

Analysis of the Ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the Romans

By Jacobus (James) Arminius

This Analysis was prepared by ARMINIUS in 1593, and was sent to Gellius SNECANUS, a Minister in West Friesland, who entertained views of Christian doctrine similar to those of Arminius. It was published in the Latin editions of the works of Arminius, as an appendix to the foregoing treatise, as illustrative of many points therein discussed.

TO THE DISTINGUISHED MAN OF GOD, GELLIUS SNECANUS, MY FELLOW MINISTER, MOST BELOVED IN CHRIST, JAMES ARMINIUS WISHES HEALTH AND SUCCESS THROUGH CHRIST

I can not easily describe, most excellent sir, with how much delight I was affected by reading and seriously considering your commentary on the 9th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. For when I saw that your idea of the scope of the Apostle, and of the use of his principle arguments, was the same, as I had recently presented to my congregation, in explaining the same chapter, I was greatly confirmed in that opinion, both because I have great confidence in your judgment, and because I found proofs in the arguments, which you advanced. I could not, therefore, do less than to write, in return, to you to present my thanks, and to inform you how I have proceeded in explaining this chapter, and what impelled me to take this course; not to prove our mutual agreement only, but to confirm it as much as is in my power. I candidly confess that this chapter has always seemed to me to be involved in the greatest obscurity, and its explanation has appeared most difficult, until light, introduced in this way, dispelled the shades, and placed the subject, illustrated by its own clearness, before my mind, so as to be plainly understood.

I come to the subject itself. In the first place, the scope of the chapter is the same with that of the whole epistle: That the Gospel, not the law, is the power of God unto salvation, not to him that worketh, but to him that believeth, since, in the Gospel the righteousness of God is manifested in the obtainment of salvation by faith in Christ. This chapter performs its part, and indeed is peculiarly engaged in the support of that proposition. It defends the proposition against the objections of the Jews, who, with all their power endeavor to overturn it as hostile and destructive to their own views, and so defends it as to confirm its truth more and more, and, by refuting those objections, adds strength and stability to the foundation already laid, in that very divine word and purpose, which the Jews were strenuously wresting, in their own favor, to the overthrow of Paul's doctrine.

That such is the design of the chapter, the connection shows, the relation of which may be sought, partly from this antecedent proposition. Many of the Jews are cast off, which is included, also, in the introduction of this chapter — "I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren," partly from the negation contained in the 6th verse — "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." Both of which, being

embraced in one enunciation, may be suitably rendered thus — Though most of the Jews are rejected, yet the word of God does not therefore fail.

Hence it appears, most clearly, that the Jews had made an assertion, against Paul, opposed to this negation, that, by the interposition of that antecedent, (which was, immediately, deduced from the doctrine of Paul) they might convict that doctrine, from which a consequence so absurd might be deduced, of falsity, and refute it as absurd, in this manner: — "If most of the Jews are rejected, the word of God must fail; — But it can not be that the word of God should fail; — Therefore, most of the Jews are not rejected." How does this operate against the apostle? He had proposed a doctrine, which necessarily included the rejection of the Jews to a very considerable extent, namely, righteousness and salvation are to be obtained by faith in Christ, not by the works of the law. It was easy for the Jews to deduce from this, — "If righteousness and salvation consist in faith in Christ, whom Paul preaches, it follows that the Jews, for the most part, are rejected from the covenant." The reason of this conclusion is this.

"Because most of the Jews do not believe in Christ." But it is false that most of the Jews are rejected by God; for then the word of God would fail.

Therefore, the doctrine of the apostle Paul, from which that consequence is deduced, is absurd. The apostle considered that it was necessary for them to refute this objection, which threatened overthrow and destruction to his doctrine, by showing that the undoubted principle, which the Jews used as the prop of their objection, was not only not injurious to his cause, but even very favorable to it.

It is necessary to properly settle the state of the question in controversy between the apostle and the Jews. For this will be of great importance to the whole matter. It is not — "are most of the Jews rejected?" or — "Is the word of God of none effect?" For the apostle confesses that it would be impious even to admit the latter thought. The former he will afterwards prove by the clear testimony of the Scripture. But the question embraces both these; — "Will the word of God fail, even if most of the Jews are rejected?" Even this is not sufficient. The answer of this question does not settle the whole dispute, or exhaust all the difficulties. For, if the apostle, by the force of his arguments, should gain this point, that some, and indeed most of the Jews, are rejected, and yet the word of God remains sure, would not this question remain: "Does not the word of God fail, if those of the Jews are rejected, who, with the greatest zeal, seek the righteousness of the Law?" That question must still remain, as it would be easy for the Jews to make an exception to the solution of that question — "Though the word of God may remain sure, if many of the Jews are rejected, yet we can not be included in the number, else the word of God would fail." This element, therefore, having been added, will complete the entire statement of the question, thus:

"Does not the word God become of none effect, if those of the Jews, who seek righteousness, not of faith, but of the law, are rejected by God."

This question is suited to his design; the solution of this finishes the discussion, and exhausts all the difficulties; of this the apostle treats, as is evident from his arguments, which all bear upon its solution. Nor indeed is that, which gave rise to the question, to be separated from the question, and to refute which that principle having reference to the certainty of the word of God, was adduced by the Jews, and which the apostle also endeavored, as strongly as possible, to assert against them. In this question, therefore, this is to be chiefly attended to, — "would the word of the covenant, entered into with the Jews, be in vain, if the doctrine of the apostle in reference to the attainment of righteousness and salvation by faith alone in Christ, not by the law, or the works of the law, should find a place, and should be regarded as the fundamental principle of salvation?" How much difference exists between those two conditions of the question, and of how much importance that difference is, you readily see. For the question, proposed in this mode, "would not the word of God be vain, if most of the Jews are rejected?" could be answered in this way. "God indeed, in the word of promise, invited all the Jews and called them to a participation of the covenant, but yet, by His eternal decree and purpose, He determined in fact to make only some of the Jews partakers, passing by the rest, and leaving them in their former state." Some indeed say that this is the sum of the answer of the apostle to the proposed question.

But the question, proposed in this last manner, — "Would not the word of God fail, if those of the Jews, who seek righteousness, not of faith, but of the law, are rejected by God?" — can only be answered in this way. "God, in His word, and in the declaration of His promise, signified that He considered, in the relation of children, only, those of the Jews, who should seek righteousness and salvation by faith, but in the relation of foreigners, those who should seek the same by the law." But the two answers are very different. In the former, the decree of Predestination is defined according to the sentiment of Beza and others; in the latter, according to your sentiment. Far be it from me, however, to make a statement such as to confirm your view or my own concerning the decree of Predestination by the answer, which I see to be alone adapted to the question so stated.

The passage itself will, indeed, declare, if examined, that the state of the question is that, which I have presented, if a right judgment can really be formed, concerning the state of the question, from the arguments adduced in its discussion, and from the conclusion arrived at, which no one will deny, who has ever saluted the threshold of knowledge.

Let us, then, consider these points, in the answer of the apostle. First, he denies that the consequence — "the word of God fails" — can, in any way, be deduced from the antecedent, which the Jews proposed: in these words — "Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect." Then he subjoins the reason of the denial, and the Scriptural proof, interwoven with the reason by means of allegories, dictated by God, and explained by the apostle. The reason consists in the distinction of the Jews, and their twofold classification, in respect to this divine word and purpose, or from the twofold seed of Abraham, of which only one was comprehended in that word and purpose. "For," he says, "they are not all Israel which are of Israel: Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children:" but there are, among them, some "children of the flesh" and others "children of the promise;" whence it is concluded — If the word of God does not

embrace all the Israelites in one character, it does not fail, even if some, from their number, may be rejected; and much less, if they are rejected of whom it is evident, from the word itself, that they never were comprehended in it. This indeed ought altogether to be added, or the question can in no way be satisfied. It was, indeed, added, as is apparent from the apostle. Nor, indeed, does he only say that not all are comprehended under that word, but he describes those, who are considered as children by God, and who are not included in that term. For the children of the flesh are considered, by the apostle, alien from the covenant, and the children of the promise are considered partakers of the covenant. Hence this argument, refuting Jewish objection, may be constructed. If the word of God comprehends only the children of the promise, to the exclusion of the children of the flesh, then it follows that the word of God does not fail, even if the children of the flesh are rejected: it, indeed, would fail if they should be received, who are excluded by the very condition of the covenant; — But the word of God comprehends only the children of the promise, to the exclusion of the children of the flesh; — Therefore, the word of God does not fail, even if the children of the flesh are rejected.

