namely the grace of faith, is given according to the works of men, which is clearly Pelagianism.

Regarding regeneration, being recognized as a gift of God's grace, if God bestows it conditionally, they must explain what that condition is, upon the fulfillment of which God is pleased to regenerate us. Yet, I have never encountered anyone who has undertaken to clarify what that condition is. Certainly, it must not only be a work of man but a work of nature since it precedes regeneration. Consequently, the grace of regeneration would be conferred according to the works of nature, which is an even more pronounced form of Pelagianism and

directly contradicts the Word of God. The Bible states that God has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace (2 Tim. 1.9). Additionally, the Apostle states that God has mercy on whom He wills and hardens whom He wills (Rom. 9.16). To bestow faith upon a man is undoubtedly an act of showing mercy (Rom. 11.30).

Based on this, we conclude that faith and regeneration are gifts of grace, bestowed by God absolutely according to His own will, regenerating those He chooses and denying the grace of regeneration to those He wills.

Now then, who are the ones on whom God should bestow faith and regeneration but His Elect? Accordingly, the Apostle calls it the faith of God's elect (Tit. 1.1), and in Acts 13.48, the Evangelist clearly tells us that as many believed as were ordained to eternal life. In Romans 8.29, it is written, "Whom God foreknew, them He predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, and whom He predestinated, them He called, and whom He called, He justified, and whom He justified, He glorified." Therefore, baptism, as a seal and assurance of fulfilling the promise of justification and salvation to those who believe, is also a seal and assurance of the promise of circumcising the heart and regeneration, but only to God's elect.

Yet, I acknowledge that according to the Book of Common Prayer used in the Church of England, we profess of every child, as they come to be baptized and when they are baptized, that they are regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's regeneration. Upon this, Mr. Monacute sometimes took advantage to justify his opinion regarding falling away from grace, as the doctrine of the Church of England seemed to suggest. However, he was answered by Dr. Carleton, then Bishop of Chichester, who explained that there is a so-

called regeneration, sacramentally speaking, which Augustine, as he showed, distinguished from true regeneration.

For all we know, every person who comes to be baptized by a minister may be one of God's elect, and therefore, we have no reason to consider them as reprobates. I would like to know what this adversary believes about everyone brought to him for baptism. Does he judge them charitably to be elect, or does he believe them to be elect in terms of faith? In my opinion, his stance is no more than this: God has ordained that if they believe, they shall be justified and saved. Accordingly, in baptism, the assurance of this is sealed to them, and nothing more.

Now, we believe, as well as they, that God has ordained this, and that baptism is a seal of the righteousness of faith and of salvation by faith. However, if he thinks the covenant of grace includes nothing more than this, we differ from him in this regard. We are ready to maintain that all those under the covenant of grace are such that sin shall not have dominion over them (Rom. 6.14). The Lord becomes their Lord and God to sanctify them and circumcise their hearts, so they may love the Lord their God with all their heart and soul, as He observes their ways and heals them. He subdues their iniquities, gives gifts to the rebellious, pours clean water upon them for cleansing, and cleanses them from all their filthiness. He gives them a new heart and a new spirit, removes the stony heart and gives them a heart of flesh. He puts His own Spirit within them, causing them to walk in His statutes and keep His judgments.

As the Prophet Jeremiah proclaimed: "This shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer.

31.33). In Ezekiel 16.60, the Lord says, "Nevertheless I will remember my covenant made with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will confirm unto thee an everlasting covenant." Furthermore, in Ezekiel 20.37, He declares, "I will cause you to pass under the rod, and bring you into the bond of the covenant." Lastly, in Ezekiel 37.23, it is said, "Neither shall they be polluted anymore with their idols, nor with their abominations, nor with any of their transgressions: but I will save them out of all their dwelling places wherein they have sinned, and I will cleanse them: so shall they be my people, and I will be their God" (Ezek. 37.23). In verse 24, it continues, "And David my servant shall be King over them, and they shall have one shepherd: they shall also walk in my judgments, and observe my statutes, and do them."

So, regeneration, sanctification, faith, repentance, holiness, and obedience—these are the works that God promises to work in them, and this is done by virtue of the covenant of grace that He has made with them.

We confess that the Eucharist is also given to all who are not excommunicated due to their profanity, impurity, or stubbornness. And this is done with the assurance that Christ died for all those who receive it worthily, not otherwise. However, those who receive it unworthily bring condemnation upon themselves. Do the Arminians themselves administer it with an assurance of God's favor towards them in any other way than if they are found worthy partakers?

As for Christ's dying for mankind, I have already explained in detail how this Author deals with it superficially, keeping it in the clouds of generality.

Now, it is a rule in schools that many equivocations lie hidden in generality.

Therefore, to clarify the truth in this matter, I have distinguished the benefits that Christ procured for us. Some of them, such as the remission of sins and salvation, are conferred conditionally, namely, upon the condition of faith. In this, we extend the virtue of Christ's death as far as they do, that is, in a conditional manner. For we willingly profess that if everyone believes, then everyone shall be saved by Christ. On the other hand, no Arminian will say that any adult shall be saved by Christ if they never believe in Christ.

