

Rutherford's *Examination of Arminianism*:

The Tables of Contents with
Excerpts from Every Chapter

Introduced & Translated by

Charles Johnson

&

Travis Fentiman

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In Honor of, and as a Gift to

Rev. Robert D. McCurley

of the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing)

“They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.
He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed,
shall doubtless come again with rejoicing,
bringing his sheaves with him.”

Ps. 126:5-6

Introduction

Travis Fentiman¹

The closest thing that Samuel Rutherford wrote to a systematic theology was his *Examination of Arminianism* in Latin.² The work's chief purpose though, was quite narrow: to simply refute the errors of Arminianism. How do these two things coincide? Arminians erred on nearly every subject of theology; therefore Rutherford took advantage of the opportunity to survey the whole theological spectrum. This is the chief value of the *Examination*: Rutherford here delves into theological points addressed nowhere else in his writings.

The *Examination* has remained locked up in Latin for nearly four hundred years. The value of here seeing the tables of contents translated into English for the first time, lies in, first, uncovering the scope and contents of the work; and second, in making the work more navigable so that persons might more easily translate further intriguing sections from it. We hope that in encouraging further translations of Rutherford, and possibly someday the whole of the *Examination*, that this gift to Rev. Robert D. McCurley will be invaluable.

The theological lectures that compose the *Examination* likely stem from the very inception of the Second Reformation in Scotland (1638), even from Rutherford's appointment as professor of divinity at St. Andrews in 1639. It is likely³ that these lectures were delivered up

¹ Rev. Travis Fentiman, MDiv., is a probationer in the Free Church of Scotland (Continuing) and resides in Vermont, USA with his dear bride and three children. Charles F. Johnson received a bachelor's degree in linguistics from the University of Illinois.

² The edition we have used, which is online at Google Books, is Samuele Rhetorforte, *Examen Arminianismi, Conscriptum & discipulis dictatum*, ed. Matthia Netheno (Ultrajecti: Ex Officina Antonii Smytegelt, Bibli., 1668).

³ According to Guy M. Richard, *The Supremacy of God in the Theology of Samuel Rutherford* (Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock, 2009) 20-21. See all of chapter 1 for a much more detailed historical introduction to the

until Rutherford's departure into England for the Westminster Assembly in 1643 when the threat of Arminianism appeared to loom large over England and Scotland. The *Examination*, though one of Rutherford's earliest works,⁴ was not published till after his death by his close disciple and friend, Robert MacWard, and the Dutch, reformed theological professor Matthias Nethenus.

In perusing the translation below, one ought not to get hung up on the scholastic form that the *Examination* takes: though unfamiliar to us, it was intended to be helpful rather than distracting. Rutherford's method through the entire book was to take up a series of precise questions on each theological topic, and answer them in a systematic way. The questions themselves are of immense importance as they boil down the controverted issues between the different theological camps to one proposition, affirmed by one side and self-admittedly denied by the other. As Rutherford was for the most part strikingly unoriginal (this writer would claim) in the *content* of most all of his theology, and as he saw himself as nearly always representatively upholding and defending the long established, reformed-catholic⁵ consensus of the post-Reformation era about these points, so the very questions and answers that Rutherford poses are immensely valuable in bringing to light the exact detailed theological points that Reformed Orthodoxy held to and affirmed in her classical era from a better day.

In every section of the work, Rutherford first states the theological question and concisely answers it affirmatively or negatively. Sometimes these questions are previously prefaced with the introduction of a Scripture text which may give rise to the question or may help in part to answer it. Next the question and its parts are clarified and contextualized (defining the 'state of

Examination. Richard's published dissertation survey's the first half of the content of the *Examination*, specifically on prolegomena, God and soteriology.

⁴ Only his catechism and some of his letters and sermons coming earlier.

⁵ Meaning 'universal', as Scriptural theology is the most universal Christian theology, recognized by all people in all times that love the Word of God as it stands pure.

the question') so that the issued answer hits its target, being rightly qualified. Rutherford then gives a numbered list of Scriptural and theological reasons for the reformed position.

Rutherford's discussion is sometimes concise, only giving a handful or less of such reasons.

Why would he be content with this? Rutherford lived in an era that emphasized truth and theological objectivity. If the few arguments given are valid, establishing the truth of the position and overturning the contrary, nothing more need be said. However, not uncommonly, Rutherford gives a thorough treatment of the topic with a dozen or more reasons, twenty being about the most. Hence the *Examination* is virtually a book-long collection of mini, theological disputations. This method facilitated clarity and depth into the minutia of our Lord's revealed theology that cannot be found in the modern generas of theology today.

The chief value of the *Examination*, though, does not lie in its historical import or its scholastic form, but rather in that its deep, Scriptural and timeless teaching about our eternal God is priceless. As the reformed divines of the sixteen hundreds seemed to have treated every conceivable theological topic in vastly greater depth and Scriptural detail than any other era of Church history, it is hoped that a reviving of such an older treasure as this will help to greatly inform our relative, theological ignorance.

The translation philosophy here used is that of formal equivalence. The infrequent times that a "literal" translation of the Latin diction has been departed from has only been where the English language has demanded it. In smoothing out the English, accuracy is almost always lost; on the contrary, we have thought faithfulness to be of greater value and have sought to preserve something of Rutherford's clear, succinct and precise Latin style.

For the sake of comprehensiveness, the two sections of the *Examination* translated by Rev. McCurley⁶ have been included below. The work here cannot repay the debt of grace this writer owes to his greatly esteemed pastor. With much affection these two mites are dedicated to him whose love and zeal for the God and Christ of Samuel Rutherford bears much fruit.

“But the Plant of Renown, the Man whose name is the Branch,
will bud forth again and blossom as the rose,
and there shall be fair white flourishes again,
with most pleasant fruits, upon that tree of life.

A fair season may He have! Grace, grace be upon that blessed and beautiful tree!
under whose shadow we shall sit and His fruit shall be sweet to our taste.”

Rutherford

Letter 50, *Letters*⁷

⁶ Ch. 10, ‘Whether the Covenant of Grace is eternal?’ & Ch. 14, ‘Whether we ought to be certain about our election?’ from Robert McCurley, ‘Samuel Rutherford: a Translation,’ *The Master’s Trumpet*, vol. 6 (Winter, 2018), 39-43.

⁷ (Banner of Truth, 2006) 122.

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⁸ “After the death of Jacobus Arminius (d. 1609), a group of his Dutch Protestant followers, led by Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), submitted a remonstrance in 1610, outlining their objections to Calvinist doctrine under five articles. In 1618, the Synod of Dordrecht refuted these errors and confirmed the biblical truths codified in the Belgic Confession and Heidelberg Catechism.” McCurley, “Rutherford: A Translation,” 40.

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⁹ Vorstius (1569-1622) was a German-Dutch, Remonstrant theologian, and successor to Jacobus Arminius in the theology chair at Leiden.

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10. Whether Christ thus endured the lot of those for whom He died in order that God would consider the punishments owed to them as dead? We affirm against the Remonstrants. 406
11. Whether Christ intercedes generally for all, but specially and truly only for those who believe? We deny against the Remonstrants. 411
12. Whether Christ merited faith and regeneration for none? We deny against the Remonstrants. 413
13. Whether Christ embraced those He died for with the greatest love? We affirm against the Remonstrants. 415
14. Whether reconciliation is by the active efficiency of God's will to save in place of a will to damn? We deny against the Remonstrants. 417
15. Whether the foundation of Christian certainty is in this, that Christ died for all, and of desperation rather, that He died only for those elected absolutely? We deny against the Remonstrants. 418

- * 16. [Whether the reprobate are made reconcilable to God by the death of Christ?](#) We deny against the Remonstrants. [The Arminians simply affirm it. We distinguish...]¹⁰ 421
- * 17. [Whether each and every truly reprobate person must believe Christ to have died for them?](#) We deny against the Remonstrants. 422
- * 18. [Whether it may be required from reprobates by \[divine\] law that they believe in Christ?](#) We affirm against [what] the Remonstrants [say of our position]. 424
- 19. [Whether none can rest in Christ in faith, except that he first know that He was given by God to him as a savior?](#) We deny against the Remonstrants. 425

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- 1. [Whether God, of his free good pleasure alone, entered into a Covenant of Grace with man?](#) We affirm against the Remonstrants. 427
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¹⁰ p. 421

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- * 5. [Whether the Covenant of Grace is eternal?](#) We affirm against the Remonstrants. 438
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- * 8. [Whether the Covenant of Works entered into with Adam was rigid and of such a sort that God, according to its rigor, could not carry it out on his posterity?](#) We deny against the Remonstrants. 449
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- * 7. Whether because God converts with irresistible force, the will is therefore coerced and freedom overturned? We deny against the Remonstrants. 486
- * Whether because God infallibly determines the will to one thing, He overturns liberty? 486
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9. Whether the efficacy of grace and of conversion (rather than non-conversion) depends upon actual, determining grace? We affirm against the Remonstrants. 488
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1. Whether we are justified by faith alone, not by our works? We affirm against the Jesuits and Remonstrants. 498
2. Whether God justly imputes the righteousness of Christ to us? We affirm against the Remonstrants, Papists, and Socinians. 506
- * 3. [Whether the act of believing is imputed to the believer properly, so that it is therefore his righteousness formally before God?](#) We deny against the Remonstrants and Jesuits. 510
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- * 10. Whether good works are necessary as causes of justification, and therefore also of salvation? We deny against the Remonstrants and Papists. 530
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12. Whether faith only justifies as an instrument? We affirm against the Remonstrants. 540
13. Whether faith is a token of special mercy? We affirm against the Remonstrants. 542
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of God, election, and the care and power of God, can so fall away that (i) they part with all right unto the kingdom of God that they once had in Christ, (ii) fall away from the favor and grace of a gratuitous election, and (iii) totally and finally fall away? We deny against the Papists, Pseudo-Lutherans, Socinians, and Remonstrants. 553

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3. * Whether it is hypocritical that those possessing temporary faith cannot be said to fall away? We deny with a distinction against the Remonstrants. 568

4. Whether, because exhortations by their nature serve to engender fear, the purpose of the promise, by which God absolutely promises perseverance, is therefore extinguished? We deny against the Remonstrants. 579

5. Whether they cannot be moved to obedience by the promise of eternal life who are certainly comprehended in it? We deny against the Remonstrants. 591

6. Whether God promises perseverance absolutely? We affirm against the Remonstrants. 594

7. Whether Christ elected none to perseverance? We deny against the Remonstrants. 596

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14. Whether we teach that true believers not only do not cast off the Holy Spirit and faith by the most severe sins, but that the abiding principle of faith in these persons remains safe under those sins, it being so pleasing to God that, due to it, God wills to grant eternal life? We deny against the Remonstrants. 617
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- * 3. [Whether the Arminians rightly deny there to be any certainty of our salvation?](#) We deny against the same. 638
- * 4. [Whether or not a greater certainty is required by us than that which the nature of a free act itself bears?](#) We affirm against the Remonstrants. 640

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3. Whether the Remonstrants rightly teach that to be the true Church which agrees in the faith and profession of necessary truth? We deny according to their own principles. 644
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- * 5. [Whether the doctrine of the marks of the Church is useless and harmful?](#) We deny against the Remonstrants. 670
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- * 1. [Whether all the divine things of the apostles were to be proven to be inspired by the rule of the Word?](#) We deny with a distinction against the Remonstrants. 681
- 2. Whether the sending of ministers by the calling and ordination of the Church is still necessary by divine institution? We affirm against the Remonstrants. 684
- 3. Whether the ministry of the gospel and the preaching of the Word are precisely necessary for salvation? We affirm with an explanation against the Remonstrants. 686
- 4. Whether it is well spoken that the distinction in presbyters between teaching and ruling [presbyters] is an innovation? We deny against the Remonstrants. 689

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- 1. Respecting synods, how much is to be attributed to the authority of them? Explained and proven against the Papists, Remonstrants, and Separatists. 692
- 2. Whether synods are neither useful, nor the ideal way for controversies to be decided? We deny against the Remonstrants and Socinians. 710
- * 3. [Whether they must be wholly indifferent and not restrained to any party who have the right of voting in a synod?](#) We deny against the Remonstrants. 714

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On the Sacraments and Ecclesiastical Discipline

1. Whether sacraments are signs, not [only] by way of representing and shadowing forth the thing signified to us, but also in a certain way by exhibiting and sealing? We affirm against the Remonstrants and Socinians. 716
2. Whether sacraments may be administered by any lay-person whatsoever? We deny against the Remonstrants and Socinians. 721
3. Whether the Remonstrants rightly teach that paedobaptism is to be used by them insofar as it is an ancient rite, yet it has authority neither from a precept of Christ nor as an apostolic institution? We deny against the same. 722
4. Whether baptism is only a temporary rite and not to last till the end of the world from Christ's institution? We deny against the Remonstrants and Socinians. 723
- * 5. Whether baptism is only a solemn rite by which we are distinguished from others and brought into divine worship, and not rather by which grace is really conferred? We deny against the Remonstrants and Socinians. 724
- * 6. Whether, in the Lord's Supper, the death of Christ is only proclaimed and commemorated, and no spiritual gifts are actually sealed? We deny against the Remonstrants and Socinians. 725
7. Whether the Remonstrants rightly deny that the Church wields any power whatsoever in the act of discipline, not only not over the flesh (such as the magistrate wields), but neither that which is internal and ecclesiastical, by which the Church binds the conscience to the thing before God and excludes one from the kingdom of heaven on account of guilt? We deny against the same. 726

Chapter 19

On the Magistrate¹¹

1. Whether it is lawful for the magistrate to afflict the dissolute and murderers with capital punishment? We affirm against the Remonstrants and Socinians. 728

- * 2. Whether it is for the magistrate to punish heretics? Whether it is agreeable to the laws of our most merciful Savior Jesus Christ that the magistrate tolerate Jews, Turks, Papists, etc, and all heretics in the republic who err with a purely mental error? We affirm the former. We deny the latter with a distinction against the Remonstrants. 732

3. Whether none errs in doing works, nor persuades himself to err while he is stirred up on account of his eternal salvation? We deny against the Remonstrants. 737

4. Whether the power of the magistrate is supreme in the external rule of the Church, is in kind higher than Church-power and is immediately subject to God alone? We deny against the Remonstrants. 739

Chapter 20

On the Soul and the Resurrection of the Body

¹¹ The whole of this chapter has been translated by Guy M. Richard in *The Confessional Presbyterian*, vol. 4 (2008) 270-276.

* 1. [Whether souls are immortal?](#) We affirm against the doubting Remonstrants and Socinians.

[753](#)

2. Whether the same number of bodies are to resurrect as are dissolved into dust? We affirm against the Remonstrants and Socinians.

[753](#)

3. It is asked whether the hellish tortures of the damned are eternal, or whether at last in the end it will be that the impious at length will be wholly destroyed and will be reduced to nothing? The Remonstrants waver. We deny the latter.

[758](#)

Chapter 1

On the Scriptures and Fundamental Articles

Jn. 5:39

“Search the Scriptures; they are they which testify of me.”¹²

The Judge of Controversies¹³

pp. 1-4

It is asked whether Scripture (or the Holy Spirit speaking in the Scriptures) is the judge of controversies? Or whether God in his Word leaves to us no rule morally binding consciences, but rather only a rule judging directively?

The Remonstrants (*Apology*, ch. 7, folio 3) say, “The Scriptures cannot be a judge, as the law and a judge are distinct, whereby a lawsuit is of the sense of the law.” The Papists make the church to be the decisive and infallible judge of Scripture, the sense of Scripture, and of all controversies of faith. The Arminians counter that they indeed do not want it to be a ministerial judge or any ministerially furnished, binding authority, but a mere guideline, and guiding in such a way that whatever senses the Scriptures suggests for itself, he therefore does not sin who embraces a heterodox sense. From this, they deny that there is any infallible judgment of the

¹² The Latin Scripture quotations which Rutherford used, according to Rev. McCurley, were from the broadly popular translation amongst protestants of the Old Testament by Immanuel Tremellius’ (1510-1580) and the likewise popular translation of the New Testament by Theodore Beza (1519-1605). McCurley, “Rutherford: A Translation,” 41-42.

¹³ These summary subheadings are not original, but have been supplied by the translators.

church, even if it judges according to the Scriptures; and they teach that either the very phrase of Scripture, or the arguments drawn by our labor from the Scriptures, are only a guiding-judging rule, only to such an extent as from them each one is able to form their own judgment on matters of salvation, so that the most certain rule having been left to us from God is so limited that any person which does not assent to them is not able to be compelled by any other infallible judgment or undoubted rule.

But we teach that the Scriptures are sufficient for binding determinations of controversies.

1. Because Christ directs to the Scriptures, Jn. 5:39, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” Likewise Jn. 5:47, “But if ye believe not the writings of Moses, how shall ye believe my words?” Paul directs to Moses and the Prophets in controversies with the Jews (Acts 24:14-15 & 26:22).

2. Because the conscience perpetually waivers, one would not have anything upon which to stand, if the Scripture be not the end of controversies.

3. Because the Scripture is “a lamp to the feet and a light to the paths” (Ps. 119:105).

4. Because if Scripture were mere law, and nothing more, law and judge would necessarily be divided. But, because Scripture is a rule for judgement, and has the Holy Spirit joined to it at the same time, who, for men which the gospel is not a shelter, decides their case and resoundingly convicts, for this reason it is not necessary that the Law and the Judge be distinct like a human law and earthly judge.

5. It is absurd that the judgment of the Church judging according to the Scriptures would not be the rule of controversies, for this is to deny God and the Holy Spirit speaking from the

Scriptures, which the Church as a minister holds forth; for if it could not decide controversies of the faith as a ministerial judge, then it would relinquish all persons to doubtings.

6. If no bindingly-judging rule is left to us in the forum of the conscience, but only one guiding, and men are left to the private judgment of their consciences, there would be nothing grasped by the conscience to believe the Scriptures, and rather, all believers would abide in conjectures and private delusions.

7. If it were so, none would sin in wresting the Scriptures to their own destruction, which is nevertheless said to be done by many (2 Pet. 3:16). For who sins by wresting the law if it is minimally binding to the conscience? Therefore, if the Scripture does not compel men to receive the true sense which was intended by the Holy Spirit, he does not act against a binding obligation who attributes a false and erroneous sense to it; and because of this, he does not sin who, destitute of truth, twists the Scripture.