By consequence, also; — The word of God does not fail, even if most of the Jews are rejected, provided they are embraced in the number of the children of the flesh, and that they are so included is evident from the description of the children of the flesh.

The children of the flesh are said, in this place, by the apostle, to be those who, by the works of the law, follow after righteousness and salvation. In this way, also, the consequent is sustained, being deduced from his doctrine concerning justification and salvation by faith in Christ. For it does not follow from this, that some of the Jews are rejected, unless by this distinguishing mark, namely, that they do not believe in Christ, but follow after the righteousness of the law. But the children of the promise are they, who seek righteousness and salvation by faith in Christ. This description of the children of the flesh and of the promise is so plain from the Scriptures, as not to need further argument. But the foundations of the proofs can be sought from the 4th, 9th, and 10th chapters of this epistle, and from the 3d and 4th chapters of the Epistle to the Galatians, as you have observed, and as I presented to my congregation, when I treated this subject.

From this discussion of the question it is evident, that it must be proposed in the second manner, with reference to the character of those rejected. We must now, indeed, consider the proof of that reason, which is assumed in the refutatory syllogism. For the consequence, deduced from it, is, in itself, clear and manifest. The apostle, then, proves that the word of the promise and covenant comprehends only the children of the promise, to the exclusion of the children of the flesh, and this by a twofold type, one, taken from the family of Abraham, and the other from the family of Isaac.

But two things are to be presupposed to the argument in both cases, both supported by the authority of the apostle, which ought to be held sacred by us. One, that Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, are to be considered, not in themselves, but as types in those passages, which he presents. The other, that they are types of the children of the flesh and of the promise.

The apostle proves neither, but assumes both and correctly. For it is most certain, from an inspection of the passages themselves, that this is so, for the apostle says, in Galatians 4:24, "which things are an allegory," and that the first sense, which God wished to give in those passages, is not literal, but allegorical. These things being presupposed, the force of the apostle's argument consists in the agreement between the types and antitypes, which is as great as is the immutability and constancy of Him, who willed that these should be the types, corresponding to those antitypes. But it is to be observed that this agreement consists, not in their exact resemblance, but in their mutual connection and relation, the proper difference of type and antitype being preserved. I give this admonition that no one may think it necessary that he, who represents the children of the flesh, should himself be a child of the flesh, by the mode of the same definition.

Now, to the particular cases. The proof from the first type depends on these two passages of Scripture (verses 7 and 9). "In Isaac shall thy seed be called," and "at this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son." From which this argument is deduced, that agreement being presupposed; — In the seed, reference is made to Isaac; — But Isaac is the type of all the children of the promise; — Therefore, all the children of the promise are regarded in the seed. The Major is embraced in these words — "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." The Minor, partly in these words — "For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son;" partly in that agreement, of which mention was made.

But not only may we infer that all the children of the promise are reckoned in the seed, but that they alone are so reckoned. For those things, which are spoken of Isaac, are effectual to the exclusion of Ishmael, as the apostle signifies by the adversative particle "but" (7th verse), joined to the member of the sentence, opposed to the former negations, "but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called;" from which this conclusion is deduced; — Ishmael is not reckoned in the seed; — But Ishmael is the type of all the children of the flesh; — Therefore, none of the children of the flesh are reckoned in the seed. I know that in that figure, the conclusion is deduced only in a particular case, but the strength of the conclusion depends on the agreement, which subsists between the type, and that which is adumbrated by the type, in accordance with the immutable will of God. We know, also, that a conclusion may be drawn from the necessity of the subject, which can not be drawn from the particular form of the syllogism.

Here we might say many things concerning the consequent mode of the mutual relation of Ishmael and the children of the flesh, and of Isaac, and the children of the promise; and how this was aptly signified by the birth of each, as the apostle declares was prefigured by that type. But I think that it is unnecessary to repeat those things, because they serve only to explain that sentiment, not to confirm it, as it is sufficiently proved to us by the authority of the apostle, namely, that the children of the flesh are signified by Ishmael, but the children of the promise, by Isaac.

Now another type is introduced, taken from the family of Isaac, in which the apostle affirms that the same thing is declared, as in the former, when he says (10th verse) "and not only this, but when Rebecca, also, etc." That passage, therefore, adduced for the same purpose, is to be explained in accordance with the same design. But three things are to be

considered here, in order. First — some circumstances, peculiar to this type, which add much weight to the proof of the apostle, and by which the apostle anticipates whatever he foresees can be brought forward by the Jews against the former type in opposition to his cause. Secondly — the word of God, which was addressed to Rebecca, which the typical argument embraces, is illustrated from another passage, taken from one of the prophets. Thirdly — the explanation which Paul, the divinely inspired, gives of the object and scope of that divine declaration.

As to the first, the Jews could object against the former type, that it is not wonderful that Ishmael, being rejected, Isaac should be adopted as a son by God, both because Ishmael was the child of a bond woman, and Isaac of the free woman, and because, before God announced the word of promise to Sarah, Ishmael was born and could have perpetrated those things which made him unworthy of that honor and felicity. The apostle meets these objections, and replies to the first, that, in the case of Esau and Jacob, the circumstances were entirely different, as they had both the same father and the same mother, and were born at the same birth. In reply to the second objection, he refers to the words, addressed to Rebecca, when she was yet carrying the twins in her womb, and therefore, the children were not yet born, and could not have done any good or evil, by which one deserved to be rejected and the other adopted. By these circumstances, the Jews were deprived of any objection, which they could make against the previous type, namely, that they, being born of the free woman, and seeking their salvation from the law, could, in no way whatever, be reckoned among those who were rejected. Those words, addressed to Rebecca, are to be considered, which were briefly these: "The elder shall serve the younger."

They are explained by a passage from Malachi 1:2, 3. "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated," and this is said, that it may be evident that the servitude of the elder is united with the divine hatred, and the dominion of the younger with the divine love.

Here we must repeat what was said before, as a general remark, that Esau and Jacob are to be considered, not in themselves, but as types, and so that which is attributed to them, is to be accommodated to the antitypes, or rather to the things signified. Hence, also, the antitypes are to be considered, before a conclusion, similar to the former, can be deduced from them, to the refutation of the sentiment of the Jews and to the confirmation of that of the apostle. But what those antitypes are, may be gathered from the end or design which the apostle has added, in these words: "that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth." That is, God, in those words, "the elder shall serve the younger," addressed to Rebecca, "the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil," designed to indicate nothing else than that He had formed, in His own mind, from eternity, a purpose to communicate righteousness and salvation, not one which should embrace all the posterity of Abraham universally, but which should be according to election, by which He would distinguish between these and those, not considered simply in their own nature, as pure or corrupt, but in respect to the condition, by which righteousness and salvation were to be applied, as the apostle shows in the following words — that this purpose, according to election, might stand not of works, but of him who calleth, in which words is contained a description of the

antitypes, which had before been given in the phrases "children of the flesh" and "children of the promise." Here it is more clear, for the children of the flesh and those of the promise are, such, by their own peculiarity, defined by the apostle, in this passage, since the former are "of works," the latter of faith, by which obedience is rendered unto God, who "calleth." Therefore, the apostle says that the purpose of God, which is according to election, has reference to those who have faith in God who calleth, and who trust in Christ, not to those who seek salvation by the works of the law. The conclusion can be drawn from these things against the objection of the Jews in favor of the doctrine of the apostle concerning justification by faith, in this way: "If the word of God and His purpose is according to election, by which the former is rejected, and the latter accepted, then it follows, even if some of the Jews are rejected, yet that word and purpose is not in vain; rather indeed, if that purpose, which is according to election, should be said to embrace all without any election, it would be in vain; — But this word and purpose is according to election; Therefore, even if some of the Jews should be rejected, yet that word and purpose does not, on that account, fail; it is, indeed, rather confirmed from that fact, because it is its nature to exclude some, as it is according to election, by which one is rejected and another accepted."