However, there are other benefits bestowed by God upon man for Christ's sake, such as faith, regeneration, and repentance.

Now, these are not conferred conditionally, for if they were, then grace would be given according to men's works, which is manifestly Pelagianism. Therefore, these must be conferred absolutely, not on all, for then all would believe and be saved, but on some. And who can these be but God's Elect?

As for the Remonstrants, they categorically deny that Christ merited faith and regeneration for anyone (*Exam. Censurae*, p. 59). Now, let any impartial person judge by this who is the one limiting the efficacy of Christ's sufferings more, them or us.

Lastly, he tells us that our prayers, common to both the Pastor and the flock, cannot be of any profit, either to the one or to the other, that is, either to the Pastor or to the people. And why is this? Please observe the strange reason he gives for this. It is because they are all either elect or reprobates. Doesn't this Author believe this as well as we do, namely, that everyone is either elect or reprobate, either registered in the book of life or not registered therein?

o clarify this, he later bases his reasoning more deliberately, not solely on election and reprobation, as they are already determined

for all, but on the manner of these. He asserts that election is ordained in such a way that it has no more regard for men's prayers than for their faith, and that it is impossible for them to be erased from it. We willingly acknowledge this and also demonstrate the inconsequence of his inference. We say that God has equal regard for our prayers and our faith, not that He elected us based on foresight of these, but because He ordained us to eternal life as a reward for our faith, repentance, and good works. He also ordained us to obtain faith, repentance, and good works to be wrought in us, partly through the ministry of His word, in which He speaks to us, and partly through our prayers, in which we seek His blessing on His word and the work of faith in us. God expects us to seek Him through prayer for this, as we read in Ezekiel 36:37: "Thus saith the Lord, I will yet for this be sought of the house of Israel, to perform it unto them." We do not maintain that God ordains any man of ripe years to eternal life by a mere act of nature before ordaining faith, repentance, and good works to be wrought in him through the ministry of the word, with God's blessing upon it, in response to the common prayers of both the Pastor and the people.

Therefore, neither our faith, nor the ministry of the word and Sacraments, nor prayers, are in vain or unprofitable for God's elect. I willingly confess that they are not at all profitable for reprobates, except that by them, they may profit somewhat in terms of external improvement of life to be punished more leniently.

I do not think that either this Author or any Arminian, either on this side or beyond the Seas, will affirm that any of these are more profitable for reprobates. My meaning is that they will not claim, as I presume, that any reprobate attains salvation through these means. I presume they agree with us that God's decrees are unchangeable. As for the term "inevitable decrees," it is a questionable phrase, as the

denomination of evitable or inevitable only applies in reference to things that are possible in the future. We know that God's decrees are everlasting, as ancient as the Ancient of Days Himself, and, therefore, it is improper to discuss the evitable or inevitable nature of these decrees.

Nevertheless, some may take issue with the unchangeable and irrevocable nature of divine decrees. I am aware of some who speak explicitly on this matter, such as one who has written about divine essence.

In conclusion, we can see the low regard that should be held for this base discourse, which lacks the wisdom and learning expected of even an ordinary theologian. It is clear how he has attempted to defame our doctrine, suggesting that it opposes the conversion of unbelievers, the reformation of the scandalous, and the consolation of the afflicted, all without merit.

The true basis for all these accusations is that we adhere, as the Apostle did, to the belief that God shows mercy to whom He wills and hardens whom He wills. We believe that God grants the grace of faith and repentance to some to cure the natural unbelief and impenitence that is common to all, while leaving it uncured in others by denying them the grace of faith and repentance. If, on the other hand, we were to align with them and assert that God gives faith and repentance conditionally, that is, based on some condition to be performed by man, then they would praise our doctrine just as they do their own, as being very beneficial for conversion, reformation, and consolation. In effect, they imply that if we were to embrace Pelagianism as they do, we would prove to be very useful and powerful Christians, for, according to them, Pelagianism is true Christianity.

Perhaps they would have us go even further and openly deny that faith and regeneration are gifts from God. If they are gifts, I wonder how they can deny that they are bestowed upon us for the sake of Christ, especially since they are things closely associated with salvation.

Recently, they have declared to the world that Christ did not merit faith and salvation for anyone. But because we consider all such Pelagian spirits to be enemies of grace, as Augustine did at times, and Prosper went even further, explicitly calling them vessels of wrath in contrast to vessels of mercy, it is for this reason that this eloquent divine accuses us of making the preaching of the word of no effect and completely undermining the use of the Sacraments and the practice of prayers. He does so with great confidence, as if he were a brave cavalier before the battle. He presumes that he has sufficiently demonstrated this in his interlude, consisting of three acts and several scenes within each. In the opinion of some scholars in the University, he is considered to have performed his role so well that they may even bring him a stool to sit outside the arena, in recognition of his eloquence.

Furthermore, since he has already gained such credit and reputation among the learned, he concludes authoritatively that our doctrine overturns the foundation of the ministry, which is based on sound doctrine and good discipline. However, I do not recall this topic being addressed anywhere in his entire discourse.

In this manner, I have examined the wisdom with which this Author has applied the principles of the two Synods of Dort and Arles to practical matters.

FINIS.

MONERGISM BOOKS

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