

free will in outward actions, whether they concern manners,<sup>4</sup> a family, or the commonwealth, albeit, both in the choice and refusal of them, it be very weak. . . .

The will received: I. An impotency whereby it cannot will, or so much as lust after, that which is indeed good: that is, which may please & be acceptable to God. . . . II. An inward rebellion whereby it utterly abhorreth that which is good, desiring and willing that alone which is evil.

By this it appeareth that the will is no agent but a mere patient in the first act of conversion to God, and that by itself it can neither begin that conversion or any other inward and sound obedience due to God's Law.

### CHAPTER 13: Of actual sin

After original sin in Adam's posterity, actual transgression taketh place. It is either inward or outward. Inward is of the mind, will, and affection.

The actual sin of the mind is the evil thought or intent thereof, contrary to God's law. Examples of evil thoughts, God (the only knower of the heart) hath in divers places set down in his word. I. That there is no God. . . . II. That there is neither providence nor presence of God in the world. . . . III. It imagineth safeguard to itself from all perils. . . . IIII. It esteemeth itself more excellent than others. . . . VI. To think uncharitably and maliciously of such as serve God sincerely. . . . VIII. That the pains of hell may be eschewed. . . . Many carnal men pretend their good meaning, but when God openeth their eyes, they shall see these rebellious thoughts rising in their minds as sparkles out of a chimney.

The actual sin of both will and affections is every wicked motion, inclination, and desire. Gal. 5:17, *The flesh lusteth against the spirit.*<sup>5</sup>

An actual outward sin is that, to the committing whereof, the members of the body do, together with the faculties of the soul, concur. Such sins as these are infinite. . . .

### CHAPTER 15: Of election, and of Jesus Christ the foundation thereof

Predestination hath two parts: election and reprobation. 1 Thes. 5:9, *God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by the means of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Election is God's decree whereby, on his own free will, he hath ordained certain men to salvation, to the praise of the glory of his grace. . . .

This decree is that book of life wherein are written the names of the elect. . . .

The execution of this decree is an action by which God, even as he purposed with himself, worketh all those things which he decreed for the salvation of the elect. For they whom God elected to this end, that they should inherit eternal life, were also elected to those subordinate means whereby, as by steps, they might attain this end, and without which it were impossible to obtain it. Rom. 8:29-30, *Those which he knew before, he also*

<sup>4</sup> {"Manners" translates the Latin "moralibus"; it is also clear in the Latin that "of them" refers to "outward actions."}

<sup>5</sup> {Pre-Reformation orthodoxy held that only voluntary acts could be sinful; Perkins, however, follows Luther and Calvin in breaking this link between sin and consent.}

*predestinate to be made like the image of his Son, that he might be the first born amongst many brethren; moreover whom he predestinate, them he called; whom he called, them he justified; and whom he justified, them also he glorified. . . .*

### CHAPTER 18: Of Christ's office

Satisfaction is that whereby Christ is a full propitiation to his Father for the elect. . . .

Christ satisfied God's anger for man's offence:<sup>6</sup> according to his humanity, by performing perfect obedience to the will of God; according to his deity, by ministering such especial dignity to his perfect obedience as was both of full merit and efficacy before God for the salvation of the elect. . . .

Satisfaction comprehendeth his passion and fulfilling the Law.

His passion is the first part of satisfaction, by which he, he having undergone the punishment of sin, satisfied God's justice and appeased his anger for the sins of the faithful. His passion was on this manner.