An indefinite proof of this kind, however, is not sufficient for this subject: for it remains to be proved that those same persons are excluded by the purpose according to election, who are properly considered to be excluded and rejected, according to the doctrine of the apostle concerning justification by faith, namely, those who sought to obtain righteousness and salvation, not from faith in Christ, but from the works of the law.

This, therefore, the apostle adds. Hence to exhaust the whole objection, the conclusion is drawn thus: If the purpose, according to election, stands, not of works, but of Him that calleth, then it follows that they, who seek after righteousness and salvation from the works of the law, and by the law, are not included in that purpose, but they, only, who by faith obey God, who promiseth and calleth; — But the purpose, according to election, stands, not of works, but of Him that calleth; — Therefore, in that purpose, they are not embraced, who are of the law, but only they who are of the faith of Jesus Christ. The Major is, in itself, plain from its phraseology, if rightly understood, which signifies that the firmness of the purpose, which is according to election, depends, not on works, but on Him that calleth. Therefore, to them who are of the works of the law, this purpose can not be firm and sure, but to those who are of faith.

From this idea, I seem to myself to perceive the reason that God placed the condition of the covenant of grace, not in a perfect obedience to the law, as previously, but in faith in Christ. The minor depends on the declaration "the elder shall serve the younger," and on the agreement of the type and antitype, which consists in this — that what is presignified by the type should correspond to the antitype. But, by the type of Esau and Jacob, is presignified, first, that the purpose of God is according to election; then, that this purpose stands, not of works, but of Him that calleth. The former, indeed, because one was loved and the other hated; one was preferred to and placed over the other, which is a sign of "the purpose according to election;" the latter, because Esau, the elder, was hated and made subject, and Jacob, the younger, was loved, and placed over him, which is a sign

that this purpose stands, "not of works, but of Him that calleth;" that is, that God loves them, who seek righteousness, and salvation by faith in Christ, but hates them who seek the same by the works of the law. It follows that they are not embraced in that purpose, who are of the works of the law, but only they who are of the faith of Jesus Christ, and consequently that those of the Jews are rejected, who followed the righteousness of the law, and they are elected and loved, who sought participation in righteousness by faith in Christ. Therefore, so far from the truth is it that this doctrine of justification by faith is overthrown by the word of the covenant and the divine purpose, that, by this, alone, it is established.

At this point, I have also explained to many, how the Jews were signified by Esau, the elder, who were seeking, in their zeal for the law, justification and life by the law, and that, by Jacob, the younger, they were signified, who sought the same things by faith in Christ. It is not necessary to repeat these things here; the authority of the apostle is sufficient, who thus explains those types, and who, briefly, from the agreement of the type and antitype, or that which is signified by the type, deduces this argument.

Esau, the elder, was condemned to be the servant of his brother, by God, and was hated by him; — But Esau, the elder, is the type of all those who seek justification and salvation by the works of the law; — Therefore, all they who seek salvation by the works of the law, are condemned to servitude, and are hated by God. Again; — Jacob, the younger, obtained dominion over his brother, and was loved by God; — Jacob, the younger, is the type of all those who, according to the grace of vocation, by faith seek justification. Therefore, they who, according to the grace of vocation, by faith seek justification, obtain dominion, and are loved by God. Both Majors are included in the declarations "The elder shall serve the younger" and "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated" The Minors are contained in these words, "that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth," and depend on the authority of the apostle, who thus explains those types.

Hence it is apparent that the question referred not only to the rejection of some and the acceptance of others, but to the rejection or acceptance of those of certain characters, that is, those distinguished by certain qualities.

Therefore the apostle, here, treats not of the decree or the divine purpose, by which some are elected and others are reprobated, considered absolutely in their own nature, whether pure or corrupt; but of a purpose such as includes that description of elect and reprobate, which is here clearly observed in that purpose by the apostle: in which consists, in fact, the controversy between Beza with his followers, who strenuously defend the former and yourself, who urge a purpose of salvation such as to embrace the characters of those, who are to be saved and those who are to be damned.

But they will say that it is indeed true that Ishmael and Esau, Isaac and Jacob are to be considered typically, that is, the former, in each case, representing the character of the children of the flesh, and of those who are of the works of the law, and the latter, the children of the promise, and those who are of faith, but that they also, for themselves,

belong, in the same manner, to those classes, which they typify, and this of the eternal purpose of God, by which He determined to make Isaac and Jacob children of the promise, and to bestow on them faith in Christ, but to leave Ishmael and Esau in the carnal nature, in which they were born.

They affirm that we must go further back and inquire why one is the child of the flesh, another of the promise, why one should believe in Christ, and another should not believe, but seek salvation of the works of the law. I answer — It can not be proved from this passage that they, who are types, pertain to the antitypes: and if it may, perhaps, be true that Ishmael and Esau belong to the children of the flesh, as thus described, yet that they are such, of any divine purpose, is not taught in this place. In this purpose, as we have explained it, something is determined concerning the children of the flesh and of the promise, but with the explanation which they prefer, something is determined concerning individuals, that these should be children of the flesh, those of the promise. They can not, therefore, be the same purposes, the subject of one being changed into the attribute of the other. Concerning the adequate subject, there is not, as yet, harmony even among the Coryphaei of that view. And since the question — "why do some believe and others not?" has the same change of subject and attribute, I affirm that it is not here discussed by the apostle, nor has it even the least connection with his design. They must therefore, consult other passages of Scripture and see whether they can, from them, obtain proof for that decree. It is sufficient for us that, here, the purpose is described, by which our justification and salvation through grace, may be self consistent, and by which we can be made more certain, in ourselves, concerning the same things. But this purpose is that which God determined, after the former condition added to the legal covenant had not been performed, and man had by the fall been made unable to perform it, to enter into a covenant of grace with us through Christ; and of grace to change the condition of the former covenant into faith in Christ, by which we, believing in Christ, might obtain the same thing as we should have previously obtained by plenary obedience to the law, rendered by ourselves. On this purpose, as it appears, depends the certainty of our salvation, and at the same time the assurance of it in ourselves. For we inter that assurance from this Enthymene, "I am a believer," or "I believe in Christ; — therefore I shall be saved," or "I am elect." The strength of which depends on this proposition: "God has immutably determined from eternity to save those, who believe Christ;" in which words is contained the sum of that purpose.

If any one should inquire, "Why did God wish that Ishmael and Esau should be the types of the children of the flesh, but Isaac and Jacob the types of the children of the promise?" I answer — Because it was suitable for the sake of significancy, and of agreement between the type and the antitype; in relation to the former type that he who was born of the bond woman and of the flesh should be the type of the children of the flesh, but that he, who was born of the free woman, and of the promise, when the flesh had now become unfruitful, should be the type of the children of the promise; but in relation to the latter type, that he, who was born first, should prefigure the children of the flesh, and he, who was born last, the children of the promise. The reason will be manifest to those who consider the agreement of types and antitypes.

