

The FORERUNNER to a further Answer (if need be) to two Books lately published against *Tho. Grantham* of *Norwich*: Wherein the Spirit and Temper of the *Calvinists* is discovered; particularly *Mr. Calvin*, *Mr. Finch*, and his little *Precursor*.

To which is prefixed,

The solid Testimony of *Mr. George Wisher* against *Calvinism*, the worst of Doctrines.

By *THO. GRANTHAM*, Preacher of glad Tidings to all Men in the City of *Norwich*.

**M**R. *George Wisher*, a Man of great Judgment in many things, and a faithful Monitor of the English Nation for many Years; did, in the Year 1666, publish his *Parallelogrammaton*; wherein he does much persuade to Repentance and Brotherly-Love. And observing some great Impediments to both, in p. 61, &c. he considers the Doctrine of the *Calvinists*, in denying universal Redemption, to be a very great Obstruction thereunto. And thus he declares himself.

‘I will be bold to aver—that the brotherly Love and true Repentance, whereto I would persuade, will never be effectually attain’d unto by them, which knowingly, premeditatedly, and wilfully persevere in denying the universal Redemption of Mankind by *Jesus Christ*; seeing thereon depends God’s most glorious Attribute; and in regard it is that for which we are much more obliged to him than all the rest of his Creatures, he cannot but be highly displeas’d with all those who confine the extent of that Mercy. I know many in these Times (some of them in other respects very good and learned Men) who think *universal Redemption* to be a *New Doctrine*, terming it *Arminianism* and *Popery*: but it is neither new, nor repugnant (as is pretended) to the Orthodox Doctrine of *Election* and *Reprobation*, and the free Grace of God; nor ascribes ought more to Nature by the Consequences thereof, than tends to our justifying of God, and to our self-condemnation, if that which he hath given us be not husbanded according as he hath and doth enable. The holy Scriptures evidence it to all who rightly understand them.

‘So far is it from being a *Novelty*, (as ignorant Hearers are made to believe) that it was received and professed for a necessary Truth by the Churches of God in all Ages since *Christ’s* Birth, and contradicted by very few in the first Times of Christianity: Yea, it was believed many hundreds of Years before *Arminius* was born, or *Popery* had any being in the World; and will be professed, when the Opposers and Traducers of that Verity shall be quite rooted out of the *Evangelical Kingdom*—It is the well-counterfeiting of Truth and Holiness which must complet the Design of *Antichrist*; and there is not any one single Heresy or Wick- edness, which doth so secretly, and so mischievously supplant *Christ*; it undermines the Foundation of that Structure which open Blasphemies above-ground cannot endanger, and hath already sprung a Mine to the dividing of *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, that they will hardly be reconciled until all Controversies are at an end.

‘Let us therefore consider well what depends upon it; how much it concerns the Glory of God; how much he is dishonour’d by a contrary Belief, and how much it detracts from our own Privileges and Consolations. God’s Mercy is above all his Works. It is the Crown and Dignity of the King of Kings, and the highest of all Treasures to clip it.

\* A professed denial of the universality of *human Redemption*, seems to me a cursed *Counter-Call*, made and sung by Devils, in opposition to that blessed *Nativity-Song* which was sung by Angels at the birth of *Christ*, *Glory to God on High, on Earth Peace, and good Will to Men*. For how was God likely to be glorified, Peace to be upon Earth, and good Will to Men, manifested by the Incarnation of his Son, if Man's Redemption had not been *Universal*? But so narrowed, that it extended to a very few, and those few also left without assurance they were of that small number, whatsoever they should endeavour, if there should be an Exception from the Act of Grace, as many fancy?

