

tion, and of two opposite effects, to give being unto either. Wherefore not only to our seemings, (as some men of great understanding and knowledge have imagined,) but even according to truth itself, and by the plain different efficacy of those causes, whereby things are really brought to pass, we may conclude, that some are by natural constitution necessary, and must needs fall out, (the course of nature being presupposed,) as fire cannot but consume the stubble thrown into it, except God's omnipotent power overrule the course of nature: some things contrariwise are casual or contingent; contingent I say in their own nature, and not so judged only by us through ignorance of the manner how their causes work. Things contingent are certain as touching the circumstance of time when, and place where, they have once their being. But in respect of the cause which produceth them, they have no certainty. So that although we be not of any thing more sure, than that he doth walk, whom we presently behold walking: yet if we refer this effect to the cause out of which it groweth, that is to say, to the will of him which moveth himself, there is not any thing less necessary. For if nothing change more easily than in such cases the will of man, by reason of the manifold incitements and stays whereto it is subject; is it not plain that of all effects in a manner the most contingent are our own particular actions: and yet of the will of man itself, there are some operations necessary, as we see, in that all men without exception desire happiness; some for the most part so constant, that easily they alter not, as appeareth by things done through a settled virtuous or vicious habit of the mind; some altogether doubtful and either way indifferent, as the voluntary motions which grow from outward occasions happening unawares. This is it which maketh counsels and deliberations intricate. For which cause, in matter of consultation, we account them wisest, to whom through experience, the most approved principles of action are so familiarly known, and by particular notice the matter whereof they deliberate so thoroughly seen into, that having considered both the one and the other, they are able to forecast the surest effects that causes subject to so great variety will in likelihood of reason bring forth. It is therefore the doubtfulness of things contingent that sharpeneth man's industry to seek out the likeliest means of bringing them to good effect, and the providence of God which giveth success thereunto, as he in his wisdom seeth meet. But the events of this world, though we all behold alike, yet touching the manner how they come to pass, all are not of one mind; but some impute whatsoever happeneth to irresistible destiny; others avoiding this, have imagined every thing left to the

loose uncertainty of fortune and chance. Between which two extremities of error, the only true mean is that doctrine of divine providence.

[23.] In things ordered by this providence, it is especially to be considered, that the foreknowledge which he hath of all things¹, (for his eternal prescience is as a large volume wherein they are all exactly registered,) doth not make all things to be of necessity; although, forasmuch as in God himself there can be no error, it must needs be that every thing will come to pass, which he foreseeth as really future, whether it be necessary or contingent.

When things are necessary according to their own natural constitution; as a good tree must needs bring forth good fruit, and of necessity every tree fruit according to his kind; this, for distinction's sake, we call a real necessity. On the other side, when God foretelleth, or foreseeth any future thing, it followeth of necessity, that so it shall be, because otherwise God were deceived. And yet, that which is so foreseen may haply be in itself a thing casual; as the treason of *Judas*, the fall of *Peter*, and such like events, which when Christ had foreshewed, could not in truth or reason choose but accordingly follow. This necessity is not real, because the things brought to pass be contingent. We term it therefore a necessity *in reason*, because it followeth only by way of necessary sequel from a presupposal of God's foresight. He seeth it will be, ergo it shall be. His prescience then doth not take away casualties, nor make all things in the world subject to inevitable necessity; but such he foreseeth them as they are of their own natures when they come to pass. Whensoever we find therefore in Scripture divine predictions, the declarations of God's foreknowledge alleged, whether it be before they take effect, or after, this is perpetually true in them all, they are alleged as arguments, proofs, and testimonies, only, that so it would be, but never as causes imposing a real necessity on that which is foreshewed. Prescience, as prescience, hath in itself no causing efficacy. Again, what the book of God's knowledge doth comprehend, the same both wholly in one sum and every part thereof distinctly lieth at all times alike open in his sight²; which notwithstanding is no let, but that those things which he by his knowledge together beholdeth, we may

II. That God's eternal and infallible foresight of all things maketh not all things to be of necessity.

¹ Psalm cxxxix. 2; Esai. xli. 22, 23; Eccles[iasticus] xxiii. 19, 20; xxxix. 19, 20; Hebr. iv. 13. Θεῷ ὕστερον ὃ μὴ πρότερον εἶχε. Justin. [i. e. a writer in his name] Resp. ad Græc. [p. 539 D. ed. Bened.]

