

A
DIALOGUE
Between the
BAPTIST
AND THE
PRESBYTERIAN.

WHEREIN

The *Presbyterians* are punished by their own Pens, for their Cruel and Soul-devouring Doctrines, making God the Ordainer of all the Sins of Men and Devils: And reprobating the greatest part of Mankind, without any help of Salvation.

Whereunto is annexed,

A Treatise of ELECTION, Intituled, *The Order of Causes*: Formerly published by an Eminent Servant of Christ, and now republished with some Explication concerning FREE-WILL.

By THOMAS GRANTHAM, Messenger of the Baptized Churches in *Lincolnshire*.

Pfal. 64. 7, 8, 9. *But God shall shoot at them with an Arrow, suddenly shall they be wounded. So shall they make their own Tongue to fall upon themselves: all that see them, shall see away. And all Men shall fear, and shall declare the Work of God; for they shall wisely consider of his doing.*

London, Printed in the Year, 1691.

**An Epistolary Preface,
to the Citizens of the Ancient City of *Norwich*.**

Honoured Sirs;

God's Providence having ordered my Residence in this City; and my Business being to Preach the Gospel, I have endeavoured to perform my Office amongst you; for which I have met with many unkind and undue Reflections, and more especially from that sort of Professors who have espoused the Principles and Doctrine of Mr. *John Calvin*, concerning his imaginary *Decree of absolute and irrelative Reprobation*.

Two Confessions of Faith I find much received in this City, containing these words; *God did from all Eternity, freely and unchangeably ordain ALL THINGS whatsoever come to pass.—And that his Almighty Power extendeth it self even to the first Fall, and all other Sins of Angels and Men, and that not by a bare permission. And that By the Decree of God, some Angels and Men were fore-ordained to Everlasting Death.—And that these Angels and Men; thus predestinated and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their Number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either encreased or diminished. See the Conf. of Faith. by the Assemb. of Divines.* In which Confession, they also teach, That God did not decree any of those things, because he foresaw they would come to pass: But they make the Decree of God the FIRST Cause of all things whatsoever comes to pass, *Chapt. 5. Sect. 2.* So that according to this Doctrine, all the Sins, both of Devils and Men, from the beginning to the end of the World, was by force of God's Decree, THE FIRST CAUSE, unavoidably necessary; and hereupon also the unavoidable Damnation of just such a Number, both of Angels and Men, as God would have to be damned and no more.

And hereupon it will follow, that God's Decree was the first cause that *Cain* killed his Brother *Abel*; that *Ruben* polluted his Father's Bed; that *David* committed Adultery with *Bathsheba*, and murdered *Uriah*; yea, and of all the Villanies in the World. The odiousness of which Doctrine will better appear, if we put this case: *A* oweth *B* 100 *l.* he pays it, for so it was decreed; but then comes *C* in the Night, and robs *B* of his 100 *l.* and also cuts his Throat. And this comes to pass also by force of God's Decree unavoidably; because (say they) *God did from all Eternity unchangeably decree all things whatsoever comes to pass.* That I do them no wrong by speaking, hear the words of *Calvin* himself, *Inst. L. I. c. 17. Thieves and Murderers are the Instruments of Divine Providence, which the Lord himself useth to execute*

his Judgments, which he hath determined in himself, and that he works through them.

When I had seriously considered, that many were ensnared in these dreadful and blasphemous doctrines, to the exasperating their Spirits, against the Truth of the Gospel, and against such as do sincerely preach it as the Means of Salvation to all Men, scandalizing them by the Name of *Free-willers*, &c. I did find my self concern'd, to testify against this unmerciful Doctrine, and this unrighteous accusation about Free-will¹; And to preach the Everlasting Gospel, that God is *not willing that any should perish, but that All should come to repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. And being well assured of the sincerity of my Doctrine and purpose, I did as Occasion offered assert the Truth, both by Word and Writing.

And hearing that Dr. *John Collings* was the greatest Asserter of the *Reprobatarian Principles*; I found an opportunity to write him, upon the occasion of a Passage in his Book, Intituled, *A Discourse of Divine Love*, pag. 259. which I now publish, with his Answer, and my Reply, to prevent and correct false Reports, which have gone abroad amongst some concerning these Papers. The Doctor's Proposition is this:

God cannot Seriously act, and be finally opposed.

A dangerous Position it is; as if the final Impenitency of Sinners, were the issue of some want of seriousness in God; that is, though he calls them to Repentance, yet he does not inwardly intend that they shall repent: and to this purpose he quotes several Scriptures; all which will be evident by the Papers following. My first to him proceeds thus.

Some Observations upon a Passage of Dr. *Collings*, in his *Discourse of Divine Love*, pag. 259. Viz. *God cannot seriously act, and be finally opposed.*

1. Here the final Impenitency of Sinners is charged upon God, for that he is not serious in leading them to Repentance; directly contrary to the Word of God, *Rom. 2.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.*

2. It reflecteth upon God's gracious Expostulation, and acting in a way of Mercy with *Cain*, (who opposed God finally) as if God was not serious with him.

3. It reflecteth upon God's striving by his Spirit with the old World; as if God did not strive seriously, nor act seriously by the preaching of *Noah*, wherein God waited long, and yet they opposed finally.

¹Concerning which point of Free-will, you shall have an Account in the last Treatise, where it will appear, they that accuse others, do hold as much as the Persons they accuse (if not more) concerning Free-will.

4. It reflecteth upon God's Counsel to the Pharisees, (quoted by the Doctor) as if he was not serious in that Counsel, which he by his Servant *John the Baptist* gave them, *to bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance*; for they resisted finally, as the Doctor himself intimates.

5. It renders God not serious in sending his Prophets to turn *Israel* from their Iniquities, *Jer. 7.13.* (which is quoted by the Doctor) for they did oppose finally, and were cast out, and the Prophet was forbidden to pray for them, *Jer. 7.15,16.*

6. It impeacheth God as not serious, in calling *Israel* to Repentance, *Psal. 81.* (quoted by the Doctor) for they opposed finally, and God gave them up *to their own Hearts Lusts, and they walked in their own Counsels, Ver. 12.*

7. The Doctor reflects dishonour upon Christ, as not serious in his actings towards *Jerusalem*, when he would have gathered them, (the words are quoted by the Doctor) when yet he wept over them, for their final Opposition. For the things which did once belong to their Peace, were now hid from their Eyes.

Finally, The Doctor is humbly intreated, that he do not oppose God finally, by such Reflections as these, nor by finally rejecting the Counsel of God against himself, as *the Pharisees* did, for he hath been long under the Power of that Sin.

Norwich,
Sept. 12. 1690

Tho. Grantham

Here follows the Doctor's Answer, dated Sept. 12. 1690.

I Received a Letter this Night, by an unknown Hand, from an Unknown Person, who calleth himself Thomas Grantham: whosoever that Thomas Grantham be, I perceive he is one, that either knoweth God so little, as that he believeth him not Omnipotent, or of so little sense, to affirm Omnipotency may be resisted, when it seriously willeth to effect an End; which it cannot do, without a willing to put forth its utmost Power to effect it.