\* Doubtless if it had been so, it would have given occasion rather of howling than of singing, and been rather *sad* than *glad* Tidings, in regard of that great Terror which might have seized upon all Mankind, and caused an universal Lamentation, when they considered how many millions of millions were certainly exposed to everlasting Damnation; how small a number is: possibility to be saved, and how few of their dearly beloved Parents, Children, and Friends might be of these few, for whom *Christ* took upon him humane Nature. O horrible and unparalleled Blasphemy! Doubtless be God's Name if it not so. When the Children of *Israel* were redeemed out of their Egyptian Bondage, which was a Type of our *universal Redemption*, there was not one Soul, nor one Hoof left behind them; nor was one soul absolutely excluded from the benefit of *Christ's* Incarnation and Passion, but they only who by their own Defaults, and unrepented Sins, should fall away, as they did who perished in the Wilderness. For God hath many a time, upon several Occasions, passed his Word to ascertain the Universality of his Love to Man without personal Respects, where personal Sins without Repentance, have not first made the Person incapable. Nay, our Incredulity hath put him to his Oath to assure every Sinner. And if nevertheless we still distrust him, continue in our misbelief of his Word and Oath, and labour to draw others into the same Crime; it cannot be an ordinary Punishment which God will at last inflict for so extraordinary and so high an Affront; it being a Sin more heinous than Murder, Adultery, and all other carnal Sins put together; yea, more heinous than these the Jews committed by their Idolatries, killing the Prophets, and crucifying *Christ* in the Flesh; for the last was but a Sin against his Humanity, and their Idolatries but the ascribing some part of that Honour to the Creatures, which was due to God only: Whereas the limiting God's universal Grace in *Christ* with the concomitant Doctrines, and the Consequences thence raised, and the imputing to God an eternal Reprobation of the greatest part of Mankind, before they had done Good or Evil; for those Sins also which they blasphemously say he necessitated them to commit, to shew his Justice, and manifest his hatred to Sin, is a despoiling God of his Divine Nature, of his Goodness, and an ascribing unto him that which belongs only to the Devil.

\* O the Patience of God! what can be so abominable! They do not only make Reprobation older than the Father of it the Devil, but make God also the Author of his Wickedness, in necessitating him to be a Devil, and consequently Author of all the Wickedness committed by all the Devils in Hell, and all the wicked Men upon the Earth: which appears to me so horrible an Impiety, that I wonder not to see the World so full of Plagues and Sins, and Sins and Sinners become such Plagues to each other as they are. Nor can I believe there will ever be less Plagues, where that Blasphemy is professed and indulged as Orthodox Doctrine, until it be repented of. Nor shall I marvel if my Words be misunderstood, and my good Meaning misinterpreted; if God's Word be so mistaken, and his Love so ill-rewarded. I know the bitterness and uncharitableness of their Spirits, who shall be obdurate in this Judgment, yet am neither afraid nor ashamed to declare my Conscience therein; or to whatsoever else I think may concern God's Glory, and the Peace of my Country. Thus  
 far Mr. Geo. Wither.

*7th Forerunner to a further Answer (if occasion serve) to two Books lately Published against Tho. Grantham of Norwich.*

*Briefly shewing the Spirit and Temper of the Calvinists, and particularly of Mr. Finch and his Procurer, &c.*

*Wickedness proceedeth and cometh forth from the Wicked, as saith the Proverb of the Ancients, 1 Sam. 24. 13.*

**I**N Psal. 94. 20 this Question is put, *Shall the Throne of Iniquity have Fellowship with thee, which travaileth Mischief by a Law? The Sense of the place is, No just thing can please God, &c.*

Now of all Mischief, Sin is the worst, and indeed the Cause of all the rest. It must therefore be exceeding Evil, for any to make the Holy God the Ordainer and Commander of all the Sins of Angels and Men, and that freely, without any Provocation, and infallibly and unchangeably also, that they must even so come to pass as he hath (not only) foreseen them, but ordained and commanded them. This is the Doctrine which I chiefly opposed in my Dialogue. And though I have made this very manifestly appear to be the Doctrine of the principal Men of the Presbyterian and Calvinistical Perswasion, yet I will here add one Passage more out of Mr. Calvin, Inst. L. 2. c. 24. Sect. 6. where he boldly tells us, *That God doth now otherwise foresee the things that shall come to pass, than because he hath ordained they shall so come to pass. It is vain to move Controversy about Foreknowledge, where it is certain rather by Ordinance and Commandment.* So then, let the Action be never so wicked, he makes it infallibly necessary, by virtue of God's Ordinance and Commandment. Than which I do aver, nothing can be spoken more dishonourable to God, nor more mischievous to Men. Yea, Zanchius is as bold as Calvin, for he saith, *Damnus Reprobat necessitate peccandi, cogit & peritendi, ex hac Disordinatione constringi, atque ita constringi ut nequeat non peccare: atque perire:* That is, *We grant that Reprobates are held so fast under God's Almighty Decree, that they cannot but sin and perish.* These I call the worst Doctrines in the World.