It may be asked further, "Why did God will that Ishmael should be born of the bond woman and of the flesh, and that Esau should be born first; but that Isaac should be born of the free woman, and of the promise, and Jacob last?" I reply that the same question would be asked, if Isaac and Jacob had been substituted for Ishmael and Esau. In this matter, the Divine freedom is complete, circumscribed by no necessity of the Divine attributes, or of His revealed will. This will be seen of the attributes of the divine nature and His own revealed will are subject to God, in the determination of that purpose, for which your opponents contend.

Let us, now, come to another objection, which is of this character: "What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God." The nature of this question, and of this objection is manifest, but it is not equally clear, what the antecedent is from which that objection is deduced. Some state it thus: — "If God, without any respect of works, regards Ishmael and Esau with hatred and excludes them from the number of His children, but loves Isaac and Jacob, and considers them as His children, is He not unjust? It seems to be a kind of injustice not to bestow the same things on those of the same character." It is true that, if the apostle was considering them in themselves, and not as types of certain characters — as has been remarked — there would be an occasion for such an objection. For it is certain that from those antecedents arises an occasion for the objection. Such, however, was not the antecedent of the apostle, but this: "God in the word of the covenant, and in the purpose, which is according to election, embraced only those, who might be the children of the promise, who should believe in Christ, to the exclusion of the children of the flesh and of those who sought the righteousness of the law." Whence it followed "that those of the Jews were rejected who, in their zeal for the righteousness of the law, did not believe in Christ, and, moreover, those of the Gentiles, who sought a participation in justification and salvation by faith in Christ, were received into the covenant." There is besides another antecedent of that objection, namely, this: "If God hates the children of the flesh, and excludes them from the covenant, but loves the children of the promise, and reckons them in the seed, embraced in the covenant, and this, indeed, of His mere purpose, without respect to works, then it follows that He is unjust;" or this: "If God rejects the Jews, and accepts the Gentiles in their place, then He is unjust." But these two amount to almost the same thing.

I think that the reasoning of the former is the more conclusive. The reasoning of this objection seems sufficient to prove injustice in the Deity, because He made this decree of the mere good pleasure of His will, without any reference to merit.

Let us, however, examine the answer of the apostle. He first denies the inference. Then he gives the reason for his denial. He denies the inference, when He says, "God forbid," that is, we ought by no means to admit the thought that there is injustice in God, who is just in Himself, and, indeed, is essential justice, and does nothing, and can do nothing, unless it most perfectly agrees with His nature.

The reason of this denial of the inference is twofold; first, from the liberty of the divine mercy; secondly, from the due illustration of the divine power and glory. That, which is inferred from the liberty of the divine mercy, is comprehended in these words, "For He

saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion" (15th verse). In these words is expressed, according to the Hebrew idiom, this idea: "In the choice and liberty of my will is placed the power of having mercy on whom I will:" as is also indicated by the deduction, "Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy" (verse 18th). But in what way this answer is effectual to the overthrow of that inference, the word Mercy declares, which word embraces in itself the whole weight of the refutation. For the only sufficient reason for charging injustice on God on account of that purpose was this: that God could not, without injustice, make of none effect "His purpose of creation, by which He made justification and life dependent on obedience to the law, but condemnation and death in the transgression of the same law; especially so far as to exclude, from justification and life, those, who should endeavor, by the law, to attain to justification and life, but to make others, who should not indeed do this, but should believe in Christ, partakers of justification and life." This charge of injustice can be removed from the Deity, only by the word mercy, here used, which, as it presupposes misery and sin, by this very fact indicates that a change of the purpose is not made with any blame on God, but because the condition of that purpose had been violated by a transgression of the law, and, thus, an inability to keep the law had been brought upon man. Hence we see that, by the fault of man, the covenant, entered into at the creation, was made void, and therefore God, free from its obligation, could have either punished man according to his demerit, or instituted another purpose in His own mind. That this might be for the good of man, it was necessary that mercy should intervene, which should remit sin, and arrange a condition, which He might, by the aid of mercy itself, be able to perform.

The apostle affirms that God formed within Himself a purpose of this character, and this indeed of His mere mercy, which was free (yet under the guidance of justice) to determine on whom He might will to have mercy, and on whom He might will not to have mercy; whom He might will to make partakers of justification and life, and whom to exclude from the same blessing. Whence it follows that God, on account of a decree of this kind, and a purpose according to election, by which He determined to receive the children of the promise into the covenant, and exclude from it the children of the flesh, and which He purposed should stand "not of works, but of Him that calleth," can not be charged with injustice; because, moved by mercy alone, He made this decree in His own mind. God would, therefore, be unjust, if He should deprive any one of justification and life, or should require a condition contrary to the covenant entered into at the creation: but when, on account of the violation of the condition, and of inability to perform it, it was either for mercy to make a covenant of grace with man, or for severity to punish man without hope of pardon; it is apparent that God was not less free, that indeed He was much more free, to arrange whatever conditions might seem good to Him, in that covenant, than in the covenant of creation. Consequently He could not be charged with injustice in one case more than in the other.

This whole matter may be treated syllogistically: — If the purpose of God according to election to reject the children of the flesh, but to consider as seed, the children of the promise has for its cause the mercy and compassion of God alone; then it follows that God can, by no means, on this account be charged with injustice; — But the cause of that

purpose is the mercy of God alone; — Therefore God can not, on account of it, be charged with injustice. That this is the meaning of the answer of the apostle is evident from the subjoined inferential answer — "So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God, that showeth mercy," (verse 16) supply here "the purpose according to election," which is effectual so far as he had before said — "that the purpose of God, according to election, might stand, not of works, but of Him that calleth," and "the children of the promise are counted for seed," the children of the flesh being excluded. For, when the will and the course of men are opposed to the mercy of God, it is certain that the reference is to the effort and the course of a man, by which he hopes that he will obtain justification and salvation apart from the mercy of God. Such, however, is the effort and the course of those, who seek justification and salvation by the works of the law. When, also, mercy is, on the other hand, placed in opposition to the will and course of men, it is evident that the condition of justification and life, which is most nearly related to mercy, namely, faith in Christ, the Mediator, is ordained, the other being opposed to mercy.

The other reason of the denial of the inference consists in the just illustration of the divine power and glory, in those, on whom He wills not to have mercy: which, also, is set forth, in the particular example of Pharaoh. It is comprehended in these words: "For the Scripture saith unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared in all the earth" (verse 17.) From which passage, the apostle answers that part of the objection, in which God was charged with injustice because He rejected and regarded with hatred the children of the flesh, of His purpose according to election, in an argument, susceptible of the following form: — If God is free, for the just declaration of His own power and the illustration of His own name, to raise up, harden and punish Pharaoh, then injustice can not be attributed to God, because, in His purpose according to election, He decrees to illustrate His own power and glory in the just hardening and punishment of the children of the flesh; — But God was free to do the former, as is apparent from this passage; — Therefore also He is free to do the latter, and hence He can not, on this account, be accused of injustice. The argument of the Major is valid. For, either God will be free, in no case, to illustrate the power and glory of His name in the just punishment of any person, or He will be, also, free to decree to do this, according to any purpose, in the condemnation of those, by whose just condemnation He may will to declare His own power and the glory of His name.

It is, also, true that to take away the right and power from God of making a decree, which is according to election, is nothing else than to be unwilling that He should exhibit His own power, and the glory of His own name, in the just hardening and punishment of some men. For these things are conjoined, to punish any man and to decree that the same man is obnoxious to punishment. Punishment can be, with justice, inflicted on no one, unless the same thing was destined for him by a just purpose or decree. How God was free to raise up and harden Pharaoh, etc., will be shown hereafter, in the refutation of a subsequent objection. That this is the whole meaning of the answer of the apostle appears from the conclusion, subjoined to the whole answer —

"Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will have mercy, and whom He will He hardeneth" (verse 18).