He seems mightily scandalized at a Saying in a Book of Mine, on I Cant p. 259. God cannot seriously Act, and yet be finally resisted. That is, he cannot act seriously, for any End or Effect, and be finally opposed as to that Intended Effect. This Proposition I thought had been secured, as well by that of the Apostle, Who hath resisted his Will at any time? As from the Nature of God, who is Almighty, and therefore cannot be finally opposed in what he resolveth, [that is, willeth to effect:] but that God may be finally opposed in what he adviseth or commandeth, none that ever I heard of yet denied.

Well, but if this gentleman may not have his Notion, the Final Impenitence of Sinners must lie at God's Door, contrary R.2.2,3, &c. First, Let the Author prove, That God willed their Repentance by an inward Act of his Will; for if he did not, his Act in calling them to Repentance, might have another End, as to which he was not, nor could not be opposed.

The same must be proved, as to his Instances of the old World, the Pharisees, the Jews, &c. Let him prove, that God within himself, willed the Eternal Salvation of these Persons, and to do what in him lay towards it, and accordingly acted; or affirm that any reasonable Creature, can seriously act for an End, and yet not inwardly will it, or put forth his Power in order to it.

For his Admonition and Charge in the close, I shall only say with the Apostle, It is a small thing to be judged of Men, especially Men who understand the Nature of God no better. But I have too much Business further to regard such impertinencies.

J. Collings.

To this Letter I Sent this Reply.

Reverend Sir,

1. In much faithfulness to God and you, I send you my Observations upon your Position, *i.e. God cannot seriously act, and be finally opposed*; for I think you are the first Man that ever spake so of the God of Truth. But you persist in it, and labour to defend it, by accusing me of Ignorance about God's Omnipotency; And are you sure you know him therein unto Perfection? You cannot fairly collect from my Paper, that God can be resisted in the thing wherein he will act Omnipotently, for then he should cease to be God. But does God never act Seriously when he doth not act Omnipotently? This, Sir seems to be your Notion, but it is far from Truth.

2. Nor do these words [who hath resisted his Will *at any time*] prove your Proposition; for I find them not in the Bible. Indeed, St. Paul shews that some bold Spirits would be ready to interrogate the most High much after that rude manner, but I hope Dr. Collings will not do so. For he cannot but know, He has often resisted God when he seriously advised him to the contrary, as well as my self and others have done, for which we ought to be greatly humbled. Let him not then think to defend himself by adding to the Text, lest he be reprov'd.

3. You seem to hold that God cannot affect an End, [I suppose you mean, he cannot convert a Sinner] without a willing to put forth the utmost of his Power to effect it. But you cannot give an Instance, where he ever did exert or put forth the utmost of his Power in any thing that ever

he did. We must take heed we limit not the Power of the Almighty, lest whilest we accuse others, we our selves prove our selves the most ignorant of his Omnipotency.

4. You should not alter the Terms of your Proposition. But let us consider what you now say; *God cannot seriously act (you say) for any End or Effect, and be finally opposed as to that intended Effect.* And yet you grant, God may be finally opposed in what he adviseth or commands: but seeing you explain God's resolving by his willing a thing, here seems to be a plain Contradiction, unless you can be so hardy as to say, when God Adviseth or commands Men to forsake Evil, and learn to do well, his Will is not that they should do so; and when he commands all Men every where to repent and obey his Voice, he inwardly never intends they shall do the one or the other, for he wills not that; and if he wills not that, then he wills the contrary, that he may punish them for not doing that which he would not have them to do; or else he wills nothing at all, and so his Advice and Commands signify nothing. But indeed your meaning is, God commands and adviseth Men well, but wills they shall not obey that; so he may damn them for not obeying, as appears in the close of your *2d Paragraph.* And you also put me to prove, *that God did will Sinners to Repentance,* Rom. 2. *by an inward Will.* And what is this, but to tell the World, that God does not mean as he speaks? Sir, Was it not the Riches of his Goodness, and his Long-suffering that should have led them to Repentance? O no! you will imagine God had no such End, but another, as to which God was not, nor could not be opposed, and that was not their Salvation; why then it must be their Damnation. But I had rather believe the Apostle than you; he shews that God's end was to lead them to Repentance, and that is the way to Salvation.

5. But I must prove also, *that God willed within himself, the Salvation of the old World, the Pharisees, &c.* whom he called to *bring forth Fruits meet for Repentance;* and that he willed the eternal Salvation of the Jews, *Psal. 81.* and those over whom Christ wept for their disobedience *with an inward Will.*

1. Then for the old World, The Lord was so serious, and so inwardly concern'd, that he strove with them by his Spirit; *And it grieved him at his Heart* that they were so disobedient: and he gave them a Preacher of Righteousness, and an hundred Years space to repent in. And I think this shews that he inwardly willed their Repentance; yea, and I am sure that had they repented he would not have destroyed them, for he hath taught us so to judge of his Threatnings against sinful Nations, *Jer. 18.7, 8. Jona. 3.10.*

2. Is it possible that you should call in question God's Seriousness with the Jews, *Psal. 81?* Are not these his words? *O that my People had hearkned unto me, and Israel had walked in my Ways! vers. 13.* See also *vers. 8. 9.*

10. and judg your self. Surely if you, or any Man else, should speak thus to his Friends, or Enemies either, it would be great uncharitableness to think you were not serious, and had an inward will for their happiness, unless we knew you to be a Dissembler, [which temper cannot be found in God].

3. That Christ was [inwardly] serious in his endeavours to gather *Jerusalem*, appears by his Words, and by his Tears, which are such as may even break an Heart of Stone. And sure I am, God's Mind in sending Christ to them was to turn EVERY ONE OF THEM AWAY FROM THEIR INIQUITIES, Act 3. *ult.*

4. Now for the *Pharisees*, they were part of the *Jews* to whom Christ was sent, and in many things they were the best Sect of the Jewish People; and God did, by his Servant *John*, seriously call them to Repentance; yea, his Counsel was of God, *Luke 7. 29, 30. Who never said to the House of Israel, Seek ye me in vain.* And yet if he were not now serious, but spake one thing, and thought another, yea, determined and resolved another, you will then make him say to them, *Seek ye me in vain.* But far be it from the Almighty, that his Word should be *Yea* and *Nay*. Sir, It is because God is true, that his Ministers may boldly assure poor Sinners that he wills not their Death, but that they turn and live; yea, he hath sworn, *He hath no pleasure in the Death of the Wicked.* And hence I conclude, [against your dangerous Position] that God is altogether serious, even as Seriousness it self.

Tho. Grantham.

To this letter the Doctor gave no reply. But a Friend of his sent me a small Paper of Verses, as I suppose, to pick some Quarrel with me about *Free-will*: And thus they speak.