And finding this worst of Doctrines to have much prevailed in the City of Norwich, I have endeavoured to make the Citizens sensible of the danger of it, both by Preaching and Writing. For which Work and Labour of Love (and to their Souls especially who are most deceived by it) I have been ill requited by many Slanders and Reproaches; and particularly by a very foolish Pamphlet, as a Forerunner to that Book of Mr. Finch, which he calls, *An Answer to my Dialogue*, [which scurrilous Pamphlet was published with his Privy and Allowance, as I suppose] in both which, one great Design is, to disgrace my Person by unseemly Epithets, and very false Stories; and particularly for that which I writ against Calvin for his Rage and Cruelty, in procuring one Michael Servetus to be burnt to death at Geneva, Anno 1553. Concerning which the Pamphleteer calls Calvin, a *renowned Man a Star of the first Magnitude*; and Servetus, an *infamous Wretch*; and my self, a *pantry grovelling Fellow*. And Mr. Finch calls me, a *boisterous quarrelsome Man*, one that hath the *Spirit of Slander*, as a *check and punishment to defame such a Man as Calvin*; and to extol Servetus, an *Antitrinitarian*; and says, *I have lost all Credit and Esteem with all wise and knowing Christians.* But yet I hope all wise and knowing Christians will hear me speak for what is Truth, and so for my self also before they condemn me. And,

1. Wherein do I defame Calvin? That he did certainly procure the death of Servetus, a very learned Man, and of that exact Life, that nothing is objected against him, though I doubt he did err in some things; I say that Calvin did procure his Death, is p<sup>r</sup> he

¶ *Libenter fateor (inquirit Calvinus de se) ac prae me fero prodisse accusatorē, spero capitale saltem ferre iudicium. Calv. Ep. ad Fayet.*

saith, *I freely confess the Accuser came out from me, I hope at the least he shall be put to death.* I have not then defamed Calvin, unless Mr. Finch and his little Lawyer can justify that cruel Action; as indeed they seem willing so to do, by approving Dr. Owen his Sentence, who tells us, as Mr. Finch quotes him, p. 115. *That Serverus is the only Person in the World that he ever heard of, that ever died upon the account of Religion, in reference to whom the Zeal of them that put him to death may be acquitted.* And thus Mr. Finch, Dr. Owen, &c. have bathed their

Hands in the Blood of poor *Michael Servetus*. Behold, and wonder! and wonder the more, because neither of them ever saw the Book which *Serverus* died for, but take their Grounds from the Pens of his Murderers, who would not speak the best of him you may be sure. But,

2. Wherein do I extol *Serverus*? I said he was a Learned and worthy Man, and pious, tho' mistaken in some things perhaps. And do I not call him Pious in conjunction with Calvin? Now I conceive that in Charity, I may hope many were pious Men, who did not rightly understand the Mystery of the Trinity. Yea, I have the charity to think, that Calvin was a pious Man, and yet I believe and know that he was very Erroneous in many things, and that he was acted by *Cain's* Spirit, when he procured the Death of *Serverus*, who could not deny either the Father, Son, nor Holy Spirit, because he held true Baptism in the Name of all the Three; though I fear his Sentiments were not so clear as they ought to have been concerning the Unity of these Three. And who can say that he so fully knows this great and glorious Mystery as he ought to do? I am far from justifying *Serverus* in his Error, yet I think they ought to have spared his Life, though they had laid some Restraint upon him.

3. Let us hear what Learned Protestants have said before me, in the Case of *Serverus*.

1. *Grotius*, a Man that had but few Equals for Wisdom and Moderation, tells us; *Serverus Libri non Geneva tantum, sed in aliis Locis, per Calvini diligentiam exusti sunt; fateor tamen Anam me exemplum vidisse Libri Servetiani, in quo certe ea non vepi que ei objicit Calvinus, Vol. pro pūde, p. 16.* That is, *By the Diligence of Calvin, all the Books of Serverus were not only burnt at Geneva, but in other Places. Yet I have seen one Copy of Serverus's Books, in which truly I do not find the Things which Calvin does object against him.*

And saith Dr. *Pierce*, (a Learned and Able Minister of the Church of England) "*Serverus* was burnt at Geneva for less than being a *Sacilian*, and who was not so bad as Mr. B. (a Presbyterian) hath laboured to fancy me.

And he tells us also, "*That Ocolampadius (a Learned Protestant)* was offended at the barbarity of the Sentence. Nor find I any thing (*saith he*) pretended against *Serverus*, which was so highly blasphemous, as to make God the Author or Cause of Sin.