For, by that conclusion, the whole objection of the Jews is most fully refuted in this way: — If God can have mercy on whom He will, and harden whom He will, then He is also free to form a purpose according to election, by which He may determine to have mercy on the children of the promise, but to harden and punish the children of the flesh; — But God can have mercy on whom He will, and harden whom He will; — Therefore He is free to make a decree, according to election, by which He may determine to have mercy on the children of the promise, but to harden and punish the children of the flesh. By consequence, also, if He should do this which He is free to do, He can not be, at all deservedly, accused of injustice. Thus the justice of God, in that purpose according to election, is sustained and proved by the apostle by the strongest testimonies from the Mosaic Scriptures.

Another objection of the Jews is next presented (19th verse), arising from the latter part of the conclusion immediately preceding; in the refutation of which, they who contend for that absolute decree of God to save certain particular individuals and to damn others, think that they have strong support for their cause. On which account, also, we must diligently examine both the objection and its refutation, that we may not, by negligence, pass over it, as though it were unseen: for it is, to them, the club of Hercules, for conquering all the monsters of objection, or rather the sword of Alexander, to cut any knot which can not be untied. The objection is this: "Why doeth he yet find fault?" The reason of this objection is added: "for who hath resisted his will?" Which things, proposed in the form of an interrogation, may be stated thus: "Therefore, He can not justly find fault, since no one can resist His will." The objection will be filled up, by the addition of the antecedent, from which this consequent is deduced: "God hardeneth whom He will." Therefore, He can not justly find fault with those, who are hardened. The connective reason between these two is this: "Since no one has resisted His will."

Hence, exists a continual proposition of this kind — If no one can resist the will of God, then He can not justly find fault with those, whom He hardeneth according to that will.

Let this conditional proposition be converted into a simple or categorical statement, "God can not justly find fault with those who are hardened by His own omnipotent will." Such is the objection. Let us now consider what force it has; that from the examination, it may be evident how it can be refuted, and the way for its suitable refutation, may be prepared. These two things, then, are to be considered. First, "God can not justly find fault with the hardened." Second, "Because He has hardened them by His omnipotent will, which can not be resisted." The examination of the former consists in the discussion of this question. "Who are they with whom God can justly find fault?" The examination of the second consists in the discussion of this: "Whether and in what manner, they, who are hardened by the omnipotent will of God, may be exempted from the number of those with whom God can justly find fault?" The former question will be solved, if it may be explained, what that is, on account of which God can justly find fault, that is, what is the proper cause of the divine anger. The proper cause of the divine anger, and that, on account of

which God can justly find fault with any one, is sin. But sin is the transgression of a law, that is, of one which is just, for, if a law be not just, it is not a law, and therefore, its transgression is not a sin. That a law may be just, it necessarily requires these two conditions, that it be enacted by him who has authority to command, and that it be enacted for him who has the power or rather ability to obey, not only [dunamai](#) but, that is, has ability of such a character as is hindered by no intervening decree, from doing that which he can do. Whence it is apparent that "sin is a voluntary transgression of the law," which the sinner, since he could avoid it (I speak now of the act), commits, of his own fault. On account of sin of this kind, and with a sinner of this kind, God can justly find fault. This condition being removed, God can not justly find fault with a man on account of sin, and, indeed, the man can not commit sin. I say this, for the sake of those, who think, though erroneously, that God can justly be angry with transgressors of the law, even if they can not, on account of an intervening decree, really obey it. An act, which is inevitable on account of the determination of any decree, does not deserve the name of sin. I doubt not that this is most certain; it shall be proved, when it is necessary. From this, therefore, it is clear who they are "with whom God can justly find fault." Now let us consider whether and how they, who are hardened by the omnipotent will of God, may be exempted from that number; that is, whether the omnipotent will of God, hardening a person, may remove the cause of just accusation, complaint and wrath. But let us premise what that means, "For who hath resisted his will?" Here omnipotence is attributed to the will of God, universally able to subject all things to itself, and actually subjecting them, when the will accompanies it, and it accompanies the will. But omnipotence does not accompany the will, considered in every respect, for God wills that His law should be obeyed by all, which is not always done. Nor yet are there, in God, two wills mutually contrary, one of which wills that His law should be obeyed by all, the other, that it should not be obeyed; for in that case, it would not be wonderful that the law should not be obeyed by many, when the latter will, armed by omnipotence, prevents obedience to it. But some, when they endeavor to explain how it may be possible that those wills should not be contrary, say that the will of God is to be considered, in a twofold relation, as secret and revealed. The revealed will has reference to those things which are pleasing or displeasing to God, the secret to those things which he simply and absolutely wills should be done, or not done; and that it is entirely consistent that, in His revealed will, He should will that one and the same action should be done, and, in His secret will, that it should not be done, since He wills, in a different mode, in the two cases. But there may be dispute whether a secret will can be supposed in God, by which He might will, absolutely, that a thing should be done or not done, which, by His revealed will, He might will should be done or not done. Others say that this will of God is that of good-pleasure, or that of sign, which amounts to the same thing. But is not the will of God, in relation to His good-pleasure, signified in the word? It is also said that the divine will is, in one respect, efficacious, in another, not efficacious. But this is the same thing as to say — one is resisted, the other can not be resisted. It is wonderful in what labyrinths they involve themselves, being blinded either by unskillfulness or prejudice, or by both. To those who rightly consider the subject, the will of God will appear to be one and the same thing in itself — distinct in its objects.

What then? "Is not the will a faculty, free according to reason, or at least the appearance of reason, extended to the act of doing or having?" So, also, in God. We may be permitted, in our obscure phraseology, to delineate those things, which exist in that clearest light. He wills to do, and He wills to have. The former wills something from Himself, the latter wills something from us; by the former He wills that something should be done by Himself, and invokes omnipotence, which always accompanies it. By the latter, He wills that something should be done by us agreeably to justice, the pattern of which He presents us, in His own law. But it is necessary that He should reveal unto us, and indeed command that, which He wills from us, that he may obtain from us that which He wills. He does not, however, always disclose to us that which He wills to be done by Himself, or that which He wills to do, but only sometimes as He judges may tend to His own glory, and to our salvation.

You ask whether the subject of discussion is any secret will of God, and you, indeed, add your opinion that such is not the subject. You, already know my sentiments in reference to the secret will of God. I think, with you, that the subject of discussion, here, is not that secret will, in whatever way it may be taken. Let them say what that secret will is. Is it that God can not be resisted, so that He should not harden those whom He wills to harden? The truth of this is manifest, from the declaration itself. Is it secret who they are whom God wills to harden? By no means. Nothing is more plain in the Scripture, than that sinners, persevering in their sins against the long suffering of God, who invites them to repentance, are those whom God wills to harden. It is, however, not evident, but hidden, who those sinners are. This is true; but what relation has it to the will, that it should, therefore, be called hidden. The knowledge of God in this place, will rather be called hidden from us. Of many such sinners, God wills to harden this one and not that one, and it is hidden from us which He wills to harden rather than others. I do not, now, discuss that point; but I affirm that this is not discussed in this passage. Therefore, since it will not be discussed in this place what that object of the will is, which is considered hidden by us, neither is the secret will of God in any way treated of in this place. But to return; that omnipotent will removes the cause of just anger, if, by it, a man may be moved to the commission of sin, and by that power which ye can not resist, and so the hardened will be, by that will, excluded from the number of those with whom God can be justly angry, if they did that, on account of which they are hardened, being moved by that omnipotent will, which no one can resist. I do not speak, here, concerning compulsion. For "God can not compel, nor can the will be compelled," but it is sufficient to excuse the man, and to exempt him from the just wrath of God, if there exist any force of divine impulse, which is followed by the inevitable necessity of doing that to which he is moved. If, indeed, the man commits that which deserves hardening of free-will, he is subjected to blame, and is worthy of wrath, even if he may be hardened by that will, which can not be resisted. For resisting and that freely, the divine will, revealed in the word, which can be resisted, he is brought into that necessity of the divine decree, also revealed in the word, which can not be resisted, and so the will of God is done in reference to him, by whom the will of God is not done.