Somewhat before his death, partly fear arising from a sense of God's wrath imminent upon him, partly grief possessing, as it were, each part of him, so disturbed his sacred mind that inwardly for a while it stroke into him a strange kind of astonishment, or rather oblivion of his duty imposed upon him; and outwardly made him pray unto his Father (if he would) to remove that cup from him, the which he did express with no small cry, many tears, and a bloody sweat trickling from his body unto the ground. But when he came again unto himself, he freely yielded himself unto his Father to satisfy upon the cross for the transgression of man. After this his agony was overpassed, by Judas his treachery Christ is apprehended. . . . This innocent thus condemned is pitifully scourged, crowned with thorns, scoffed, spitted at, spitefully adjudged to the death of the cross on which his hands and feet are fastened with nails. Here stayed not his passions, but after all these he became accursed to God the Father; that is, God poured upon him, being thus innocent, such a sea of his wrath as was equivalent to the sins of the whole world. He now being under this curse, through the sense and feeling of this strange terror, complaineth to his Father that he is forsaken; who notwithstanding, encountering then with Satan and his angels, did utterly vanquish and overcome them. When this was ended, his heart was pierced with a spear till the blood gushed out from his sides, & he gave up the ghost, and commended his spirit to his Father's protection, the which immediately went into paradise.<sup>7</sup> His body, whereof not one bone was broken, was buried and three days was ignominiously captivated of death.

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### CHAPTER 32: Of the sacraments

Thus much of the preaching of the word. Now follow the appendents to the same: namely, the sacraments.

<sup>6</sup> {This is the distinctive Reformed theory of the Atonement, usually known as "penal satisfaction."}

<sup>7</sup> {Perkins here follows Calvin's teaching, according to which Christ did not literally descend into hell following the Crucifixion but rather on the Cross experienced the full wrath of God, i.e., "hell." See *Form of prayers* <142>.

A sacrament is that whereby Christ and his saving graces are by certain external rites signified, exhibited, and sealed to a Christian man. Rom. 4:11, *He received the sign of circumcision as the seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had when he was uncircumcised.* . . .

We must not therefore surmise that there is any inherent force or efficacy of sanctifying in the visible and external sign of the sacrament as the bath waters have to cure diseases; for the power of sanctification is appropriate only to the Holy Ghost, and Christ hath ordained the sign to signify grace, not to confer it.

‡

**CHAPTER 52: Of the decree of reprobation**

Thus much shall suffice for the decree of election. Now followeth the decree of reprobation, whereby God in his just judgment hath determined eternally to reject some, to the praise of his justice. . . .

Some, fearing lest they should make God an unjust and cruel God, refer this word *predestination* only to the elect; as for the reprobate, they hold that God doth not predestinate them but only foreknow that they should be condemned. Of this mind is Heming{sen} . . . and Jacobus Andreas. These men turn the causes of salvation and damnation upside down, following this order:

God's decree, whereby he would that all men should be saved in Christ

The fall of Adam, not preordained of God but only foreknown.

Predestination, whereby God purposed with himself to justify and perpetually to glorify certain of Adam's posterity, freely of his own mercy, not by their faith or works which he foresaw.

God's foreknowledge of man's incredulity and contumacy, whereby the rest of Adam's posterity refuse that grace which is offered in the Gospel.

The decree of reprobation, whereby God, foreknowing their contumacy, adjudgeth them to eternal damnation

A universal vocation, whereby grace & salvation is offered to all men without exception.

But this description halteth right down, as may be proved by many reasons. First, it is untrue that God would have all men saved in Christ. For no man can be said to be elected, if God will that all men should be elected in Christ. For election is a singling out of some from others. . . .

Secondly, it is false that God will have none damned. For seeing that some men are condemned, it must needs be either with his will or without his will. If without his will, then violence shall be offered to the will of God, something being done against it, which is impious once to think. If with it, God must needs change his mind, which cannot be. Neither is there any cause why we should think that God is an acceptor of persons if so be he ordain any to condemnation, because he was not moved hereunto by any inherent

circumstance of any man's person, neither oweth he ought to any man, and may do with his own that which seemeth good unto him.

Neither must any think that hereby God hateth his creature; for he decreed to destroy his workmanship, not because he hated it, but upon just causes known to him he ordained it to be subject to his hatred. And God doth not actually hate anything for ought but sin. . . .