And how well Calvin could tell his own Tale, and how diligent he was in being the first

Informers of his Affairs, we may guess by his Epistles, 164, 165, which he writ to the

Four Helvetic Cities for gaining Authority to his new Device—for, let them say what

they please to lessen the Guilt of that Cruelty, yet they are Parties, and must not so easily be heeded as other Men who are none. If *Serverus* his Books were so blasphemous,

why was Calvin so diligent in burning up the Impression which he should rather have preserved, that Posterity might see some competent Cause for such a terrible Execution? Yet, by the Providence of God, one or two of the Copies escap'd the Flames;

and we are assured, by peerless *Grotius*, that in the Copy which he saw, he could not

find those things which were objected by Mr. Calvin; what *Melancton* wrote, it was merely on supposition that Calvin's Narrative was true. Thus saith the Learned *Pierce*, in *discourse of Calvin's Cruelty against Serverus*.

And by this we may perceive, how little Credit there is to be given to Dr. Owen and Mr. Finch, or his *Little Praecursor*, not one of them having seen the Book which they condemn, but receive their Information from them that were his Murderers.

And grant that *Servetus* did err in that great Mystery of the Trinity, yet must he for this be burnt to death? Why then, Dr. Owen, Mr. Finch, and his *Little Lawyer*, would make a bloody Work, even in England, where there are too many who are as erroneous concerning that glorious Mystery, as *Servetus* was, (the more is the pity); for seeing they justify *Calvin* in that bloody Act, how can they refuse doing the like, were it in their Power, unless they will come short of that Zeal which they commend in Mr. *Calvin*? By this print of the Foot, we may know the Statue of that Monster of Persecution, which did not the Law restrain, would appear in too many Professors at this Day. I speak what I know by the Usage I have met with in this City, both from Professors and Profane.

4. Now let us hear how famous Mr. *Calvin* was in the Judgment of some Learned and Sober Protestants.

(1.) He is thought to err in the Mystery of the Trinity as well as *Servetus*, though perhaps not so much. These are his words, (speaking of the Three Persons, &c.) "If the Names have not without cause been invented, we ought to take heed, that in rejecting them, we be not justly blamed of proud Presumptuousness. I would to God (says he) they were buried indeed, so that this Faith were agreed of all Men, that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are one God; and yet the Father is not the Son, nor the Holy Ghost the Son, but distinct by certain Properties. *Instit. L. 1. c. 13. Sect. 3.* And this his *Tres Proteritates*, is objected against him by some of the Learned Protestants. And I am of Opinion, should I write of the Blessed Trinity as Mr. *Calvin* has done, Mr. *Finch* and his *Fortress* would cry out *Blasphemy*.

(2.) He condemns the *Antient Fathers*, because they were not of his Mind in the Case of Irrespective Reprobation, but hold, That there was Salvation for all Men through God's Mercy in the Gift of his Son. He brands them (saith a Learned Protestant) as Pelagianising in their Opinions.

But (3.) his rudeness of Speech was intolerable: He called great and good Men by Titles unseemly; as *Serpent*, *Pest*, *Lossil*, *Fool*, *Knave*, *Devil*, *filthy Dog*, *impudent Hangman*, &c. And *Bucer* (a Learned Protestant) calls him, *Fratricide*, a *Murderer of his Brethren*. And *Grotius* says, *He grew worse and worse; and that Calvin's Disciples are such themselves in Disposition, as they make God to be in their Insinuations towards the greater part of Mankind.*

And truly this is too apparent in two of his Followers, I mean, the *Little Praecursor* and Mr. *Finch*, whose study has been to render me very odious, though I am sure they know no Evil by me, more (no nor so much) as they know by themselves. And yet thus I am represented by them, viz. *audacious*, *impudent*, *turbulent*, *impetuous*, *impertinent*, *fearless*, *prejudic'd*, *mechanick*; a *Fool*, *dispicable*, *wise* Mr. *Grantham*, a *despised* *Atax*, *Coxcomb*, *addle-Brain*, *dull* *Kitching-pate*, *Clown*, *Blunderbuss*, *dissembling* *Prater*, *Brawler*, *blowing*, *hidious*, *deaf*, *thick-skull* *Momus*, one decreed to steal, *wrangling* *Fellow*, *Dolt*, *poor* *Fop*, *soft-pated* *Clod*, *Caviller*, *Brazen-fac'd*, *inconsiderate* *Fellow*, *gagling* *Goose*, a *quarrelsome* *boisterous* *Man*, one that has lost all Credit and Esteem with all wise and knowing Christians that worship the Holy Trinity; one, like a *Woman* *scolding* and *quarrelling* in the *Streets*, one like an *impertinent* *Woman*, &c. So that I think these two *Calvinists* have come near the pitch of their Master. And such as will not spare Mens Reputation, are not to be trusted with their Lives, any more than Mr. *Calvin*.

