

AN ANSWER TO CERTAIN SLANDERS

and blasphemies, wherewith certain evil
disposed persons have gone about to bring the
doctrine of God's everlasting Pre-
destination into hatred.

<450920> **ROMANS 9:20**

*O man who art thou that pleadest against God?
hath the thing formed say to him that formed it,
why hate thou made me thus?*

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN we must not be amazed if the article of the everlasting predestination to God, be so assaulted and fought against by Satan's maintainers, seeing it is the foundation of our salvation, and also serveth for the better magnifying of the free goodness of God towards us. On the other side those Dogs which bark against it thinking to have a good and favorable cause are therein more hardy: as in very truth there is nothing more contrary to man's understanding, than to place the cause of our salvation in the good will of God, in saying, that it belongeth to him alone to choose us: without finding of anything in us wherefore he should choose us: and after he hath chosen us, to give us faith through which we should be justified. But what? Inasmuch as he is not bound to the person, it is good reason that he be left in his mere liberty to give grace unto whom he will, and to leave the rest in his perdition. But I defer myself to entreat more largely of this matter, because you may have large discourse thereof in those Books which are imprinted: which ought to content you. Concerning the writing which was scattered about, to abolish this article of our faith, in very truth it deserveth no answer: being on the one side so full of ignorance and beastliness, that everyone ought easily to judge thereof: and on the other side so full of impudence, that it is a wonder how these troublecoasts and shameless deceivers, abusing so villainously the holy Scriptures should be hearkened unto: notwithstanding because I have understood that there are yet some simple and weak ones that are troubled therewith, I therefore thought good to take the pain to show them that will

show themselves teachable: how they ought to resolve themselves, to the end they might be no more deceived by these deceivers.

In the first place, he that hath made that writing, were it *Sebastian Chastalio* or some such like: to show that God hath created all the world to be saved, he allegeth that he laboreth to draw unto him all that went astray: the which I confess in respect of the doctrine of faith and repentance, the which he propoundeth to all in general: be it to draw his elect unto him, or to make other inexcusable. God then calleth everyone to repentance and promiseth all those that return unto him, to receive them to mercy. But this meaneth not that he toucheth to the quick by his holy spirit, all those to whom he speaketh: as it is said by Isay in the fifty-third chapter,

His arm is not revealed to all those that hear. (<235301> Isaiah 53:1)

To which agreeth the sentence of our Lord Jesus Christ,

None can come unto me, except my father draw him.
(<430644> John 6:44)

And the holy scripture showeth throughout, that conversion is a special gift of God. And indeed the place of Ezechiel, (<261832> Ezechiel 18:32; <263311> Ezechiel 33:11) whereof this troublecoast maketh his buckler, very well confirmeth my saying. For the Prophet having said, *that God will not have pleasure in the death of a sinner, addeth, but rather will that he return and live.* Whereby he signifieth that God biddeth and exhorteth all which are gone astray to return to the right way. But not that indeed he leadeth them all to himself by the power of his spirit. The which he promiseth not, but to a certain number, which appeareth as well in the thirty-first chapter of Jeremy, (<243101> Jeremiah 31) as in the thirty-seventh of Ezechiel and in the eleventh (<261101> Ezechiel 11; <263701> Ezechiel 37) and throughout the whole scripture.

The second reason of this writing is, that all men are created to the image of GOD, the which he saith not to have been abolished but only subjected to evil. As though it behooved man at adventure to believe his simple saying. But contrariwise the Scripture showeth, that albeit there remain yet some trace of the image of God in us, yet that the whole is disfigured, so as reason is blind, and the heart perverse: wherefore by nature we are wholly accursed. We see therefore at the least, that by the will and decree of God, we have been all subject to everlasting damnation through the fall

of one man. Concerning that which this troublecoast addeth, that if we believe, we are delivered through Christ by the power of the gospel, and of the holy ghost: that serves for nothing, but to confirm our doctrine. For it behooveth that we always come thither, that none believe, unless those which are ordained to salvation. Acts thirteen (<441348> Acts 13:48) and all the scripture is full thereof. Wherefore this is as much, as if he should say, that the elect of God are delivered from that common damnation through faith.

The third article containeth an horrible blasphemy that if God have created men to damn them, his will and the Devil's is all one. They that speak so, show plainly enough that they are altogether mockers of God, and despisers of all religion. It pleased God that Job should be robbed and spoiled: to be short, all that is there attributed to the Devil, and to those thieves and robbers, it is said plainly, that it came not to pass but by the good pleasure of GOD. Must we therefore conclude that God's will and the Devil's are all one? But they that know that the judgments of God are bottomless, and shall have once known their own weakness, will adore them with all reverence and humility and know well to put a difference, although that GOD willeth the same thing that the devil doth, yet that this is indeed in divers respects. And so, that he deserveth always to be acknowledged righteous, although that his counsel be incomprehensible unto us.