If any oppose against this the place of Mal. 2:10, *that God is the Father of all*, they must consider that it is to be understood of God's Church: out of which, all the corrupt posterity of Adam are the sons of wrath and children of Satan. . . . Last of all, this reason must not be urged, that God created any to the end he might destroy them. For the end of every man's creation is the glory of God, to the manifestation whereof the wicked were ordained. Prov. 16:4.

Thirdly, whereas they say that God did only foreknow and not from eternity decree the fall of Adam, it is most impious. For there is not the very least thing in nature but it cometh to pass by God's decree. . . . Yea, those actions which are sin, the Lord hath in his counsel determined of them. . . .

. . .

Last of all, it is not true that all men are called to salvation, and that therefore that grace which is in Christ is offered to all. . . .

**CHAPTER 53: Concerning the execution of the decree of reprobation**

In the execution of this decree there is to be considered the foundation or beginning, and the degrees or proceeding thereof.

The foundation of executing the decree of reprobation is the fall of Adam, by which fall he was subject both to sin & damnation. . . . Here we must note that God hath so decreed to condemn some as that, notwithstanding, all the fault and guilt of condemnation remaineth in the men only.

Further, whom God rejecteth to condemnation, those he hateth; this hatred of God is whereby he detesteth & abhorreth the reprobate when he is fallen into sin, for the same sin. And this hatred which God hath to man comes by the fall of Adam, and it is neither an antecedent or a cause of God's decree, but only a consequent and followeth the decree.

Reprobates are either infants or men of riper age.

In reprobate infants, the execution of God's decree is this: as soon as they are born, for the guilt of original and natural sin, being left in God's secret judgment unto themselves, they dying are rejected of God for ever. . . .

Reprobates of riper age are of 2 sorts: they that are called (namely, by an uneffectual calling) and they that are not called.

In the reprobates which are called, the execution of the decree of reprobation hath 3 degrees: to wit, an acknowledgement of God's calling, a falling away again, and condemnation.

The acknowledgement of God's calling is whereby the reprobates for a time do subject themselves to the calling of God, which calling is wrought by the preaching of the word. Matth. 22:14, *For many are called, but few are chosen.* And of this calling there are five other degrees.

The first is an enlightening of their minds, whereby they are instructed of the Holy Ghost to the understanding and knowledge of the word. . . . The second is a certain

penitency, whereby the reprobate, I. Doth know his sin. II. Is pricked with the feeling of God's wrath for sin. III. Is grieved for the punishment of sin. IIII. Doth confess his sin. V. Acknowledgeth God to be just in punishing sin. VI. Desireth to be saved. VII. Promiseth repentance in his misery or affliction, in these words, *I will sin no more*. . . .

The third degree is a temporary faith, whereby the reprobate doth confusedly believe the promises of God made in Christ; I say *confusedly*, because he believeth that some shall be saved, but he believeth not that he himself particularly shall be saved; because he, being content with a general faith, doth never apply the promises of God to himself; neither doth he so much as conceive any purpose, desire, or endeavor to apply the same, or any wrestling or striving against security or carelessness and distrust. . . .

The fourth is a tasting of heavenly gifts: as of justification and of sanctification and of the virtues of the world to come. This tasting is verily a sense in the hearts of the reprobates whereby they do perceive and feel the excellency of God's benefits, notwithstanding they do not enjoy the same. For it is one thing to taste of dainties at a banquet, & another thing to feed & to be nourished thereby. . . . The fifth degree is the outward holiness of life for a time: under which is comprehended the zeal in the profession of religion, a reverence and fear towards God's ministers, and amendment of life in many things. . . .

The second degree of the execution of God's counsel of reprobation, in men of ripe age which are called, is a falling away again, which for the most part is effected and wrought after this manner. First, the reprobate is deceived by some sin. Secondly, his heart is hardened by the same sin. Thirdly, his heart being hardened, it becometh wicked and perverse. Fourthly, then followeth his incredulity and unbelief, whereby he consenteth not to God's word when he hath heard & known it. Fifthly, an apostasy or falling away from faith in Christ doth immediately follow this unbelief. . . .

