

Andreas Essensius on Providence, Sin, and the Death of Christ.

Essensius, Systema Theologiæ, p.254 seqq. On Providence

IX. However, the distinction between Real and Moral Providence is of the greatest instruction and utility. The former concerns all creatures inasmuch as they are beings; thus, all creatures depend on it in the realm of being. The latter, however, pertains to rational creatures, inasmuch as they are rational and owe God rational worship; thus, their actions depend on this Providence in the realm of morality. For both, there are certain negative acts that can be recalled.

X. Real Providence is the basis for all creatures, insofar as they are beings. This is clear in general from the references in Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3, Ephesians 1:11, and the reasons given there.

More specifically:

1. About the heavens: Isaiah 40:26. "Lift up your eyes on high, and see who has created these things, who brings out their host by number; he calls them all by name, by the greatness of his might..." Job 9:7. "He commands the sun, and it does not rise; he seals off the stars." Matthew 5:45. "He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Psalm 104:13. "He waters the hills from his chambers; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of his works..."

2. About men: Acts 17:25. "He gives to all life, breath, and all things." Acts 17:28. "For in him we live, and move, and have our being." 1 Samuel 2:6-10. "The Lord kills and makes alive; he brings down to the grave and brings up; the Lord makes poor and makes rich; he brings low and lifts up." Psalm 90:3. "You turn man to destruction, and say, 'Return, O children of men.'" Compare with Disputation 20, th. 20, where God's decree regarding the end of human life is expounded and proven. Matthew 10:30. "But the very hairs of your head are all numbered."

XI. Thus, all creatures, insofar as they are such, and whatever pertains to them in the order of being, are subject to divine providence. The degree of dependence in each is proportional to the degree of its existence. Accordingly, providence operates in proportion to each individual, acting more in some cases and less in others, yet nothing that exists in any way does so apart from God. This distinction is evident in Matthew 6:26, regarding the birds: "Your heavenly Father feeds them"; and furthermore, verse 30: "If God so clothes the grass of the field, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?" Likewise, 1 Timothy 4:10: "We have set our

hope on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.” And in 1 Corinthians 9:9: “Does God care about oxen?”—that is, comparatively, in relation to humans and God’s ministers.

XII. In order to understand providence more distinctly, its real aspects include preservation, concurrence, and governance in the strict sense, also called direction.

XIII. Preservation is the act of providence by which God continues the essence and powers of creatures according to His will. This applies both to their essence, whether as individuals or as faculties and added perfections, including natural order, instinct, and other gifts as appropriate. Thus, preservation is not only general—pertaining to the whole world collectively—but also particular, extending to each individual entity in the world. Relevant scriptural testimonies include Acts 17:25,28, Colossians 1:17, Hebrews 1:3, and Psalm 104:29-30. Additionally, Nehemiah 9:6 states: “You alone are the Lord; You made the heavens, the highest heavens and all their host, the earth and all that is in it, the seas and all that is in them; and You preserve them all.” Similarly, Revelation 4:11: “You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” Also, Psalm 36:7: “You, O Lord, preserve both man and beast.” The Scholastics rightly call this sustenance, because by it, God upholds all things, as if by His own hand, and maintains them in existence for as long as He wills.

XIV. Preservation is absolutely necessary because of the total dependence of creatures on God, not only for their coming into being but also for their continued existence. The continuation of being cannot primarily proceed except from the one who possesses that perfection virtually and eminently—even for the future—thus demonstrating His eternal power and divinity (Romans 1:20). Therefore, angels, rational souls, the higher heavens, and prime matter in elemental bodies are immediately preserved by God, since they depend in no way on any being other than Him. However, living bodies, meteorological phenomena, etc., since they have secondary causes for their particular essence and properties, are also preserved through certain secondary causes acting as intermediaries. Yet at the same time, the immediate and intrinsic divine efficiency of the First Cause, which belongs to a higher order, must necessarily be acknowledged. (See Disp. VIII, §4 above.)

XV. Preservation presupposes creation, just as the continuation of being presupposes being itself. It also precedes concurrence and governance, since nothing can act or be directed toward an end unless it is first sustained in existence. Some things are preserved by God in their numerical identity from the moment of their creation—for instance, those entities that are immediately preserved by Him. In other cases, individual natures perish, while the universal nature is preserved in other individuals of the same species, through continual succession, as in the case of

beasts and plants. Other entities undergo some change in part, yet persist in their essential state, as with the elements. Regarding the human soul, we have already spoken; as for the body, its preservation follows the pattern of other animate bodies.

XVI. From the above, it is now clear that the act of preservation is entirely positive—that is, the continuation of the same divine efficiency by which things were first created. This is why some call it continuous creation. Therefore, the notion of negative preservation—as if one were to “preserve” a man or another living being simply by refraining from killing it, even though one could—is incorrect and foreign to this truth.

XVII. Opposed to conservation is the negation of that positive act, which brings about the destruction of the creature or its annihilation. Psalm 139:29. Annihilation is the act of destroying a thing to the point that it no longer remains in existence, whether it is some accidental power, some formal perfection, or perhaps the entire essence of the thing. Thus, for example, a horse that is healthy and robust may lose its strength and health, yet still retain its equine nature. It may also lose its formal specific perfection, no longer being a horse, yet still maintaining some material essence, under a different formal limitation. Finally, if God willed it, even the material essence itself could be entirely reduced to nothing.

XVIII. We call annihilation a negative act because it is recognized by the end or term it reaches. Since annihilation is the destruction of a being into nothing, the term to which it relates is clearly negative; therefore, this action is formally negative, and it is a pure negation of a conserving action. This is sufficiently evident.