On Authorized & Non-Authorized Worship

p. 100-103, 105

They reply:¹⁴ 1. This argument [of Rutherford's against worship not instituted in Scripture] holds for worship which has a necessity from the opinion of the one worshipping, as in the case of the high places of Baal and the calves of Jeroboam, but surely not for adjuncts

¹⁴ Rutherford had previously argued that all human inventions are not lawful in worship because they are not from the authority of Scripture, "as it is written". 2 Tim. 3:16-17 is the topical text for this section. 'They' refers to the Arminians. 'This argument' refers essentially to the Regulative Principle of Worship, though it was not known by that name at the time of Rutherford.

[*accidentario*] in worship, such as the sign of the cross and the surplice,¹⁵ which are by no necessity, nor by any opinion of being necessary in worship, but we only have them in the place of divine worship as indifferent ornaments; consciences, of course, are not obliged unto them.¹⁶

We respond: 1. The argument of God in the Scriptures is not from the adjunct of worship, or from necessity, but from the efficient of worship. Thus, this is truly without a binding efficiency from God as the author; therefore it is unlawful. Scripture does not say: This does not have God for the author and it binds the conscience for worship; therefore it is unlawful. Therefore this strongly confirms the argument of the Holy Spirit, which He presses, that the will of the Legislator is the formal, legal rule in all which is commanded: so the reason why it was unlawful to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge was the prohibiting will of God; and the reason why Abraham was able, by right, to sacrifice Isaac, was the commanding will of God. And if God had ordered to eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, it would have had been lawful. Whatever be our opinion of the necessity or the indifference of the thing commanded, it is only the will of God ordering that makes a thing lawful, and prohibiting that makes that thing unlawful.

2. Because there would be vain inferences reflecting on God, such as: A calf is not from God; therefore it is unlawful. The feast day of Jeroboam is not from God, but from the heart of Jeroboam [1 Kings 12:32-33]; therefore it is unlawful. But if the calf and that day of feasting had been held to be things indifferent¹⁷ [by the people], and so things not obliging the

¹⁵ A spiritually symbolic white robe originally used in Romanism during the Middle Ages, specifically in the worship of the mass, which some protestant communities retained under the notion of it being indifferent.

¹⁶ This is similar to the common philosophy of worship today that holds that what Scripture obliges to is to be done in worship, though other religiously significant things are also done in worship (as worship to God) which one is thought to have liberty for (God being pleased with such voluntary worship); yet such things are said not to be bound on persons' consciences as necessary. Therefore such things are allowed and cannot be harmful when done to edification.

¹⁷ *adiaphori*

conscience, they would have been lawful. But thus the ark of the Covenant, circumcision, sacrifices, abstinence from certain foods and all the Mosaic worship would be lawful under the New Testament if only it were used as worship not obliging the conscience.

3. Nor was Jeroboam's instituting the worship of the calf believed to be binding upon consciences, as it was only a preserving of the king.¹⁸ Notwithstanding, Jeroboam's worshipping the calves was idolatry and his calves resulted in them erring from God commanding. Yet it would have [likely] been allowed to think the worship of them not to be from a religious necessity, but only from a political necessity.¹⁹

Objection 2. It is sufficient that the ceremonies are conformed to the Word of God in general [*in genere*]; thus they are therefore allowed. It is not required, however, that they are in the Word of God in particular.²⁰ This supposition is sufficient: if they are all orderly and decent [1 Cor. 14:40]. Therefore, ceremonies are lawful.

¹⁸ Jeroboam set up the calf worship as another option for the people, and encouraged it (1 Kings 12:28-29), but it is never said that he mandated the people to worship the calves; rather, the people did so of their own accord (1 Kings 12:30). Even when Jeroboam 'ordained' his own devised feast, it is clear that he ordered special sacrifices by the for the occasion through the newly made priests, but the passage is silent as to any compulsion upon the people to come to this feast (1 Kings 12:32-33).

¹⁹ Jeroboam's chief concern was political; and he wanted to preserve the worship of YHWH and Israel's religion, only in a distinctive way suited to his interests.

²⁰ The main difference between the Regulative Principle of Worship as commonly understood today and the Regulative Principle of Worship as commonly held by the Scottish and English puritans of the Post-Reformation era is that the former holds that a general and loose warrant is all that is needed for authorized worship from God's Word, whereas the latter held that a close, particular and necessary warrant is all that could warrant something to be authorized worship from God's Word. For instance, it is common to hear that musical instruments are authorized for Christian worship because they are commanded to be used in the Psalms. However, the minor proposition, namely that everything commanded in the Psalms are to be used in Christian worship, is missing. If that premise held true it would mean that incense, vestments, sacrifices, the sprinkling of blood with hyssop, and the use of a tabernacle and temple in Christian worship were also lawful. If such a syllogism could yet be made valid for musical instruments in Christian worship, as Rutherford says, we desire to hear it. The same goes for many other things that people find in the Bible and thus would place in worship, such as creeds, responsive readings, choirs, vestments, crosses, religious imagery in the place of worship, man-composed worship songs, unison prayers, processions, drama, dancing, offerings, holy days apart from the Lord's Day, using the steps of a stage as an altar, etc. We find other things in the Bible and the Psalms as well, such as persons sleeping, going to war, eating, working, and yet Scriptural principles about worship clearly exclude these things from being worship to God in any immediate and direct sense. Rutherford's following argument, that the worship of the Devil would be therefore

We respond: If fundamentally the general thing is in the Word, yet they recognize the major proposition [of a syllogism] in the Word without the assumption [minor proposition],²¹ then I will demonstrate thus that to worship the Devil has been allowed: All worship from God in his Word that has been commanded is lawful. Yet the worship of the Devil is worship from God in his Word that has been commanded [Mt. 4:9]. Therefore it is lawful. The major proposition is most certain, but for the minor proposition, I am not able to respond.²²

If truly ceremonies are so conformed to the Word of God, they say nothing, because thus the worship of the Devil is conformed to the Word of God. If ceremonies are truly conformed to the Word of God, having their major and minor propositions in the Word of God, O how we demand to hear such a syllogism! But such a syllogism is the town in the orbit of the moon and a hircocervus.²³

2. If truly each foundation of the ceremonies is in this consequence: “All are decent and orderly; therefore the surplice, the sign of the cross, days of feasting, etc. have been allowed,” this consequence is able to be proved from the Word of God, or not. If the former, we request to hear the proof. If the consequence is truly able to be proved according to natural light,²⁴ then it may yet be proved from the Word of God because the light of reason is contained in the Word of God as a part is in the whole, and so to this extent the Word of God will prove the consequence. If

lawful, was likely intended to be extreme for the sake of argument, yet the general argument applies broadly to much of the contemporary, traditional and liturgical worship in reformed churches today.

²¹ A logical syllogism is composed of a major proposition, a minor proposition and a conclusion. The major proposition is a general truth. The minor proposition is more detailed to the specifics. Taken together the conclusion ought to follow as necessary.

²² The erroneous syllogism hinges on an ambiguity in the major proposition, namely, whether the command is from God in his Word, or whether, because the Word is from God, any worship in the Word is therefore lawful.

²³ A legendary animal that was half-goat and half-deer.

²⁴ It is often put forward in our day that it is allowable for many things with a religious significance to be used in worship (which are not particularly warranted in the Word) as there are natural human reasons for them as long as they are used for edification and are done decently and fittingly.

truly the consequence is proved through natural reason which is not in the Word of God, we desire to hear such an invincible demonstration!

If truly the consequence is made good only by the will of governors, then this consequence will be valid: All such things are orderly and decent; therefore, let the calf of Aaron be made and openly worshiped, for worship in such a visible way²⁵ is by [the will of] the governors. A good consequence is one which stands indivisible: then it is a good consequence or not a good consequence. This consequence, however, where the truth has been mixed, depending partly on reason and partly on the will of men, is nothing.

But the Adversaries say: Your circumstances are not as well approved in the Word of God as our ceremonies; therefore I add:

2. Of whatever action according to the specific, moral difference,²⁶ it is able to be said, “according as it is written,” that is determined in the Word, expressly or by good consequence, though all circumstances of place, time and person are not expressly in the Word. But of all our moral actions which are lawful, including those of faith and of morals, or of the First or Second

²⁵ *modo*, or ‘form’. Contemporary thought on the Regulative Principle of Worship which holds that while the elements of worship are regulated, yet the form they may take is left open, has missed that the Scottish and English puritans, in deriving their worship from God’s Word, did not allow (any more than Scripture does) complete liberty with respect to the ‘form’ or ‘mode’ of worship. Many reformed pastors believe that they are allowed great discretion and liberty in choosing the forms of things in a worship liturgy (such things not being particularly warranted in God’s Word).

²⁶ Rutherford is making the very important distinction that the Word does not simply bind certain material actions, but it may bind moral aspects of certain actions, whereas the other aspects of those actions may be indifferent and variable. For instance, in worship, Christ has bound that a cup be used in the Lord’s Supper (as this is spiritually significant according to the Word). However, the size of the cup, the material it is made of, the shape of it, and other factors, are left indifferent as long as a suitable cup fulfilling the other morally required aspects of the Lord’s Supper is used. To give a few more examples, God’s word morally regulates the content of worship song, whereas it does not so strictly regulate the content of prayer or preaching. Scripture tells to sing praise to God. That moral obligation is fulfilled if one (1) sings, (2) praise (in consistency with further teachings of Scripture) (3) to God, though the tune, meter (or lack thereof), speed, circumstances and other factors may be variable (though these things ought to be in harmony with the light of nature as suited to the Psalms and the singing thereof).

Tables, it is able to be said, “as it is written,”²⁷ though the circumstances are not expressly in the Word. Therefore, all our moral actions are determined in the Word, though the circumstances of them are not in the Word.²⁸

* * *

But truly of all our actions worshipping God, of preaching, singing psalms, praying, the reading [of Scripture], administering the sacraments,²⁹ it is able to be said that they are according to the Word of God written; of ceremonial actions,³⁰ this truly cannot be said.

²⁷ Rutherford is deriving the Regulative Principle of Worship from the sufficiency of Scripture as a standard for all moral and spiritual actions, which all protestant communities at the Reformation held to, contra Rome. The necessary connection, which he assumes, and which makes the syllogism valid, is that all actions of worship are moral and spiritual. Therefore, by 2 Tim. 3:16 (which Rutherford uses as the main text for this section), worship actions are regulated by Scripture. The reason why we have significant liberty in the Christian life to do this or that, is because, in living unto God and fulfilling his moral law, there is much that is left unto our choice as indifferent in our daily lives, we thus being able to pick between such indifferent actions while fulfilling that which is moral. In worship, the regulations are drawn much closer by Scripture, and hence one’s liberty is much more limited, only holding with respect to truly indifferent and circumstantial matters.

²⁸ Rutherford goes on to prove the propositions of this syllogism in some detail before answering numerous objections to it for the rest of the section.

²⁹ Rutherford here names only the ordinary elements of worship which would shortly thereafter be codified in the list found in Westminster Confession (WCF), 21.3-5. Rutherford did not believe that a call to worship was an element of worship: “And as touching things of prudence, they are things properly mixed, as... how the worship shall be ordered, whether you should begin the worship with a word of prayer, or a word of praising, or a word of exhorting to stir up for the duty of the day is a matter of prudence; and because God hath not laid the band of a precept on us, to begin with either of the three; therefore it would seem that though the things themselves be moral, and must be warranted by a Word of God; yet the order is not moral, but prudential, and so cannot fall under a command of the Church; for to me it is hard that men and the Church should lay on a tie or bond of a precept where God hath laid on no such bond;” Samuel Rutherford, *The Divine Right of Church-Government and Excommunication...* (London: John Field for Christopher Meredith, 1646) 6. The traditional Scottish understanding and practice in that era was that the call to worship was a human exhortation by the pastor, normally being the sentence, “Let us worship God.” That this was also the understanding of Westminster, see ‘Of the Assembling of the Congregation...’ in Westminster’s *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. Rutherford also did not believe that the benediction was a distinct element of worship. Rather, he considered it to be a prayer: “Blessing of the Church at their dismissal is nothing but a prayer of the whole Church (the minister being [the] mouth) who blesses all...” Samuel Rutherford, *The due right of presbyteries...* (London: E. Griffin, for Richard Whittaker, and Andrew Crook, 1644) part 2, 322. That this is also the view evidenced in numerous places in the Westminster standards, see Travis Fentiman, ‘[The Benediction is a Special Prayer, per Scripture and Westminster,](#)’

<https://reformedbooksonline.com/the-benediction-is-a-prayer-per-scripture-and-westminster/> Accessed 7-16-2019.

³⁰ The term ‘ceremonies’ may not seem widely applicable by some to modern worship (and especially reformed worship). However, the extensive applicability of the issues surrounding ‘ceremonies’ to our modern day is seen in how they were defined by the puritans, namely in that ‘ceremonies’ included all aspects about worship which: (1) had a religious significance not particularly authorized by God’s Word, (2) had any use in worship that went beyond their natural, indifferent, civil use, and, (3) even if a religious significance was denied to them, they included all actions and things which had a positive appointment or significance not inherent to those actions or things. When

Chapter 2

On God

Whether the Son is Autotheos?

pp. 149-150

It is asked whether the Son is autotheos, both from Himself and of Himself God? Arminius, in his Declaration (pp. 124-125), denies that He is autotheos, either as Son or as God; for there is not any diverse respect in which the essence of God may be said to be communicated to the Son, for these things are contradictory; and he criticizes Dr. Trelcatius the younger in that he calls the Son, as God, autotheos, because thuswise, the Father would differ from the Son in name only (which Sabellius asserted) and we would fall into Tritheism: for in this way there would be three Gods that at once and concomitantly have the divine essence. Thus also Vorstius in Apology, 4, p. 46. Impius John Geisteranus said in his confession, “in time the Son accepted deity from the Father;” thus also Socinius in his Theological Lectures (folios 106-107), who denies Him to be true God (ch. 18). We, against this, state:

all of these are removed from worship, one is simply left with the unadorned, simple, bare and bold, spiritual worship that God has left to us in his Word, that He alone might have the glory, untouched by the wisdom of man (Ex. 20:25).

1. Christ to be God truly and substantially. Isa. 9:6, “He shall be called the mighty God.” Jn. 1:1-3, “The Word was God.” Rom. 9:5; Col. 1:15; 1 Jn. 5:20. Therefore, He is God from his very self and has the divine nature (according to which He is God) from none.
2. If the Son, not only as the Son, but also as God, has His essence communicated from the Father (because communicated essence is distinct from communicating essence) there would therefore be two essences, the communicating and the communicated; and the same is to be said of the Holy Spirit, and thus, there would be three essences, and three deities, and three Gods; and Arminius, not Trelcatius, is a tritheist.
3. If the Son, as God, is not God from his very self, He is not essentially God: for to be God, and to be from another, is to be God and not to be God: for God is by his very essence independent: and the Son in this way would be a lower-order god than the Father. There would be one supreme God and two small gods: the Son and the Holy Spirit.
4. To Arminius it is reverent to feign contradictions in his brain. But if it cannot be said in any diverse respect that essence is communicated to the Son and not communicated to the Son, as Arminius dreams, then in no diverse respect is essence unbegotten in the Father and begotten in the Son, which the Church constantly taught against Sabellius; in no diverse respect is the divine essence incarnate in the Son and not incarnate in the Father; in the Son, personally incarnate; in the Father, taken absolutely, unincarnate.

Whether Christ, as a Man, is to be Worshipped?

Heb. 1:6

“And let all the angels of God worship Him.”

It is asked whether Christ, as Man, may be worshipped, and as man is the formal object of worship? The Remonstrants affirm (ch. 16, p. 134). We deny:

1. Because no creature, but God only, is to be worshipped (Dt. 6:13; Mt. 4:10). But the Christ-man, or the humanity of Christ is a creature and worship is properly of the glory of God, insofar as to another besides God it is not to be given (Isa. 42:8).
2. Because the humanity of Christ is not an idol.
3. Because the Arians and Socinians try to snatch away from us that by which we prove Christ to be truly God, even that place, “Let all the angels of God worship Him.” (Heb. 1:6)³¹

If they say there ought to be a lessor worship of his humanity:

Response 1: If this is understood of a worship of religious adoration, as this must so be understood, it is spoken against the Scriptures.³²

³¹ If Christ’s humanity may be worshipped, then Heb. 1:6 may be true and yet Christ not be divine, as per the Arians and Socinians. As the Arians and Socinians have ill motives, their trying to take something away is good grounds for it being true.

³² Because there is only, and can only be, one kind of religious worship, which must be the fullest and highest degree of worshipping the divinity (there being no lesser ground for religious worship). This is in contradistinction to other civil or social kinds of ‘worship’ mentioned in Scripture, such as the honoring of kings, which, when lawfully done, is not a religious worship.

2. It is against the orthodox consensus of the Church, which has taught that Christ is worshipped with the same honor as the Father.
3. If an honor of lesser worship is allowed to come upon the creatures, it throws open all idolatry of images and the angels.
4. Scripture does not know of any honor of religious worship owed to Christ on account of the sole office being placed on Him from the Father, or out of mere grace being conferred to Him due to the Mediatorial office.

Whether Christ, as Mediator, is to be Worshipped?

pp. 159-160

It is asked whether Christ, as Mediator, is to be worshipped? We respond: In what way or to what end? Is it understood reduplicatively or specifically?

‘Reduplicatively’ connotes a formal ground of worship and bespeaks a ground why in every way, only and always He is to be worshipped. Only God, and not only the Mediator, is to be worshipped. Not even the mediatorial glory [*dignitas*] is the formal and adequate ground why the Son is worshipped, because the Father,³³ no less than the Son, is to be worshipped, as also the Holy Spirit is to be worshipped. But ‘specifically’, this term does not bespeak a proper ground

³³ Who does not have the mediatorial glory.

in respect that He ought to be adored in every way, only and always. For even a man, as a man, is flat-nosed, sees, is a land-surveyor, is musical; yet a man is not in every way, only and always flat-nosed, a land-surveyor and laughs.

If therefore, in this question, the specific sense is understood, whether Christ wholly, as Mediator, is to be adored, that is, that divine person that is the Mediator: [then yes,] He is to be worshipped; and indeed even on account of that reason, that He is the Mediator and for our good lifts up, bears and sustains the Mediatorial Office. If truly the sense is accepted reduplicatively, as Mediator, then He is not to be adored, because the mediatorial office is not the proper, formal and adequate ground of adoration. Otherwise neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit would be adored.

pp. 181-185

On God's Revealed Will and Will of Good-Pleasure

Mt. 6:10

“Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Our prayers are means of fulfilling the will of God.