² Οὐτε γὰρ πρὸς γνώσιν οὔτε πρὸς δύναμιν δυνατόν προσγενέσθαι τῷ

rightly and truly distinguish, that we may consider them by order, one going before another as their mutual dependency and coherence requireth.

Of God's will touching all things that are; of his will to create and govern the world, not considered as being evil, and of the first beginning of evil in the world.

[24.] For as the eye of divine knowledge readeth all things which are written in that book, so the hand of his will subscribeth unto all things which are effected, though not unto all things after one and the same manner. There are which think, that whereas knowledge is either an apprehension of things themselves already being, or else a foresight of them when as yet they are not brought forth; this latter kind of knowledge doth ever presuppose in God a definite ordination and appointment of every thing which cometh to pass in the world. So that the reason which they give *why he knoweth* all things, is, *because he appointeth* how all things both great and small shall happen, from the motion of the highest orb of heaven, to the least mote in the sun, or spark which the fire casteth. Others grant, that there is not indeed the least casualty which can fall out till the world's end unto him unknown. But the cause which they render, why God cannot in things casual and contingent be deceived, is not always the certainty of his own appointment, but his eminent and incomprehensible kind of knowledge, his deep insight into all things, inasmuch as he perfectly understandeth, not only what they are, or what they shall be, but also whatsoever would grow from them through copulation and concurrence, with all the circumstances which more than ten thousand such worlds can yield. One small experiment whereof there is in the history of David¹; which one may serve for example sake instead of many; David being in Keilah, and hearing that Saul's purpose was to surprise the city, asked counsel of the mouth of the Lord, *Will Saul come down as thy servant hath heard?* and the Lord said, *He will come down:* Then said David, *Will the lords of Keilah deliver me up and the men that are with me into Saul's hand?* And the Lord said, *They will deliver thee up.* David, by his speedy departure thence, stayed both these events, though God foresaw and foretold both, as indeed both would have come to pass if his removal had not defeated the bent of their secret dispositions. But by this it appeareth, that the foresight which God hath of all things proveth not his foreappointment of all things which are foreseen; because he foreseeth as well what might be and is not, as what is or shall be. All reasonable creatures know, and can foresignify what themselves appoint to do. But his peculiar honour is, to see beforehand infallibly every thing that may come to pass, yea although it never do; and therefore much more,

¹ 1 Sam. xxiii. 11, 12.

every circumstance of all things which indeed fall out, whether himself be author of them, and have ordained them to be, or no. Wherefore, as all men of knowledge grant, that God is himself no author of sin; so no man will deny, but that God is able to foresee and foretell what sin, as what righteousness either may be, or will be in men¹, and that consequently there are many things in his sight certain to be brought to pass, which himself did never foreordain. And yet we must of necessity grant that there could be no evil committed, if his will did appoint or determine that none should be.

[25.] We are therefore to note certain special differences in God's will. God being of infinite goodness by nature, delighteth only in good things: neither is it possible that God should alter in himself this desire, because that without it he were not himself. But from this natural inclination of his will, unless it be some way or other determined, there cometh no certain particular effect. Wherefore, as God hath a natural bent only, and infinitely, unto good; and hath likewise a natural power to effect whatsoever himself willeth: so there is in God an incomprehensible wisdom, according to the reasonable disposition whereof his natural or general will restraineth itself as touching particular effects. So that God doth determine of nothing that it shall come to pass, otherwise than only in such manner as the law of his own wisdom hath set down within itself. Many things proceed from the will of God, the reasons whereof are oftentimes to us unknown. But impossible it is that God should will any thing unjust, or unreasonable, any thing against those very rules whereby himself hath taught us to judge what equity requireth: for out of all peradventure there are no antinomies with God. The laws of action which he teacheth us, and the laws which his own wisdom chooseth to follow, are not the one repugnant to the other. The concealed causes of his secret intents overthrow not the principles which Nature or Scripture, the true interpreters of his wisdom, have disclosed to the whole world: and by virtue whereof, to our great contentment of mind, yea to his everlasting praise and glory, we are able in many things to yield abundantly sufficient reason for the works of God, why and how it is most just which God willeth. In those things therefore, the reasonable coherence whereof with the will of Almighty God we are not able to comprehend, we must with learned ignorance admire; and not, with an ignorant pride of wit, censure, judge, or control God, who is, as ²Tertullian by very

¹ Sap. iv. 11.