XIX. Concurrence is the act of Providence by which secondary causes are stirred up by the primary cause to act, applied, and sustained and promoted in their actions effectively. Acts 17:25, 28. “He gives to all life, breath, and all things... in him we live, and move, and have our being.” Romans 11:35, 36. “Who has first given to him, and it shall be repaid to him?” For all things are from him. Psalm 33:15. “He who forms the hearts of them all...” Jeremiah 10:23. “O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, nor is it in man who walks to direct his steps.” Proverbs 21:1. “The king’s heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; he turns it wherever he wishes.” Philippians 2:13. “For it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” 1 Corinthians 4:7. “For who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? Now if you did indeed receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?” Similarly, in Isaiah 10:5, 6, 7, 15, God stirred up and applied Babylon to act, even without its knowledge or intention, like a rod, staff, sickle, or axe in His hand; so that it could not boast against God, any more than the sickle could boast against the one who wields it, or the axe against the one who swings it.

XX. Therefore, it is not enough in God's Providence to only acknowledge the general conservation of secondary causes in their existence. Since secondary causes cannot themselves continue in existence without the divine conservation, neither can they apply or promote their actions without the primary cause. This present action of positive being in the secondary cause cannot be independent of the primary cause. There is no motion without the action of the First Mover; in him we live, move, and have our being.

XXI. Nor are those who lean toward Pelagianism sufficient in their explanation when they assert only a merely simultaneous concurrence, both in time and in nature.

For what, I ask, would be the cause of this simultaneity in the acting creature? How would it be stirred and applied to act? In this hypothesis, one would have to say that it acts by its own power, independently of the First Cause, that is, of God. However, things are only said to be simultaneous in nature when, in the sequence of their existence, they are reciprocally related and when neither is the cause of the other's existence. A cause, after all, must necessarily precede its effect, at least in nature.

If this were the case, then the creature would produce itself and possess some being and perfection independently. But then, God would be a First Cause only in name, not in reality—contrary to 1 Corinthians 4:7, Romans 11:35-36, and other passages. Indeed, God would be reduced to the kind of deity that Lactantius rightly refutes in *On False Religion* (Book 1, Chapter 11), arguing that the name "Jupiter" expresses not divine power but human assistance. Cicero interprets Jupiter and Juno as deriving their names from "helping," with Jupiter meaning "Helping Father"—a name unworthy of God, since helping pertains to a man providing aid to another, who is weak and in need. No one prays to God simply to be helped, but rather to be preserved, to receive life and salvation, which are far greater than mere assistance. Since we are speaking of the Father, no father is said to "help" his children when he begets or raises them, since such language does not adequately express the magnitude of paternal beneficence. How much more inappropriate is it, then, to apply this term to God, the true Father, by whom we exist and to whom we wholly belong?

Anyone who believes he is merely "helped" by God does not truly understand divine beneficence. Thus, it is not only ignorance but also impiety to diminish God's supreme power by calling Him "Jupiter." When two horses pull a cart with equal force in a simultaneous concurrence, neither depends on the other; they act equally in their effort. But this is entirely foreign to the relationship between God and creatures.

I press further: If a creature could act equally alongside God—if it could initiate action independently of divine pre-motion and application—why, then, could it not continue its action without God? Surely, initiating an action seems more difficult than continuing it. Indeed, the very reason why continuation requires divine efficiency is that it involves an ongoing progression from one moment to another, which is nothing but a multiplied initiation. In this way, the actions of creatures, which take place within motion and flux, depend on divine influence.

XXII. Those who concede that God's concurrence influences the effect but not the created cause, insofar as it is a cause, fail to resolve the difficulties. In doing so, they acknowledge the effect's dependence on God but make the created cause independent in its causal role, and thus they render God unnecessary in that respect. They thereby grant an independent perfection to the acting creature, which it possesses by itself as such. It is more perfect to act than not to act; thus, if a creature could move from potentiality to actuality, or to the exercise of action independently, that would be absurd and impossible.

XXIII. Those who accept God's concurrence with secondary causes but claim it is common, indifferent, and determinable by the secondary cause itself fare no better. For the determiner is necessarily prior and more active than what is determined. This would make the creature prior to God and more active than Him, reducing God to a passive role in relation to the creature's action. Such a conception completely inverts the natural order and essentially places the creature in the role of God while demoting God to the role of a mere creature. This is utterly blasphemous.

XXIV. Therefore, it must be established that God, as the First Cause, is also first and independent in causing, while the creature, as a secondary cause, is dependent and posterior even in its causal role. In this respect, we speak of divine pre-motion, excitation, and application to action, as well as subsequent sustenance and promotion in action. God, in a supremely transcendent, most perfect, most powerful, most wise, and most holy manner, touches secondary causes—both natural agents, which act by necessity without intellect, and free agents, which act with deliberation and rational assent—causing each to act according to its nature and condition. This applies whether we consider the action as such, its specification, or its singularity in all its circumstances.

A creature, with respect to this divine action as it receives it, is passive; yet, with respect to the effect produced, it is truly active and formally an efficient cause, exercising and applying its active faculty in producing a given effect. One should not think that God alone acts with the creature merely present, while the creature does nothing. Rather, the creature truly acts, both in natural and supernatural operations, as well as in both good and evil actions—this is clear from both Scripture and

nature. Indeed, the same action, considered with respect to its production of an effect, belongs both to God, in His own way and order, and to the creature, in its own way and order.

For example, in the act of cutting wood, the same action belongs to both the carpenter and the axe, though differently attributed to each. One who strikes another with a staff or rides a horse truly produces an action, yet the staff and horse also play their respective roles in that numerically identical action. There is no real distinction between the use of a horse, an axe, or a staff, and the acts of riding, cutting, or striking.