It is asked whether a distinction between the will of good-pleasure [*benepiaciti*, or of decree] and the revealed will [*signi*] is to be admitted according as Arminians deliver it? We respond no, because they, by the will of good-pleasure, mean that God wills to be produced the same things which He wills to be produced by the revealed will; and they [Arminians] will the will of good pleasure to be the same, but hidden, as that which is the revealed will, except that it has been revealed to us. So Arminius (Disputation 4, Thesis 58).

But we teach that the will of good-pleasure is the decree of God: with respect to the good, it will be brought about and produced by a necessary effect; respecting evil, it is permitted to be produced from others. And the revealed will to be of God simple complacency and approbation of the thing, so to speak of morally permitting and of honor, although of that good thing from God, at no time has it been decreed for the future.³⁴

1. On account of that, God greatly wills and approves by the approving will that which He never decrees to be produced by the will of good-pleasure: so He wills the obedience of Judas, Herod and Pilate, and yet He decrees that they would crucify the Lord of Glory, Himself permitting.

2. Because God approves by the revealed will perfect obedience by his Law: but the will of good-pleasure He decrees from eternity so that no one besides Christ would fulfill the Law perfectly.

3. Because many which have broken the Gospel God predicts and approves repentance to them, and yet from eternity He decreed not to give efficacious grace to them, without which they are not able to repent.

³⁴ *futuritio*, by futuration, a thing being made to come to pass.

4. Because God decrees by the will of good pleasure to be produced or not to be produced, it will necessarily be produced or not be produced in its time; and it is the simple will of God, which God is not able not to fulfill, which He wills and decrees to be produced (Mt. 27:35; John 19:36; Mt. 2:1517-18; Jn. 2:22). Yet God greatly approves that good which He never decrees to be produced.

Hence it is false that we place in God contradictory wills: 1. For instance, we do not teach God to [simply] approve that which is decreed from eternity, so that if it happens, that He morally commands, or if it does not happen, that He morally prohibits. 2. Nor do we teach the approving will of God to infer that God has decreed from eternity to make happen that which He approves, lest we posit an obstacle.

Whether God Intends the Salvation of All in the Visible Church?

This is akin, whether in the calling of all in the visible Church is the intention of God that all and every person obey and be saved. The Remonstrants affirm (Articles 2-3, p. 10). We negate:

1. Because God does not fail of his intention, as has been proved. Yet not all obey and are saved.
2. Because infinite wisdom does not intend that which it foreknows will never be effected.

3. Because the Law says to all, “This do and live”, but God does not intend perfect obedience in all mortals; else in this He would intend frustration to redound to the death of Christ.³⁵
4. God greatly promises the Word to this end, that persons would be hardened; so the Scripture says (Isa. 6:9; Mt. 13:14-15); and the adversaries concede this.
5. Because God does not elect all to glory which are in the visible Church; therefore.

Whether God Intends the Obedience of Reprobates in the Gospel Call?

This [objection] is akin, whether, because God does not so much approve, as it is seemly for others, the obedience of reprobates (which they are obliged to bring forth)³⁶ yet because He amiably invites and by supplications solicits, entreats and calls upon them, and as He mourns over them, is grieved by them and laments on account of the disobedient, whether He, therefore, intends the obedience of them? The Remonstrants affirm (Article 1, p. 57). We negate:

1. Because out of the amiable invitation, this only is concluded: the simple obligation of the creature to obedience, an earnest³⁷ approbation and complacency which God has with respect to

³⁵ If God intended that persons might have perfect obedience, the death of Christ would be unnecessary, and hence a waste.

³⁶ The Arminians were saying that as the reprobate does not bring forth obedience, nor are such works so fitting and akin to his corrupt nature, that God’s revealed will must not be one simply of approval and moral satisfaction, as the reformed held. Thus, the revealed will, alternately, must therefore intend the reprobate’s salvation.

³⁷ *Seria*, or ‘serious’, ‘grave’.

the obedience, inasmuch as the thing is holy, has been required of him, is morally pleasing, and as it is unto the convenience and salvation of a man.³⁸

On account of this disposition³⁹ in God,⁴⁰ nothing is further added by the simple complacency of God around obedience except a certain quasi-intention and vehemency of divine obligation to the thing, which testifies to the obedience of all by an earnestness from the precept and from having obliged men to the thing; and thus it is to Him singularly and vehemently pleasing in his sight inasmuch as salvation is made glorious to men; but except He decree it, by the corruption of men, it will not come to be.

2. Because out of the contrition of God about the disobedience of the reprobate, no great thing is able to be concluded in Him as an intention that they would produce obedience by an act, whereby truly human passions, vain wishes and ineffectual supplications may be concluded to be in God and that there be an infelicitous aching of God that He is not able to give fulfillment to his desires.

3. God, by motives which He has laid up in the treasures of his wisdom, through a saving liberty of the creature, according to Arminius, is able to infallibly procure the obedience of things if He even strenuously decrees, intends and strives for them from eternity so that men desire those things to be produced, after which things, not by a predetermining, they are saddened and aching.

³⁸ *homini convenientem ac salutarem*

³⁹ *Affectus*, or (in order of frequency of usage) 'affection', 'desire', 'goodwill'

⁴⁰ *in Deo*, this is very theologically specific language.

On God's Will Making Efficient & Permitting

It is asked what ought to be discerned regarding the distinction of the divine will⁴¹ into making efficient and permitting? We know it: Arminians here dissent from us.

For the divine will making-efficient,⁴² is that will which is the first and highest cause of all positive beings. Truly the will permitting affirms in one way and negates in two. It affirms the positive act of the will of good-pleasure, for it is not a bare negation of will, as the Arminians will it to be, as God wills, by the divine will permitting, that sins are produced on account of the glory of God. Arminians will God to will nothing by the permitting of the divine will, but a bare non-willing; so they miss of any permission, and for this reason it is an idle and non-acting will, or rather a negation of volition, which, according to them, is truly a will or volition.

But to us the divine will permitting negates in two ways. 1. It negates a moral effecting, namely that God is not the cause of the things which He permits. 2. It negates the approving will. For that which God permits, it is in no way approved or prescribed for the creature to do.

⁴¹ The singular of 'will' is here important: Rutherford is distinguishing two aspects within, and made known from, the one will God; he is not here asserting two wills in God.

⁴² 'Will' is being deliberately kept singular with attendant verbal participles (as it is in the Latin) in the translation following despite the less than pleasing English, in order to show that the diversity in the effecting and permitting is not a diversity in the will of God itself, but that this diversity is only manifested from the singular will of God in its actions directed towards the variegated creation (*ad extra*). That is, God's singular will produces the variety of effecting and permitting. This variety in effecting and permitting is necessarily how God's one, infinite, will is made known to, distributed to and comprehended by finite creatures, as the finite cannot comprehend the infinite.

Whether God wills sin to exist, He permitting it?

pp. 203-206

1 Thess. 4:3

“For this is the will of God, even your sanctification.”

Great is this question between us and the Arminians, of the will of God about sin. It is, therefore, this the state of the question. Here, then, is the state of the question: Whether God will sin to exist, He permitting it? The state of the question will be carefully set down.

1. It is agreed between us that God knows sins before they are, that is between us and the Jesuits I say; it is allowed that the Arminians blasphemously deny that God knows future sins.
2. It is agreed that God concurs to the material act of sin; it is allowed that the mode of concursus is a controversy not light.
3. That God elicits good from sin;
4. That God does not effect or cause sin;
5. That God forbids and prohibits it, and has hatred for it;
6. That God knowing and willing, permits sins.
7. That God is not the Author of sin, whatever the Adversaries calumniate.

8. Although the decree of God intervene about the existence of sin, it does not excuse men which sin.

9. God in no way wills sin by the revealed [*signi*] or approving will.

The question is not: 1. Whether God is the cause of sin. So says Gregory of Valencia.⁴³

2. Nor whether God wills sin in that He wills a penalty for it, because [it is agreed that] God positively wills and effects a penalty [for sin].

3. Nor is the question (so the Valencians affirm) whether God stimulates men to sin under a good principle, because a man is impelled to act by sound freedom and truly by no way to malice.

4. Nor (so says Arminius, *Against Perkins*, p. 698)⁴⁴ “whether men are moved by no act of God unto willing or doing evil.” But none of us assert that God moves men unto willing or doing evil.

5. Bellarmine perversely says (‘On the Loss of Grace and the State of Sin’, book 2, ch. 3), “It is asked whether God is the Author of sin?”

6. Nor is the question (as Vorstius says, appendix to *A Kind Reply to Johannes Piscator*, pp. 36-37), “Whether God truly and properly wills from us a great contradiction to his antecedent and absolute will, which will God ordinarily commands in his Word under the penalty of death?”

Such a question we do not recognize; we of course do not teach that God wills that to be by the will of his good-pleasure which the will of good-pleasure does not will to be. Nor are there here

⁴³ Gregory of Valencia (c. 1550-1603) was a Spanish, Romanist scholar and theological professor.

⁴⁴ A work against the puritan William Perkins who had written extensively on predestination. See *An Examination of Rev. James Aminius, D.D., of a Treatise, Concerning the Order and Mode of Predestination and the Amplitude of Divine Grace, by Rev. William Perkins, D.D.....* in James Arminius, *The Writings of James Arminius*, vol. 3, tr. James Nichols & W.R. Bagnall (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977) 279-525.

contrary wills in God, but He approves and commands some things, so good things, which He decrees to make; He disapproves and prohibits some things, so evil things, which He decrees to permit, and so they are made⁴⁵ to exist and to work unto his glory.

7. Nor is the question (so dream the Tridentine fathers),⁴⁶ “Whether the work of sin is equally the work of God and a work of obedience?”

But the [Arminian] Adversaries teach this: 1. God intends and has decreed every thing to be and to exist by that revealed will [*signi*] which He mandates and commands to us. We deny.

2. They teach that God in no way wills sin to exist, but that God is not willing and not acting, and has an idle⁴⁷ permission in the occurrence of sin. This we teach God to will.

3. They teach God to will that which He brings out of sin, though of course, God does not will sin to exist, and certainly not that it is a medium to illustrate his divine glory. But from the hypothesis that sin would exist, God nilling it, God wills the good of his justice and mercy which He brings out of sin. We teach God to permissively will sin to be existing, not simply as it is sin, but as it is a medium to illustrate the glory of his justice and mercy.

4. They teach permission to be a bare and idle seeing of God, with nothing of acting, by which God Himself does not act; rather, whether one sins or does not sin, it is committed by the free will of the creature. We reject this figment of an idle permission, it being so repugnant to providence.

⁴⁵ This verb is in the passive voice, whereas the last use of the verb, about making good things, is in the active voice. ‘To work unto his glory’ is also in the active voice. That is to say that evil things are necessarily brought about to be through the creatures differently than how God directly causes good things in his creatures; yet these evil things, passively being allowed to come into existence, are then actively governed by God unto his glory.

⁴⁶ The fathers of the Roman Catholic Council of Trent.

⁴⁷ *otiose*, or ‘unengaged’

The question, then, is, not whether God wills sin by a bare and idle permission, but whether by some active and positive act of the divine will permitting, by this act He wills sin to exist insofar as it is a medium to the display of the divine glory; meanwhile, whether He wills sin, that disapproved and detested, disgraceful evil unto God, it being allowed under the genus of a useful good, as it certainly conduces to illustrating the glory of God? Or, whether God has decreed sin to be existent by the creature defecting, He permitting, insofar as sin is a medium of the glory of God? The Adversaries deny; we make good:⁴⁸

Whether God impels persons to sins which He prohibits?

p. 216

It is asked whether God impels persons to sins which He prohibits? The Remonstrants deny (Article 1, p. 250 in *Synod. Script.*). We consider God impelling to sin by a moral impulse to be blasphemous; rather, by a physical and judicial impulse He impels⁴⁹ persons to sins.

1. Because to the entitative act of sin He concurs.
2. Because He punishes sin by sin.
3. Because all secondary causes, even free choices, He impels to put into motion (Prov. 21:1).
4. Because He permissively intends sins to the illustration of his glory.

⁴⁸ Rutherford goes on for five pages, in eighteen points, proving this thesis.

⁴⁹ *impellit*

Whether the act of sin and its lawlessness are distinguishable?

It is asked whether the act and the lawlessness are distinguishable in all sins? The Arminians deny (*Ibid.*). We think it good to always so distinguish:

1. Because no act in its essence is disorderly: for thus the act itself would be essentially disorder, which is plainly Manichean. Because it is allowed that snow is white, yet it is not whiteness itself; and though form, or privation,⁵⁰ adheres to actions, those actions are spoken of as concrete, and less as abstract.⁵¹

2. Scripture distinguishes these: Isa. 1:16, “put away the evil of your doings.” Thus Hos. 5:15; Isa. 65:2; Gal. 5:19. Therefore, one thing is the work, another is the sinful flesh which adheres to a work.⁵²

3. Arminius acknowledges eating to be in itself a natural act, having nothing inordinate in itself. But truly the prohibition of the Legislator [Gen. 2:17] did not dismantle the nature of the natural act, nor did the prohibition change the substance [*transubstantiat*] of it into inordinateness.

⁵⁰ Sin is being understood as a privation, or an abstract non-entity, something missing from the action, while the action itself remains.

⁵¹ To consider an action wholly according to its main abstract quality would be like considering snow to be simply whiteness.

⁵² This might be most clearly seen in a work that is indifferent or good in itself, but is done from a fleshly heart which exercises the work for ill. The work of in and of itself is good, though due to the intent of the person that did it, is tainted with evil in relation to that person.

4. Because the act is a real entity [*ens*] and is positive; inordinateness is of a moral being [*ens*] and is a privation.
5. The act is metaphysically good and is the proper effect of the first cause; truly inordinateness is essentially bad.
6. For [in the case of a good act tainted by sin,] if the act of itself [were pure sinfulness and hence] was not to be suffered, then yet the act, which is subservient to the supernatural good, would have been contrary, of itself, to being commanded [by God]. And [yet, on this premise, if the act be allowed, then it could not be tainted with any sinfulness and] thus our physical act would be essentially of itself obedience, which is absurd.

Whether sin is opposed to God in its essence?

It is asked whether sin is opposed to God in its essence? The Arminians affirm, teaching that sin is opposed to the nature of God. We respond that there is a twofold repugnancy: one is internal, of that sort which is between the two things [*accidentia*] hot and cold. Another is external, which is an incompatibility [*non-convenientia*], being of that sort which is between those things which are of the most basic [*primo*] difference, such as, substance and quantity.

[However,] in the most basic [*priore*] way, nothing is repugnant between God and the creatures.⁵³ Nor is sin opposed to God, even privatively,⁵⁴ because privation is not able to be furnished by the chief and highest good [*summi boni*], for that would be the destruction of God.⁵⁵ Nor is it opposed to God contrarily, because that is an opposition only between accidents;⁵⁶ nor relatively, for if sin is thus posited, then God is abolished; or if God is so posited, then sin is abolished,⁵⁷ which is absurd. Nor is this opposition contradictory, for in this way all creatures are opposed to God: for God is a non-man, a non-tree and a non-angel. Wherefore it follows that neither sin, God, nor anything of the divine nature is abolished.

Therefore, something only is abolished from the free, approving will of God; certainly sin abolishes rectitude, which the free will of God demands to be in actions and powers of our soul. Nor is anything posited by sin, or the existence of sin which is contrary to God, the nature of God or to the essential properties of God, nor, most deeply, to the will or decree of God: “For who has resisted his will?” (Rom. 9:19)

Whether God is the author of sin because He predestines sin?

p. 224

⁵³ Else both God and the creature could not exist at the same time.

⁵⁴ That is, sin cannot be an actual privation of God, his existence or essence.

⁵⁵ As the chief and highest good would not be the chief and highest good if anything is taken away from it, if sin had come from God. Hence God cannot sin or be the author of sin.

⁵⁶ Contingent things. Yet God is absolute and not contingent, as everything in creation is; therefore nothing that exists in creation can be contrary to God at the most basic level.

⁵⁷ If there is a relative opposition between things, then one is at the expense of the other. For instance, in Manicheanism, good and evil are said to necessarily exist in a relative opposition to each other; one cannot be absolute as long as the other exists; the existence of one takes away from the independent sovereignty of the other. God, however, is absolute.

It is asked whether because God would predetermine the will to material acts of sin, therefore He is the author of sin? The Jesuits and Remonstrants affirm that we make God to be the author of sin by name. We deny:

1. Because the concursus of God is by the way of a physical cause; it removes no law to the rational creatures which is contrary to them. But for sin to be caused is an act wholly moral.
2. Because the office of First Cause [*primae causae*] necessarily requires that God holds forth a predetermining concursus unto all secondary causes. But such an office does not require that God is the Author of sin.
3. That is the cause of sin which truly contributes the moral efficiency to sin.⁵⁸ But the predetermining efficiency is removed⁵⁹ from every moral efficiency.

Rom. 8:32

“He that spared not his own Son.”

pp. 230-232

Whether God is the principal agent of wicked actions?

⁵⁸ “The *cause efficiens*, the efficient cause, or productive, effective cause, which is the agent productive of the motion or mutation in any sequence of causes and effects;” Richard Muller, *Dictionary of Latin and Greek Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985) 61.

⁵⁹ *abstrahit*, or ‘separate’, ‘detached’, ‘unconnected’.

It is asked whether each wicked action, which is from sinning instruments, is done by God as by the principal agent? The Adversaries slanderously say that we teach the same sin to be from God as the principal agent and so from men and devils as the instruments; and for that reason teach God to be the principal and particular cause of sin. So Bellarmine, Stapleton and the Arminians.

However, we truly teach the same sinful action to be of God and men according as it is materially considered, not truly as it is moral. That truly is the same action [by both parties] as it is made manifest materially:

1. Because the Sabeans took away Job's goods, and God by the Sabeans took away the same goods. But Job was not spoiled of his goods twice, once by God and once by the Sabeans.
2. Because while the concubines of David were being borne off through incest, God by this same thing was chastising David through Absalom polluting the bed of his father. Therefore the same material action was of both God and Absalom.
3. God "performed his work in Zion" (Isa. 10:12) in punishing the Church by the Assyrians oppressing the people of God, as much as by "the rod of his anger." (v. 5)
4. God, by the king of Babylon, as by his servant and hammer, chastised his Church by striking them down with the sword and captivity. But truly it was not the same action of both God and man according to its morality, as God justly acts out of all four causes⁶⁰ while He chastises the Church by sinning instruments, yet the action of the instruments is morally unjust and wicked.