*IF Faith be not, what can we then foresee?
Or, how can we avoid it if it be?
If by Free-Will in our own Acts we move,
How are we bounded by Decrees above?
So whether we drive, or whether we be driven;
If Ill, it's ours; if Good, the Act of Heaven.*

To this captious piece of Poetry, I made this short return

OUR own Free-Will! 'Tis non-sense, Since 'tis true,
Our own we are not; Then our Will is due
To him that made us; and when we were lost,
Restor'd our Loss at his own proper Cost.
Free-Will's more talk'd of, than well understood;

That Will's not truly free, that is not good.
 God is no Author of the Will that's Evil;
 The Will that leads to Sin is of the Devil.

Decrees from Heaven restrain, not farther Sin;
 Much less does *cause Sin*. For it did begin
 From Satan; This God's Word does plainly shew,
 Who charge't on Heaven's Decrees, their Charge will

reue.

Norwich, whence came this Leaven into thee,
 To fix thy Sin first upon God's Decree?

T. G.

After this another nameless Poet assaults me; but his Lines being so exceeding ridiculous, It would but prophane the *Muses* to commit them to Posterity: And because their chief Clamour was against my preaching, *that Christ died for all Men*; and for that cause calling me a *false Teacher*, I resolved to try whether plain Scripture, without my Commentary, would pass for currant amongst our *Reprobatarians*, wherefore I wrote as followeth.

To the Nameless and Nonsensical Poet

SIR,

Your great Quarrel is, because I teach this Doctrine, *That Christ died for all, and not only for some*.

Now thus saith the Lord,

*We see Jesus made a little lower than the Angels, for the suffering of Death,—that he by the Grace of God should taste Death for every Man.*²

*He is a Propitiation for our Sins: and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.*³

*He gave himself a Ransom for all.*⁴

*And if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all—.*⁵

*The Bread that I will give, is my Flesh, which I will give for the Life of the World.*⁶

²Heb. 2.9

³1 Joh. 2.2

⁴1 Tim. 2.6

⁵2 Cor. 5.14, 15

⁶Joh. 6.51

*God is the Saviour of All Men, Specially of them that believe.*⁷

*This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have All Men to be saved, and come to the knowledg of the Truth.*⁸

*Not willing that any should perish, but that All should come to Repentance.*⁹

*And he commandeth All Men every where to repent.*¹⁰

*As by the Offence of One, judgment came on All Men; even so by the Righteousness of One, the free Gift came upon All Men to justification of Life.*¹¹

*For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*¹²

*That they have done Good, to the Resurrection of Life; and they that have done Evil, to the Resurrection of Damnation.*¹³

*Denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift Destruction.*¹⁴

*For God sent not his Son into the World to condemn the World; but that the World through him might be saved. He that believeth on him, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*¹⁵

*God will judg the Secrets of Men according to the Gospel.*¹⁶

*Which hath been preached to every Creature under Heaven.*¹⁷

*He hath shewed thee, O Man, what is good.*¹⁸

*The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion, slow to anger, and of great Mercy.*¹⁹

*The Lord is good to all, and his tender Mercies are over all his Works.*²⁰

By these Authorities I teach, that Christ died for all.

Now, Sir, shew me (if you can) where the Scripture tells us, *that Christ died BUT for some only, and not for all.* For hitherto I have not met with any such Testimony in the Word of God.

⁷1 Tim. 4.10

⁸1 Tim. 2.3, 4

⁹2 Pet. 3.9

¹⁰Act. 17.30

¹¹Rom. 5.18

¹²1 Cor. 15.22

¹³Joh. 5.29

¹⁴2 Pet. 2.1

¹⁵Joh. 3.17, 18

¹⁶Rom. 2.16

¹⁷Col. 1.23

¹⁸Mich. 6.8.

¹⁹Ps. 103.8

²⁰Ps. 145.9

And seeing you think Christ died but for some only, shew me sufficient Testimony from the Scripture, that he died for your self: And name one (if you can) now living in this great City, for whom Christ died not. And when you have done these things well, you may expect some further Account of your paper.

Your abused Friend,
Tho. Grantham.

Finally; To give you some Account of the *Dialogue* and Treatise ensuing. For the first; Being a great distance from my Study, I could not have the help of my own Books. The Collection therefore which I here give you, I have taken from several Writers, but Chiefly from *Mr. Tho. Pierce*, (a Person of great Learning and Judgment); 1. From his *Correct Copy of Notes*. 2. His *Divine Philanthropie defended*. 3. His *Divine Purity defended*. 4. *The Self-Revenger exemplified*, in *Mr. B. And*, 5. *Self-Condemnation exemplified in Mr. W. and others*. Where the studious Reader may not only find those Quotations more fully set down, and perhaps more exactly quoted, but also very well maintained, (against his learned Adversaries who have laboured to excuse them, and to palliate the Disease which they discover); and therefore I have the more willingly made this present use of them, I hope without his Offense.

For the Treatise, you will therein find the Case of *Election* clearly handled, and so familiarly demonstrated according to Scripture-Light, that the meanest Capacity may arrive at competent Satisfaction, and be delivered from the dismal Snares wherewith the World have been encumbered by Mens presumptuous pretending to know a secret Will of God, contrary to his revealed Will in his Word: Which is a vile Absurdity, and calls in question the Veracity of the Almighty, *with who is no variableness, nor shadow of turning*.

Norwich, 12th Month
(vulg. Feb.) 1690

Your Servant for Jesus sake,

Tho. Grantham.

**A Brief Dialogue, wherein the Presbyterians
are punished by their own Pens**

Baptist.

Well met, Sir; I have somewhat to say unto you.

Presbyterian.

Pray say on, I would know what is the matter.

Bapt. I was reading an Author the other day, and he declares, That the Doctrine of the Presbyterians is blasphemous against God, and cruel to Mankind, making God the Author of all Sin, and the destroyer of Mankind, in the greatest part, without any Mercy, or help for their Salvation.

Pr. This is an heavy Charge indeed, but it is not true in this, we do not make God the Author of Sin. We do say indeed, by our *Confession of Faith* made by the *Assembly of Divines*, and approved by the *General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland*, That God did from all Eternity, freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass, Chap. 3.

Bapt. But when you say that God did freely and unchangeably ordain whatsoever comes to pass, do you mean that God ordain'd all the Sins of Angels and Men, that they should come to pass, of necessity or unavoidably?

Pr. Yes, that is our very meaning; for we tell you in the same Book, Chap. 5. That the Almighty Power of God, extends it self to the first Fall, and all other Sins of Angels and Men, and that not by a bare Permission, &c.

Bapt. What do you mean, by the Almighty power of God extending it self to the first Fall, and all other Sins of Angels and Men?

Pr. We mean, and say in express words, That by a necessity of divine Providence the Fall of *Adam* did necessarily happen, that God made *Adam* and *Eve* to this very purpose, that he might suffer them to be tempted, and led into Sin, and that by force of his Counsel or Decree, it could not otherwise be, but that they must sin. *Piscat. Disp. Pref.* p. 6.

Bapt. This seems very strange that God should lay *Adam* under a necessity of Sinning.

Pr. It could not otherwise happen than God had ordain'd; and in respect of God's Decree, there is no contingency (or condition) in the World. And therefore *Adam's* change from Good to Evil, was absolutely necessary to the execution of God's Decree. *Piscat. Disp. predest.*

Bapt. But do you not ground this Decree upon God's Foreknowledge, rather than upon his Will?