In the transient actions of creatures, God is the eminently efficient and virtually transcendent cause, while the creature is the formally transient and efficient cause. For instance, in animal generation, the seed is prepared and supplied formally by the generating animals. The one who walks is formally the cause of walking, moving as he is moved, changing location, etc.—not God. However, in His supreme power, God causes animals to generate and humans to walk, etc.

Similarly, in immanent actions, God is the virtually transcendent cause, while the creature is the formal efficient cause of its immanent actions. Man understands, wills, and believes by his own formal action, while God cooperates in a supreme manner, causing man to understand, will, and believe. The creature receives from God's most eminent action—which is no more fully comprehensible to us than God's own nature—the transition from potentiality to actuality, becoming a formal agent without any change or imperfection in God Himself, as stated in James 1:17.

XXV. We now consider actions generally in the realm of being, at least insofar as they possess metaphysical goodness, whether or not they also possess moral goodness in free causes. This applies equally to angels and humans in any state, as well as to other creatures, albeit with different modes of activity appropriate to their natures.

Any entity, no matter how great or small, must be referred to the First Cause. Creatures universally receive divine action according to their capacity for reception. Morally good actions are in accordance with the law prescribed to those creatures. Morally evil actions, however, involve a specific defect, which formally and privatively belongs to the sinning creature itself.

Thus, a distinction must be made in sin between the underlying action and its deviation. The former comes from God's positive concurrence; the latter, being a privation, cannot in any way be attributed to God or His most perfect divine action. At the same time, we must acknowledge God's physical permission, which we

distinguish from ethical permission. The former is a negative act, or rather a negation of an act in concurrence—it is a non-prevention of what happens, and thus is itself a non-action, not causality. God permits in this way because such an act, even though disorderly, is ultimately to be ordered to good according to God's permissive decree.

XXVI. In the meantime, the concurrence [of God] thus explained and previously confirmed in brief, against the Pelagianizing Papists, Anabaptists, and Remonstrants, let us now prove more fully, by arranging classes of arguments.

Here belong, first, certain general testimonies of Holy Scripture, without special regard to morality: namely, Acts xvii, 25, 28. Psalm xxxiii, 15. Proverbs xxi, 1. Isaiah x, 5, 6, 7, 15. Jeremiah x, 23. Romans xi, 36. See above, Disputation xix. Add Jeremiah xviii, 6: *Behold, as clay in the hand of the potter, so are you in my hand, O house of Israel.* James iv, 15, 16: *You ought to say, "If the Lord wills, and we live, we shall do this or that." But now you glory in your boastings. All such glorying is evil.* Likewise Ephesians i, 11. Isaiah xl, 26. Matthew v, 45. See above, thesis x. In all these places it is sufficiently expressly established that God concurs with second causes, both with men and also with others, and indeed as by nature prior to the actions of the creatures themselves, and as making them to operate.

Second; there occur certain special [testimonies] concerning works morally good; where such concurrence is most clearly expressed, and is also to be considered more closely in our theology: as 1 Corinthians iv, 7. Philippians ii, 13. See above, thesis xix. Add Jeremiah xxxi, 18: *Convert me, and I shall be converted, for you are Jehovah my God. For after I was converted, I repented.* Verse 33: *This is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says Jehovah: I will put my law within them, and write it on their heart.* Ezekiel xxxvi, 26, 27, 28: *And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put in your midst, and removing the heart of stone from your flesh, I will give you a heart of flesh: and I will put my spirit in your midst, whereby I will cause you to walk in my statutes, and to keep my judgments and do them. And you shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, etc.* Thus is sufficiently plain the concurrence, yea even the premotion of God in those acts. Again John vi, 44: *No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.* John xv, 5: *I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in me, and I in him, this one bears much fruit; for apart from me you can do nothing.* 1 Corinthians xii, 3: *No one can say "Jesus is Lord" except by the Holy Spirit, etc.* Verse 6: *There are diversities of operations, but the same God who works all in all.* Philippians i, 29: *To you it has been granted in behalf of Christ, not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him.* 2 Timothy ii, 24, 25: *The servant of the Lord must not be quarrelsome but gentle to all, instructing in meekness those who oppose themselves, if perhaps God might grant them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, etc.* Hebrews xiii, 20, 21: *Now the*

God of peace, who brought again from the dead that great shepherd of the sheep, our Lord Jesus, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you what is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. James i, 17, 18: Every good giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning. Of his own will he brought us forth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. Many more could be added, concerning our new creation, regeneration, resurrection from spiritual death: but concerning those, elsewhere, against the same adversaries.

Third; there are also special [testimonies] concerning acts infected with moral evil: Genesis xlv, 7, 8: Joseph to his brothers: *God sent me before you to preserve you a remnant in the earth. So now it was not you who sent me here, but God himself, who has made me a father to Pharaoh, etc.* Exodus vii, 3: God himself: *I indeed will harden Pharaoh's heart, that I may multiply my signs and wonders in the land of Egypt: but Pharaoh will not listen to you, when I stretch out my hand upon Egypt, etc.* 2 Samuel xii, 11, 12: To David; *Thus says Jehovah: Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own house, and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, etc.* xvi, 10, 11: David himself about Shimei: *Let him curse, because Jehovah has said to him: namely, by real holy concurrence, and just physical permission. And further, Romans i, 24, 25: Therefore God also gave them up to the lusts of their own hearts, to uncleanness, to dishonor their bodies among themselves... therefore God gave them up to vile affections... God gave them up to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not fitting.* 2 Thessalonians ii, 11: *Therefore God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe the lie.*

Fourth; the same is confirmed by certain reasons taken from the dependence of second causes upon the First, and from the independence of the First Cause itself.

1. Every analysis of motion must be carried back to the first unmoved Mover, the cause of that actual perfection; and therefore operating prior by nature.

2. Every effect of a created cause must be reduced to the First Cause: consequently also the very inception, yea even the act by which the will determines itself according to the judgment of the practical intellect, and the act of the practical judgment itself. For more than one first principle cannot be admitted.