⁶⁰ The traditional causes in Aristotelian metaphysics, which were widely used in their own way by the Reformed scholastics: the material cause, formal cause, efficient cause and final cause.

As God is higher than every law to men,⁶¹ He does not sin; though truly if men, in an act unto sin, used other sinning men in this way, they would be sinning gravely. Nor has this natural law of God been imposed upon Him, as it is not lawful for the supreme, eminent and judicial act to be exercised by sinning instruments, as it is so lawful for God.

It is asked whether, because God is surely not the cause of causing malice, yet it is allowed that He is the cause of the cause, even of the act, and because God concurs by a universal and indifferent concursus to the action, though the concursus of God is not the cause, why then is the good act more of the supernatural than the act forbidden by the Law of God? So the Jesuits and Arminians. We truly teach that God is not the cause of the malice, though it is allowed that He is the cause of the act.

1. God is not the cause of malice for the reason that He is not bound to give⁶² rectitude to the act; man truly is so bound, so says [John Duns] Scotus (2nd Distinction, 34, section 1).
2. Because the concursus of God is quasi-physical and necessary, not truly moral; nor is God subject to this Law.

Whether God is able to hate sin and will its existence?

p. 233-234

⁶¹ If God were on the same plane as men, but higher, this would be problematic, if God acted contrary to and against law. However, as God is the unmoved, moving First Cause of all things, He and his actions are at a different level than anything in creation; hence, He is not bound, according to Rutherford, by the natural law He has imposed on the creatures.

⁶² *tenetur dare*

It is asked whether that distinction is frivolous by which we teach God to hate sin, and yet to will its existence? So says Arminius, *Against Perkins* (p. 701). We deny:

1. Because for God to hate sin is not for God to intend that sin would never exist, as it is false that God decreed that the crucifixion of the Savior, the selling of Joseph, the carrying off of his people into captivity by the Assyrians and Chaldeans, the defecting of the ten tribes from the family of David and the spoiling of Job by the Sabeans, would not exist.

2. Because sin in itself is a disgraceful evil and an object of the displeasing and disapproving will [of God]. But truly for sin to exist is a useful good, conducing to the glory of God; and all good existing in time is from God, from the eternal decree.

3. Because in the explication of our distinction, Arminius falsely imputes to us that we teach that God wills and approves sin existing and that God does not hate sin existing. For God hates sin and hates the existence of sin in the genus of a disgraceful thing, and yet He decrees to permit that it would exist under the genus of a useful thing.⁶³

4. [William] Twisse rightly says, Marcus Cato⁶⁴ willed Carthage to exist inasmuch as it was a grindstone and material exercising youth of Roman virtue, and yet he willed against it, i.e. to hate Carthage. I further add that Peter rightly willed that Christ would spare Himself, that He would not be killed by ungodly foes; and yet Christ wills against this, rightly declaring him to be of Satan; notwithstanding, Peter was bound to hate that occasion as it was sin (Mt. 16:21-23).

⁶³ Rom. 9:22-23, "What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory." Note that God is not said to take pleasure in sin in anyway. Rather, it is true that by the will of God's good-pleasure (that of decree) He permissively wills sin to exist under his hatred only insofar as it is useful unto his higher ends, which are truly good.

⁶⁴ Marcus Cato the elder (234-149 B.C.) was a Roman soldier, senator and historian known for his opposition to Hellenization.

Whether sin necessarily follows upon God's giving permission for it?

p. 236

It is asked whether permission having been granted [by God], sin necessarily follows by a logical necessity? The Arminians deny⁶⁵ (*The Remonstrants' Confession*, ch. 6, thesis 3; Arminius, *Against Perkins*, p. 667). We affirm:

1. Because permission is a negation of the efficacious grace required to avoid a particular sin⁶⁶ by an urging temptation here and now. But given the negation of grace, the hour of temptation necessarily leads to sin.

2. Because Scripture argues from the positing of permission to the positing of sin. God permitted Pharaoh to detain his people and Sihon to deny travelling through to the people. Therefore, they were detained and denied transit. Further, God did not permit Abimelech to violate Sarah, Abraham's wife. Therefore, he did not so violate (Gen. 20:6). He did not suffer his people to do the abominations of the gentiles. Therefore, they did not do them (Dt. 18:14). So Gen. 31:29; 1 Sam. 25:32; Ps. 106:41; Acts 17:30.

⁶⁵ If permission is wholly an absence of God willing anything positively, as the Arminians held, then nothing follows upon it. Sin, on their paradigm, would then either come from man's autonomy, or not. The reformed notion that God's permission has an effective positive aspect to it (in addition to a passive, negative aspect), necessarily entails that something follows upon it. Yet sin may not positively come from God, nor come from his will by a necessary causation, lest God be the author of sin. The reformed made a distinction that the event decreed would certainly come about infallibly, but may happen, as sin does, through a free creaturely cause, not by necessity (cf. WCF 5.2).

⁶⁶ WCF 16.3, "Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the spirit of Christ. And... there is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of his good pleasure..."

3. The permission of sin often is often a punishment for sin. But the punishment does not follow the sin except insofar as it is allowed.

4. Because it is necessarily a form or privation in the subject's capacity, holding for a time.

Therefore, grace having been denied (so it is in permission), necessarily posits permission, even sin.

5. Because if permission were posited to be established, and this would not posit permitted sin, it would fundamentally extirpate fear, trust, the obligation to fervent praying, humility and gratitude to God. For, if permission being posited, I am able not to sin, without cause do I scrupulously pray and fear lest God would permit me to sin or be given over to a reprobate mind.

Chapter 3

On Election

Whether Faith is both a Condition and Promised?

pp. 270-2

It is asked whether faith is not able simultaneously to be a requisite condition by a stipulated means and of a free obedience by the elect, and a thing having been promised from God and effected infallibly in us? The Remonstrants deny; we assert.

Certainly on the one hand it is conceded to be a condition and a free act. But truly, that it is yet a thing having been promised and infallibly effected by God, which the Remonstrants deny, is proven:

1. Because there is promised a 'circumcising of the heart' (Dt. 30:6), 'a new heart' (Eze. 36:26), 'for all shall be taught of God' (Jer. 31:33-34; Jn. 6:44-45), 'so that all flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord' (Isa. 40:5), and 'the spirit of grace and supplication shall be poured out in the family of David.' (Zech. 12:10-11) Therefore faith is promised.
2. Because the faithful pray for faith [Mk. 9:24]. Prayer, however, leans upon the Word of promise.
3. Because the saving knowledge of God in Christ is promised (Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34), and the knowledge of Christ by which men are justified (Isa. 53:11, and that by none other), is according to faith.
4. Because the Spirit is promised by which they shall see the Lord whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10-11). Therefore, faith.
5. Because faith is the gift of God, which excludes all the glorying of a man (Eph. 2:4,8; Phil. 1:29).
6. Because the saints give thanks to God for their and others' faith (Eph. 1:15-16).

Whether the Object of Predestination is Man to be Created?

It is asked whether we invert the natural order because we state that the object of predestination is the man to be created and not a man having been created; because God thus sets up a non-entity to glory? The Remonstrants affirm (*Apology*, ch. 5, folio 67).⁶⁷ We deny.

1. Because God has made all for [on account of] Himself. Therefore, He decrees to make a man to be.
2. Because it is asked, by which end God has decreed to create the world from eternity? For the world from eternity was a non-entity. Surely so that He Himself is glorified. Therefore, God has decreed a non-entity to his glory.

Chapter 4

On Reprobation

Whether there is a Distinction Between Preterition and Reprobation?

pp. 278-80

⁶⁷ Reformed infralapsarians often pose this same objection to supralapsarians.

Whether the distinction between negative and privative non-election, or preterition, versus reprobation, is senseless? The Arminians affirm (Article 1, pp. 235-6). We truly acknowledge them to be distinguished from each other:

Preterition, or non-election, is that by which God, with no harm to his justice, is able to deny a benefit to a man though he merits nothing evil; and reprobation is that by which God decrees out of his absolute good-pleasure to create some and to deny efficacious grace to them in order that He might declare the glory of his justice.

The former act is logically called ‘non-election’; theologically it is called ‘preterition’; because of itself, that God out of his free will chooses some absolutely to eternal glory, [therefore means that] He necessarily passes over all others [*praeterit*] and does not elect them to glory (for if election is of all, it is not an election).

Objection: If reprobation necessarily follows from non-election, then this God does also: if He would enjoin to any person that he might live for a thousand years,⁶⁸ yet, in the meanwhile, He might continue the preserving of the strength of life to him for only ten days. Response: This same argument is propounded by Paul of the person of the canal man (Rom. 9:14). For God, by right, is able to be enflamed against him whom He gives a conserving of the strength of life for as long as ten days, whom He thereafter further casts away, God Himself, out of his own free will, yet taking away his strength.

⁶⁸ This appears to be an Arminian assumption based on their system which posits an antecedent good-will of God which may be overturned. Rutherford does not grant the assumption. As the sense of the paragraph is not entirely clear to the translators, here is the Latin: “*Object. Reprobatio necessario sequitur ex non-electione, ideoque Deus hic idem facit ac si ad mille annos ut vivat, alicui imperet, interim tamen decem tantum dies vim vitae conservatricem ipsi continuet. Resp. Hoc idem argumentum a Paulo proponitur in persona carnalium hominum, Rom. 9:14. Potest enim Deus jure succensere ei, qui vim vitae conservatricem ad decem dies tantum servet, & deinde ultro abjiciat, etsi ipse Deus ex libera sua voluntate eam vim abstrhat.*”

Whether there is a Positive Reprobation of those Outside the Visible Church?

It is asked whether the reprobation of them which have had never heard the Gospel is nothing? Or whether otherwise it is hidden and inexplicable to them which are in the visible Church?! The Remonstrants affirm (Article 1, p. 23). We deny:

1. Because God absolutely reprobates from the Covenant and means of grace the Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites and other nations, insofar as He has willed it; so this is gathered out of Mal. 1:2-4.

2. Because God has not elected the Jews to abide as his people or called them to the communion of glory and grace on account of their dignity or holiness (Eze. 16:3,8; Dt. 7:6-7; 9:4-5; Ps. 147:14,20). Therefore the other nations He has rejected from the like communion because He absolutely willed it.

Whether Reprobation is the Prime Cause of the Destruction of Men?

It is asked whether absolute reprobation is the prime cause⁶⁹ of the enduring destruction of the greater part of men. The Remonstrants affirm. We deny:

1. Because God is not at all the cause of destruction, except inasmuch as a judge is the cause of sin by the act of bringing it forth for examination.⁷⁰ But in reprobation He is not a judge, but an absolute Lord.⁷¹ Therefore God is not the cause whatsoever.

2. Because in reprobation God determines only to deny grace, which He owes to no mortals. Therefore, He is not able to be the cause of sin or of their destruction, though He reprobates men.

Whether God wills men to do no more good than they do?

p. 285

It is asked whether, according to our doctrine, God has absolutely willed that men would not do more good than what they do and that they would not omit more evil than what they omit? The Remonstrants affirm (Article 1, p. 250).

We say that if this is said of the approving will, it is false; if it of the will of good-pleasure and decree, it is true:

⁶⁹ *prima causa*

⁷⁰ or 'by the act of existing and looking upon it.' Either way the idea is that a judge is in some way a cause of sin in that his looking upon it with moral condemnation makes it to be, or confirms it to be sinful.

⁷¹ This is explained in the following point.

1. Because the measure of good and bad actions and the number of all entities has been absolutely determined in the presence of God.
2. Because there would be no use of prayers or the action of gracious influences if within the will of God there were not so many good actions and so many bad, neither more nor less.
3. Because there would be no use of faith unless one believe that God through his gracious will determined precisely the number of our foes and injuries and the number of supernatural acts.

Whether it conflicts with God that He predestines an end which cannot be reached
without sin?

p. 292

It is asked whether it conflicts with the blessedness of God for Him to absolutely put forth an end which cannot be reached without that which is unacceptable and offensive to Him?⁷²

The Remonstrants affirm (Article 1, p. 257). We deny:

⁷² It appears from Rutherford's answer below that he accepts the premise that God's end, as He so decreed it and as it is revealed in Scripture (Rom. 9:22-23), could not be reached without sin. Rutherford's response is to show that these things are in consistency with the blessedness of God.

1. Because nothing is permitted to be made⁷³ by Him (who intends the end, which is not reached without sin) that withdraws from the blessedness of God, because it is not to the detriment of that blessedness in that God remains holy and immune from every stain.⁷⁴

2. Because sin is certainly opposed to the free approval of God, but to the nature of God it is not properly opposed, either privatively or by contrariety, but only conditionally: insofar as it conflicts with the immutability and holiness of God for Him to will such a [righteous] act [of the creature, though tainted with sin] as equitable and just, which He Himself has forbidden as sin; which act, nonetheless, He is able to command absolutely as equitable and just before that [sinful] volition [of the creature].⁷⁵

Whether it is better for reprobates not to hear the gospel?

p. 295

⁷³ This passive voice is significant: God does not actively make these offensive things, but rather they are allowed to be made through the creature.

⁷⁴ Rutherford is essentially saying that the existence of sin, along with God's decree and providence in bringing it about, does not touch or alter God's blessed aseity (his needing no other). Hence the aseity of God, God's eternal blessedness and the existence of sin are consistent with each other.

⁷⁵ Rutherford appears to be saying that sin is contrary to God's nature in that, given God's revealed will being willed as it is, God, by his holiness and immutability (attributes of his nature), cannot will an action of the creature tainted with sin, to be righteous and approved. Thus, sin opposes the nature of God conditionally: on the condition of sin existing (which God freely chose), and God's revealed will being what it is, God, by his nature, is limited by sin in that He cannot approve of sin. However, Rutherford notes, God is still able to will (by his revealed will) such righteous actions tainted by human sin without approving of the evil of that human action. The translators, however, are not entirely sure of the interpretation of the last half of point 2. Another translation is: "...insofar as it conflicts with the immutability and holiness of God; for instance: if He wills equity and justice, by such an act He has thus prohibited iniquity; which iniquity, nonetheless, God is able, in an absolute respect, to command [logically] before that volition of equity and justice." The Latin reads: "...*quatenus pugnat cum immutabilitate & sanctitate Dei, velle tanquam aequum & justum, talem actum quem ipse vetuit, ut iniquum, quem tamen absolute ante illam volitionem ut aequum & justum mandare poterat.*"

Whether given reprobation, it had been much better for reprobates never to have had heard the gospel? The Remonstrants affirm (Article 1, Script. Synod., p. 261). We say that by the falling out of it [*per accidens*]⁷⁶ and out of the abuse of the gospel it would have had been better for them never to have had heard the gospel:

1. Because it would have been better for Judas if he had never been born (Mt. 26:24).
2. Because the condition of the Sodomites and those of Tyre will be more tolerable at the Last Judgement than the impenitent hearers of the gospel (Mt. 10:14-15; 11:24).
3. Because it is better to be without the sin of one unfaithful to the gospel than to be guilty of it (Jn. 15:22).

But certainly the knowledge⁷⁷ of the gospel in itself and by its fundamental impulse⁷⁸ is a great and most excellent benefit⁷⁹ of God, and yet it does not cease to be a benefit because one withdraws [from it] by a very grave and sorrowful evil, men abusing such a benefit. However, indeed, if we wish the wisdom of God to be measured by our insane reason, then that good [knowledge] being conferred into man would not be seen to be a benefit, because we know that he will withdraw himself into a very grave evil.

Chapter 5

⁷⁶ ‘by accident’ in the Aristotelian sense, in that the attributed quality is not inherent and necessary to the thing itself, but is an adjunct contingent upon another factor, which may or may not be present in all cases.

⁷⁷ *preconium*

⁷⁸ *actu primo*

⁷⁹ *beneficium*, or ‘kindness’

On the Estate of the First Man

Whether God is the Author of the First Sin?

pp. 300-301

It is asked whether God is not made the author of the first sin, if because man had sinned due to God having denied to him, before his fault, grace necessary to escape the first sin. The Arminians affirm, with *Against Perkins* (pp. 704, 505). We deny:

1. Because God had subtracted from the man none of his image: for actual grace, or an efficacious influence of God to the act of obedience was required;⁸⁰ this is not a part of the divine image. Yet Adam had the ability to sin and the ability not to sin.

2. Because that influence was not any law or obligation having been owed to the man. Yet God is not able to be the author of sin, as that which He subtracted from Adam was something not-owed, although it was necessary to escape the sin.

3. Because God was not willing for Adam to have an efficacious influence, but denied it. Therefore this was a virtual and interpretive demerit of Adam, though not formally so, because in the same temporary instant in which God denied this actual influence, Adam had freely willed [was pleased] to be without it, and this from himself, by which he sinned the first sin; interpretatively he had willed to be without this predetermining grace, which if he had possessed it, he would have had uprightly escaped the first sin.

⁸⁰ Every act unto good, even from someone with a good nature, requires a concurring and free act of God's Spirit in order for its accomplishment, cite WCF and Scripture.

Nor is it absurd that we teach to coexist at the same time the lack of predetermining grace and the culpable demerit of that destitution, as it is conceded that an ordinary destitution of nature is prior to demerit, which I know to be a mystery of our theology which ought not to be inquired into.

Whether Sin is a Negative or a Positive Quality?

pp. 304-305

It is asked whether sinful concupiscence is an entity of privation or truly a positive quality? The Adversaries will it to be an entity of privation. We distinguish.

For a positive quality may be threefold: 1. Physical, 2. Ethical 3. Logical. Concupiscence is not a positive physical quality, because every such quality is from God, and so that which is of nature is good. So in this we do not teach concupiscence to be a positive quality.

But truly concupiscence is yet considered in two ways: 1. *Formally and in abstraction*; and in this way, logically speaking, it is not a positive quality, but logically privative, and is a potential crookedness of power, resulting in power. But truly 2. Concupiscence is considered *in concrete*, so it would connote a subject capable of a contrary inner, acting principle [*habitus*]; and thus we teach concupiscence to be an entity of plain privation, but an entity ethically positive.