Pr. God foresees nothing but what he hath decreed, and his Decree doth precede (or go before) his Knowledge. *Adam* necessarily fell in respect of God, and it behoved him to sin, not by the idle permission of God separate from his Will and Decree. *Piscat. Disp. predest.*

Bapt. Can any satisfactory Reason be given for this Doctrine?

Pr. Man doth fall, God's Providence so ordaining it. And the first Man fell, because the Lord thought it expedient: why he thought it expedient we cannot tell. *Calvin. Inst. l. 3. c. 23. sect. 8.*

Bapt. By this Doctrine you make God the Author of Sin, though you would deny it.

Pr. God doth holily drive, or thrust Men on to Sin or Wickedness, that he may punish Sins with Sins. God is the Author of Sin one way, and the Devil another; *yet we say*, God is the Author, not of these Actions alone, in and with which Sin is, but of the very Pravity, Ataxy, Anome, Irregularity and Sinfulness it self which is in them; yea, that God hath more hand in Mens Sinfulness, than they themselves. *Comfort. For Believ. p. 36, 37.*

Bapt. How it is possible that the Holy God should have any will to, or hand in, the Sins of Devils and Men?

Pr. Adultery or Murther is the Work of God the Author, saith *Zuingl. de Prov. c. 6.* God may seem not to be the cause of human Actions only, but of the very Defects and Privations which cleave unto them, *Pet. Mart. in I Sam. c. 2.* God procures Adultery, Cursings, Lyings, *Piscat. Resp. ad Apol. Britii. p. 143.* All wicked Men do all that they do by force of God's Will, *idem Resp. ad Tauff. p. 65.* God efficaciously acteth, or effecteth, and by his efficacy performeth all things without any least exception. *Beza cont. Castel. Aphoris. 1, 6, 7.*

Bapt. These are very unsavory Speeches. I ever thought, and do yet believe that the Devils and wicked Men are the Authors of all Sin; and that God only suffers Sin, that is, he doth not by violence always hinder them, though he does often restrain them, and graciously prohibits all Sin under pain of his displeasure.

Pr. The Devil and Wicked Men are so restrained on every side with the Hand of God, as with a Bridle, that they cannot conceive, nor contrive, nor execute any Mischief, nor so much as endeavor its execution, any further than God himself doth not permit only, but command; nor are they only held in Fetters, but compelled also as with a Bridle to perform Obedience to such Commands. *Calvin. Inst. l. 1. c. 17.* God exciteth Men to the act of Adultery, that he stirreth them up to unjust Acts, as a Man puts Spurs to a dull Jade. *Mr. Barlee cont. Mr. T. P.*

Bapt. Certainly the Original of Sin is Satan's Malice, and the Lusts of the Flesh, and cannot be bottomed on God's Decree, for he tempteth not any Man; nor on his Commands, for they prohibit all Sin.

Pr. God's Decree, by which any is destin'd to Condemnation, is not an Act of Justice, nor doth his Decree presuppose Sin—When God makes an Angel or a Man a Transgressor, he himself doth not transgress because

he doth not break a Law. The same Sin, *viz.* Adultery or Murther, inas-much as it is the Work of God, the Author, Mover, and Compeller, it is not a Crime; but in asmuch as it is of Man, it is Wickedness. Dr. *Twiss*, in *Serm. de Prov.* See Mr. *Peirce*, *Correct Cop.* p. 10.

Bapt. This is highly gross, that you should charge God with making the Devils and Men Transgressors; where as *God made Man upright, but he hath sought out many Inventions.*

Pr. God doth stir up the Devil to lie, and is in some manner the cause of Sin, and thrusteth on the Wills of the Wicked to grievous Sins. *Pet. Vermil. in Ep. ad Rom.* p. 403, 406. and 38. Yea, God doth incite, seduce, draw, command, harden, and inject Deceptions, and effecteth those things which are grievous Sins. *Piscat. ad Amic. Dupl. Vorstii*, p. 176.

Bapt. By this Doctrine you make Man an insignificant Cypher, and God the principle Actor in all Wickedness. But seeing the Elect do sin as well as others, Who is the Cause of their Sins?

Pr. Though Reprobates are predestinated to Damnation, and to the Causes of Damnation, and created to that end that they may live Wick-edly, and be Vessels full of the Dregs of Sin; yet it follows not that God's absolute Decree is the Cause of all the Villanies and Lewdnesses in the World, because, besides the Sins of the Reprobates, there are also other Villanies committed, namely by the Elect. *Piscat. cont. Tauff.* p. 47.

Bapt. But you do not answer the Question, Whether did God decree that the Elect should sin?

Pr. Nothing is done without God's will, no not without his Opera-tion; for God worketh all things in all Men, therefore he willetth and ef-fecteth that ungodly Men do live in their Concupiscences. *Trigland. Apol.* p. 172.

Bapt. But why do not you answer the Question directly, Whether God decreed all the Villanies committed by the Elect?

Pr. God doth incite, seduce, draw and harden, and inject Deceptions; and doth or effecteth those things which are hainous and grievous Sins. *Mart. in Judg.* 3. 9. p. 49.

Bapt. This is indeed a general Answer, but yet you speak not directly to the Question.

Pr. It doth, or at least may appear from the Word of God, that we neither can do more Good than we do, nor omit more Evil than we do; because God from Eternity hath precisely decreed, that both the Good and the Evil should be so done. *Piscat. ad Amic. Dupl. Vorst.* p. 176.

Bapt. This comes near the Point; but can you say no more?

Pr. It is fatally constituted, when, and how, and how much every one of us ought to love and study Piety, or not to love it. *Piscat. idem* p. 223. and *Beza* saith the same. That both the Reprobates and the Elect, were

preordained to Sin, as Sin, in as much as the Goodness and Glory of God was to be declared thereby. *Zanch. de Nat. Dei.* p. 555. *alia Edit.* p. 572.

Bapt. Why, shall we think that God could not be glorified, without Man had sinned? What manner of Doctrine is this?

Pr. God made Men with this intent, or to this purpose, that they might really fall; because he could not attain his principal Ends any otherwise than by this course. *Piscat. cont. Schasm.* P. 29.

Bapt. By this Doctrine you make God the Cause, both of Sin and of Punishment.

Pr. The Reprobates are therefore not converted, because God will not have them converted. *Trigland. ex. Comment. Calv. in Ezek.* 18. p. 138. God's first Constitution was, that some should be destin'd to eternal Ruin; and to this end their Sins were ordained, and desertion or denial of Grace in order to their Sins. *Zanch. de Nat. Dei.* p. 740.

Bapt. I can by no means believe that our good God made any Man on purpose that he might be damned.

Pr. God made Men to divers Ends; and some to the End that they might suffer Eternal Torments. He appointed also, or ordained, that those Men being intire, should fall from their Integrity; and that for this Reason, that whom he created for Destruction, he might Reprobate; to this End that he might punish them out of Justice. *Maccov. Disp. de Praed. Thes.* 8.