3. God foreknows all future things, according to the determined counsel of his will: consequently the certain and determining concurrence of God must be acknowledged, not indifferent and determinable by second causes. For thus what was determined from eternity would in time be undetermined, as being determinable.

4. The efficiency of God actively, in the identical sense, is the very decree of God, and God himself; and therefore necessarily must be admitted a certain efficacy of it, and priority to the actions of creatures, insofar as they are actions of

creatures. But the same, considered terminatively, is simultaneous in time with the actions of creatures; meanwhile still prior by nature, since the actions of creatures depend upon its causality

On Sin, P. 335, seqq.

VI. Sin, in the second place, is either of commission or of omission. The former is opposed to a negative precept; that is, something is done which ought not to be done, because it is forbidden. This act, considered in itself, indeed has its metaphysical goodness, in the genus of being; but, through its contrariety to the Law of God, it lacks moral goodness, and suffers from an evil which is its opposite.

The sin of omission is opposed to an affirmative precept, in not doing what ought to be done, because it is commanded. Here a faculty or habit ceases from the exercise with which it ought to be occupied, and that according to the prescribed norm: therefore that non-action is blameworthy, because of the obligation to act imposed by Him who has that right in every respect, but neglected by the sinner with rational acquiescence or complacency. And thus, either nothing at all is done—that is, no notable work—or something else is done instead.

Moreover, what is omitted is either the whole duty commanded, or some manner, or other adjunct, prescribed to be observed in it: in the first case, there is a total omission; in the second, a partial omission, that is, so far as it is in fact found to be the case.

VII. Sin, formally considered—since it is something privative—has no direct and properly so-called efficient cause; and by no means ought such efficiency to be attributed to God, whose holiness is utterly removed from sins, although these lie under His permission and ordination. Let no one, when he is tempted, say, “I am tempted by God”; for God cannot be tempted by evils, nor does He tempt anyone (James 1:13). Compare above, On God, in Disputation XII, thesis 91 and following; and On Providence, in Disputation XXX, thesis 35 and following.

But the rational creature itself, when sinning, is properly its deficient cause, in so far as it departs from the norm and perfection prescribed to it.

Nor ought we to say, with the Papists, the Socinians, and their followers, that there is no sin properly so called which is not voluntary, preceded, namely, by a judgment and deliberation, and by a formal act of the will. For the matter stands otherwise—

1. In the case of original sin, as will be shown later.
2. Likewise, in falls arising from sudden preoccupation and inadvertence.
3. And also, in the very doubting and deliberating about committing or completing some sin, and in the disordered motions of the will and affections in their very first beginnings, without any deliberate counsel—yet, meanwhile, contrary to the Law of God, with some kind of acquiescence and complacency, at least interpretative and virtual, in that state, condition, and sinful actions

VIII. In sins which occur daily (alas, too much!) both obvious and manifest, the internal cause is discovered in various ways and by various means.

1. Inborn corruption of nature: thus is the evil tree, producing fruits consistent with itself; Matt. vii, 18.
2. Acquired evil habits: thus are they taught to do evil, so that they cannot do good; Jerem. xiii, 23.
3. Particular ignorance: hence Paul persecuted the Church; others crucified the Lord of glory. But this, if it be not of law—especially common and public law—but of fact; not vincible but invincible; not of an evil disposition but of mere negation, excuses indeed in part, yet not altogether: since we are antecedently bound to know, so further to obey the precepts that are known. 1 Tim. 1, 13. 1 Cor. ii, 8. Acts iii, 17.
4. Unbelief: for whatever is not of faith, is sin; Rom. xiv, 23. To the unbelieving all things are defiled; Tit. i, 15. Paul, lacking faith, persecuted the Church; 1 Tim. 1, 13.
5. Vacancy of reverence toward God: by which the reins are loosened to whatever sins; Gen. xx, 11. Ps. lv, 20–21.
6. Blindness of mind: whereby the sinner does not see things right, honest, just.
7. Hardness of heart: whereby he refuses to be bent and conformed to the prescribed rule; Eph. iv, 17–18. Matt. xiii, 13–15.
8. Weakness of the flesh: by which he easily slips; Matt. xxvi, 41.
9. Inordinate concupiscence: for this is the fertile mother, which after it has conceived, gives birth to sin; James i, 15.
10. Deliberate counsel and purpose of delivering oneself into the servitude of sin; Rom. vi, 16. Thus Ahab gave himself over to do what was evil in the eyes of Jehovah; 1 Kings xxi, 25.
11. Other sins, by reason of kinship or affinity: thus covetousness is the root of all evils; 1 Tim. vi, 10. Ambition and pride of life, another element of many sins; 1 John ii, 16. Idleness, the Devil's pillow, etc. Behold, this was the iniquity of your sister Sodom: pride, fullness of bread, and quiet ease was to her and to her daughters; Ezek. xvi, 49.

IX. The external cause impelling to sin is also many, such as:

1. The Devil, tempter and deceiver, liar and murderer from the beginning; John viii, 44. Gen. iii, 13. 2 Cor. xi, 3. Matt. iv, 3. He assails men in diverse ways: sometimes by working directly upon the intellect itself, and so soliciting the will; sometimes by moving disordered affections, etc. For we are not ignorant of his devices; 2 Cor. ii, 11. Add Rev. xii, 24. 1 Pet. v, 8. Eph. vi, 11–12, and the like.