This apostasy is sometimes sin against the Holy Ghost, which is when any man willingly through obstinate malice doth speak blasphemy against Christ and his divine truth which he hath certainly known. This obstinacy of the heart ariseth from the old and engrafted affections, hatred, envy, and malice directly against God himself and Christ. It hath his name not because it is committed against the person of the Holy Spirit, but because it is done against the gift of the Holy Ghost, namely, illumination. This cannot be forgiven because it excludeth all faith and repentance. . . .<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> {The 1600 edition is considerably fuller: "The efficient cause of it . . . is a set & obstinate malice against God and against his Christ. Therefore when a man doth in the time of persecution, either for fear or rashly, deny Christ, he doth not commit this sin . . . as may appear by the example of Peter who denied Christ. . . . Neither doth he which persecuteth Christ and his Church upon ignorance fall into this sin. . . . Many of the Jews crucified our Savior Christ, who afterward, because they committed that grievous fact upon ignorance, repenting at Peter's sermon, they did obtain remission of their sins. . . . For the malice of this sin is directed against the very majesty of God himself, and against Christ. . . . Therefore this sin doth directly respect the first table of the moral law, and is not some particular slipping aside . . . such as are some doubtings concerning God or of the truth of the Scriptures or of Christ, &c., but it is a general defection & apostasy from God, and that totally. . . . This sin is found in none at all but such as have been enlightened by the Holy Ghost and have tasted of the good gift of God. . . . Neither is it in him a bare cogitation alone but . . . such a blasphemy against God as proceedeth from a malicious and obstinate heart. . . . The elect cannot commit this sin, and therefore they who feel in themselves a sure testimony of their election need never to despair; nay, this sin is not in every reprobate; for many of them die before they have this illumination by God's Spirit. . . . This sin cannot be forgiven . . . because after a man hath once committed this sin, it is impossible for him to repent. For the gift of repentance proceedeth from the Holy Ghost, and the Holy

After apostasy followeth pollution, which is the very fullness of all iniquity, altogether contrary to sanctification. . . .

The third degree is damnation, whereby the reprobates are delivered up to eternal punishment. . . .

The execution of the degree of reprobation in infidels which are not called, is this. First, they have by nature ignorance and vanity of mind. After that followeth hardness of heart, whereby they become void of all sorrow for their sins. Then cometh a reprobate sense, which is when the natural light of reason and of the judgment of good and evil is extinguished. Afterward when the heart ceaseth to sorrow, then ariseth a committing of sin with greediness. Then cometh pollution, which is the fullness of sin. Lastly, a just reward is given to all these: to wit, fearful condemnation. . . .

#### CHAPTER 54: Of the state and condition of the reprobates when they are dead

The death of the reprobate is a separation of the body and the soul; of the body, that for a time it may lie dead in the earth; of the soul, that it may feel the torments of hell, even until the time of the Last Judgment, at which time the whole man shall be cast into the most terrible and fearful fire of hell. . . .

. . .

#### A corollary

And this is the full execution of God's decree of reprobation, whereby appeareth the great justice of God in punishing sin; from whence also cometh God's glory, which he propoundeth to himself as the last and chiefest end in all these things. Therefore let every Christian propound the same end unto himself. . . .

. . .

#### CHAPTER 57: Of the application of predestination

The right applying of predestination to the persons of men is very necessary, and it hath two parts. The first is the judgment of particular predestination, and the second is the use of it.

The judgment and discerning of a man's own predestination is to be performed by means of these rules which follow.

I. The elect alone, and all they that are elect, not only may be, but also, in God's good time, are sure of election in Christ to eternal life. 1 Cor. 2:12, 2 Cor. 13:5.