Bapt. It is out of Justice indeed, for I can see no Justice in it.

Pr. It is incomprehensible, yet believed by us, how it is just to damn such as do not deserve it. *Luth. de Servo. Arbitr. cont. Phil. Nico.* p. 8. *Beza post Paelec. in Ep. ad Rom.* It is not fitting nor agreeable to ascribe the preparation to Destruction, to any other than the hidden Counsel of God. *Zanch. de Nat. Dei.* l. 5. c. 2.

Bapt. By this it is evident you hold, that Men are compelled to Sin, by the secret Impulse of God; which is a dangerous Error.

Pr. We grant Reprobates are compelled with a necessity of sinning, and so of perishing by this Ordination of God; and so compelled, that they cannot chuse but sin and perish. *Zanch. de Nat. Dei,* l. 5. c. 2. Man doth that which is not lawful for him to do, by the just impulse of God. *Calv. Inst.* l. 1. c. 18.

Bapt. If things be thus as you teach, Why does God call upon Men to abstain from every appearance of Evil, and to do Good?

Pr. God directeth his Voice to some Men, but that they may be so much the deafer; he gives Light to some Men, but that they may be so much the blinder; he offers them Instruction, but that they may be the more ignorant; and useth a Remedy, but to the end they may not be healed. *Calv. lib.* 3. c. 24.

Bapt. Why, does God speak one thing, and mean another quite contrary thereunto? How then is he serious?

Pr. God cannot seriously act, and be finally opposed, Dr. *Collings, ut supra.* God can will that Man shall not fall by his Will, which is called *voluntas signi*, (his revealed Will); and in the mean time ordain, that the same man shall infallibly and efficaciously fall by his Will, which is called *voluntas beneplaciti*, (*viz.* his acceptable Will): The former Will of God is improperly called his Will, for it only signifies what Man ought to do by right; but the latter Will is properly called a Will, because by that he decreed what should inevitably come to pass. See Mr. *Pierce Correct Copy*, p. 9.

Bapt. By your Doctrine I perceive you hold, that the number of the Saved, and the number of the Damned, were unalterably determined, before there was so much as one Man created.

Pr. Yes, we say, by the Decree of God for the manifestation of his Glory, some Men and Angels are predestinated unto Everlasting Life, and others fore-ordained to Everlasting Destruction; and those Angels and Men thus predestinated, and fore-ordained, are particularly and unchangeably designed; and their Number so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished. *Assemb. Catechis.* c. 3. sect. 3, 4.

Bapt. Why then is the Gospel preached to Men thus determin'd to Damnation?

Pr. It must necessarily follow that Christ is preached to them to aggravate their Damnation. *Dantil. cont. Anonimum.*

Bapt. You make the Case of the greatest part of Men grown deplorable, without Remedy. Pray, What do you think of the Case of dying Infants?

Pr. Elect Infants dying in Infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit. *Assemb. Catechis.* c. 10. sect. 3. And of the rest Mr. *Calvin* saith, That so many Nations of Men, together with their Infants, were involved without Remedy, in Eternal Punishment, by the Fall of *Adam*, for no imaginable Reason, but that so it seemed good in the sight of God. *Inf. l. 3. c. 23. sect. 7.*

Bapt. That God does cleanse dying Infants, and fits them for Heaven, I readily grant. But what do you mean by regenerating Infants?

Pr. They must be regenerate, and have Faith some way, else they must perish, They who are regenerated, have Faith and Repentance. But all Infants saved, are regenerated. Therefore all Infants saved have Faith and Repentance. They must be born of Water, and the Spirit, according to *John* 3.6. else there is no Heaven for them. Mr. *Firmin.*

Bapt. What manner of Faith and Repentance is this you talk of?

Pr. It is Seminal Faith, and Seminal Repentance. Mr. *Firmin.*

Bapt. But you know not what kind of Faith this is, nor can you tell what Infants have it; and so you cannot tell that one Infant dying, is saved, by this Seminal Faith and Repentance; or, are you so charitable to think that all Infants have this Faith Seminal, and this Seminal Repentance?

Pr. I aver, (how cruel soever I may be judged) that no Unbeliever can, according to any Divine Revelation, have any assured hope of their own, or their Childrens Salvation who die in their Infancy. Mr. *Whiston, Right Method*, p. 46.

Bapt. Lo how you would fill Hell with multitudes of poor dying Infants; but how then has God said, that *he hath no pleasure In the Death of the wicked*, if it be as Mr. *Calvin* and you teach, that both they and their Infants are damned without Remedy?

Pr. God wills not the death of a Sinner, so far forth as he wills his Repentance, which experience teacheth, that he doth so will as not to touch his Heart that he may repent. *Calv. in Ezek.* 18. The Sin of Incredulity doth depend upon God's Praedestination, as the Effect upon the Cause. *Piscat. ad Dupl. Varst.* p. 10, 11. God doth effect in them an Incredulity, in as much as he blindeth them whilst the Gospel is preached. p. 25, 27. All things which shall be, shall be by the inevitable Counsels and Decrees of God. *Mart. Borrhaus in Deut.* 47. p. 924.

Bapt. You should have said, that Men do harden their Hearts, and resist the Holy Ghost; but I am sorry that so many Learned Writers should represent God at such a dreadful rate, not only to make Angels and Men to damn them, but also to make them Sinners that he may damn them. What is this but to make God the greatest Sinner? which is blasphemous.

Pr. I have told you already, That when God makes an Angel or a Man, a Transgressor, he himself doth not transgress, because he doth not break a Law. The very same Sin, *viz.* Adultery or Murther, inasmuch as it is the Work of God, the Author, Mover, and Compeller, it is not a Crime; but in as much as it is of Man, it is Wickedness.

Bapt. Certainly these things hitherto asserted by you are dreadfully Blasphemous, and more like the Doctrine of the *Turks*, than of true *Christians*, and ought to be exploded with the same detestation which was wont to be made (as my Author sheweth) in these words.

Αναθεματίζω τω τε Μαωμεδ
βλασφημίαν, τω λεγεσαν, ὅτι
Θεός, ον θέλει, πλανᾷ, και ὄν
θέλει ὁδηγεῖ εἰς ἀγαθον, και ὅτι
ὁ Θεός ἠθέλεν ἕκ ἂν ἐπιλέμειν
ἀλλήλοις οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἀλλ'
αὐτου ποεῖ ὅπερ βύλεται, και
παντὸς ἀγαθὰ και ποιηρᾷ αιτου
αυτὸς ἐς, και τυχ και ἐιμαρμλοη
πάντων κεατέι.

I do Anathematize the Blasphemy
of *Mahomed*, saying, That God de-
ceiveth whom he will, and whom
he will he leadeth to what is good;
for if God would, Men would not
war one with another; but he doth
what he will, and is himself the
cause of all Good, and of all Evil;
all things are governed by Fate and
Destiny. *Nicetus Saracenita*.