1. Because it is not said that there is in it only a barrenness, an absence of rectitude, a withholding of power, but yet that it connotes a subject capable of form and of privation.

2. Because it not only deprives the soul of Original Righteousness, so entailing blindness and depriving the eyes to be able to see, but it also afflicts the soul with a depraved quality and propension in which the festering corrupts the fruit and the bodily fever effects a deadly disease.
3. Because Scripture ascribes positive actions to it, even that which opposes itself to the Spirit of God, leading men captive, working works of the flesh, etc.

Chapter 6

On Original Sin

Whether Original Sin is not Sin because it was not done Personally?

p. 313

It is asked whether, because original sin is not committed by personal volition, therefore it is not a sin properly speaking? The Arminians affirm this not to be a sin, properly speaking, by itself. We against this state:

1. This sin is voluntary by a volition of nature, not of person; by a representative volition, not properly a volition.
2. The essence of sin is opposition to the Law of God, even in that which is voluntary. However, voluntariness is not essential to sin in general, because the propensions and inclinations of the

power of the soul (which precede a volition) are from the sin of corruption, in which the ground of voluntariness does not hold place, notwithstanding.

3. Scripture says that we all, having sinned in Adam, were constituted sinners (Rom.

5:12,19). Nevertheless, our personal and physically individual will was not in Adam.

4. Nor is the ground of voluntariness formally in the strength of a fallen man, yet he is punished on account of murder. Nevertheless our will, it is allowed, was in Adam not physically, yet legally and morally, by the special covenant and free imputation of God, even as by such an imputable sin as is according to that covenant.

Whether Inclinations to Sin that are not Consented to are Sin?

pp. 318-19

It is asked whether concupiscence, when not given the consent of the will, is sin? Do the adversaries teach that in this case it is not sin? We truly state yes.

If the first, prime motion is either purely intellectual [and] in the mind, so that it speculatively knows the temptations of the Devil, this is not sin, even as this was in Christ. Or it is a first, prime motion in the [innate] appetite [or desires of a person], or even another [motion] following the first; both these presuppose some cognition and semi-consent, or a consent having begun and imperfect; and this is sin.

1. Because this motion is contrary to the most intense disposition [*habitu*]⁸¹ of loving God, which the Law requires.
2. It is prohibited by the Ten Commands. Even Paul says that it is sin and evil itself to be led captive and to be sold by sin, though notwithstanding consent is not given (Rom. 7:15-16, 19-20), because, of these motions, Paul says, “that which I do not will, I do.”
3. The Law of God requires perfect conformity between the will and all inclinations of the sensual and rational desires [*appetitus*], which precede consent of the will, which concerns the will of God, the revealed Law. For example, inclinations to vengeance, whoredoms, inebriation, heresies, and vain-glory, which, of a saint, in themselves they prove to bring anguish to holiness; therefore they are faults to him, by which the Holy Spirit is made to suffer us on account of such things, though we at no time give consent to them.

Chapter 7

On the State of Fallen Man

Whether it is Useless for the Unconverted to use the Means of Grace?

pp. 343-344

⁸¹ An innate, originating and enduring disposition which produces repeated action.

It is asked whether or not, because God does not give grace to a man due to previous dispositions or out of any debt or obligation, that on this account the Adversaries rightly infer that according to our doctrine it is not necessary, and even harmful and useless to be unconverted and to hear the Word, to read, to meditate, to know one's misery, and to use the external means? The Adversaries affirm. We deny.

1. Because the unconverted are obligated to the means; and they sin in not using the means, though grace is not given due to the use of the means, as this mandate lies broadly open, even as far as the promise. For God is well-able to command that for which obedience is remunerated, though it is neither grasped nor promised.

2. Because external preparation is required beforehand in those who would be converted; and yet it is not due to that preparation, but out of mere grace that conversion is given. Yet these preparations are able to be, by accident [*per accidens*, in their falling out], useless and of hurt, insofar as men are Pharisaically glorying by these preparations and are content [with them], as much as with the fruits of true conversion.

Whether Legal Contrition is a Preparation to Conversion?

It is asked whether or not legal contrition is able to be spoken of as a preparation to conversion, so that temporary faith be a preparation and steps to final salvation?

We respond that contrition and faith here are rightly spoken as steps *to the thing*, but not as steps *in the thing*, or as the *material beginning*, but not the *formal beginning*: so yellow is a step preparing for white,⁸² but it is not a step *in the thing* because by its appearance [*specie*]⁸³ it is distinguished from white. But truly it is so that black is yet able to be a step *to the thing* and a preparation for white.⁸⁴

In the same way, all the moral dispositions [of a person] ought to so ache about sins, desire salvation, trust the Creator, take joy in the time of the blessing of the Gospel and its way; which dispositions in the unregenerate are a species distinguished from those spiritual dispositions coming under conversion, because these dispositions differ from the *formal object*. For the unregenerate person aches about sin, but not by an aching according to God, but only so far as sin is a procurative of punishment, not insofar as it is an offence to the most merciful good of the Father; and thus of the rest.

Chapter 8

On the State of Grace

⁸² If one was an artist and had used a dark color on a canvass, which paint was still wet, he might turn it to yellow, a lighter color, in preparation for turning it white.

⁸³ This may also mean 'species', as in 'kind' or 'type'. The appropriate ambiguity may have been intended.

⁸⁴ If God had sovereignly ordered the steps of the means to fall out that way.

On Grace Sufficient & Grace Efficient

pp. 368-9

It is asked whether a distinction ought to be admitted between grace sufficient and efficient? The Arminians affirm.

We say the external means are sufficient: 1. For rendering without excuse, 2. For external discipline, 3. For vindicating the righteousness of God; but no grace is sufficient for conversion unless it is at the same time efficacious.

1. Because every sufficient cause produces the effect. But the sufficient grace of the Arminians does not produce the effect, even conversion.

2. Because every sufficient cause is able to produce the effect. But the grace of them is not able to produce the effect; because it is not able to bring to an end the battle with the corrupt power resisting the calling to God and to infallibly move the will to obedience. This would overturn the will, so they teach; therefore it is not sufficient.

3. As such grace does not yield that which it supposes, it is a great devil to God. But if such a universal grace is posited, which is not able to be efficacious unless there is the capacity for the will to resist, so they say, then that will be more powerfully wicked which is in the world, than God, who inhabits the sons of God. But the apostle teaches the contrary to be true (1 Jn. 2:14; 4:4). From the efficacious victory of the saints over sin, it is intimated that God is stronger than the Devil.

4. If there is another sufficient grace in the truly regenerate which is always able to be ineffectual, so they teach, then God allows the faithful to be tempted above that which they are able [to withstand], contra that place, 1 Cor. 10:13.

Chapter 9

On Universal Redemption

Whether All are Bound to Believe in Christ in the Same Way?

pp. 399-400

It is asked secondly, whether because God proscribes evangelical grace and heaven to none except the rebel in Christ, that therefore all persons and every person, by the same direct principle [*jure*] and way, is to believe in Jesus Christ announced by the gospel?

We say that all are obliged by way of the law [*jure*], that is, by way of the evangelical mandate and of conscience, out of the authority of God, being incited by being commanded, to believe in Christ; this is to say that all are equally bound to obey God. But we deny that all, the elect and reprobate equally, by the same formal principle [*jure*], or the same right [*jure*] of title and propriety in Christ the Savior are bound to believe, because by this latter principle [*jure*] the elect only are bound to believe.

1. Because, out of the intention of God the Father and the dying of Christ, Christ is not a savior of reprobates, but only of the elect. For the intention of dying for some, and election (or the intention of saving), are in God equally revolving things.⁸⁵ But the Arminians and Jesuits are not so bold to say that Christ is the savior of reprobates out of a preemptory intention of God. The Jesuits themselves deny a congruent calling from an absolute decree, denying of themselves Christ to be the Savior.⁸⁶

2. Believing is not by the merit of Christ procuring for reprobates the remission of sins, the righteousness of Christ, regeneration and faith. But this all is by the merit of Christ, that the elect are acquired. Therefore, the principle [*jus*] does not equally bind the elect and reprobate to believe.

Whether the Reprobate are made Reconcilable by the Death of Christ?

pp. 421-425

It is asked whether the reprobate are made reconcilable by the death of Christ? The Arminians affirm it simply.

We distinguish and teach that in this sense they are made to be reconcilable by the death of Christ, by which Prosper⁸⁷ says (*Response to the Little Head of the Gauls*, ch. 9): “Christ is

⁸⁵ *Ambitus*, ‘walking about’, that is, they are coextensive in their designs and objects.

⁸⁶ If the congruent call of God in the gospel, according to the Jesuits (the reformed deny the concept altogether), does not stem from an eternal decree of God, but something less (the efficacy of it being conditional and based on the creature), then it is not Christ doing the saving.

⁸⁷ Early Church father (c.390-c.463)

the Savior of the whole world on account of his true undertaking of human nature and communion in the ruin of the first man.” Hence, it is not allowed that Christ has died for the reprobate, yet by the death of Christ they have been made reconcilable in this sense:

1. Because Christ assumed the nature which is common; it is not conceded that it was common to all, but it was the nature of Abraham, the father of the believing (Heb. 2:16). Hence, the devils are not at all⁸⁸ made salvable by Christ, of course, as the angelic nature has not itself been united to his person.

2. Because Christ has expiated the common sin of Adam on the tree of the cross, though it is not conceded that it was as common, but as it was in the elect and the believing.

3. Because the grace of the preaching of the Gospel has been procured by the death of Christ to reprobates born in the visible Church, and the sacrifice of Christ has been made approved and of simple complacency to them. Wherefore they are called to the Supper (Mt. 22; Lk. 14:16) and are called to Christ (Mt. 11:16; 23:37-38; 1 Cor. 1:18,23; [sic] Acts 14:46; Prov. 1:24-25; Isa. 6:10-11; 65:2-3). These previous things cannot be said of devils.

But reprobates are not made reconcilable to God by the death of Christ:

1. As if the sacrifice of Christ made them conditionally and decretively so, in that God offered Christ for them in this way, that by his act He Himself set to apply efficiently his merits, just as believers have been made reconcilable by the death of Christ.

⁸⁸ *Minime* could also be translated as ‘only minimally’. Rutherford, at least in later writings, took the hypothetical necessity view of the atonement of Christ, that God could have saved persons apart from any atonement at all, though it was hypothetically necessary for Christ to assume human flesh and die as a substitute as that would bring the most glory to God. On such a view, it would seem that devils could be saved, hypothetically, with or without an atonement made in their nature.

2. They have not been made reconciliable, as if Christ has borne up their persons on the tree of the cross, and has Himself paid their penalties by being plagued.
3. Nor are they made reconciliable as if Christ, by his death, merited for them reconciliation, remission and eternal salvation.
4. Nor as if in preaching the promises, God intended for them by the Gospel the promised things, either absolutely or conditionally.

Is Every Person to Believe that Christ Died for Him?

It is asked whether all and every person, even the reprobate, are obliged to believe that Christ died for him.⁸⁹ The Remonstrants and Corvinus⁹⁰ affirm against Molina,⁹¹ ch. 29, section 16. We deny.

1. Because that which is false, none is obliged to believe. But that God has elected all and every person to glory, or that Christ died for all and every person, is false, as it has been proved elsewhere. Therefore [etc.].

⁸⁹ The Latin is *Christum pro se esse mortuum*, 'Christ to be dead for him'. The Marrow Men of the early-1700's Scottish Church theologically distinguished between the phrase 'Christ died for you' (in the event of the cross) and 'Christ is dead for you' (as presented and offered to you in the atonement), and claimed that reformed theologians before them made this same distinction. Rutherford confirms here (along with other passages in the Examination) some recent scholarship that the older writers held these phrases to be the same, the English equivalent of them probably coming from the Latin.

⁹⁰ Johannes A. Corvinus (1582-1650), an Arminian writer.

⁹¹ Luis de Molina (1536-1600), a Jesuit writer.

2. Because, to believe that Christ has died for all and every person is not the proper and adequate object of saving faith. Rather, the object of faith is a being having been embraced, even, Christ, the sufficient⁹² Savior, who has been made the author of salvation to all who obey Him and believe.

3. Because Christ dying for sinners conveyed the will of God, but only so far as the decree of election to glory. But the counsel, intention and decree of my election is not the proper object of my faith, but rather it is revealed to me by an experimental sense and the internal testimony of the Holy Spirit.

4. Nor are all those having been elected immediately required to believe, and that from a certain rule, that Christ has died for him. Therefore, much less the reprobate are so obliged. The former is proved:

1. Because the elect are required first to be conscious of the burdening weight of his⁹³ sins and misery and to lie trustingly, resting his heart upon Christ, just as all believers lie upon the sufficient Savior in salvation, whom are required to believe that Christ died for them. And because only those who labor and are heavy laden are immediately obliged to come, i.e. to believe (Mt. 11:28; Isa. 55:1).

2. If they are secure and not conscious of their misery, they being held to believe that Christ has died for them would keep them feeding vain presumption.

⁹² *Sufficiens*, is actually a verb, a participle: 'sufficing'. Note the change in tense from past tense previously to present tense.

⁹³ Sic; Rutherford not infrequently changes pronouns, in this case going from the elect as a category of people to each elect person individually appropriating the promises to himself or herself.

Whether Reprobates are required to believe in Christ, He not having died for them?

It is asked whether, after the Arminius in *Against Perkins*, Corvinus rightly says against Molina (ch. 29, section 17) that, “It is not by law required from reprobates that they believe in Christ having died, when certainly He has not died for them, because it is an injustice to condemn men because they have not been encompassed into grace through faith in Him, which grace does not at all pertain to them, neither did He procure [*impetrate sit*] by name for them”? We deny.

1. Because the equity of the obligation to believe, by which reprobates are obliged to believe in Christ, depends on the authority and lordship of God the Legislator; it is not, however, by any right of propriety by which Christ, out of eternal election, was destined to be their savior. Thus, on this account, Arminius is able to say that reprobates are not obliged to believe in [their own] eternal life and remission of sins, because God in the decree of election did in no way will eternal life to pertain to reprobates.

2. It is not able to be said that Christ does not in any way pertain to reprobates. Christ pertains to them even (1) by right [*jure*]⁹⁴ in the offer of the Gospel, (2) by the sufficiency of the death of Christ, (3) by the right of sharing in a common nature,⁹⁵ (4) by right of the common, first transgression being expiated by Christ,⁹⁶ (5) by right of the New Covenant being preached to the

⁹⁴ Or ‘command’. The obliging command assumes a certain right given to take of the offer.

⁹⁵ The referent of the implicit pronoun is not clear. Hence the phrase could also mean by right of Christ assuming a common nature; either meaning essentially points to the same thing.

⁹⁶ It is not entirely clear to the translators what Rutherford means by this. Rutherford elsewhere says, in reference to the reprobate, that original sin was expiated on the cross only for the elect. However, as all

reprobate out of the grace of Christ, (6) by right of the charge of God inciting⁹⁷ so that reprobates receive Christ.

3. Arminius has maintained this argument to be valid, that: reprobates being obliged to believe in Christ and trust in Him so as to lie on the sufficient Savior of all believers, though Christ, out of the intention and decree of God, is not a savior to them, nor has, as the author and mediator of salvation, been destined to them (which little worms of dust that are able to examine ought to adore and admire; how much less would it be fitting to blame?) is opposed to the mystery of the Gospel.

Chapter 10

On the Covenant of Grace

Whether the Covenant of Grace is Eternal?⁹⁸

pp. 438-439

sins stem from original sin as their source, and Christ paid this mother-transgression, the root of all others, on the cross (albeit only for the elect), it appears that Rutherford sees that in Christ paying for sin, though it was not for the reprobate, yet the sin imputed to Christ and Christ's payment of it has a potential applicability for the reprobate by the nature of it.

⁹⁷ Or 'by right of the imposing of the command of God', *jure mandati dei jubentis*.

⁹⁸ This section was translated by Rev. Robert D. McCurley.

The question is raised whether the covenant of grace is eternal; whether truly it so depends on this covenant continuing by our free will of choice, that we may be able to remain in it, or through our decision to be cut off by it? The Remonstrants deny that this Covenant is eternal. We assert that this Covenant is unalterable and eternal.

1. The eternal nature⁹⁹ of the Covenant is established from each part expressed in these words.

From God's side: "And I will make with them an everlasting Covenant, so that I will not turn away from doing good to them" (Jer. 32:40). And the eternal nature of the same is established from our side in the same place; it is established from the infallible promise of God: "and I will put my reverence in their soul, so that they might not withdraw from me."

2. Because final perseverance in grace is promised to those in the covenant¹⁰⁰ (Jer. 32:40, 41; Jer. 31:33-35; Isa. 59:21; Hos. 2:18; Ps.1:5; 1 Jn. 4:14; Mt. 16:18; Jn. 6:37; Jn. 10:28, 29; Jn. 14:16).

3. Because this Covenant is equally fixed, consistent and inviolable, and it is a natural Covenant of God according to the perpetuation of day and night, the revolving of Sun and Moon (Jer. 31:35-37). And it is that kind (of covenant), because with God's sacred oath interposed, it is evident to be most true. And Noah's world is not in need of being overwhelmed with waters (Isa. 54:10). Therefore, it was confirmed by God's immutability and veracity, who is not able to lie (Ps. 89:34-37).

4. Because it is supported by the sacred Covenant which will never be violated, between the Father and his Son, entered into, concerning an ancient seed which will be given to him (Isa. 53:10), children (Isa. 8:18. Heb. 2:13), concerning giving to him a dominion from sea to sea (Ps.

⁹⁹ *aeternitas foederis*: literally, "the eternity of the covenant."

¹⁰⁰ Literally: "the covenanters" or "the covenanted ones."

72:8; Ps. 2:8, 9) and a willing people (Ps. 110:3).¹⁰¹ Even now he may set aside souls for himself. Moreover, this Covenant between the Father and the Son, is in no way able to be an ineffective thing.

5. The death and shedding of the blood of Christ would have been in vain, by which the Testament of the Covenant was established. And there would be a place for another covenant, another Surety, who would confirm another covenant with another blood, if this covenant would be able to be returned void.