2. The World, lying wholly in wickedness; 1 John v, 19. The counsels of worldly men, false and deceitful doctrines, invitations and persuasions. Hence Prov. i, 10–15: My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, Come with us, etc. We shall obtain all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil; you shall cast in your lot among us, etc. My son, do not walk in the way with them, etc. Matt. vii, 15–16: Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. Thus Rev. ii, 14: there were in the church of Pergamum those who held the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel, that they should eat of things sacrificed to idols and commit fornication. 1 Cor. xv, 33: Do not be deceived: evil communications corrupt good morals. Thus Solomon's wives turned away his heart; 1 Kings xi, 3. Likewise examples, commands, threats, persecutions: thus Jeroboam sinned and together caused Israel to sin; 1 Kings xiv, 16. Nebuchadnezzar commanded that all peoples, nations, and languages fall before his image, with the threat of the burning furnace; Dan. iii, 6. And Paul, while still a Pharisee, often punishing the saints in every synagogue, compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, persecuted them even unto foreign cities; Acts xxvi, 14. Thus the world tempts, both on the right hand and on the left.

Prosperous things, by which many grow wanton, and loosen freer reins to their desires; but by accident, through men's abuse: Ezek. xvi, 49. Here pertains the serious warning, Ps. lxii, 11: Trust not in oppression, and do not become vain in robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them. Likewise Rom. ii, 4: Do you despise the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? And the pious supplication, Prov. xxx, 8–9: Give me food convenient for me, lest I be full and deny, and say, Who is Jehovah?

For, as to the polluted and unbelieving nothing is pure; Tit. i, 15. And the corruption of the best is wont to be the worst. Thus even the Law of God, through men's abuse, serves to increase native corruption and to multiply sins. Thus indeed: We ever strive after the forbidden, and desire the things denied. For without the Law, sin was indeed dead; but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death: for sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me; Rom. vii, 9–11.

X. By that very fact that Sin is a deviation from the right rule and the true end, it has not an end of itself, properly so called. For every end is desired and intended under the aspect of good; and a means in relation to an end, as conducing toward it: but evil, as such, is not desirable, nor conducive to good as a means—just as darkness, of itself at least, can contribute nothing to light.

Indeed, sinners propose an end to themselves: some apparent good, pleasant or useful; yet in such a way that they miserably deceive themselves in the meantime. For evil is not to be done, that good may come; Rom. iii, 8. They altogether fail in their intention, who, killing the Apostles, thought that they offered service to God; John xvi, 2. The expectation of the wicked perishes; Prov. x, 28. Yet God so governs sins, that by accident they serve both the glory of his majesty and also the salvation of the elect: nor would the Most Holy permit anything evil to be done, unless the All-Wise and Omnipotent likewise knew and was able to bring good out of evil. See above concerning Providence, in Disputation xxx, th. xxxvi, and xlv.

ON THE IMPETRATION OF SALVATION

XXIV.

DISPUTATION III. Ad Tit. XIII

Thus far the Procurement of Salvation has been explained according to its parts: it follows that we should consider the End for which, or for whom, salvation was procured by Christ the Mediator. We have already proved in Tit. XII, Thesis LXII, that this procurement ought not to be extended to Angels, nor that Christ should be called their Mediator.

But neither is it to be extended in common to the whole human race, as if Christ had procured salvation for all and each individual men, had died equally for all and each, etc. We confess that Christ, on account of the infinite dignity of His Person, could have procured salvation for all men whatsoever, who are, have been, or shall be in the whole world—indeed, even for many more—if that had been the intention of God and of Christ. That aptitude of Christ, and that potential sufficiency, we fully acknowledge; but the exercise and act we deny—against the Remonstrants, and also in this part against the Papists, Anabaptists, Lutherans, and all patrons of universal grace. We shall now marshal classes of arguments against them; and we shall derive them:

1. From the Restrictions which the Holy Spirit Himself applies in this matter.
2. From the Consequences.
3. From Election.

4. From the New Covenant.

XXV. Let the first class be this: Whatever Holy Scripture itself restricts to certain men, with others excluded, does not belong to all and each equally or indifferently. But Holy Scripture does thus restrict the procurement of salvation. Therefore, etc. That restriction is expressly made to “Many”; to the “Called, the Faithful, and the Sanctified”; to the “Church”; to the “Sons of God”; to the “Sheep and People of Christ”; to those who were “given to Him by the Father,” and whom He “loved exceedingly”—the rest of the world being excluded.

1. The restriction to Many is made in Matt. 26:28: “My blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the remission of sins.” Romans 5:19: “For as by the disobedience of one man many were constituted sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be constituted righteous.”

In the former passage is meant the multitude of those who belong to the communion of the New Covenant, which is of grace, according to the purpose of God—in opposition to the rest who are strangers to it. In the latter, the multitude of those who are reckoned under Christ the Head, according to the same purpose of God—which is set in contrast to the greater multitude of those who were reckoned under Adam the Head. Adam by his disobedience made sinners, and therefore guilty, his “many”—the Adamites. Christ by His obedience makes righteous His “many”—the Christians; who are translated from that first community under Adam into the other community under Christ.

Similar also are the passages Isaiah 53:11–12: “By the knowledge of Him shall My righteous Servant justify many; for He shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide Him a portion with the many.” He shall justify many, He shall have many as His peculiar possession; for their iniquities He shall Himself bear, and so shall acquire them to Himself.

Matthew 20:28: “The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

Hebrews 9:28: “Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”

Thus to “many” is restricted that ransom of redemption—their sins He bore in Himself by His offering, and to them He shall apply the consummation of salvation when He appears glorious on the last day.

2. The restriction to the Called is expressed Hebrews 9:15: “For this cause He is the Mediator of the New Covenant, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Covenant, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.” Those who are effectually called receive that eternal inheritance promised in the Testament; to this end the death of

the Testator intervened, for the redemption of those transgressions which had stood even under the Old Testament.