Pr. Our Doctrine is more ancient than *Mahomet*; *St. Augustin* did maintain it; It is certain that *Judas* could not but betray Christ, seeing God's Decrees are immutable. And whether a Man bless or curse, he always doth it necessarily in respect of God's Providence; and in so doing, he doth always according to the Will of God. *Piscat. de Praedest. Thes.* 12. 1.

Bapt. Antiquity, for the first four Centuries, is against your Doctrine, *Augustin*, tho sometime tinctured with it, yet upon better Advice exclaims against it. And as to the Instance of *Judas*, Antiquity is against you. For thus saith *Chrysostome*;

Ο Ιούδας, ἀγαπετοί, ὅς βασιγείας
τὸ Πρῶτον τῶ, και ἤχουσε μετὰ
τις μάθετων. Ἐπὶ δωδεχα θεόνυς
χαθείσθη. ἀλλὰ γέγονεν ὕσειν
ὅς γεένυς.

*Judas, my Beloved, was at first a
Child of the Kingdom, when he
heard it said to him with the Dis-
ciples, Ye shall sit on twelve Thrones;
but at last he became a Child of Hell.*
*Chrysost. Orat. 52. as quoted by
Mr. J. Goodwin.*

Pr. I perceive you hold, that a Child of God may possibly fall away and perish. This is a dangerous Error.

Bapt. That some may depart from the Faith, giving heed to seducing Spirits, is clear in the Word of God, and of this fall I doubt the *Presbyterians*, many of them, are a terrible Instance, as well as others. Nor need any Man say more concerning falling away than they do in their *Confess. of Faith*, made by the *Assembly of Divines*; for as they deny not but that there are *temporary Believers*, and truly such are all that fall away. So they plainly tell us,

That the purest Churches under Heaven are subject to Mixture and Error; and some have so degenerated, as to become no churches of Christ, but Synagogues of Satan. Chap. 25. Sec. 5.

Surely the purest Churches under Heaven are true Believers; and if these purest Churches may become the Synagogues of Satan, it is too much to prove the Point.

For my part, though I doubt not but there is a state attainable, even in this Life, from which by the Grace of God Christians shall not fall; yet I hold it a vanity for any Man to affirm of himself, or of any other Person in particular, that it is impossible for him to fall. I hold it better by far, for the best, as well as others, to take heed lest they fall. And here the Decree concerning Reprobation may be useful; for God never made it to cause Men to be Reprobates, but to hinder them from being such; like as all good Laws made against *Treason* and *Felony*, were not made to make Men *Traitors* or *Felons*; but to prevent them that they might not be *Traitors* nor *Felons*.

Let us not then turn the Goodness of our God into Perverseness, nor his Grace into Wantonness, by thinking he will damn any Man, without first shewing Mercy; or save us of necessity; for *is God unrighteous, who taketh vengeance: how then shall he judg the World?*

Pr. But why do you suggest your fears that the *Presbyterians* are a terrible instance of falling away, as well as others?

Bapt. Because they have received a Doctrine, the Tenour of which is such, that no Man which receiveth it, can have any true or well-grounded Faith: for if God did extend the Death of Christ to scarce one Man of an hundred, how is it possible for any Man to know assuredly that Christ died for him in particular? He may have an opinion Christ died for him; but he cannot be sure of it, seeing the certain knowledg who Christ died for, must not be built upon any good which we conceive to be wrought in us, but upon the clear testimony of the Word of God. *Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* Rom. 10. Hence all are bound to believe under pain of Damnation, *Mark* 16.16.

Pr. We deny, by the Pen of Mr. *Whitfield*, p. 75. that all Men are commanded to believe, but only the least part of the World: and Mr. *Brimley* tells us, There should no Gospel be preached, but for the Elects sake. And Mr. *Calvin* saith, That so many Nations of Men, together with their Infants, were involved WITHOUT REMEDY in eternal Punishment, by the fall of *Adam* [and he fell, because God thought it expedient] for no imaginable Reason, but that so it seemed good in the sight of God. *Calv. Inst. l. 3. c. 23.* And hence we conclude, that those Nations which have not the light of the Gospel, Christ died not for them; for if God gave his Son to die for them, which is the greater, he would not deny them the Gospel which is the lesser. *B. K. Serm. and Letter.*

Bapt. That God is known throughout the whole World to be Propitious, Gracious and Merciful, cannot be denied; and where God is known

to be gracious, pardoning Sin upon Repentance, he is known in Christ, though the Name of Christ be not known; and indeed few knew him by that Name of *Jesus Christ*, till he was born of the Virgin. And that God has taken care that his Name, *Gracious and Merciful*, should be known throughout the World, is evident, not only by the Holy Scriptures, but by the Writings of the *Heathen*; yea, the *Turks* themselves, though they are for *Destiny*, yet begin almost every Chapter of their *Alcoran* with these words; *In the Name of God Gracious and Merciful*.

And *Prosper* (*Augustin's* Disciple) *De vocatione Gentium*, shews, That God did never leave himself without Witness in any part of the World, *Act. 4.17.* which he compares with *Psal. 76.8, 9.* and *138.4, 5, 6. Isa. 60.* to make it good. And Mr. *Pierce* shews excellently how the Gospel is spread throughout the World. As,

1. All *Protestant* Countries.
2. All the Countries of *Papists*.
3. All the *Greek Churches*
4. All the *Muscovites*.
5. All the *Asiaticks* Under the Patriarch of *Jerusalem*.
6. The Christians called *Melchites*, under the Patriarch of *Antioch*.
7. The *Armenians* under an hundred Bishops.
8. The Christians called *Jacobites*, mingled with the *Mahometans*, through a great part of *Asia*, under the Patriarch of *Carmite*.
9. The Christians under the Patriarch of *Mezul*, about *Assyria, Mesopotamia, Parthia* and *Media*, (accounted more than all the *Papists*.)
10. The Christians called *Georgians* in *Iberia*.
11. The Christians called *Circasians*.
12. The Christians called *Mengrellians*.
13. The Christians of *Natolia*, under the Patriarch of *Constantinople*.
14. The Kingdoms of *Cazan African, &c.* under the Patriarch of *Mosco*.
15. The Christians called *Maronites*.
16. The Christian *Indians* of *St. Thome*.
17. The Christians under the Patriarch of *Alexandria* from the *Graditan Straits* to the *River Nile*.
18. The *Abassine* Christians in *Ethiopia*.
19. The Christians in *Congo* and *Angola*.
20. All the Christian *Americans* (which are not few) through *New Spain, Castella, Nova-Peru, and Brasile*.
21. All the *English, Dutch, and French* Plantations, in *Mexicana*, and the islands on either side.

Thus it appears that the name of Christ is known in all the World, *Europe, Asia, Africa, and America*; though, God knows, the gospel in the purity of it, is too little known in all these Nations. But this may shew that Christ died for many more than the *Presbyterians*, and that the whole World has an Object of Faith, and not the lesser part only.

Pr. But Mr. *Barlee* confesseth, *p.* 87. That in the general Proposal of the Gospel, *Mark* 16. 15. cannot possibly lurk any mental Reservation, or Insincerity. Yet Mr. *Whitfield* saith, *p.* 61. That Christ cannot be said seriously to desire the Salvation of those, from whom he will not remove those things which he knows will hinder their Salvation.