6. Because predetermined grace, pardon of moral lapses and repentance are promised in this Covenant.

7. That distinction would be destroyed, that the Holy Spirit had established between the Covenant that Jehovah had stipulated with the house of Israel, on that day when he led them out of Egypt – and the New Covenant; because that (previous) one was void and violated, but this one truly eternal and inviolable (Jer. 31:31-33).

Whether God is Able to Execute the Penalty of the Covenant of Works upon Adam's Posterity?

¹⁰¹ Rutherford went on in his later writings to develop the distinction between the Covenant of Redemption (*pactum salutis*) and the Covenant of Grace and to establish the idea that the former undergirds and supports the latter. See *The Covenant of Life Opened* (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1655). See also D. Patrick Ramsey, 'Samuel Rutherford's Contribution to Covenant Theology', in Matthew Vogan (ed.), *Samuel Rutherford: An Introduction to His Theology* (Edinburgh: Scottish Reformation Society, 2012), 139-166.

It is asked whether the Covenant of Works that was entered into with Adam was rigid and of such a sort that God, according to its rigor, could not carry it out on his posterity? The Remonstrants teach this by consequence in the doctrine of the punishment of Original Sin, which is nothing to them (*Corvinus contra Molina*, ch. 9, section 5; *Apology*, ch. 7, folio 84). We deny.

1. Because if God were to be unjust and cruel, because, due to the original sin of Adam, He would threaten death to him and all his posterity (whether temporal death or eternal), yet this would contend with the pity, mercy and the goodness of God in releasing¹⁰² infants from the eternal torments of Hell with respect to that sole sin which infants have not perpetrated in their own person, but has only been committed by another.

Because, according as that notion [by its inverse] contends with the veracity and fidelity of God in He not being able to actually predestine to promise such blessings as his saving righteousness or goodness,¹⁰³ so the threatening of that punishment of the creature, which He is not able to inflict by an act, contends with the righteousness of God and his wise goodness, except God wills to hear that He is cruel and rigid by inflicting such a kind of punishment which contends with God's righteousness, goodness, clemency and compassion.

But truly God is not unjust and cruel. Therefore He is able to join the threatening of the Covenant of Works, due to the Original Sin of Adam, to him and all his posterity, even infants, and justly punish by temporal and eternal death; nor does this contend with his compassion, clemency and goodness.

¹⁰² *luere*, or 'atoning', 'expiating'

¹⁰³ Which are not earned by, or imputed to the creature by any act of theirs. This argument stems from Paul's argument in Rom. 5:12-21.

2. Because, as God, out of mere grace and his absolute good pleasure sent his Son into the world (Jn. 3:16; Tit. 3:4), had power not to send Him, so it would not have been unjust if Adam and all his posterity had paid temporal and eternal death.¹⁰⁴

3. Because the Law of God is just and holy to all. Therefore the threats of the Law by the execution of the command are just, for the law is not capable of being just when the threat of it is unjust.

4. Because the Remonstrants touch even the administration of the Covenant on the part of God, which, though necessary from eternity [they say], would have had lost the entire human race,¹⁰⁵ to contend with the will of God which ought to save all and every mortal, when yet no such will is in God; and as the eternal destruction of a single man equally contends with such a will of God as does the eternal ruin of all and every man.

5. Out of this doctrine they conclude that Original Sin is not properly a sin, nor meritorious of eternal death; which is false according to the Scriptures, as has been previously demonstrated.

¹⁰⁴ This argument is built on, and intended against, the premises of the Arminian system: the Arminians posited that punishment upon people due to Adam's sin was mitigated by Christ's universally atoning death. Therefore God was not unjust and cruel in punishing persons according to Adam's sin. However, Rutherford notes, God could have not sent his Son, and then God would have punished Adam's posterity, justly.

¹⁰⁵ Rutherford is playing up the problems in the Arminian paradigm. While the reformed held that the administration of the Covenant was *certain* from eternity, in that it was God's eternal will so to perform, yet they did not hold that the Covenant was *necessary* of God to administer (rather it came about by God's free will, which could have been otherwise). Whereas the Arminians thought it necessary from an antecedent will in God for God to be constrained to administer such a covenant of salvation to lost man. Though this Covenant, according to them, was necessary from eternity, and included all men in it (contra the reformed), yet it was capable of saving none and actually, of itself, saved none.

Whether Persons Now are Morally Obligated to the Covenant of Works?

It is asked whether no mortal is henceforth under the Law as it was the Law and Covenant that had been entered into with Adam, as such, and that this covenant, having been broken by him, punitively seizes upon all, at the same time morally requiring obedience to it? The Remonstrants affirm [that none are so obliged] (*Corvinus contra Molina*, ch. 8, section 7). We deny.

1. Because the Law, as the Law, from that time is not condemning murderers and perjurers insofar as they have heard from the written Law, as Rom. 2:12 thus says, “who without the law will perish”.¹⁰⁶ Yet if the Law, as the Law, is not obliging them to active obedience, then it also is not obliging them out of justice to the same punishment [death] due to not having furnished active obedience [and yet they still die, showing that they are under the Law].
2. Because those married to Christ are under the Law¹⁰⁷ and under grace (Rom. 7).
3. Because no mortals are liable to this curse of the Law, Dt. 27:26 [“Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them.”], due to having committed sins after the Fall [and yet they are still liable];¹⁰⁸ for none not obliged to active obedience works sin contrary to the Law [and yet persons are obliged to active obedience to the Law].

¹⁰⁶ Note that this is different than the case of Adam, who had the Law of the Covenant of Works audibly told to him.

¹⁰⁷ In some respect, though not by way of legal bondage.

¹⁰⁸ That is, this curse is a general curse to those under the Law who break any law, which general curse does not come upon them by breaking any particular law.

4. For then [if persons are not yet still obliged by the Law,] Christ had died only for the breaking of the first Covenant entered into with Adam, nor would a curse have been made upon our actual transgression of the Law; but it is spoken by Paul to the contrary (Gal. 3:10-11,13-14).

Chapter 11

On the Manner of Conversion

pp. 486-487

Whether the Will is Coerced by Irresistible Grace?

It is asked whether because God converts us with irresistible force, that therefore the will is coerced, for here there is (so the Remonstrants affirm, Article 3-4, p. 20): 1. The external agent, having been armed with irresistible power, 2. Voluntary struggling and resisting, 3. A minor resistance with victory by the greater? We deny.

1. Because the will is, due to an external agent, willing, from nilling and being unwilling, by the removing of the heart of rock and the infusion of a new heart (Eze. 36:26).

2. Because the will willing by being unwilling and acting against its inclination is a coerced will. But such a will as this is nothing.¹⁰⁹

Whether Liberty is Overturned by God Determining the Choice of the Will?

It is asked whether because God infallibly determines the will to one thing, that He overturns liberty? The Remonstrants affirm. We deny.

1. Because God, by an infinite wisdom and omnipotence, does not overturn the nature of secondary causes, except in the case of miracles that change the thing's substance; so with Him having converted water into wine and the staff of Moses into a serpent. But conversion is not a miracle of this kind of change of substance; rather the substance remains in its nature of the same qualities.

2. Because God moves the free will in this manner, so that it most freely moves itself to that same thing to which it is fore-moved from God.

¹⁰⁹ As a will can't will against itself. In such a case it is not a willing at all, or it is a contradiction in terms, which unwill the will: that is, makes it nothing. The reformed orthodox, though, did have an ethical category for the common, practical case of a person's will being partially coerced by another agent: this makes the volition of the person's will not entirely free. For that reason the willing is less the person's own; therefore the person is less culpable for the act or less deserving of praise.

3. Because if certain motions being infallibly produced [by the will] bends the will infallibly, the will remaining completely free,¹¹⁰ much more greatly the Creator Himself is able to predestine this of wills.

Chapter 12

On the Justification of Sinners

pp. 510-511

Rom. 4:3

“For what saith the Scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.”

¹¹⁰ The argument is using a premise that the Arminians would agree with. The will has power to act, and in acting it infallibly (without fail) directs itself to its choice (as it has power to do), and, in the very willing and choosing of the thing, makes that choice infallibly. This is all to say that the will has the power to make choices; hence, in making such choices that it has power to make, it remains, by definition, completely free. Rutherford is not necessarily disagreeing with this premise, and may be affirming it; he simply argues that if the will has power to infallibly direct itself and remain free, how much more can God infallibly direct the will while maintaining its full freedom? There is another interpretation of Rutherford’s third point: As ‘produced’ is *creata*, it is possible that Rutherford is arguing from God infallibly creating the will to God being able to predestine the will. However, it is not entirely clear from this context exactly how God’s infallibly creating the will bends the will infallibly in subsequent acts of the will; hence this interpretation has not been preferred.

We know that this speech is a metonymy¹¹¹ and a figure. For that by which we apprehend, is imputed to us for righteousness in the manner in which it is said that my hand has endowed me, i.e. as industry does of wealth and as the labor of the hands is as a river having brought forth, so these things have endowed me [of them]. Hence:

Whether our Belief Serves as our Righteousness Before God?

It is asked whether the act of believing is imputed to the believer, not figuratively, correlatively or metonymically, but properly, so that it is our formal righteousness before the tribunal of God? Arminius affirms (*Disputation on Justification*), also Bellarmine (Book 1 *on Justification*, ch. 17). We deny.

1. Because it is not from any work by us that one is justified. Eph. 2:5, “For by grace are ye saved;” Tit. 3:5, “not by works of righteousness which we have done;” Rom. 11:6, “but if it be of works, then it is no more by grace.”

2. Because “the judgment of God is according to truth.” (Rom. 2:2) God is not able to accept the act of believing for the perfect fulfillment of the Law, because to believe is not to exactly and in all respects uphold the Law.¹¹²

¹¹¹ The substitution of a something closely related for the thing meant.

¹¹² The Law requires more than believing; therefore believing does not completely fulfill the Law.

3. We are justified by the grace of God and the redemption which is in Christ (Rom. 3:24), and by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Therefore, it is certainly not at the same time by any other acts in us.

4. It is not written that Christ has merited so that our faith be meritorious of the remission of sins and of eternal life. All of our faith, actions and sufferings together are not of that condign [wholly deserving] glory which is to be revealed (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 5:17-18).

5. The righteousness, which covers us and is necessary to appear before the tribunal of God, cannot have any part with sin or consist with sin (Rom. 3:9,22-23; Gal. 3:10-13). But the faith of the elect is joined with sin (1 Jn. 1:8; Ps. 130:3; 143:2; Prov. 20:9).

Whether Good Works are Necessary?

pp. 530-534

Mt. 3:10

“Every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.”

Hence, the necessity of good works is additionally established if we should want to be saved.

But, It is asked whether good works are necessary as causes of justification, and therefore also of salvation? The Arminians say so. We deny it. But for the more clear determination of

the question, these three things are to be distinguished: 1. The right to eternal life; 2. The particular application of that right to certain, definite persons; 3. The actual possession of eternal life.

2. A distinction is to be made between a cause *sine qua non*,¹¹³ or as Calvin says between an inferior and a superior cause.

Therefore, we put forward our sentence with these assertions:

Assertion 1: The right to righteousness and eternal life is owed only through the merits of Christ, not by our works: 1. Because the blood of Christ is the ransom¹¹⁴ paid for us, not our works, nor our sufferings (Rom. 3:24; Act. 4:12; Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 1:5); 2. Because there is no meritorious strength in our works (Rom. 8:18; 2 Cor. 4:17).

Assertion 2: Neither are our good works antecedent dispositions or causes for justification which qualify us by the promise of God: 1. Because justification is not from works, but from mere grace, as is proven elsewhere; 2. Because there is no such promise in Scripture that he who supplies good works of such a sort, he shall be justified therein before the tribunal of God.

Assertion 3: The applying cause of the right, or of the meritorious title to righteousness and eternal life, is faith alone; for faith alone takes hold of the righteousness of Christ and his merits. Christ, rather, is our righteousness, and eternal life is acquired¹¹⁵ by his merits and blood alone.

Assertion 4. Nothing keeps us from calling good works an inferior cause of the actual possession of eternal life. Thus says our Calvin, *Institutes*, book 3, ch. 14, section 21:

¹¹³ Literally: “without which: nothing”. That is, the presence of something is so essential to another thing, that without it, that thing does not exist.

¹¹⁴ λύτρον

¹¹⁵ Or ‘begotten’.

“In this, however, there is nothing to prevent the Lord from embracing works as inferior causes. But how so? In this way: Those whom in mercy he has destined for the inheritance of eternal life, he, in his ordinary administration, introduces to the possession of it by means of good works. What precedes in the order of administration is called the cause of what follows... In short, by these expressions, the order rather than the cause is noted. The Lord adding grace to grace, takes occasion from a former to add a subsequent.”¹¹⁶

Hence that statement of Bernard, “Good works are the way of the kingdom, not the causes of reigning.”¹¹⁷ He excludes them here only as principal causes. Therefore, Bucer, in the Colloquium of Ratisbonne [Germany], A.D. 1547, ch. 6, calls them, “causes in some way of eternal reward.”¹¹⁸ And Zanchi, *On the Nature of God*, book, 5, ch. 2, ‘On the Predestination of the Saints’, part 2, question 3 says, “they are an instrumental rather than an efficient cause, and a cause *sine qua non*, as they say.”¹¹⁹

Assertion 5: Good works are understood to have a causative power for eternal life in three ways. 1. As strictly¹²⁰ meritorious, which we reject against the papists as blasphemous, as we proved in another place. 2. That they might have an inferior and causal instrumental power conferred upon them by the grace of God, as Gisbertus Voetius says in *Thersite Heautontemerumeno*,¹²¹ section 1, ch. 2, just as the race is a cause of the crown which is received, the battle a cause of the victory, and diet a cause of health.¹²² Neither may one be said

¹¹⁶ Translation from John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. H. Beveridge, vol 2 (Edinburgh, UK: T. & T. Clark, 1863).

¹¹⁷ *Tractatus de Gratia et Libero Arbitrio (A Tract on Grace and Free Choice)*, Ch. 14, section 51 in *Sancti Bernardi, Abbatis Primi, Claraevallensis, Opera Genuina, Juxta Editionem Monachorum Sancti Benedicti, Tomus Secundus, Complectens Vi Opuscula, et Sermones de Tempore et de Sanctis* (Parisiis: Apud Gauthier Fratrem et Soc., Bibliopolas, 1836)

¹¹⁸ Martinum Bucerum, *Disputata Ratisbonae, in altero colloquio, Anno [ML]XLVI. Et Collocutorum Augustanae Confessionis Responsa, quae ibi coeperant, completa, De Justificatione, et locis doctrinae Euangelicae omnibus, quos doctrina de Iustificatione complectitur...* (1548) 569.

¹¹⁹ Girolamo Zanchi, *De Natura Dei, Seu de Divinis Attributis, Libri V...* (Neustadii Palatinorum: Wilhelmi Harnisii, 1598).

¹²⁰ *condigne*

¹²¹ *Thersites heautontimorumenos hoc est, Remonstrantium hyperaspistes, catechesi, et liturgiæ Germanicæ, Gallicæ, & Belgicæ denuo insultans, retusus...* (Ultrajecti: Abrahami ab Herwiick & Hermanni Ribbii, 1635)

¹²² 2 Tim. 4:7-8

to distinguish accurately here between a means and a cause, or between a way and a cause: for while good works are means, they are not passive, but active: a means here is an inferior cause. Therefore it is said, “For our light affliction *worketh for us* a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”. *Κατεργάζεταιται ἡμῖν*, ‘they work’, ‘they are causing for us’. So speaks the Holy Spirit, 2 Cor. 4:17. Neither can we distinguish here between causes and signs, for mere signs have no causality; neither is the dawn in any way a cause of the day, nor is smoke a cause, even an inferior one, of fire. Our race,¹²³ though, has an active causality through good works for the actual possession of eternal life. However, this causality 1. Is not principal. 2. Is not meritorious. 3. Is not through the works themselves, but by the grace of God. Therefore, they are *established* causes, rather than innate ones; not so by their own power, but from the dispensation of God. It therefore follows that, in this question, the following are not necessary: not 1. A distinction between *presence* and *causality*, or between *presence* and *efficiency*; nor 2. That distinction between a *cause* and a *sign*; nor 3. That distinction between a *means*, or a *way*, and a *cause*; nor 4. That distinction between an *active* and *passive* means, except as they might be prudently expounded.

3. Good works are understood [by the Arminians] to have a principal, controlling and predetermining causative force for eternal life, flowing from our free will, and not, rather, from the predetermining grace of God, so the Arminians dream: and in this way they desire¹²⁴ good works to be causes of eternal life, which we judge to be blasphemous.

1. Because to him who runs and wrestles,¹²⁵ and who does not receive strength in the games from the Lord, the praise and glory of the prize and victory should be owed, and not to the

¹²³ Heb. 12:1

¹²⁴ *volunt*, ‘they will’, a pun on their theological system.

¹²⁵ Eph. 6:12-13

Lord, who was a mere spectator, if to determine oneself is absolutely at the disposal of free will, and the determination of free will is in no way by God and his grace: and so good works should be the principal causes of eternal life, and not the grace of God.

2. The glory of good works and eternal life would rightly be ascribed, not to God, not to the Lamb slain for our sins, and not to divine grace (for, if these things had been ordained to all, free will may thereby determine or not determine itself to good works); but the glory ought then to be borne by free will alone.

3. Conversion, and perseverance, and eternal life, rather than non-conversion, apostasy, and eternal damnation, would be absolutely at our disposal, and not at the disposal of God and his grace.

4. Because Scripture everywhere denies that we are saved by works, but affirms that it is done from the grace and mercy of God. Eph. 2:8-9. *By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.* 2 Tim. 1:9 *Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus.* Tit. 3:5 *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* Rom. 9:23 *For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God (not wage) is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

5. Because the covenant of works (or the law) and the covenant of grace (or the gospel) would be confused if salvation were from our works. Indeed, grace is the cause of our eternal salvation, which is our justification before the tribunal of God. Finally, neither do we will good works, as *legally* perfect, to be necessarily required for the possession of eternal life, but for

evangelically good works to be sufficient, and acceptable and pleasing to God through Christ the Mediator.

Chapter 13

On the Perseverance of the Saints

Whether Apostates were Ever Regenerate?

pp. 570-574

Heb. 6:4

“For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, v.5, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come, v. 6, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance.”

Out of this place the Adversaries attempt to prove that the truly regenerate and justified, wholly under grace, are able to finally fall away (Script. Synod, Article 5, p. 237). We deny such, that those of which the apostle speaks truly have been regenerated.