Restriction to the Faithful; John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” God is said first to have loved the world in an indefinite and synecdochical expression—for a part is contained in the whole; and what is said of the part is said of the whole only so far as regards that part. This is immediately explained definitely, and the end of God in giving His Son is distinctly proposed: that whosoever should believe in Him should not perish, but have eternal life. Therefore, to the believers—or those destined to believe—Christ procured, according to God’s definite intention, deliverance from destruction and eternal life. But faith is not of all men (2 Thess. 3:2), but of God’s elect (Titus 1:1).

Likewise Acts 10:43: “To Him give all the prophets witness, that through His name whosoever believeth in Him shall receive remission of sins.” As the prophets testified, so Christ intended, that through His name, by His saving virtue and power, remission should be received by whosoever should believe in Him—and therefore not by all and each indifferently.

Again Romans 3:22: “The righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference.” Verses 25–26: “Whom God hath set forth a propitiation through faith in His blood... to be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 10:4: “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.”

So too with the Sanctified; Hebrews 10:14: “For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.” By the offering of Christ, the procurement of salvation is perfected—not for all and each generally, but for those who are sanctified. Likewise Hebrews 5:9: “And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” Clearly, faith and sanctification depend upon the procurement itself, and are surely applied to those for whom it was procured; and to them also belong the remission of sins and eternal life.

Together also to the Sanctified and the Faithful; John 17:19–21: “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.” Thus the end and intention of Christ in His offering and intercession manifestly appears, so that it ought not to be extended to all and each indifferently.

3. To the Church; Acts 20:28. “Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He acquired with His own blood.”

To that flock especially the Bishops ought to have attended, and to feed the Church of God; because it was purchased at such a price. Therefore this acquisition through the blood of Christ does not pertain to all and each [person] equally.

Similarly, Eph. 5:25–27: “Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself up for her: That He might sanctify her, ... That He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blame.” As husbands ought to show conjugal love particularly to their wives, so Christ particularly loved the Church; and so He gave Himself up for her, to be cleansed from sins, sanctified, glorified. Surely these things do not apply to all and each man without exception.

4. To the Children of God, both in the Jewish nation and dispersed throughout the whole world; John 11:51–52. Where it is said of Caiaphas: “Being the high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for the nation; and not only for that nation, but also that He might gather together into one the children of God that were scattered abroad.” Christ therefore died for those who by divine appointment were the children of God; however dispersed; and indeed to be gathered into one mystical body.

5. To the Sheep of Christ; John 10:14–16. “I am the good Shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by Mine. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd.” And further, vv. 26–28: “But you do not believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I said to you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: And I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.”

That good Shepherd knows His sheep: He knows who among them they are, and who are otherwise. He is also known by the sheep already gathered, in act; and these hear His voice and follow Him. Others also, who by destination likewise belonged to His sheep, He was also to bring, when He was likewise laying Himself down for them: thus there was to be one flock of all, one mystical Church; and to all consequently He was certainly to give eternal life. But the condition of the goats is altogether different, whom in the Last Judgment He will set on His left, and adjudge to eternal fire, that they may go away into everlasting punishment (Matt. 25:32, 33, 41, 46); and whom He never knew with that knowledge of special benevolence or complacency (Matt. 7:23).

6. Likewise to His People; Matt. 1:21. “You shall call His name Jesus. For He shall save His people from their sins.” Thus He is Jesus, i.e. Savior, with respect to His People, whom He saves from their sins. Compare Eph. 5:23: “Christ is Head of the Church; and He is the one who gives salvation to the Body.” And Titus 2:14: “That great God and our Savior Jesus Christ gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify for Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.” Therefore, those who do not pertain to the mystical body of the Church, to whom Christ does not give salvation, whom He does not free from all iniquity by His death, and whom He does not purify that they may be His peculiar people, zealous of good works—for these Christ did not give Himself unto death: since that most wise and most powerful One does nothing except for an end; nor can He fail of His intention.

7. To those who were given to Christ by the Father; John 17:9, 11, 15–17, 24. “I pray for them: I do not pray for the world, but for them whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. Holy Father, keep them through Your name, whom You have given Me, that they may be one, as We are.—I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from that evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through Your truth: Your word is truth. Father, I will that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory, which You have given Me.” And indeed vv. 1–2, 4, 6–8: “Father, the hour is come; glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You: As You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. I have glorified You on the earth: I have finished the work which You gave Me to do. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world: Yours they were, and You gave them Me; and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever You have given Me are from You. For the words which You gave Me I have given them; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from You, and they have believed that You sent Me.”

Thus Christ expressly restricts His intercession, and that work of salvation which He finished on earth, to those who were given to Him by the Father: that He Himself might give them eternal life; whom He declared not to be of the world; for whom at the same time He requests preservation from that evil one, and consummation in blessed union with Himself; whom at last He pronounces to believe, or to be about to believe, in Him. But these things strongly refute that universality which the Adversaries desire.

8. To those whom God and Christ supremely loved; John 15:13. “Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” 1 John 3:16: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us.” Rom. 5:7–8: “But God commends His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be

saved from wrath through Him.” Rom. 8:34–39: “Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died ... Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress ... For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, etc., shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Thus that delivering up of Christ unto death is an act of supreme love; and so it is restricted to those whom He supremely loved, and whom God willed to reconcile to Himself, that out of sinful enemies they might become friends, be saved from that wrath, and never be separated from that love. But this love is by no means universal; rather, it is proper to the Elect and those to be saved. Such was the intention of God and Christ; and likewise such was the execution. (On John 3:16 see this thesis, §2.)

9. The exclusion of the rest of the world is also clearly set forth, John 17:9. “I pray for them: I do not pray for the world, but for them which You have given Me.” The rest, who are not given to Christ by the Father to be redeemed and saved, are separated from those who were thus given to Him; and are called by the name “world,” by synecdoche: where “world” must be considered as lying wholly in wickedness (1 John 5:19), and insofar as it is to be left in that corruption. Thus Christ denies that He intercedes for the world: but those who are excluded from intercession, to them He does not will salvation to be applied; for intercession denotes before God a representation of such a will. Consequently, also, Christ did not satisfy for that world, nor merit eternal life for it; since such acts involve such an intention or will.