Bapt. You are excellent at Self-contradiction; and you that represent Christ not to be serious, because he will not save Men whether they will or no, can never be serious in your calling upon Men to repent and believe; for whilst you inwardly believe God hath decreed they shall not believe, your Sermons are meer Dissimulation, or meer Absurdities. Which made Bishop *Usher* cry out, *That this is the extreme Absurdity* into which the *Arminians* did drive the *Calvinists*. For, saith he,

“What would not a Man fly unto, rather than yield that Christ died in no wise for the Reprobates; and that none but the Elect had any kind of Title to him; and yet many thousands should be bound in Conscience to believe that he died for them, and tied to accept him for their Redeemer and Saviour—whereby they should have believed that, which in itself is most untrue, and laid hold on that in which they had no kind of interest?”

This Reverend Man saith further;

“That Satisfaction of Christ was once done for all, the Application is still in doing. The Satisfaction of Christ only makes the Sins of Mankind fit for Pardon. All the Sins of Mankind are become Venial, in respect of the Price paid to the Father—But all do not obtain actual Remission, because most Offenders do not take out or plead their Pardon as they ought to do.—We may safely conclude, that the Lamb of God offering himself a Sacrifice for the Sins of the whole World, intended, by giving sufficient Satisfaction to God’s Justice, to make the Nature of Man which he assumed a fit Object of Mercy, and to prepare a Medicine for the Sins of the whole World, which should be denied to none that intended to take the benefit of it.—In respect of his Mercy, he may be counted a kind of universal Cause of restoring our Nature, as *Adam* was of the depraving of it.”

I will conclude this Dialogue with the *31 Article* of the *Church of England*, which the *Presbyterians*, and other *Calvinists*, have lately subscribed: And shall appeal to their Consciences how they can reasonably believe the *Articles* made by the *Assembly of Divines*, which I have excepted against; or be displeased with me, merely because I teach, *That Christ died for all Men*.

The *Article* is this;

Christ is a perfect Redemption, Propitiation, and Satisfaction for all the Sins of the whole World, both Original and Actual.

Let them stick to this, and then magnify God's special Grace, and abase Man as much as they please.

Pr. But before we part, let me mind you of the Case of *Esau*, concerning whom *Huldericus Zuinglius* saith, *contra Catabap.* p. 172. That we cannot say of *Esau*, being rejected by God, I would to God he had died an Infant. For he could not die, whom the Divine Providence created to this very End, that he might live, and that he might live wickedly.

Bapt. Those whom *Zuinglius* called *Catabaptists*, were the faithful Asserters of the Doctrine of Baptisms against the Church of *Rome*, as we whom you falsly call *Anabaptists* are against both the Church of *Rome* and the *Presbyterians*, who have changed God's Ordinance, and set up your own Inventions instead of it.

But to the Case of *Esau*, how blasphemously do you speak in saying, That the *Divine Providence created him that he might live wickedly*? Although his case is doubtful, (as well as *Solomon's*, who sinned with as high a hand as *Esau* did) yet it is rashness to conclude that either were damned. The Learned observe, that some of your own Writers believe the contrary. *Luther* in *Gen.* 33. and *Mollerus* in *Malach.* 1. *did not doubt of Esau's Eternal Bliss*. Nor durst *Oecolampadius* to account him a Reprobate, because he knew these words, *Rom.* 9. were only spoken by a Figure. See Mr. *Pierce* 'Αυτοχάκρισις, p. 197. And it is observed by Mr. *Sam Loveday*, in his *Personal Reprobate Reprobated*, p. 65. That it hath been the general Opinion of the Ancient Fathers, that *Esau* in Person is saved; and he particularizeth of the Ancients, *Jerom*, *Augustine*, and *Anselm*.

The Reasons why they think *Esau* was not damned; are three.

1. He was fully reconciled to his Brother *Jacob*, notwithstanding the occasion of Offence given by *Jacob*: this appears *Gen.* 33

2. He joined with *Jacob* in the burial of their Father *Isaac*, *Gen.* 35.29.

3. They say he died in the True Religion, and that many of his Posterity were Godly: It is said to be the general Opinion of the Learned, that that holy Man *Job* was of *Esau's* Posterity; and was that *Jobab*, of whom we read *Gen. 36.33. ex Loveday, idem.*

But he that will diligently read *Gen. 25.23.* will find that there is not a word of hating *Esau* before he was born, but only it is foreshewed, that the Nation which should proceed from *Jacob*, should be greater than the Nation which should proceed from *Esau*: and how could this be any prejudice to the Salvation of *Esau*? And whereas *Paul* adds, in *Rom. 9.* as it is written, *Jacob have I loved, and Esau have I hated.* To this we say, *first,* There was no Scripture written at all when *Jacob* and *Esau* was born, nor for many hundred Years after. *Secondly,* When it was written, it is evidently written of the Posterities of *Jacob* and *Esau*; and the only cause why the Posterity of *Esau* were hated, was their Pride and Wickedness, particularly against the *Israelites*, or Seed of *Jacob*; this will appear by reading the places where these things are written. First the Prophet *Obadiah* is very plain.

Ver. 6. How are the things of *Esau* searched out? how are his hid things sought up?—For thy violence against thy Brother *Jacob*, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off for ever. In the day thou stoodest on the other side, in the day that the Strangers carried away captive his Forces—even thou wast as one of them.—Thou shouldest not have entered into the Gate of any People in the day of their Calamity—Neither shouldest thou have stood in the cross way, to cut off those of his that did escape. And, Ver. 3. The pride of thine Heart hath deceived thee. And for this Cause the Lord hated the Posterity of *Esau*; Ver. 8. Shall I not—even destroy the wise Men out of *Edom*, and the Understanding out of the Mount of *Esau*? Yes, he would surely punish them for their Iniquity.

And to the same purpose are the words of the Prophet *Malachi*, ch. 1. 2, 3, 4. *I loved Jacob, and hated Esau, and laid his Mountains and his Heritage waste, for the Dragons in the Wilderness. Whereas Edom (that is, the Posterity of Esau) saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate Places: thus saith the Lord of Hosts, They shall build, but I will throw down.* And thus did the Lord hate *Esau*, that is, the Posterity of *Esau*, who lift up themselves in Pride against God, and Cruelty against the *Israelites*.

The truth is, God is no respecter of Persons; and therefore God will hate in this kind, (that is, punish) as well *Judah* the Seed of *Jacob*, as *Edom* the Seed of *Esau*; yea, both these Nations, as well as other Nations, when they lift up themselves with Pride against him. Read and consider, *Jer. 9.25, 26. Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will punish all them which are circumcised with the Uncircumcised; Egypt, and Judah, and Edom, and the Children of Amon and Moab, and all that are in the utmost Corners, that dwell in the Wilderness: For all these Nations are uncircumcised, and all*

the House of Israel are uncircumcised in the Heart. Lo, here is the Cause why God hates Men, even their hardness of Heart, and Rebellion against him, and nothing else.