1. Because this place, so we rightly note after Athanasius, ought to be understood of the sin against the Holy Spirit; this is not a simple sin, but παραπίπτειν, to fall away by total apostasy; and that sin is not able to come upon the truly elect and justified, so endless places of Scripture prove as has been seen above; this Pareus notes (*Commentary*, *Ibid.*).

2. Because such persons of which are spoken here have not had their ears prepared and their senses [exercised] to discern good and evil, nor are they of a capacity for solid food; rather they are they which have need for alphabetical instruction in the first principles of Christianity, so it is seen in ch. 5:12-14. But truly the apostle does speak of the elect and truly believing, speaking of them in vv. 9-10 of this chapter as being persuaded of them of better things and that which accompanies salvation, and of their labor of love which they have ministered to the saints.

3. Because the whole argument is firmed up [by the Arminians] in another way in the following form:

The regenerate have been illuminated, have tasted the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit.

But these justified and regenerate ones to which the apostle writes are illuminated, have tasted of the heavenly gift, etc.

Therefore, etc.

However, the major proposition is turned about and is openly false, and is that which is in question.

4. Because the apostle does not agitate here with crafty hypocrites, but with professors somewhat illumined;¹²⁶ it is not infrequent that they, which have not been regenerated, taste afore by their lips the sweetness and blessedness of the age to come. For ‘to taste,’ by meaning, is opposed to the imprinting of the internal and root thing in the heart, disposition [*habitus*] and strength of the soul; wherefore it is said: ‘to taste death’ (Mt. 16:28) and ‘Christ tasted death’; and we also know Him not to have been wholly subject to the dominion of death.

And 1 Pet. 2:3 [“If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious”] signifies an initial perception of grace which precedes the first birth and bringing forth of the newborn [Christian]. ‘To taste death’ is given to believers, yet of them it is denied that they will die (Jn. 11:26). Therefore, the clause “to taste of the powers of the age to come,” need not that it sound to be of the participation of eternal life, that they be those which have the firstfruits;¹²⁷ but of those firstfruits, they are not the partakers of.

But while the material object of his tasting is the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, yet it is not the formal object, for these things differ widely: to love a wife as one does a prostitute, by the love of prostitutes, and to love her as a wife with a marital love. In the same way Herod was oftentimes affected towards heavenly and spiritual things with joy, temporarily, as the good is pleasing; the true believer [is so affected] as the good is virtuous, but not for the same formal reason.

For just as the spiritual man takes spiritual joy in God on account of good, temporal things, so the unregenerate man is able to take hold of natural joy in the supernatural object, for

¹²⁶ The difference, per Rutherford previous to this section, is that self-conscious hypocrites, being inwardly and deliberately insincere, do not taste of these good things mentioned in Heb. 6:4-6, whereas those with temporal faith, having some sincerity therein, do taste of the good things to come.

¹²⁷ A pledge of eternal life.

the dispositions [*affectus*] and motions of the will and heart are not determined by the material object.

5. *The partaking of the Holy Spirit* is the communication of the common gifts of the Holy Spirit in the sacraments and gospel promises. But whomsoever are thus given these eminent temporal gifts, there is notwithstanding a deep of silence about the remission of sin, of justification, of the sealing of the Spirit, of the first-fruits of the future life and of gratuitous election to salvation, which things essentially discriminate the believer from the non-believer.

6. *The impossibility of being renewed* is able to be attributed to no truly elect believers according to the dogmas of our Adversaries, which gaze upon universal and sufficient grace to be the most excellent of all in this life. For they dream that ‘impossible’ [Heb. 6:4] here [stands] for ‘difficult,’ as, so far excellent is such sufficient grace that it makes a light threat upon sin by a long and most fierce denunciation; for surely such [a denunciation as is here given] is the punishment of a light sin.

7. ‘To crucify again the Son of God’ no more at once signifies the Son of God to be crucified by them which are unworthy communicants and participants of the Lord’s Supper, than by which thing such are said to be [communicants and partakers] of the body and blood of the Lord, by whom it is said the body and blood of the Lord was broken and poured out on the tree of the cross; so observes Ames on the *Anti-Synodical Writings*.¹²⁸ But here the apostle mocks in order to overturn the Jews¹²⁹ who had crucified Christ anew (just as their fathers had once crucified

¹²⁸ *Animadversiones in synodalia scripta Remonstrantium, Quoad Articulum Primum Sub præsidio D.D. Golielmi Amesii, Disp. XXVIII in Academia Franekerana propugnata à Studiosis Theologiæ...* (Vldericus Balck, 1629)

¹²⁹ The writer to the Hebrews was likely writing to Jewish Christians who had Jews as their adversaries.

Him under Pontius Pilate) inasmuch as they held out their assent to his disgraceful death by their malicious opposing of the gospel and persecution of all believers in Christ.¹³⁰

8. That ‘sanctification’ [in Heb. 10:29] which is bestowed upon them, is: 1. Sacramental, 2. Internal, indeed, but common, 3. External by the profession of the Gospel.

9. It is false that the truly regenerate are called, v. 8, cursed earth and ‘nigh unto cursing’, ‘whose end is to be burned’, ‘which beareth thorns and briars’, along with all which are in Christ by faith in which all the nations of the earth are blessed, having been blessed with Abraham (Gal. 3:14).

10. This the Adversaries especially hold out, that the threat about the elect is frustrated if apostasy is impossible respecting them. The basis of the argument though, is slippery and infirm, because the flight of Joseph and Mary into Egypt with Christ as an infant, to this end, that the boy would not have been cut apart by Herod, was not frustrated. The slaughter of Christ in infancy having had been permitted out of the absolute decree of God is equally impossible as the apostasy of the elect.

Chapter 14

On the Certainty of Salvation

¹³⁰ As is mentioned in Heb. 10:32-34; 13:3. Heb. 10:32-34 comes right after a warning against apostasy in v. 29, which, in conjunction with Heb. 6:4-6, seems to imply that it is likely that those who apostatized due to persecuting pressures then turned against their former Christian brothers in a like opposition. Such persecuting of Christians, due to Christ’s mystical union with them, is a persecution of Christ Himself (Acts 9:4). It can only be wondered whether some of those early Christians written to in Hebrews would shortly be crucified at the instigation of the Jews (Jn. 15:20-21).

Whether we ought to be certain about our election?¹³¹

pp. 638-640

The question is raised whether rightly the Remonstrants should pass by with silence on the doctrine concerning certitude, the certitude of our election; and whether rightly Grevinckhoven¹³² against Ames¹³³ should deny all sense of election in this life. We answer: The Remonstrants deny that anyone is able to know in this life that he himself is decisively elected unto glory, because no one, according to them, is decisively and irrevocably elected, unless dying in faith. But we contend against them, that people ought to be certain about their own eternal election, not, to be sure, with an a priori certainty (for who has known the mind of the Lord?) but with an a posteriori certainty.

1. Because we receive the Spirit who is from God, so that we might know that which God has freely given to us (1 Cor. 2:12). Therefore, also (we know) election has been granted from eternity.

2. Because all who are elected unto glory are also predestined to conversion and the adoption of the Sons of God (Eph. 1:5-6). But God has given to us many τεκμηρια, by which we may

¹³¹ This section was translated by Rev. Robert D. McCurley. For his introduction and original footnotes, see the original.

¹³² Nicolaas Grevinckhoven (d. 1632) was a Dutch Arminian minister and a proponent of the Remonstrant party.

¹³³ William Ames (1576-1633) was an Orthodox Reformed theologian from England who labored in Holland. Rutherford's reference is found on p. 138 of *Dissertatio theologica de duabus quaestionibus hoc tempore controversis, quarum prima est De reconciliatione per mortem Christi impetrata omnibus ac singulis hominibus: altera, De electione ex fide praevisa. Sermone primùm inchoata, postea vero scripto continuata, inter Guilielmum Amesium et Nicolaum Grevinchovium. Non qualem ille eam edidit cum suo, quod agnoscit, auctario; sed genuina illa atque integra: cui accessit ejusdem Grevinchovij responsio ad Amesii instantias* (Roterodami Batavorum: Mathias Sebastiani, 1615).

know that we are converted; therefore, also by which we may know that we are elected unto glory. A greater proof is Rom. 8:30 and Acts 13:48. A smaller proof is 1 John 2:3, “By this we know that we know him, if we keep his commands”; and 1 John 3:14, “We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brothers”; “By this we know that we love the sons of God, since we love God and keep his commands” (1 John 4:2); “And we know and believe the love that he has toward us” (1 John 4:16).

3. Because we are ordered to render our calling and election more firm through good works (2 Pet. 1:10).

4. Because we know that we are called and justified by peace of conscience, by *παρρησιαν* [boldness], by a sense of the love of God poured out in our hearts, by hope, which is not ashamed, by boasting in afflictions (Rom. 5:1-4; Rom. 8:15-17). And those who were justified, have the clear Word of God that they were predestined unto glory (Rom. 8:30, Acts 13:48).

5. Because not only the Apostles but also the seventy disciples are ordered to rejoice that their names had been written in the book of life (Luke 10:20). Therefore, they knew – and they were considered to know – that they were elect unto glory.

6. Because we are constrained, by the example of Paul and the Faithful, to attribute the grace and glory of our election altogether to God (Eph. 1:2-9, 1 Pet. 2:1-4). And no one is constrained to give thanks about a conjectural, free benefit in Christ, which he may reach, ignore, and even be obliged to ignore.

Whether the Certainty of Perseverance Lies in the Human Will?

pp. 640-641

It is asked whether no greater certainty of perseverance is needed by us than which the nature of a free act itself bears (whatever that be)? Is that which we have out of indifferent acts of free-will certain? The Remonstrants in *Script. Synod* (Article 5, p. 198) teach that the whole certainty of perseverance is ultimately resolved to be in the constancy of free-will, which has in itself the ability to persevere or not to persevere. We will to the contrary¹³⁴ that all such certainty has been founded in the truth, immutability and constancy of God, in the intercession of the Mediator and through the sealing of the Holy Spirit.

1. Because the Arminian certainty of persevering in complete faith and hope (and thus far the tranquility of the conscience) has been founded in miserable human liberty, standing upon a hinge vacillating to any place whatsoever.
2. Because so far is a man blessed and so far is there certainty in the blessed state of adoption as he is well-able of himself, by free-will, to promise to himself the cooperating grace of God.
3. Because this sentiment entrusts and commits all the promises of God, the eternity and stability of the Covenant of Grace, the intercession of Christ and his fruit before God the Father to the liberty of a man, a most miserable nanny¹³⁵ and an abandoned font of living waters.
4. This they teach, and so from this they build upon the absolute certainty about perseverance, [and in so doing they] overturn all religion, the nature of free obedience, of commands, of promises and of threats; so it is better and advantageous to be destitute of that certainty.

¹³⁴ Deliberate pun.

¹³⁵ *tutrici*, a female guardian or tutor of children.

Notwithstanding they themselves believe it to be very likely that the indefectible gift of perseverance be given, though in a miraculous and extraordinary way, some having so been confirmed in grace. Whence it follows that their men under the chastisement of death are released from every bond of religion and obedience, since these persons are not the same (so they themselves will) that are obliged to obey God, to which persons, notwithstanding, the indefectible gift of perseverance is provided.¹³⁶

But it is not seen that holy fear is well able to consist with the certainty of perseverance. They always lean upon this hypothesis: that the fear of God and faith are opposed. Certainly a fear of Hell and the spirit of bondage (which the regenerate do not receive, Rom. 8:15), fights with the true faith: 1. “But perfect love casteth out fear.” (1 John 4:18) 2. This fear is prohibited. (Lk. 12:32) 3. Because the regenerate cherish God ‘without fear’ (Lk. 1:74) and Zacharias said, in the order of the text [v. 71], that the dread of man is against it; it is added, for example, that we walk “in holiness and righteousness before Him¹³⁷ all the days of our life.” (v. 75) Nor does such dread [of God] for man weaken under the New Testament. 4. Because fear has been commanded to us, having been enjoined with spiritual joy (Ps. 2:11), the object of the fear being the goodness of God (Hos. 3:5). But certainly this argument is not of a fear properly said of final destruction and apostasy, but rather of the power of pious caution and a holy carefulness [*anxietatem*] about all those means which ought to be used, by which we persevere in the state of grace.

¹³⁶ It appears that the Arminians, in seeking to allow the most antinomian persons to be saved, taught that if a Christian apostatizes, but still knows the truth, though he does not assent to it or live by it, may be saved. If he is saved, it means that he had the gift of perseverance. Apparently, the way that such antinomian apostates may be saved, and be recipients of the indefectible gift of perseverance, is that in their falling away from revealed truth, they are no longer bound to obey it.

¹³⁷ And not before the dread of man.

Chapter 15

On the Church & its Marks

Whether the Doctrine of the Notes of the Church is Useless?

pp. 670-671

Jn. 10:28

“My sheep hear my voice.”

It is asked whether the doctrine of the notes of the Church is useless and noxious? The Remonstrants affirm (Episcopus, Disputation 28, Thesis 1). We deny.

1. Because we are expressly enjoined that we are to cling to the true Church, in which is sounded the voice of Christ the shepherd [pastor]: “Go, by the footsteps of the flock...” (Cant. 1:8)
2. Because the saints desire to cling to the Church themselves: “Whither is thy beloved turned aside? That we may seek him with thee.” (Song 6:1)

3. Because it is necessary to salvation that one unite himself together to the true Church. From thence the apostles will that one receives repentance, belief and the sacraments of the Church in token of his union with the Church (Acts 10:48; 2:38-39).

4. Fellowship with the saints in the external worship of God is necessary by all who profess Christ, and is encompassed under the communion of the saints, which Christians believe.¹³⁸

Chapter 16

Of the Ministers of the Word

pp. 681-684

Whether all the Divine Things of the Apostles were to be Proven to be Inspired by the
Rule of the Word?

Rom. 10:15

“How shall they preach except they be sent?”

¹³⁸ As confessed in the Apostle’s Creed. The teachings of the Creed were held by Rutherford, in chapter one, to be of the essentials of the Christian faith.

The sending of ministers is twofold: either immediate and extraordinary (of such were the apostles), or mediate, by the ordinary working of the Church. Of the latter sending there is a quarrel between us and the Remonstrants. The former sending was extraordinary because they were inspired immediately by an act of the Holy Spirit, and so not able to err.

Hence it is asked whether the divine breathing¹³⁹ which the apostles were given from God (it being a norm and rule akin to that same thing in the Old Testament, which breathings are contained in it) required work to be discerned [*interpretari*]; or [to put it another way,] whether truly all the breathings of them were weighed¹⁴⁰ according to the rule of the Word? The Remonstrants affirm that those breathings did not require the work of an examination by the Word of God.

We instruct about the thing otherwise. Indeed, this is the ‘work’ [needed,] by distinctions: 1. One is the rule for them which are of the divine breathing; [there is] another [rule] for the hearers. 2. Another [rule] is the authority of the breathings of them *insofar as themselves* and *in themselves*; another of the breathings of them *insofar as us*. 3. Another is the rule of the breathings of them in the *act* or *exercise*; there is another rule of them in their *abiding disposition* [*habitu*].

Hence, Assertion 1: The apostles themselves in act and exercise, while they were being inspired by those breathings, as far as the content contained in them, did not have to work to examine and to prove them by the Law of Nature or by other Scriptures. Reason: Because Abraham, by the inspired address of God, in that God ordered it, did not have to work to examine the [command

¹³⁹ *afflatus*, this could be translated as ‘inspiration’ except that *afflatus* has an emphasis, in this context, on the content of what is immediately breathed out, and in that *inspiro* is also used throughout this section. The two Latin words have been kept distinct in their English translations.

¹⁴⁰ Or ‘exegeted’, *exigendierant*.

of the] slaying of his son or to approximate it to the Law of Nature, because that inspired mandate about slaying his son essentially included revelation having been made to Abraham that the order was lawful and divinely inspired. Whence the address of the angel to Zechariah [Lk. 1:11-17, 19-20] and that voice made to Peter (Acts 10[:13,15]), which they had herein resisted, were not immediate breathings, but were a bare communication of the will of God by an angel and a heavenly voice sent to them.

Assertion 2. But when, in the breathings of them, the prophets or apostles did not err in actual exercise, they are able to doubt so far as to examine those breathings by the Word of God.

Whence Jeremiah called into question whether he was a prophet: “I said, I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in his name,” (ch. 20:9). He had a work to examine [this sentiment] on account of the Word of God revealed to him in divine breath (ch. 1:7-10), or he rightly said this (“not to speak more in his name”), and still yet [he had to work] to examine whether he was called to be a prophet by the breathing of God. If yet the apostles had been in doubt of the resurrection of Christ, they ought by the Scriptures to examine their breathings, by which they had once believed that article.

Assertion 3. But the hearers of the apostles and prophets had a work to examine, according to the rule of sacred Scripture, Natural Law and the Decalogue, whether what the prophets and apostles had said was in conformity to Scripture. For the immediate breathings of the apostles were allowed *in themselves* to be not less authentic than the canon of Scripture since they contained, of their very own selves, the formal will of God and are on account of all, the same with the Word of God; and [that which is] the Word of God in itself, is the Word of God and authentic.

Notwithstanding, those breathings, *as far as to us*, are not formally the regulating rule of faith, but with respect to us are a rule having been regulated.¹⁴¹ Whence hearers have the work to examine as deeply as they are able and they ought to prove by the Word of God whether these breathings be, as to their content [*materiam*], the Word of God.

Whereby it is proved contrary to the Remonstrants:

1. 1 Jn. 4:1, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God.” 1

Thess. 5:21, “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

2. Because the Bereans are praised so generously in that they “searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so,” (Acts 17:11) which things had been proclaimed by Paul by divine inspiration. They did not, therefore, hold the immediate breathings of Paul, however in themselves divine inspirations, to have been for a regulating and immovable rule, but rather examined them from the Word of God.

3. Because the apostles did not prove, and especially not Christ, that which they predicted by divine breathings, but rather by the Scriptures of the Old Testament, the Law and the prophets (1 Cor. 15:4; Acts 26:22).

Chapter 17

¹⁴¹ The difference is that the canon of Scripture is the inspired, confirmed rule by which all else, including the teachings of prophets, are judged (Isa. 8:20). The words of a prophet do not hold this place (1 Cor. 4:6), but, though inspired, yet must be judged in accordance with the canon of Scripture, even if those words came into the canon at that time, or later.