XXVI. The second class is taken from the Consequents; such as Non-condemnation, Salvation, Calling, Deliverance from the bondage of sin, Regeneration, etc. For these follow upon the obtaining of salvation; and therefore Christ did not obtain salvation for them, did not satisfy for them, nor merit eternal life for them, to whom these benefits do not fall.

1. Concerning Non-condemnation, it is clear, Rom. VIII, 33, 34: Who shall bring a charge against the elect of God? God is the one who justifies. Who is he that condemns? Christ is the one who died, indeed rather who also was raised, who also is at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. Therefore no one can bring charges against the elect of God, no one will condemn them; because Christ died for them, and, having been raised from the dead, and exalted to the right hand of God, intercedes for them: for God himself justifies them on this account. But since all unbelievers are condemned, it altogether follows that Christ neither died nor intercedes for them. Indeed, if some were condemned, for whom Christ satisfied the Divine Justice, it would follow that God punished the same sins twice—once in Christ the Surety, and again in these men—which is foreign to Divine Justice. Nay, it would even follow, according to the opinion of the Adversaries, that Christ also died for those who, when he died, were

already damned, and whose souls at that time were tormented in hell, without any hope of liberation; which is most absurd.

2. Concerning Salvation; Rom. V, 8, 9 (see above, Thesis XXV, § 8), and further verse 10: For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son; much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. So great is the efficacy of the death of Christ, such is the power of the reconciliation made by it, that all, for whom he died, and whom he thus reconciled to God, will most certainly be saved by his life. But not all and every one, not unbelievers, are saved by the life of Christ; therefore he did not die for them, nor did he reconcile them to God. Compare John III, 36: He that believes in the Son has eternal life; but he that does not assent to the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God remains upon him. Since unbelievers shall not see the life which believers have, but the wrath of God remains upon them, it follows that Christ did not die for them, nor was the wrath of God appeased for them.

3. Concerning Vocation, it is likewise evident.

The word of reconciliation is not always announced to all and every individual man, without exception; witness both experience and also Scripture. First, in the economy of the Old Testament, Acts 14:16: "In past generations He permitted all the nations to walk in their own ways." Compare above, Tit. XX, de Foedere Evangelii, th. CV 11. Likewise, still in the economy of the New Testament, which, although far broader and extended also to the Gentiles, yet the preaching of the Gospel does not always come to all and every man without exception. Acts 16:6–7: "Having gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word of God in Asia. And when they came to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them." He therefore who does not will that the word of reconciliation be always announced to all and every man, without exception, does not in His death intend the reconciliation of all and every man. The reason for the consequence is this: because faith is from hearing (Romans 10:8, 14, 17); and the preaching of the Gospel is the ministry and ordinary means of applying reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:19–20; 1:1, 21). To those, therefore, for whom reconciliation has been obtained by the intention of God and Christ, to them at least it must be announced and offered by the word.

4. Likewise, concerning Liberation from the bondage of sin, Regeneration, Faith, and Sanctification.

For Christ also obtained these benefits, as was proved above, th. XXI. But remission of sins and eternal life are not received except through faith and repentance, which are conferred upon the elect in regeneration, where God makes those unwilling to listen willing, removing the heart of stone, giving a heart of flesh, etc. Thus He

Himself removes those things which on our part might otherwise hinder the application of the remission of sins and of eternal life, and with His omnipotent grace overcomes every obstacle. Furthermore, those benefits certainly befall all to whom they were obtained; but by no means do they befall all and every man without exception. Therefore, Christ did not obtain them for all and every man, and consequently neither remission of sins nor eternal life, on account of the indissoluble connection of saving benefits among themselves. See also above, th. XXV, §2.

XXVII. The third class of arguments we derive from those passages of Holy Scripture which treat of Election, and which teach that certain definite men, not all and every individual, are destined by the eternal counsel of God to eternal life and to the means leading thereto. Those arguments we produced above in the Title De Decreto Dei, Disputation XXI, th. XXX. From which it altogether follows that the intention of God, when He delivered Christ unto death, was not to reconcile all and every man to Himself through it, and so eternally to save them, but those certain persons by name whom He chose unto salvation and the means of salvation; nor did God deliver to Christ all and every man to be redeemed, but only the elect; and consequently Christ received to redeem and save those by name, and them alone, and had this, and no other, intention in obtaining salvation.

XXVIII. The fourth class, finally, is taken from consideration of the New Covenant; to whose internal, mystical, and saving communion, by the intention of God and of Christ the Mediator, not all and every man belong, but only the elect, the called, the faithful. This is proved above, Tit. XI, th. VI, VII. If, therefore, God by His eternal decree willed to admit only them into the communion of the New Covenant, and so indeed admits them, and Christ, the Mediator and Sponsor of that Covenant, has no other intention: it follows likewise that this alone was the intention of God and of Christ in obtaining salvation; not, however, to liberate and save all and every man without exception.