² Contra Marcion. lib. ii. c. 2. "[Deus tunc maxime magnus, cum homini pusillus; et tunc maxime

fit comparison inferreth, *even best then when we least see how*, and just to the level of his own reason, when the reach of ours cometh most short. So that in all things our duty is with meekness to submit ourselves, and humbly to adore that wisdom, the depth whereof forasmuch as we cannot sound, what are we that we should presume to call him to account of his purposes, by way of contre-plea or opposition¹?

[26.] The determinations of the will of God are most free, and his will most freely determining itself ere ever any thing was, giveth being unto all things that are. His determinate will affirmatively considered, as granting passage to that which wisdom seeth meet, is either positive, or but permissive². He willeth positively whatsoever himself worketh; He willeth by permission that which his creatures do: He only assisting the natural powers which are given them to work withal, and not hindering or barring the effects which grow from them. Whereunto we may add that negative or privative will also, whereby he withholdeth his graces from some, and so is said to cast them asleep whom he maketh not vigilant³; to harden them whom he softeneth not; and to take away that, which it pleaseth him not to bestow.

But above all things, we are to note what God willeth simply of his own voluntary inclination, and what by occasion of something precedent, without the which there would be in God no such will. That which he willeth determinately of his own accord, is not only to himself always good, but in such sort good that he chooseth it, maketh it his end, taking pleasure and delight in it, as being utterly without hurt. That which he willeth by occasion, is also to his own good. For how should God will hurt to himself? Yet so far is this inferior to the other, that because it is joined with harm to a part of his noblest creatures, it cometh in that respect from the will of God as it were with a kind of unwillingness.

In all this God determineth nothing which tendeth so to his own glory, but that it also maketh for the good of the works of his hands, especially the good of reasonable creatures either severally considered, or else jointly as in one body. God doth not so much as permit that evil which he some way or other determineth not to convert even to their good, as well as unto his own glory. He

"optimus, cum homini non bonus;
"et tunc maxime unus, cum homini
"duo aut plures."

¹ Rom. ix. 20.

² "Nihil in ista totius creaturæ
"amplissima quadam immensaque

"republica est, quod non de interi-
"ori atque intelligibili aula Summi
"Imperatoris aut jubeatur, aut per-
"mittatur." Aug. de Trin. 3. 4.

[t. viii. 797, 8.]

³ Rom. ii. 8.

turneth to good that which was never by himself intended nor desired. It is not therefore said of Judas simply, *It had been good had he never been*; but *it had been good for that man if he never had been*. And in what kind soever it be, the will of God's absolute determination is always fulfilled¹.

[27.] Wherefore to come to the operations of [or?] effects of God's will, because his eternal and incomprehensible being is so all-sufficient, as nothing could move him to work, but only that natural desire which his goodness hath to shew and impart itself, so the wisest of the very heathens themselves, which have acknowledged that he made the world, know that no other reason thereof can be yielded but this, his mere goodness, which is likewise the cause, why it cannot be, but that the world which he hath created, he should love so far forth, as it is the workmanship of his hands.

Seeing then that good is before evil, both in dignity and in nature (for we cannot without good define and conceive what evil is); and of good things that come to pass by the will of God, the first is the end which his will proposeth, and that end is to exercise his goodness of his own nature, by producing effects wherein the riches of the glory thereof may appear: forasmuch as all other effects are grounded upon the first existence or being of that which *reviveth* [receiveth?] them: the first determination of God for the attainment of his end, must needs be creation, and the next unto it governance. For that he which created should govern, and that he which made should guide, seemeth reasonable in all men's eyes. Whereupon we come to observe in God two habilities or powers; his power to create, and his power to rule: in regard of the one, we term him our God, in respect of the other, our Lord and King. As God, Creator or Father of all, he hath no will but only to be gracious, beneficial, and bountiful. As Lord, both mercy and wrath come from him: mercy of his own accord, and wrath by occasion offered: but his providence, the root of both, is over all. All things have their beginning from him, by him their continuance, and in him their end. In power he ordereth them, but yet with gentleness: mightily, but yet in amiable manner². So that under him they feel no unpleasant constraint: framed they are to his inclination without violence to their own³: such is the course of his heavenly regiment, such his wisdom to overrule forcibly without

¹ Acts xvii. 31; Psalm cxv. 3; supplied by conjecture.
Esai. xlvi. 10; Hest. xiii. 9.

² [There is a blank here in the MS. of one word, which has been

³ [Wisdom viii. 1.]

⁴ Sap. viii. 12.

force. The providence of God is both general over the kinds of things, and such also as extendeth unto all particulars in each kind.