Afterwards to abolish the Election of GOD, seeming as though he would confess it, he answereth that God hath not created nor predestinated any man not to believe, seeing he calleth everyone. Wherein he showed that he never yet learned the ABC of Christians, seeing he knoweth not how to distinguish between the outward preaching, which is done by the mouth of men, and the secret calling of God whereby he toucheth the hearts within. Now when it is commanded in the last of Mark, (<411615> Mark 16:15) to preach the Gospel to all, this importeth not that God therefore worketh in all by the power of his spirit: and when it is said in the second Chapter of the first to Timothy,

that God would all men to be saved, (<540204> 1 Timothy 2:4)

the solution is added by and by, *that come to the knowledge of his truth*. Wherefore then is it, that he himself would not at that present time, that the gospel should be preached to all? so far of is it that he hath enlightened

all the world in the faith. It is marvelous that this shameless forehead, is not ashamed to allege for himself the tenth to the Romans, (<451016> Romans 10:16-20) where the text expressly setteth forth that all believe not the Gospel, because that Isay saith, *that the arm of the Lord is not revealed to all*. Also the sixth chapter of Saint John (<430637> John 6:37) where Jesus Christ expressly pronounceth, *that all that are given him of his father come unto him*. And touching that, that he saith, *that all shall be taught of God*: it is a special promise made to the Church: as also the Lord Jesus Christ was a faithful expositor thereof, saying:

He therefore that hath heard and learned of my father,
shall come unto me. (<430645> John 6:45)

Whereby he showeth, that all are not inwardly called. According as a little after (<430665> John 6:65) also he confirmeth the same. *Therefore I have said unto you, that none can come unto me, unless it be given him from God my father*. Notwithstanding this Rustic imagineth he hath well escaped, having spoken a word of predestination, without making any semblance of the text so expressly set forth, where it is said,

that God will have mercy, upon him on whom he will have mercy,
and that our salvation is of the same mercy: and not of the willer
nor of the runner, and that before the two twins were born, when
they had neither done good nor evil: to the end the purpose of his
election might stand sure, he had chosen the one and rejected the
other. (<450911> Romans 9:11-18)

Also when we believe that this proceedeth of that, that God hath chosen us: Thereupon it followeth, that the rest of the world remaineth blind. But because it would be too long to allege all, consider those places which are gathered in a little book that our brother master Beza hath made thereof, and you shall be fully satisfied therein.

To show that the hardening of Pharaoh, proceeded not of God, he allegeth that which is said in the third and fourth of Exodus. (Exodus 3; Exodus 4) I have commanded thee, to let my people depart and thou wouldest not. But it followeth not thereupon, that God had not ordained Pharaoh to be glorified in his obstinacy and hardness, as he protesteth, Exodus ninth chapter. And Saint Paul allegeth it in this sense in the ninth chapter to the Romans. (<450917> Romans 9:17) This therefore is sottishly [*stupidly*,

foolishly] concluded of this impudent fellow, that our will is the first and chief cause of evil. I confess indeed, that it is the near cause, and the true root of our condemnation. But to the end a man may grant him, he allegeth the authority of Amerbachius, who is a lawyer, and as skillful a Divine, as a Poticarie [*Apothecary*] is a good butcher.

Concerning Melancthon, if this Rustic rested not himself upon him, as he protesteth, but upon the Gospel, how proveth he by the Gospel, that God hath not ordained of his creatures? Touching that he imputeth unto us, that we put a fatal necessity as the Stoics do, it is a very villainous slander: For the Stoics, they made god himself subject to such necessities, making a net of obscure causes, wherein God was entangled. But we set the Lord and master in full liberty, attributing the sovereign Empire to his providence, to dispose of all things. Concerning that this Clown babbleth of Free will, it is sufficiently rejected throughout the whole Scripture. For Freedom and bondage are contraries. Now, that we are the servants, yea the slaves of sin, there needeth not that we allege one place alone, seeing the whole scripture are full thereof.

Notwithstanding, to give some color to his error, he allegeth that Jerusalem would not receive the grace of God, yea as though this proved Free will, to choose good or evil. You shall find throughout all my books, how I have taught, that we must not seek the cause of our perdition anywhere else but in ourselves, and in our perverse will. But it followeth not, that it is in us to change our will, which is altogether given to evil.

You shall also find that I have taught that which this troublecoast setteth down here to put out the whole light: to wit, that our will is the cause or means to come to salvation. Wherefore it needeth not to allege that Abraham believed God, and that it was imputed unto him for righteousness. For in very truth it must needs be that a man must accept the grace of God. But the question is of knowing what is the first cause. And this is the power of the holy ghost, through which we are drawn to the obedience of God, according as he hath chosen and adopted us for his children before the foundation of the world. Now in this behalf this vile dog showeth sufficiently enough, that he makes no accompt [*account*] of the holy scripture, the which as much as lies in him, he would abolish or tread under his feet. For in going about to declare how Abraham was saved by his will, he saith that this was of that will which God had put in man