From these things, I think that a solution to that question can easily be formed.

But let us examine the answer of the apostle, and with that diligence, which the gravity and difficulty of the subject deserves, yet according to our measure. At the outset, however, it is not to be supposed that the apostle sought evasions, when he could not refute the objection itself, nor did he involve the subject in difficulties, that he might coerce and restrain the objector, terrified by the difficulty of the subject, but he most aptly and effectually refuted the whole objection. I would dare to affirm that no objection in the whole Scripture is more sufficiently refuted.

Let this objection be placed before the eyes, with all its fundamental principles contracted into a small space, that it may be inspected, as it were, in a single moment, in the following form — "Can God be justly angry with those, who are hardened by his irresistible will?" We may be permitted to use that form of expression for the sake of compendious significance. The answer of the apostle is twofold. In one part, reproving the objector on account of his own unworthiness, and that of the objection; in the other, refuting the objection. That which has the nature of reproof has three parts, the reproof, its reason, and the proof of its reason.

The reproof is proposed in the form of an interrogation in these words: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God?" That is, Consider, O man, who thou art and who God is, and thou wilt understand that thou art unworthy to answer God in that manner. To slander so excellent a doctrine in a manner such as to charge unjust wrath upon God, and to wholly exculpate man, was resistance of God to His very face, and the most direct opposition to Him. Hence it is not wonderful that the apostle, excited by the indignity of the thing, should have determined sternly to reprehend the man, who should make an objection.

The reason consists in a comparison of man and God, in the like unworthy answer, adapted to that comparison. For as there are three things contained in that proposition, The man replying, God to whom the reply is made, and the reply itself. The reason of that proposition refers to those three things, in these words, "Shall the thing formed say to Him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Here man is compared to "the thing formed," God to "Him that formed it," and the reply to this, "why hast thou made me thus?" In this comparison the apostle gives the reason why it is not suitable for man, as "the thing formed," to reply thus to God, as "to Him that formed it," as if he should say, "as it is not permitted to the thing formed to say to Him that formed it, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' so also, it is not permitted to thee, O man, to reply to God in this way.

For thou art nothing else than clay and a worm of the earth, a thing made by God, but God is He who made and formed thee."

We considered next what is the answer to this reply, which is reproved in the thing formed, though we must, first, examine the third part of the reproof; that is, the proof of the reason. That is deduced from the right and power, or from a comparison of the right and power, which the potter has over the clay, to the right and power, which God has over that which He has formed, or rather over that from which He formed it. The right

and power of the potter goes to prove the unworthiness of that objection and therefore to its refutation.

The comparison, also, has the effect of demonstrating that God has the same right over His own creature, which the potter has over that, which he makes. In the first place, the conclusion is like this — "If the potter hath power, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honor and another unto dishonor, it is not for thee, the thing formed, to say to Him that formed thee, 'Why hast thou made me thus?' — But the potter hath that power; — Therefore, etc." In the second place: "If the potter hath that power over the clay, then also God hath the same over men, or rather over that from which He was about to form or make men; — But the former is true; — Therefore, the latter, also, is true." Therefore, also, "it is not for man to reply against God, 'Why hast thou made me thus?'" or to make this objection, on account of which the apostle reproves and rebukes the objector. Thus much in reference to the arrangement and the sum of the objurgatory answer, in which, also, it is shown how that can tend to the refutation of the objection itself, if, indeed, an addition, suitable to the comparison, had been made. We must now treat, in a right and legitimate manner, of the application of the things compared. This will consist, wholly, in an explanation of the right and power of God over the man, either already created or to be created. First, in reference to the comparison used in the reason, "shall the thing formed say to Him, that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" The explanation of this will be, according to the comparison, — "so it is not lawful for a man to answer God, as you do in that objection." In any case, it is necessary that the objection of the man should have congruity with this of "the thing formed." But the former was this: "if thou hardened a man by thy irresistible will, there is no reason that thou shouldst find fault with him:" This objection, harmonized with that of "the thing formed" will be like this, "Why hast thou made me, to be hardened by thy irresistible will?" What Beza says, here, of the mutability of human condition, seems to me to have little adaptation to the purpose.

If, likewise, we should consider the argument from the power of the potter, it will be apparent that some such application of that comparison was to be made. For what resemblance has the power of making to honor or to dishonor to the power of making something changeable. But it has much resemblance to the power of making a person, to be hardened or to receive mercy. Let us now see what is the explanation of the comparison which is used in that argument. "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another to dishonor?" The explanation, strictly set forth, will be thus, "thus God hath power from the same lump to make some men to honor, others to dishonor; or some to wrath, others to mercy," in a manner adapted to the subject of discussion, as appears from the following verses: from which the conclusion is deduced. "If God hath power, from the same mass of the human race, to make one vessel to wrath, and another to mercy, then man can not, justly, reply against Him, Why hast thou by thy irresistible will, made me to be hardened, that is, a vessel to wrath?" He adds, however, in reference to the vessels to honor and mercy, though the question was only in reference to the hardened, since the subject of discussion is the power of God which has reference to both. You will observe that I have presented these things, most rigidly, according to the sense of my opponents, because I wish to concede to them whatever can, in any way, be accommodated to the scope of the apostle.

We must now see how those things are to be understood which we attribute to God in those applications; namely, that "He hath power, from the mass of the human race, to make one vessel to honor and another to dishonor, one man to obtain mercy, and another to be hardened by His irresistible will." The word "power" used here signifies not ability but right and authority. It is *ejxousi* and not *dunamiv*. The subject, therefore, in this passage, is not that absolute power by which He is able to do any thing, but the right by which it is lawful that He should do any thing. In the word "lump," Beza understands the reference to be to "the human race, as not yet created, and not yet corrupt." We know that Augustine was of a different opinion, and that he considered the "lump" as referring to the fallen human race; if any one wishes to deny the latter view, the argument, which Beza presents, will not be sufficient, namely, that "the apostle must, then, have said that God left some vessels in dishonor, and transferred others from that state to honor." But I am willing to concede this to him, that unformed matter is signified by the word "lump." For it does not seem to me to be sufficiently safe, to say that God hath not power from one lump to make one vessel to wrath, and another vessel to mercy, — to make one man to be hardened by his irresistible will, and another to obtain mercy. When we see daily that God makes vessels of mercy and vessels of wrath, and that He hardens some men, and has mercy on others, it is indeed apparent that He hath the right to do that which He really does. But I add that He hath the right to do this, in the same mode, in which He does it, and to determine to do it for the same reasons, in view of which He really does it. The subject, indeed, would be plain in itself, if it had not been involved in difficulties, by a preposterous mode of explanation. This I will not here disprove, lest I may be too prolix: for I have not designed to do this now, but only to show that this chapter, by which, as by a firm foundation, they say that their theory is supported, is not in their favor.

I will, however, endeavor to throw some light on this subject. When God is said to make vessels of wrath or vessels of mercy, to harden a man or to have mercy on him, then necessarily three things are to be considered, two explicitly, one implicitly, being interposed between the other two as a medium or means. First it is necessary that a man should exist, and be a vessel. Secondly, it is necessary that before he can be a vessel of wrath or of mercy, he should be a vessel of sin, that is, a sinner. Thirdly, that he should be a vessel of wrath or of mercy.

Let us now consider what is the work of God in this matter. First, then, it is the work of God by which He makes man, that he may exist, not only that he may exist, but that he may exist to a certain end, which is signified in the term "vessel," which is equivalent to "instrument." But an instrument is made to some end. The Scripture declares that this end is the glory of God. Therefore, God made man for His own glory, that is, not that He should receive glory from man, but that He might illustrate His own glory in a much more distinguished manner, by man than by His other creatures. But the glory of God is illustrated, by a manifestation of His own natural attributes, especially of those which are considered as being of secondary importance, such as goodness, justice, wisdom and power.