Postscript.

What I have here presented to consideration, is but an *Essay*; for I doubt not but that the contrary-minded will quarrel these my Labours. Know therefore, that as Occasion shall be offered, you may expect (if God permit) a more ample Account of the things briefly noted in the preceding *Dialogue*.

It hath pleased God to stir up some of Learning and Judgment, to serve the Truth in these Enquiries; of whose Learned Labours I hope to give a more full Account, and especially concerning the Doctrine of the Christian Writers from the Apostles Days, to the Time of *Augustine*, which was more than 400 Years: During which Time this dreadful Doctrine, opposed in these Treatises, was a Stranger to the Church of Christ. The Testimonies being many and large, it may be convenient to take a further time for the producing of them, as well in the Languages wherein they were first written, as in our English Tongue. And the same may also be necessary in respect of those Modern Writers, which have so greatly eclipsed the Grace of God to Mankind. All which may be done by an industrious Hand, though but meanly Learned, because these things are made ready to our Hands, and may therefore be made the more serviceable to the Truth, when dispersed in small Volumes, for these large Tractates come but into few Hands.

And were I never so capable to collect and translate those Authors Opinions respectively, yet I would rather make use of the Collections and Translations already made, by those whose Abilities that way are unquestionable; and what they have done of this kind, approved and defended; as may also be shewed in time convenient.

I confess I never had experience of the Effects of this Spirit, Which makes Men think that God in Christ loves but a very few of his Offspring, (I mean Mankind, *Acts 17.28.*) and that he hates the far greatest part of them from all Eternity: I say, I never had so much experience of this Spirit, in its bitter Effects, as since I came to reside in *Norwich*. It hath filled even the highest sort of Professors with such indignation against me, meerly for preaching God's Love to all Men, [for let them talk what they please, this is the thing] that if they could, I should not have had a Place whereon to lay my Head in *Norwich*. And I have been prayed against (as I am informed) as a Limb of Antichrist; and God hath been desired to confound me with Antichrist, &c. such a Fury does this Doctrine of irrespective Reprobation

beget in the Hearts of its Admirers. *A Fraternitate Calvinianâ libera a nos Domine.*²¹

Now the Lord knows, (to whom I appeal) that I have born these things with Patience, (and yet vigorously preached the Truth, according to my ability) and I have, and do heartily pray for Mercy for these my Persecutors, and hope by such Endeavours to prevail; praying them timely to consider the dismal Effects of their Doctrine, [*that Christ died but for a few:*] How many have hereby despaired of Mercy, and laid violent Hands upon themselves! and too many (God knows) about this City. And here the most humble Christian is in the greatest danger.

And On the other Hand, how does the careless and confident sort go on in their evil Courses; concluding from those *peccant Articles* (above recited) that not one more can be damned, nor one less can be saved, than was decreed, (and that unchangeably) to be saved or damned from the beginning, yea, from before the World was, yea, from all Eternity: And therefore it is all one whether they be Religious or Irreligious.

This is the Doctrine (saith a Learned Man) which is calculated for the Kingdom of Satan, than which no Doctrine can more befriend his devouring Designs against the Souls of Men; for, saith he, *A Man may (now) be unjust, unmerciful, partial, and full of dissimulation; hating most Men without a cause, and yet be most like God.* And indeed how should Men that have thoroughly *imbibed* these Principles, be better than they take their God to be? O then beware of a false Apprehension of God; for when Men have set up such an Image of God in their Judgment, they will adore it, and thereby depart from God, and do Mischief at a venture.

As concerning God's Election and Reprobation, I shall briefly here assert my Judgment.

1. That God did from the beginning chuse (in Christ) to Salvation, all that part of the fallen Race of *Adam*, that die in their Innocency, or accept of his Mercy and Grace according to the Means he gives them; and this Decree proceeds from his own Goodness, and is not built upon any Goodness in the Creature.

2. God did reprobate in his Decree and Determination, from the beginning, all that should, in the successive Ages of the World, reject or despise his Mercy and Goodness, which should have led them to Repentance; even *every Soul of Man that doth Evil, as well of the Jews as of the Gentiles*, Rom. 2.8, 9.

3. That no Man that is an unregenerate Sinner, *is actually Elected*, till he turns from Sin, and accepts of God's Mercy by Faith, *Rev.* 17.14. And

²¹Calvin burnt Servetus, (a learned and pious Baptist) for differing in opinion in Matters of Religion. Servetus is justified since his Death, and Calvin condemned for false Accuser and Fratricide, by Grotius and other Learned Men.

that none are actually reprobated till they depart from God, or reject his Mercy and Goodness, which he graciously holds forth to them, *Rom.* 1.28. And this is so clear, that even those who are our Adversaries, are forced to allow it. For thus they speak, *Assemb. Conf. of Faith*, c. 11. *God did from all Eternity decree to justify the Elect—Nevertheless they are not justified, until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.* And to make this Matter evident to every considerate Reader, I shall offer this Argument.

All that are *actually Elected*, have an Inheritance in the Kingdom of God, and of Christ, and none can lay any thing to their Charge, *1 Pet.* 1.2, 3, 4, 5. *Rom.* 8.33.

But no unbelieving, Drunkard, Whoremonger, Murtherer, or Idolater, hath any Inheritance in the Kingdom of God, and of Christ, *Ephes.* 5.5. and these Impieties may be laid to their Charge.

Ergo, No unbelieving Drunkard, Whoremonger, Murderer, or Idolater, is *actually Elected*. And yet we know that some which have been such, were actually Elected, when they were purged from their Filthiness, and by Grace renewed.

As for *personal, irrelative, and unavoidable Reprobation*, it is a Plant which bears most dismal Fruit: An Instance we have of it in *Calvin*, who confesseth that he procured the burning to Death of *Michael Servetus*, who was a learned and worthy Man, though perhaps in some things mistaken, See *Hug. Grot. in Points of Controv.* Of which inhumane Act I will make this just Reflection to prevent the like.

O *Calvin*, why didst thou (like *Cain*) thy pious Brother slay,
 Because he could not walk with thee, in thy self-chosen Way?
 He did, in Sacred Baptism ('tis plain²²) the Truth assert:
 And thou, by choosing Infancy (as plain) did it pervert:
 To which thou needst wouldst it dispense, without one word
 of Truth,
 To stand by thee in thy defence. Whilst it with open Mouth
 Did stand by him whilst he did plead, Repentance and true
 Faith,
 (In Sinners all) *prerequisites*, are for that Holy Bath.

Why didst thou slander him, and then his Books to Ashes
 burn,
 Left by his Innocence, thy Wrath should to thy shame return?
 But some did 'scape thy furious Flames, and he by them does
 speak.

²²See *Calv. Inst. cont. Servet.*

More Truth than thou his Enemy. But yet suppose him weak,
(Tho Wise and Learned all must grant) must he therefore be
slain?

And Charitable too he was, (thou dost confess): How vain
Then must thou be him to oppress? Let all thy Brood take
heed,

They *Reprobate* no Man (as thou) by such an horrid Deed.

T. G.

FINIS