Of Synods

Whether Delegates to a Synod may be Restricted to a Given Party?¹⁴²

pp. 714-716

It is asked whether they must be wholly indifferent and not restricted to any party¹⁴³ who have the right of voting in a synod? The Remonstrants affirm [this in their] *Confession*, ch. 25, section 2, where it is expounded thus: “Those which are delegated to synods are truly free; they endure through the examination of a dispute, having been essentially bound to no person, Church or confession, etc., but solely to God and Christ, and his sacred Word.” The reason is in their *Apology*, ch. 25, folio 287, “because the judge, in a judgment with contrary sides, is not to be bound unto one part of the dispute.”

We respond: The voting delegate must be free; this [indeed] is by enduring through the dispute having been sworn to no person, Church or confession, but only to the Word of God; [however] it is required, in enduring through and being limited in the examination of the dispute, to have been sworn to no confession *as it is human*. But if they would have the voter to be bound to no side, simply, yet be consenting to the Word of God, they bear jests:

¹⁴² Simon Episcopius (1583-1643), a leading Arminian at the Synod of Dort (1618-1619), complained that the small numbers of Arminian delegates at the Synod was due to undue prelimiting factors. Frederick Calder, *Memoirs of Simon Episcopius, the Celebrated Pupil of Arminius, and Subsequently Doctor of Divinity, and Professor of Theology in the University of Leyden* (London: Hayward and Moore, 1838) 310-312.

¹⁴³ *parti*, or ‘part’. This Latin term could not be translated uniformly through the passage; more nuances occur in the Latin than what show up in the English.

1. Because Peter, Paul and James had a preconvicted mind about the necessity of circumcision and other ceremonies before the [spiritually] coercive¹⁴⁴ synod of Jerusalem (Acts 15). Indeed, Elijah preconvicted the Baalite worship before [he came to] the coercive synod with the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18). And Nicodemus and Joseph, which were set to go to the council, stood parts with respect to Christ before they were constituted [in court] about his person. Nor would any here say that they were illegitimate members of the council.

2. Because as they would have judges to have respect to the truth, [they would have them] resemble unformed matter,¹⁴⁵ indifferent of itself, or a blank slate, or a chart of the world upon which nothing is inscribed by which the mind is in two ways. But it is necessary that they have their senses exercised by having been rooted in the truth and in Christ by stable faith. For those that are wholly indifferent about every divine truth are those which are able to be driven in a circle, giving vent to doctrine any which way, by whom light is set forth in the sight of the court for sale.

3. Because they thus intimate that synods are useful for nothing. If, for instance, the content of canons is a fundamental article, then the voter is greater than it, as an infidel;¹⁴⁶ but that is most absurd. For if he believe a fundamental article about the divine faith ought to be driven back, then he is not free, but has been drawn to a certain side about the faith. If he does not believe [at

¹⁴⁴ Rutherford is gratuitously emphasizing certain things which the Remonstrants disagreed with. The Arminians held that the Church does not have an exercise of discipline that may coerce the conscience of a person; rather the person is able to receive such teaching and advice, and make his own judgment. Rutherford, to the contrary, taught that Church discipline is coercive, spiritually, in that the person's conscience is bound by, and should forcefully moved by, the Word of God rightly administered through Church discipline.

¹⁴⁵ *materiae primae*

¹⁴⁶ If a delegate may vote down a fundamental article, then he has more authority than that fundamental article. Such an authority in voting only gives one the authority to vote as an infidel would, and, in fact, gives infidels the right to vote.

all], but in this manner is an infidel, then the more unfaithful he is, the more lawful it is to him and he ought to be a voter.

But, actually, they deny that any canons are able to settle things about fundamental articles because [they say] fundamentals are not truly controversial. If the content of canons (contradistinct from fundamentals) is at all truly controversial, then [on their view] it is not a work of canons; for if it is truly controversial, being further limited by the examination of the dispute, they all are able to be free and bound to a neutral part; and then what of a synod? It is made by the people a game.

4. Nor did the Remonstrants enter the Synod of Dort freely, not having been restricted by the sentiment of Arminius which they had taught by writings in the academies and pulpits before the synod was congregated.

5. And a true right is not in our ability; so the Apologists in the place cited. None, therefore, enters the synod who has been restricted in no way, and such is rarely needed [anyway].

Chapter 18

Of the Sacraments & Ecclesiastical Discipline

pp. 724-725

Whether Grace is Conferred by Baptism?

It is asked whether baptism is only a solemn rite by which we are distinguished from others and brought into divine worship, and not by which grace is really conferred? The Remonstrants affirm (*Confession*, ch. 23, thesis 3; *Apology*, ch. 23, folio 243; *Episcopus*, Disputation 29; thesis 8; Socinus, *Of the Office of a Christian Man*, ch. 4; Smalcius, Disputation 9, contra Franz¹⁴⁷, p. 299). “It is a fable that some internal efficacy is in baptism.” To the contrary:

1. Mk. 1:4, John “did preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.”
2. Rom. 6:4, “Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into his death;” and 1 Pet. 3:21, “The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” But under the bare significance represented in baptism, insofar as it is literal, is the remission of sins and regeneration; therefore baptism is a bare sign [of something else].
3. Because the end and intention is of Christ, that the Church “might be cleansed by the washing of water by the Word.” (Eph. 5:25-26)
4. Because if paedobaptism is not necessarily a rite by divine institution,¹⁴⁸ then it is not able to be a moral admonition of the remission of sin to infants; while they teach that which is in infants is not properly called sinned, yet it needs remission. (*Apology*, folio 84-85)

¹⁴⁷ This may be Wolfgang Franz (1564-1628), a Lutheran professor of theology at Wittenberg (1605-1628).

¹⁴⁸ As the Arminians held, though they still practiced infant baptism.

Whether Spiritual Gifts are sealed in the Lord's Supper?

It is asked whether in the Lord's Supper the death of Christ is only proclaimed and commemorated, and no spiritual gifts are actually sealed? The Remonstrants affirm (*Confession*, ch. 23, thesis 4; *Apology*, ch. 23, folio 249. Arminius in *Articles Weighed*.¹⁴⁹ So the Racovian Catechism on the Prophetic Office of Jesus Christ, ch. 3, p. 186). We are against this: we teach it to seal and really confer to us Christ and his benefits, but in a spiritual way.

1. 1 Cor. 10:16, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Mt. 26:28, "For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." Ex. 12:13, "And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the firstborn in the land of Egypt." But there was a real liberation of Israel from the overthrow and smiting made that night in the cutting down of the first born of Egypt.

2. Because we deny that a communion with the physical substance of the body is allowed. Notwithstanding, we recognize that a real, but spiritual, communion is necessary (which is opposed to an imaginary and a mere signifying); otherwise Christ is not given to us for the true and real nourishment of the soul.

¹⁴⁹ *Some Articles Diligently Weighed by Examination* (1620)

They object: But only in that way in the sacrament are we partakers of the body of Christ, whereby in the Word we are partakers of it, i.e. by faith. We respond:

1. But nor do Arminians say, we by the Word in another manner to be partakers of the body of Christ, which is solely by a moral signification and action.

2. Calvin calls it (*Institutes*, book 4, ch. 17, sections 7-9), “A high and admirable communion,” and Beza says it is (*Questions on the Sacraments*), “an incomprehensible mystery.” Yet it is allowed that communion be through faith, in that through a spiritual mouth we eat the body of Christ; nevertheless it is not only faith which accompanies the preaching of the Word, but in proportion as faith perceives and grasps¹⁵⁰ the offered¹⁵¹ grace of the things comprehended in the sacrament, God, in the presence and right use of the elements and rituals,¹⁵² actually and really exhibits¹⁵³ grace.

Chapter 19

Of the Magistrate¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ ‘perceives and grasps’ is one word in the Latin: *percipit*.

¹⁵¹ *exhibitionem*

¹⁵² Rutherford uses the plural as the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper not only involves the static bread and wine, but also the rituals of the Lord consecrating the elements through prayer, the breaking of the bread, the pouring out of the wine, giving this to the people and the people sharing it amongst themselves.

¹⁵³ ‘portrayed’, ‘offered’, ‘given’.

¹⁵⁴ The whole of this chapter has been translated by Guy M. Richard in *The Confessional Presbyterian*, vol. 4 (2008) 270-276. This here is an independent translation.

Whether the Magistrate is to Punish Heretics?

pp. 732-737

It is asked whether or not the magistrate is to punish heretics? Whether it is truly agreeable to the laws of our most merciful Savior Jesus Christ that the magistrate tolerate Jews, Turks, Papists, Arians, Socinians, Libertines and all heretics in the republic who err with a purely mental error? In this question these distinctions ought to be observed:

1. The distinction ought to be made with Bullinger (Decade 2, sermon 8) between arch-heretics and those they have led astray;
2. With Polyander (in *Synopsis of Pure Theology*, Disputation 50, thesis 57) between a blasphemous and others who are heterodox;
3. Between a complete apostate from Christianity and he who opposes or denies a fundamental article;
4. One thing is 1. Knowledge, 2. Another conscience, 3. Another is an external profession;
5. A positive profession is one thing; a negative one is another;
6. A common punishment is one thing; capital punishment another;
7. A curable error is one thing; an incurable one another;
8. A cumulative power is one thing; a privative one another.

Assertion 1. Thus far the liberty of simple knowledge and opinion for all men ought to be yielded by the magistrate, that the magistrate is able to constrain no one to be of this or that

opinion or sentiment in religion. Because mental acts, since they are internal, are not subject to the authority of the magistrate. The magistrate is able to govern information of the mind by doctors and pastors,¹⁵⁵ but not the opinion of the mind.

Assertion 2. The power of the magistrate directly and immediately on the conscience is null; yet indirectly and secondarily,¹⁵⁶ the power of the magistrate on the conscience is cumulative, because he is able to command someone to anxiously and diligently endeavor towards orthodoxy by all means. But privative power,¹⁵⁷ there is none, because rightly ought one to think of God freely; the king is not able to deprive the conscience, no tyrant, not any created power.¹⁵⁸

Assertion 3. The magistrate ought to constrain a heretic to a negative profession of sound faith. That is, the magistrate can, and ought to, compel the heretic so that in the exercise of religion he does not externally and openly profess, teach or disseminate anything which is contrary to the sound faith. Hence, we reckon that all that publicly and openly profess a false religion ought to be chastised according to the nature of the offence.

1. Because the magistrate bears the sword in order to take vengeance on the wicked (Rom. 13:4; 1 Pet. 2:13-14). But such heretics are evil-doers, and heresy is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:20).

¹⁵⁵ Insofar as the magistrate has jurisdictional governance over the outward man as it relates to civil peace and natural truth, including acts of speech and public discourse. So the magistrate is able to enjoin doctors and pastors to faithfully perform their offices (2 Kings 23:1-4; 1 Chron. 13:2-3; 2 Chron. 19:8-11). WCF, 20.4, "And for their publishing of such opinions, or maintaining of such practices, as are contrary to the light of nature, or to the known principles of Christianity, whether concerning faith, worship, or conversation; or to the power of godliness; or such erroneous opinions or practices, as either in their own nature, or in the manner of publishing or maintaining them, are destructive to the external peace and order which Christ hath established in the church; they may lawfully be called to account,[q] and proceeded against by the censures of the church, and by the power of the civil magistrate. (Dt. 13:6-12; Rom. 13:3,4 with 2 Jn 10,11; Ezra 7:23,25-28; Rev. 17:12,16,17; Neh. 13:15,17,21,22,25,30; 2 Kings 23:5,6,9,20,21; 2 Chron. 34:33; 2 Chron. 15:12,13,16; Dan. 3:29; 1 Tim. 2:2; Isa. 49:23; Zech. 13:2,3)"

¹⁵⁶ *secundario*, or 'following'

¹⁵⁷ power to take away.

¹⁵⁸ WCF, 20.2, "God alone is lord of the conscience (James 4:12; Rom. 14:4);"

Yet the king is not a servant of God if he does not coerce faulty perceiving and open professing about the divine majesty.

2. Those which the Church ought to ecclesiastically discipline, even the scandalous, those the Christian magistrate, as the Guardian, Nourisher, Tutor, Defender and Protector of the Church, ought to civilly discipline: the office of Guardian, Tutor and Protector requires it. But the Church is to convince¹⁵⁹ the gainsayers and to excommunicate the contumacious, and so likewise ought she to shun heretics.

3. A false public religion before God is a public sin, or not. If the latter, then men in any sect or religion are able to be saved; that is absurd, since there is one faith (Eph. 4:5) and as salvation is through the name of Jesus only (Acts 4:12). If the former, so ought the servant of God to punish and coerce it.¹⁶⁰

4. Because if this reason of the Remonstrants were strong, that heretics ought not to be coerced by the sword because solely by reason and not by iron, the flame or force is one persuaded to religion, then this reason proves indeed that no blasphemers and arch-heretics (which, if their pseudo-prophets do not teach destructive heresies about Christ, even in public places, they believe themselves, in their erroneous consciences, to be obligated to the utmost wickedness) ought not to be coerced.

Yet [even] they teach that the magistrate is permitted to, and is to detain doctors of destructive errors from gainsaying in church-buildings and public places. Yet this is inevitably responded: such an arch-heretic ought to be persuaded by reason that he ought not to teach in public

¹⁵⁹ or 'convict'

¹⁶⁰ The assumed premise, that the magistrate has jurisdiction about, and ought to punish, every public sin, is not widely believed today, though Reformed Orthodoxy taught it from Rom. 13:1-5 as basic to the office of the magistrate and to politics.

places that doctrine which he believes is healthy and necessary to the saving of souls, yet he ought not to be excluded by force and sword from public church-buildings.

Assertion 4. The magistrate cannot directly coerce the heretic to a positive profession of sound faith so as to openly own true salvation, which he thinks is blasphemy, because thus he would be able to coerce him to hypocrisy. But the magistrate is able to coerce to the putting down of the erroneous conscience by the causes, means, reasons and motives which ought to be weighed and in he being informed further.

Assertion 5. The magistrate ought to implement capital punishment to blasphemers, openly¹⁶¹ heretical and blasphemous professors of God, and those defecting from Christianity to Judaism or another false religion.

- p. Because God mandates this: “He that sacrifices to other gods, except to God only, he shall be utterly destroyed (Ex. 22:20). The Law is (Dt. 13) that the dreamer and the one tempting to serve strange gods: without any leniency he ought to be killed. A worshipper of the sun and moon, one ought to be buried with stones. Lev. 24:15-16, “And he that curseth his God shall bear his sin; and he that blasphemeth the name of the Lord, shall be put to death, [and all the congregation shall certainly stone him.]”

Indeed, these laws do not pertain to us as they are judicial laws (so notes Beza, *Of Punishing Heretics*): 1. For they are from Moses, not from our magistrate; they were prescribed to Israelites, not to us. 2. For they speak of corporal sacrifices, etc. 3. For against [prophetic] dreamers they were made [whereas the gift of prophecy has ceased]. These laws are now ceased

¹⁶¹ *profitentes* may also connote ‘public’. An open professor, willing to openly and publicly receive a given status, nearly always has a public profession.

unto¹⁶² us. But as pertaining to their natural equity, it is not able to be proved from the Scriptures that these laws are of those which were abolished by the death of Christ, unless those laws would have said that the following was effected by the death of Christ: that to blaspheme the name of God, while it might have been a sin amongst the Jews, has been allowed or is indifferent [*adiaphoran*] to us; or if it is a sin, it has been taken away by the death of Christ, at least insofar as it ought not to be punished by the magistrate.

2. Because the edicts of king Nebuchadnezzar are praised, which did not regard the political and judicial law of the Jews (Dan. 3:29), and of Artaxerxes (Ezra 6:11; 7:25-26), of appointing them to death and eradication which had uttered blasphemy against Jehovah and refused to prepare to do the Law of God. So 2 Chron. 15:13 & Ezra 10:8.

3. This is not insufficiently confirmed by the examples of Jehu, who slaughtered the priests of Baal; of Josiah, who executed the priests of the high places; of Elijah, who slayed the priests of Baal next to the brook of Kison; of Peter, who struck down Ananias and Sapphira; and of Paul, who struck Elymas the sorcerer with blindness. These all prove from the lesser¹⁶³ that much more it is licensed to the Christian magistrate to devote blasphemers to death since by justice it is natural in both cases, as this sin is most grave and is not inferior to patricide.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶² *inter*, or 'between', probably signifying a lapse of time.

¹⁶³ While the apostles in these New Testament examples did not directly inflict a physical punishment on the offenders themselves (a civil power), yet they gave their word and sanction to these extraordinary physical punishments that God immediately inflicted upon the offenders. If a physical punishment from God be fitting for the persons' spiritual sins, then such a punishment is fitting from the civil magistrate, who acts in the stead of God and bears the regular authority to inflict such corporal punishments.

¹⁶⁴ A direct and intentional attack upon God our Father by blasphemy and cursing (one only being able to reach Him with one's words) is akin to striking one's father and wishing him dead.

Assertion 6. Where men go astray, having been seduced by others, there the magistrate ought to act with much patience and all lenity, that those going astray be coerced, in whatever way, with a mild penalty unto repentance, that they might be forgiven.

Chapter 20

Of the Soul and the Resurrection of the Body

Whether souls are immortal?

p. 753

Acts 7:59

“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”

It is asked whether souls are immortal? The Remonstrants and Socinians waver.¹⁶⁵ John Geisteranus in the *Confession* says, “It is not known whether souls after death are alive live or

¹⁶⁵ The Socinians tended to be skeptical of much Scriptural and orthodox teaching. While this was also true to some extent of the Arminians, they also especially found unbelievers suffering in Hell for eternity incompatible with the love of God (which viewpoint Rutherford critiques later in the chapter). Hence, these were likely motivating factors as to why both groups wavered on the eternity of the soul.

dead, mortal or immortal.” Henry Slatius in the *Declaration* (p. 53) openly says, “It is not known whether souls remain surviving after they have been loosed from the body; at least this is not comprehensible.” The Remonstrants teach (*Apology*, ch. 19 & *Confession*, ch. 19), “The faithful, and they only, are awoken to be given a glorious and incorruptible body.” Contra Eccl. 3:21; 12:7; Mt. 19:28; Acts 7:59.

The End