creating him after his own image. Whereby he utterly abolisheth the whole grace of the holy ghost: and goeth beyond not only the Papists, but also some of the Painims [*pagan, heathen*], in the impiety. For the Papists keep such a measure in magnifying their Free will, that they confess, being corrupted and depraved, we can do nothing, if God through his spirit and supernatural grace, do not help, drive and direct us. But concerning the holy scripture, it showeth us, that we shall always be rebels against God, until that he shall have changed and renewed us. And lo why Moyses said to the people ^{<052904>}Deuteronomy 29:4, that God had not yet given them an understanding heart, and seeing eyes. And therefore to the end he might be obeyed, he saith, that he would give them a new heart, taking away that stony heart, ^{<243101>}Jeremiah 31: ^{<261103>}Ezekiel 11:37: and Saint Paul in the second to the Philippians (^{<503813>}Philippians 2:13) say that God giveth both to will and to perform. And in the first of Saint John (^{<430113>}John 1:13) it is said, that they which believe, are not of the will of flesh nor blood: but renewed of god. And Saint Luke speaking of the woman, showeth well, how all are drawn unto faith: to wit, that God openeth the heart, to the end his word may be understood. Now it is certain that these things are not spoken of the common order of nature. And yet this villain dareth allege that which Saint Paul saith in the third Chapter to Titus, that God hath saved us not according to our works, but according to his mercy: to infer upon that, that we have Free will, but not so constant. Now when Saint Paul speaketh in the third to the Romans (^{<450310>}Romans 3:10-18) of the will of man, such as it is by nature, he deciphereth plainly enough, that there is nothing but perversity and malice: as also in the eighth chapter (^{<450807>}Romans 8:7) he saith, that all our thoughts are enmities to God. Mark then how this agreeth with that which this troublecoast chatteth, saying that God renewed us, after that we have consented to his calling. And he is not ashamed to allege to the same purpose the fifth to the Ephesians, where he speaketh thereof as of the fables of Marlin: but contrariwise he saith in the same epistle: (^{<490201>}Ephesians 2:1, 2) When you were dead in your sins, and the captives of Satan, and that ye were the children of wrath as others, God hath quickened you, etc. And in Ephesians 1, he showeth well, that faith and regeneration proceeded from no other thing, than Free election. And indeed, it must needs be that God accomplish in us that which he hath spoken by his prophet Esaie, in the sixty-fifth chapter, (^{<236501>}Isaiah 65:1) I appeared unto them, which sought me not. And lo why John

Baptist, reproving the rudeness and hardness of his disciples, saith in the third chapter of Saint John, (^{<430327>} John 3:27) No man can receive anything, unless it be given him from heaven. And which is worst, this troubler is not ashamed also to bring this place, that God giveth both to will and to perform, to make us believe, that the grace of God followeth our good will: howsoever it be that Saint Paul in that place without leaving anything to men, would attribute the whole praise of our salvation to God: as he saith in the first chapter (^{<500106>} Philippians 1:6) that he which hath begun the good work of salvation, will finish it. Wherein it must be, that he make the grace of god to come after the tail of Free will.

Now afterwards this troublecoast taketh great pain to prove, that there is a will in man, as though any man had ever denied it. But he should show, that that will is Free to choose good and evil. Now how proveth he it? By the seventh chapter to the Romans, saying that this place cannot be wrested. But herein men may easily judge, how his mind is forward and perverse, seeing that Saint Paul (^{<450701>} Romans 7) declareth there, although his will labored and strived to good, inasmuch as it was regenerated by the spirit of God, yet oftentimes he went but hopping upon one foot. He allegeth a little after the seventh of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, where he speaketh of a man's will, that hath a daughter to marry. Here is good stuff to found Free will. Concerning the thirtieth of Deuteronomy, where it is said: I set before you this day life and death, choose you: Saint Paul in the tenth to the Romans (^{<451019>} Romans 10:19) giveth a sufficient solution: that is, that Moyses presupposeth that God putteth his word in the heart. And lo why it is said, that this ought to be laid to the gospel. Concerning that of Ecclesiasticus which notwithstanding is Apocrypha, there he speaketh but of the outward doctrine, but the inward grace is a thing apart and by itself, That which is so ill favoredly jumbled together by this troublecoast, that under the shadow that Jesus Christ calleth all those that are heavy laden, he concludeth that grace is given equally to all. But he maketh no reckoning that Jesus Christ after he had preached more excellently than all creatures, saith by and by, that his father must draw them to believe in him.

In the end going about to salve that place of Saint Paul where it is said, that if a potter make vessels of earth as he seeth good, this showeth that God disposeth of his creatures: I pray you mark well, the goodly solutions that he giveth: that God ravisheth by miracles, or diseases both one and other

as seemeth good unto him. As if Saint Paul spake not expressly there, that God according to his unchangeable purpose, either chose or rejected men, before they were born, or before they had done either good or evil: to show that it is neither of the willer nor of the runner, but of his mercy, that his elect are saved. Such premises are worthy such conclusion as he maketh, let us draw near unto God, and consent unto him, and he will draw near unto us. As though the first approaching were not, that he should seek us out, whilst that we are far from him. It is true that God oftentimes useth this speech, Return unto me, and I will come unto you: but this is to show what is our duty and not what our power is.

PRAISE BE UNTO GOD

FINIS.