XXIX. The sources of solutions for refuting the objections of the adversaries are these:

1. God is said to have so loved the world (John 3:16) that He gave His only-begotten Son for this end, that believers in Him should have eternal life; a synecdochic expression, inasmuch as the part is contained in the whole. See above, th. XXV, §2. Similarly, John 1:29: "He takes away the sin of the world." And also 1 John 2:2: "He is the propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world"—inasmuch as He expiated not only the sins of the believing Jews, but also the sins of the rest of the believers of the whole world, of all times. The denomination is made from the greater; and this is diligently to be noted in the appellation "world," where sometimes the excellency of dignity is regarded, so that

the universality of the elect and the faithful must be understood. Thus Romans 11:12, concerning the Jews: "If their trespass means riches for the world, and their failure means riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!" where "world" undoubtedly denotes the universality of the elect from the Gentiles. So "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing to them their trespasses" (2 Cor. 5:19); which certainly does not apply to all and every man without exception, but to the elect alone. Sometimes, however, the excellency of number or multitude is regarded, and by "world" is understood the universality of the reprobate, as the "world of the ungodly" is called (2 Peter 2:5), whose prince is Satan (John 12:31). Thus John 14:17: "That Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you." And John 17:9: "I do not pray for the world, but for those whom You have given Me." 1 John 5:19: "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies in the wicked one."

2. Likewise, mention of "all" is sometimes made: 1 Tim. 2:6: "Who gave Himself as a ransom for all." Heb. 2:9: "That by the grace of God He might taste death for all." Rom. 5:18: "As through one trespass judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so also through one act of righteousness the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." Rom. 11:32: "God has consigned all to disobedience, that He may have mercy on all." 1 Cor. 15:22: "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." Where the term "all" must be taken distributively for kinds of individuals, not for individuals of every kind; as in Matthew 4:23: "Jesus went throughout all Galilee, healing every disease and every sickness among the people," where every kind of disease is to be understood. See also Matt. 12:32 concerning every sin being forgiven, except that against the Holy Spirit; and similar examples. Thus the universality of the elect, the faithful, the Christians, is regarded in those passages. For it is most certain that not all and every man without exception will be made alive by Christ in the blessed resurrection. Thus are mutually opposed the universality of Adam and the universality of Christ. And so also 2 Cor. 5:14-18: "The love of Christ constrains us, that we judge this, that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again for them. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. And all this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ." The same universality is expressed, and at the same time restrictions are sufficiently clearly indicated. Compare also the similar mention of "all families," "all nations," "all the ends of the earth," "all flesh," etc. (Gen. 12:3; 18:18; 22:18, with Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8; also Ps. 2:8; 22:28; Isa. 11:2; Joel 2:28 with Acts 2:17; Rev. 5:9; 7:9).

3. 2 Peter 2:1: False teachers are said to arise, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing upon themselves swift destruction. But the Lord is not said to have purchased those false teachers with His blood unto salvation, and so to have died for them; rather the

acquisition and obligation of them is to be understood in respect to the ministry to be rendered to Christ, through various benefits and gifts conferred upon them, yet not saving ones.

4. Similarly concerning those who sin against the Holy Spirit, Heb. 6:6, “that they crucify again for themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.” Christ indeed was once crucified for His elect and exposed to shame; but such men, as far as lies in themselves, crucify Christ again for themselves and expose Him to the mockery of the enemies of truth, to their own destruction; by no means unto their salvation, which Christ never intended. Likewise Heb. 10:28–29: “How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who trampled underfoot the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace?” For such men, as far as lies in themselves, trample underfoot the Son of God; they count as profane that most holy blood of the covenant, by which either Christ Himself was sanctified (John 17:19), or the covenant was sanctified (i.e. solemnly confirmed), or even they themselves were sanctified externally, inasmuch as they were called (though not savingly) and admitted also to the outward communion of the Church, and made partakers of various gifts therein, though not saving ones—as the washed sow (2 Pet. 2:21–22). Thus also they outrage the Spirit of grace, the Author of saving grace in others, and also of certain gifts of grace (though not saving) in themselves.

5. Truly also our Catechism asserts, Question 37, that Christ bore the wrath of God against the sin of the whole human race, in body and soul. For the wrath which Christ bore was against the sin of the whole human race, since we too were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest (Eph. 2:3). But it does not assert that Christ bore the wrath of God for the whole human race; for the sin of the whole human race indifferently; nor with that intention, that He should redeem the whole human race, or all and every man without exception. Rather it expresses the intention and end of Christ thus: that by His passion, as the one propitiatory sacrifice, He might deliver our body and soul from eternal damnation, and might acquire for us the grace of God, righteousness, and eternal life.

XXX.

Disputation IV, and last. On Tit. XIII

It has been proved and defended that Christ did not obtain salvation for all and every individual man. The adversaries rise up against this truth in more than one way; and turn themselves into various forms, after they have undertaken the patronage of the reprobate and the damned against God and Christ.

There have been some who urged Universal Redemption; as though there were a restitution of all and each into that state from which they fell in Adam; so that henceforth men should be damned only on account of their own unbelief and impenitence, as if on account of a relapse. But Christ is the Mediator and Surety of the New Covenant, which has other and better promises, as was shown above: and both the Satisfaction of Christ for all our guilt, and also His Merit, look to another end.

Some contend that God and Christ on their part intended the salvation of all and every man, and thus procured it sufficiently, although not effectually: because application is made only to the faithful and penitent; but the rest are rendered inexcusable. Yet neither is that conception worthy of the intention of God and Christ, nor is it agreeable to the efficacy of the salvation obtained.

The Remonstrants urge in some places that Christ died for all and every man: and indeed in such a way that for all He obtained by the death of the cross reconciliation and remission of sins; yet on this condition, that no one enjoys that remission of sins except the believing man. Elsewhere, that Christ obtained this: that God could and would do good to us, under such law and condition as He might see fit: and that that impetration by its own nature could be stable, firm, and certain; even if it were applied to no one; or, through the intervening unbelief of all, might become void. Or again: that Christ by His Satisfaction acquired for the Father the right and will of entering into a new Covenant with men, under whatever condition, whether of works or of faith: but that the Father preferred the condition of faith, yet in such a way that its fulfillment depends upon the free will of man. The absurdity of those fabrications is sufficiently clear from what has been set forth above.