II. They have not this knowledge from the first causes of election, but rather from the last effects thereof; and they are especially two: the testimony of God's Spirit and the works of sanctification. 2 Pet. 1:10, Rom. 8:16.

III. If any doubt of this testimony, it will appear unto them whether it come from the Spirit of God or their own carnal presumption, first, by a full persuasion which they

Ghost remaineth in us through Christ apprehended by faith; now no man doth apprehend Christ that doth maliciously despise and contemn him. . . . It is very hard to know when a man committeth this sin because the root thereof (namely, set malice) lurketh inwardly in the heart and is not so easily discerned.")



shall have; for the Holy Ghost will not barely say it, but persuadeth such that they are the children of God, the which the flesh cannot in any wise do. Secondly, by the manner of persuasion: for the Holy Ghost draweth not reasons from the works or worthiness of man, but from God's favor and love; and this kind of persuasion is far different from that kind which Satan useth. Thirdly, by the effects of that testimony. For if the persuasion arise from presumption, it is a dead persuasion; but contrarily, it is most lively and stirring if it come from the Holy Ghost. For such as are persuaded that they are elected and adopted children of God, they will love God, they will trust in him, and they will call upon him with their whole heart.

IV. If the testimony of God's Spirit be not so powerful in the elect, then may they judge of their election by that other effect of the Holy Ghost: namely, sanctification—like as we use to judge by heat that there is fire when we cannot see the flame itself.

V. And of all the effects of sanctification, these are most notable. I. To feel our wants, & in the bitterness of heart, to bewail the offence of God in every sin. II. To strive against the flesh; that is, to resist & hate the ungodly motions thereof, & with grief to think them burthenous & troublesome. III. To desire earnestly and vehemently the grace of God & merit of Christ to obtain eternal life. IIII. When it is obtained, to account it a most precious jewel. Phil. 3:8. V. To love the minister of God's word in that he is a minister, & a Christian in that he is a Christian; and for that cause, if need require, to be ready to spend our blood with them. . . . VI. To call upon God earnestly & with tears. VII. To desire & love Christ's Coming and the Day of Judgment, that an end may be made of the days of sin. VIII. To fly all occasions of sin and seriously to endeavor to come to newness of life. IX. To persevere in these things to the last gasp of life. Luther hath a good sentence for this purpose, *He that will serve God, must (saith he) believe that which cannot be seen, hope for that which is deferred, & love God when he showeth himself an enemy, and thus remain to the end.*

Now, if so be all the effects of the Spirit are very feeble in the godly, they must know this, that God trieth them, yet so as they must not therewith be dismayed, because it is most sure that if they have faith but as much as a grain of mustard seed and as weak as a young infant is, it is sufficient to engraft them into Christ; & therefore we must not doubt of their election because they see their faith feeble & the effects of the Holy Ghost faint within them.

VI. Neither must he that as yet hath not felt in his heart any of these effects presently conclude that he is a reprobate; but let him rather use the word of God and the sacraments, that he may have an inward sense of the power of Christ drawing him unto him, and an assurance of his redemption by Christ's death and passion.

VII. No man may peremptorily set down that he or any other is a reprobate. For God doth oftentimes prefer those which did seem to be most of all estranged from his favor to be in his kingdom, above those who in man's judgment were the children of the kingdom. Hence is it that Christ saith, *the publicans and harlots go before you; and, many an one is called at the eleventh hour*, as appeareth by that notable example of the thief upon the cross.



TEXT: *A golden chain, or the description of theology containing the order of the causes of salvation and damnation, according to God's word. . . . Written in Latin by William Perkins, and translated by another* (London, 1591) (NSTC 19657).

Checked against *A golden chaine. . . .* (Cambridge, 1600); and *Armillæ aureæ id est, theologiae descriptio mirandam feriem causarum & salutis & damnationis iuxta verbum Dei proponens* (Cambridge, 1592).