Of things created, the noblest and most resembling God are creatures endued with the admirable gift of understanding. St. Augustine¹ comparing the first matter whereof all things are made with these last and worthiest works of God's hands, saith of the one, it is little above the degree of nothing; the other, little inferior to God the creator of all. If God, then, clothe the lilies of the field, and provideth food for the birds of the air, should we think that his providence hath not always an especial care, as well of each particular man, as of mankind, and that for our greatest good every way, unless some great thing occasion the contrary? the work of creation itself therefore, and the government of all things simply according to the state wherein they were made, must be distinguished from that which sin, arising afterwards, addeth unto the government of God, lest we run into their error, who blinde [blend?] even with God's very purpose of creation, a reference to æternal condemnation and death.

[28.] Concerning his intended work of creation and government simply in itself considered, by the effects which are seen it may in part be understood what his secret purposes were, and that amongst sundry other more hidden determinations which were in God, these for example's sake are manifest, amiably to order all things, and suitably with the kinds, degrees, and qualities of their nature: not to be wanting unto reasonable creatures in things necessary for the attainment of their end: to give unto angels and men happiness in the nature of a reward; to leave them endued with sufficient ability in the hands of their own will¹: to enjoin them their duty, to shew them the danger which they might avoid, and must sustain if they did not avoid.

It being therefore the will of God to make reasonable creatures the liveliest representations of his own perfection and glory; he assigned unto angels and men a state of the greatest happiness to be acquired by actions of most dignity, proceeding from the highest degree of excellency, that any created nature was to receive from him. To¹ angels and men there was allotted a threefold perfection, a perfection of the end whereunto they might come, eternal life; a perfection of duty, whereby they should come, which duty was obedience; and a

¹ [Confess. lib. xii. c. 7. "Tu " nihil: unum quo superior tu esses, " eras, et aliud nihil unde fecisti " alterum quo inferius nihil esset." " cælum et terram, duo quædam; t. i. p. 211 F.]
" unum prope te, alterum prope " Sap. [Sir.] xv. 14.

perfection of state or quality for performance of that duty. The first was ordained, the second required, and the third given. For presupposing that the will of God did determine to bestow eternal life in the nature of a reward, and that rewards grow from voluntary duties¹, and voluntary duties from free agents; it followeth, that whose end was eternal life, their state must needs imply freedom and liberty of will. A part therefore of the excellency of their nature was the freedom of their will; and in this respect necessary, that he whose will was to govern them in justice should strictly tie them to the constant observation of requisite offices, by the possibility as well of endless perdition and woe, if they fell away, as of like felicity [if?] they continued for a time, that which they ought and might have done. *Out of the liberty wherewith God by creation endued reasonable creatures*, angels and men, there ensued sin through their own voluntary choice of evil, neither by the appointment of God, nor yet without his permission. Not by appointment, for it abhorreth from the nature of God, to be outwardly a sharp and severe prohibitor, and underhand an author of sin. Touching permission, if God do naturally hate sin, and by his knowledge foresee all things, wherefore did not his power prevent sin, that so his natural desire might be satisfied? Because, in wisdom, (whereupon his determinate will dependeth,) he saw it reasonable and good, to create both angels and men perfectly free, which freedom being a part of their very nature, they could not without it be that which they were: but God must have left them uncreated if not endued with liberty of mind. Angels and men had before their fall the grace whereby they might have continued if they would without sin: yet so great grace God did not think good to bestow on them, whereby they might be exempted from possibility of sinning; because this latter belongeth to their perfection, who see God in fulness of glory, and not to them, who as yet serve him under hope. He saw it reasonable also to grant them power touching all events of their liberty, to shew them how they might use it to their own everlasting good. But if, himself having thus with great good reason determined, his power should after have interposed itself for the hinderance of their choice either in good or evil; as to hinder them the one way, could not have stood with the purity of righteousness, so the other way to let them, had been against that constancy of wisdom, which is in him, whose greatness nothing doth more

¹ "Nec boni nec mali merces " ventus, non voluntate." Tertull.
" jure pensaretur ei qui aut bonus " contra Marc. 2. [c. vi.]
" aut malus necessitate fuisset in-

beseem, than to be one and the same for ever, and not to stop the events of mutability in his creatures, by changing his own decrees for their sakes with mutability in himself. Consider (saith Tertulian¹) what divine fidelity requireth, and thou wilt never marvel, although for preservation of that which was according to the will of God, his power hindered not that which was greatly against his will.