There are others which belong more intimately to His essence, as simplicity, infinity, eternity, immutability, etc.

It is now to be considered what the attributes are, in the manifestation of which the glory of God was, first of all, to be displayed. I affirm, that they were His goodness, justice, wisdom and power. It belonged to goodness that He should communicate Himself; to justice, to prescribe the rule of that communication; to wisdom, to know how it might suitably and possibly be done; to power, that He should be able, in fact to communicate Himself. Goodness, therefore, impelled God, to make not only other things, but man also, that is, to so communicate Himself to Nothing, by His own image, that out of Nothing and that communication there should exist that being, which is man. Justice prescribed the mode, in which it was suitable that this communication should be made: for it is the arbitrator of goodness, or as Tertullian says, the arbitrator of the works of God.

Wisdom knew how it might be proper that God should communicate Himself to that which was to be made man, and how God could do this.

Power, the instrument of the others, was at hand to perform. God could communicate His own image to Nothing. But man was made, only, that he might be a vessel of that goodness, justice, wisdom and power, and thus He was a vessel to illustrate the divine glory. It must, however, be also considered in what manner he should be a vessel to illustrate the glory of God.

This is indeed true. — God did not make man, that he might only be that which he was made, but that he might tend to greater perfection. Nor did God think that His own goodness was satisfied, when He had once communicated Himself to man, as his creator, but his own glorified, but He wished to communicate Himself further to man, as also "the glorifier of man;" and that this might be possible He endowed him, not only with natural, but also with supernatural gifts. But justice prescribed the rule and measure of this communication, namely, that it ought to be made only on the condition that man should live, in accordance with the divine image, in obedience to the commands of God, and, since he could be exalted, he could also be cast down, — and nothing was more just than that he should be cast down, if he should abuse the gifts, by the right use of which he could be exalted to the highest dignity. Man was, therefore, in that respect, a vessel to illustrate the just goodness and wrath of God, by which God might declare His own great goodness in blessing him, if he should live righteously, and His severe wrath in punishing him, if he should transgress the command. Thus God made man originally, and in him the rest of mankind, vessels to illustrate His just goodness and wrath, that is, instruments fit for this. But He did not, in fact, do this, without the intervention of that, which is here considered in the second place. — Man, originally placed in this condition, by the Deity, by transgressing the command, made himself an evil vessel, that is, a sinner: with the concurrence of no co-operation of the Deity to this result, except such as was suitable to His goodness, justice, wisdom, and indeed to His constancy, by which nothing was taken away from the freedom of man or the actual mode of freewill would be restrained or would be impelled in this or that direction.

Man, existing in this state, with all his posterity, whom God had determined to produce, of his blood, by the ordinary means, was worthy to receive, in view of his demerits, punishment and wrath, that is, to be made, in fact, a vessel of wrath. That same goodness (which I may be allowed here to call the source mercy), did not however permit this, and this is true even of the justice of God, the arbitrator of goodness and mercy. The wisdom of God indeed knew that punishment was due to that cause — sin, and justice wished that what was due to that cause should be rendered to it; but the former also knew that still more was due to goodness, and the latter according to its nature, that what was due to goodness should also be rendered to it, namely, that highest demonstration of itself, and its advancement to the place of mercy, which is the inclination of goodness towards the wretched, and the ill-deserving. It was suitable that the goodness of God should communicate itself, not only to the non-existing, and those existing without any merit, and to the well-deserving (if they had obeyed the commandment), but also to the ill-deserving, and to the transgressors of the law, that He might give to him who had not, give again and with addition to him that had, and spare him that abused his gifts; thus being victorious over sin by its own remission, as triumphant over Nothing, by the act of creation. Therefore, wisdom discovered a mode by which what was due to the cause might be rendered to it, and what was due to goodness might be rendered to it, namely, Jesus Christ the Mediator, on whom the cause of the human race might be laid, to be borne and carried through before the tribunal of justice by whom man might become a vessel to illustrate the divine justice and goodness, in the highest and most excellent way.

Here also justice interposed itself, mindful of its duty, and showed that such a communication of goodness, by means of mercy, could not be made without a condition in this case more suitably than in the former; but it was just that a condition should be fixed upon, in accordance with which that good should be communicated, of mercy, or not communicated at all, and, instead of it, the contrary evil should be inflicted. Hence, also, it was determined to make some men vessels of wrath and others vessels of mercy, that is, fitted to wrath or to mercy; of mercy, those who should perform the condition; of wrath, those who should violate it and not cease to violate it; and this irrevocably and of necessity, so that those who should have violated the condition, persisting in that violation, should be made, by that act, vessels of wrath, and they, who should perform the same, should be made, by that act, vessels of mercy: which same mercy, nevertheless, bestowed the power of obedience in that mode in which it is suitable that mercy, mingled with justice, should bestow it. Briefly, God makes man a vessel; Man makes himself an evil vessel, or a sinner; God determines to make man, according to conditions, satisfactory to himself, a vessel of wrath or of mercy, and this He in fact does, when the condition is either fulfilled, or perseveringly neglected.

From this it is apparent what is the true sense of those things, which are here proposed by the apostle, namely, that God has the power to make men from unformed matter, and to establish a decree concerning them, of the pure choice and pleasure of His will, sanctioned by certain conditions, according to which He makes some vessels to dishonor, other vessels to honor; and therefore man has no just reason for replying against God because He has, by His irresistible will, made him to be hardened, since obstinacy in sin intervenes between that determination of the will and the actual hardening; on account of

which obstinacy God wills according to the same pleasure of His will, to harden the man by His irresistible will. If any one shall say that God has power absolutely or unconditionally to make a man a vessel to dishonor and wrath, he will do the greatest injustice to the Deity, and will contradict the plain declaration of Scripture. Therefore, Beza himself does not dare absolutely to affirm this, but he affirms that the decree is to be so understood, that its execution does not take place until after man, having become sinful, has made himself worthy of wrath.

But he so subjoins the execution of the decree as to make the proximate cause of its execution depend on the decree itself, which is equivalent to the absolute statement, that God determined to make some men vessels to honor, others to dishonor; some vessels of wrath, others vessels of mercy; and that he might be able to do this, to make all, in the first place, sinners, that afterwards He might make, of His justice, some, vessels of wrath and to dishonor, and, of His mercy, others, vessels of mercy and to honor.

Whatever absurdity can be deduced from that comparison of the apostle, by introducing a wrong interpretation, it may be detected only by the distinction, which exists between men and the vessels of the potter, when that distinction is rightly understood.

I have thus treated these matters; not as if there could be no other explanation of that comparison, but that, conceding their own explanation to our opponents, I might show that even it, when rightly understood according to the analogy of faith, does not favor any purpose, such as they wished to conclude from it, but indeed agrees, most fully, with the other view, which you describe. But what if I should say, and I surely have this right, that the true explanation is not that, which they give, but what the apostle presents in the next two verses — "What if God, willing to, etc."

— and that he uses the reference to the power of the potter over the clay both to confirm the reason of the reproof, and to refute the objection.

These very things are also of a kindred nature. For to demonstrate the unworthiness of an objection is, in some measure, to refute it, as we also see in the former cases. I do not see, in what respect, this explanation may not be fitly accommodated to that proposition: "For, as the potter hath power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel to honor, and another to dishonor, so God has power, and indeed with much greater justice, to endure with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction, and to prepare the vessels of mercy into glory." This justice is illustrated by the ends, which God has proposed to Himself in both cases.

It will be said "there is want of agreement between the expressions, 'to make vessels to dishonor,' and 'to endure with much long suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction' that is 'to dishonor;' but that, with the former, this expression is more in agreement 'to fit the vessels of wrath to destruction;' as, 'to prepare the vessels of mercy unto glory' is in agreement with 'to make vessels to honor.'" But who shall prescribe to the apostle the mode of applying his own comparison? Is it not allowable for him to show the purity of the divine power in that, which God really does in reference to the vessels of

wrath and of mercy, although it may be less than what the potter does concerning the vessels unto honor and dishonor, that in this way the force of the argument may be stronger, from the less to the greater, than from an equal to an equal? There is, however, something wanting to that application of the apostle, and it is clear that it is of this character. "Shall He not then have power to do this?" or "shall He not therefore be able to find fault justly with the hardened?" Let us, now, consider, finally, how fully the objection is refuted by those words, in whatever sense they may be taken, whether as an explanation of the comparison, or absolutely and in their simple meaning. I said, and still say, that no objection, in the whole Scripture, seems to me more thoroughly refuted, and that no answer more sufficiently exhausts all the difficulties of any objection. The objection had three parts, The antecedent "God hardeneth when he will;" The consequent, which contains the chief force of the objection, "Therefore he can not justly find fault with the hardened;" The proof of this conclusion from an adjunct of the divine will, "because the will of God can not be resisted. The antecedent, and the argument of the conclusion or consequence, may be connected thus — "God hardens, when he wills, by His irresistible will." The consequent is added thus, "With them God can not justly find fault." Four simple ideas are contained in that objection. The divine wrath, the persons hardened, irresistible will, deservedly or unreservedly, which fourth I would prefer to call "the mode of composition by affirmation or of division by negation."

The relation between these is proposed by the objector thus, — "The wrath of God is an attribute, by which God deals with the hardened, who therefore constitute the object of wrath, and, in this case, also its cause; as frequently objects have the relation of cause to certain attributes, not in the essential nature of the attributes themselves, but so far as they are exercised with those objects, that is not in the primary, but in a secondary act. The hardened, and the irresistible will of God are placed as cause and effect. The hardening is the effect of the irresistible will of God. Now it is inquired whether, that relation being supposed to exist between the hardening and the irresistible will, there is the same relation between the divine wrath and the hardened, that is, whether God can be angry with those thus hardened, which is signified by the expression deservedly and undeservedly. To these things, thus explained, the answer of the apostle may be applied.

First, the apostle declares that such a relation does not subsist between the wrath of God and the hardened, but rather the opposite relation. For the hardened are the object of the divine wrath, nor is their hardening the cause of that wrath, but the divine wrath is rather the cause of their hardening.

God also, in the act of hardening is occupied with those, with whom He is already angry, that is with those, who are already, in fact, vessels of wrath.

This the apostle signifies when he declares that God hardeneth "the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction." There is then in those arguments not only the fallacy of *causa non causa*, *subjecto non subjecto*, but also that of the inversion of cause and effect, of subject and adjunct, hence their refutation is most complete. So far from the truth is it that God can not find fault with those, whom He has hardened, that, on the contrary, He may not harden them, unless they have already, by their own fault, been made vessels of the most

just wrath of God. The whole Scripture teaches that hardening is the effect and the sign of the divine wrath. Hence the question "Can God be angry with the hardened?" is a foolish one. It should be inquired "Can God harden those with whom He is angry?" In the second place, the apostle replies to the relation between "hardening and irresistible will," in these words "endured with much long suffering the vessels of wrath;" in which He signifies that the mode of hardening is "patience and mildness" not the omnipotent action of the will which can not be resisted. Therefore, there is here also the fallacy of *causa non causa*.

It will, however, be asked, "Does not the decree, by which God determined to harden the vessels of wrath, pertain to the will, which can not be resisted?" This is indeed true. But it is one thing for God to use the omnipotent act of His own will to effect hardening, and another thing for Him to determine by that will that He will harden the vessels of wrath. For in that case, the exercise of the will is attributed to the decree of hardening not to the act; between which the difference is so great that it is possible that God should, by His irresistible will, make a decree in reference to hardening the vessels of wrath by His patience and long suffering. If it shall be said that "this hardening will nevertheless, more surely follow by means of that patience, on account of the decree by which He not only determined to use patience, but also to use it for the purpose of hardening, and that this is equivalent to that omnipotent act of the will which can not be resisted," I shall deny that it is equivalent. But to the proof of this denial many things pertain, which it would be tedious to present here; I will, on that account, omit any reply, because this objection does not militate against my design. For should we concede that the vessels of wrath are hardened by the force of the omnipotent will, would this take away even the least particle from the justice of the divine wrath, when they have themselves merited hardening, while it is for God to decide to inflict the punishment, in whatever way may seem good to Him? The third part of the reply refers to the equity of that divine act, which the apostle now explains, deduced from its design. What then; is it not just that God should in some way, demonstrate His wrath and power? Most just. But against whom, if not against "the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction" which God "endured with much long suffering?" Either it is just that God should declare His power and wrath against persons of this character, or He will, in no case, be free to do it, and thus it will be in vain that God is armed with power and wrath, since He can never exercise them, in whatever way He may be provoked. From this, it is manifest, that this is here set forth by the apostle, more clearly than the refutation of that objection demanded. For whatever could be presented, not only as apology, but also as defense, and even as declaration of the divine wrath against the hardened, is here presented; and thus they are described in whom God would show His wrath and power that they all might together embrace, in themselves the just causes of the divine wrath. For He is not angry with them, unless they have already become vessels of wrath; nor does He, when, by their own merit, they have been fitted for destruction, immediately, in accordance with His own right, carry out His wrath in their destruction, but He endures them, with much long-suffering and patience, inviting them to penitence and waiting for their repentance; but when, with a heart, hardened and knowing not how to repent, they condemn the long suffering and patience of God, it is not wonderful that even the most merciful goodness of God should not be able to restrain

Him from the exercise of His wrath, lest, when that anger is demanding that justice should render to it its own highest right, He should seem to give it no place.

We shall, however, set forth the answer with greater conciseness, if we adapt it to the several parts of the syllogism in the objection. The syllogism was as follows — "He, who hardens by His own irresistible will, can not justly 'find fault' with those, who are hardened; — But God hardens by His own irresistible will; — Therefore, He can not justly find fault with those hardened." The apostle replies to the Major by denial; both because it is absolutely false, since they, whom God hardens, have merited that hardening, and God is free to inflict upon them, according to their merits, in whatever way it may seem good to Him; and because a false cause of anger is alleged, namely, hardening, while they, even before they are hardened, were vessels of wrath, and, therefore, the cause of the hardening. The Major, then, should be corrected thus: "He, who, by His own irresistible will, hardens those who, because they are vessels of wrath, have deserved hardening, can moreover 'find fault' with those justly hardened." To the Minor, the apostle replies, by proposing another mode of hardening, by which is removed that mode, which is assumed in the Minor; for He "endured, with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction." Why should any imputation be made against God, if they have been hardened on account of their own wickedness. The Minor, then, should also be corrected; "But God, using patience and long suffering towards the vessels of wrath, hardens them." The Major also must then be further amended, by introducing this mode of hardening, which will greatly favor its truth and equity. From this it follows that the conclusion is false; its contrary follows of necessity from the correction made in its antecedents, and it is most fully true, not only on account of the antecedent truth, but also on account of the just design of the divine hardening, which is the illustration and exhibition of the wrath and power of God. What pertains to that phrase, "vessels of wrath fitted to destruction," can be easily understood from the preceding remarks. As to what is said in addition in reference to "the vessels of mercy," it has been explained for what purpose the apostle did this. As there is no dispute on this point, I will omit further explanation.

In this discussion, I seem to myself to have demonstrated that this passage, from the Apostle, does not serve to confirm that doctrine, which may think to be built on this chapter as a foundation. I have not, however, thought proper to treat the subjects themselves, embraced in this chapter, more extendly, because this will be done more fitly at another time, when we consider them, abstractly, and not as depending on the authority of this or that passage.

If any one will show me that these things are not in accordance with the sentiment of Paul, I will be ready to yield the point; and, if any one will prove that they are inconsistent with the analogy of faith, I will be prompt to acknowledge the fault and forsake the error.