[29.] We see therefore how sin entered into the world. The first that sinned against God was Satan. And then through Satan's fraudulent instigation man also. The sin of devils grew originally from themselves without suggestion or incitement outwardly offered them. They² kept not the state of that first beginning which they had from God; and as our Saviour himself saith of them³, they stood not in the truth, whereby it may be very probably thought, that the happiness even of angels *depended chiefly upon their belief in a truth which God did reveal unto them*: The truth of that personal conjunction which should be of God with men. For Christ, although a Redeemer only unto men, might notwithstanding be revealed unto angels as their Lord, without any reference at all to sin, which the knowledge of Christ a Redeemer doth necessarily presuppose. So that man, their inferior by degree of nature, they must in Christ the Son of God advanced unto so great honour adore. Which mystery the too great admiration of their own excellency being so likely to have made incredible, it is unto us the more credible, that infidelity through pride was their ruin. As also envy maketh them ever sithence the first moment of their own fall, industrious, as much as in them lieth, to work ours, which they can only do as solicitors and instigators. Our sin therefore in that respect excuseth us not, but we are therewith justly charged as the authors of it ourselves. Touching God, though he stop it not, he neither coveteth nor appointeth it, he no way approveth, he no way stirreth, or tempteth any creature unto it. It is as natural unto God to hate sin, as to love righteousness.

Amongst the Jews, two hundred years before Christ, there were, as it seemed, [seemeth?] men which fathered sin and iniquity upon God's ordinance: under the Apostles there is some shew that the like was broached⁴. The Valentinians, the Marcionites, and the

¹ [Cont. Marcion. ii. 7. "Exigere a Deo debes et gravitatem summam, et fidem præcipuam in omni institutione ejus: ut desinas quærere, an Deo nolente potuerit quid evenire. Tenens enim gravitatem et fidem Dei boni, sed "rationalibus institutis ejus vindicandas, nec illud miraberis, quod Deus non intercesserit adversus ea quæ noluit evenire; ut conservaret ea quæ voluit."]
² Jude 6.
³ John viii. 44.
⁴ James i. 14 [13?]; 1 John ii. 16; 1 John i. 5; Matt. xix. 17;

Manichees being persuaded, as the truth is, that one and the same God cannot wish, love, or approve, both virtue and vice, both good and evil, ascribed willingly the one to that God most just and righteous, whom we all worship: but vainly imagined that the other had grown from some other God of equal power and of contrary disposition. Of late the Libertines have reduced both unto God again, they have left no difference between good and evil, but in name only. They make all things in God's sight to be alike; God the worker, man but his instrument; and our perfection to consist only in casting out that scrupulosity, conscience, and fear, which we have of one thing more than another. Of all which heretical devices the fountain is that secret shame¹ wherewith our nature in itself doth abhor the deformity of sin, and for that cause study by all means how to find the first original of it elsewhere. But for as much as the glory of God hath been defended, first by Jesus the son of Sirach² against blasphemers in his time; by St. James³ against the wicked of the Apostles' days; against the Valentinians and afterwards by Irenæus⁴; by Tertullian against the Marcionites; against the Manichees by St. Augustin; and against Libertines last of all by Calvin⁵: to whose industry alone we owe the refutation of their impiety; we may well presume that of this the whole Christian world is agreed, all denying God to be one author of sin.

[30.] It appeareth hitherto how God's creation is an effect of the will of God, which had no subject at all to work upon, but of nothing made all things, and gave them that being, wherein it rejoiced God to behold the first fruits of his own benignity. The subject of his providence simply considered, were all things in the state of their first creation, and amongst them reasonable creatures to be further advanced to a state of supernatural happiness, in such sort as those laws required which the wisdom of God saw meet for itself to follow. The laws of his providence we term such general rules, as it pleaseth God to follow in governing the several kinds of things, and especially in conducting reasonable creatures unto the end for which they were made. And because in the subject of his providence over reasonable creatures, there is now an addition of sin which was not before considered, the laws of his general providence, in regard of this

Psa. v. 5; Esai. lxxv. 12; Zach. viii. 17; Eccles[iasticus] xv. 11.

³ James i. 13.

⁴ Iren. iv. 47, 48.

¹ "Omne malum aut timore aut pudore [natura perfudit.]" Tertull. cont. Gent. p. 564. [Apol. c. 1.]
² Syr. xv. 12.

⁵ [In two Tracts published 1544, 1547. See his collected Tracts in Theology, Genev. 1597. p. 501, 540.]

What the will of God is touching man, the sin of the world being presupposed.