5. There is one thing which runs through Mr. *F's* Epistle and Book, and that is a talk of special discriminating Grace. As if God's Grace, which he gives to most Men, were of little use for them that have it; yea, of no use at all, in respect of Eternal Life. All that Mr. *F.* allows that Grace to effect for them in the other World, is only to make their Punish-

ment: *left in Hill*, as you may see in p. 15. of his Answer; which is a piece of as woful Divinity as ever was heard surely.

*Reader*, I humbly advise thee to take heed how thou receivest these Dictates, and esteem all (even the least Measure of Grace from God) to be a special favour, and such as in its Nature and Effect (*if it be all that he designs' a Justice, or it were so little*) will certainly lead thee to Heaven, thou being a faithful improver of it, sincerely, though under many Infirmities; and this through his own Goodness, in Christ Jesus our Lord, who gave himself a Ransom for all to be testified in due time, 1 *Tim.* 2. 6.

(2.) Again observe, that these terms, *discriminating Grace*, &c. are not found in the Scripture; nor wisely made use of to render some of God's Grace not to be discriminating, (as they please to phrase it). We know God gives more Talents to some than he does to others, yet Grace is the same in Nature and Efficacy, if improved, and to leave the Receiver under unpardonable Guilt if not improved, *Mat.* 25. and we shall only be accountable for what God gives to each one, and for no more; nor will he deal in severity, but where his Grace hath been contemned.

(3.) Consider that very many of those who most talk of discriminating Grace, are greatly destitute of that tender Love which *Paul* had for them that rejected Christ, *Rom.* 9. 1, 2, 3. & 10. 1, 2, 3. but are filled with hatred against all that oppose their Conceit of *irrespective Reprobation*: being indeed fierce and of a cruel Disposition, full of Passion, quickly angry, &c. These things I have found to be true (God knows it) among such as pretend very high to discriminating Grace more than amongst others: but I fear it will prove but a special discriminating Conc. it in the end to very many of them.

6. There is a great talk also, both in his Epistle and Book, about God's absolute Sovereignty. As if because he is so, he might make Angels and Men on purpose to damn them to Everlasting Fire, without giving them (at any time) any Means sufficient to prevent their Destruction. To avoid this Rock upon which they often spit themselves, let us consider, That though God's Sovereignty is incomprehensible, yet it is every way better both in its Mercy and Justice, and in the exercise of both, than any Sovereignty that Men do receive or exercise under him. Now we know, that what Prince soever exerts his Sovereign Power, to impose absolute Impossibilities upon his Subjects, and Death for non-performance, is a very cruel and unrighteous Prince in the exercise of that Sovereignty. Such was *Pharaoh*, *Exod.* 5. condemned by God and Man.

O how ill would it become a Prince to cut off the Feet of many of his Subjects, and then Gibbet them alive, because they do not run as well as those whose Feet he spared? And yet even thus do these *Calvinists* represent the most merciful Sovereign that ever was: For they hold and teach, that God did freely and unchangeably decree, precisely such a number of Angels and Men, Women and Infants, to be damned, and that *irresistible Time*, before there was either Angel or Man created; and this, not because God foresaw they would sin, and dispise the Riches of his Goodness; but he did ordain them that they should commit so many Sins, yea, all the Sins that they ever shall or can commit, that so he might glorify the Sovereignty of his Justice (as they speak) in such a voluntary and dismal destruction of his Creatures.

7. These things I made evident from the Learned *Calvinists*'s own Writings, as alleged against them by their fellow Protestants; and Mr. *Flood* is so far from answering them, that he plainly tells you, he will not meddle with any of my Quotations, and yet he calls his Book an Answer to mine. He says also, he will not justify all the Phrases of *Learned and Godly Men*; and thus he will hold to their Opinion, but not to their Phrases. Hence he likes not Dr. *Collings*'s using the Phrase, as if God did not seriously act, &c. when indeed he makes the Case far worse: for tho' *Peter* told the Jews, God sent Christ to them to bless them, in turning every one of them from their Iniquities, Mr. *F.* tells you, it was far from *Peter's* meaning, p. 21.

And when our Saviour bewails *Israel*, for not knowing the things that belonged to their Peace; Mr. F. tells us, *Christ did not weep for their Spiritual Peace*, but to prevent their Ruin by the *Romans*; as if Christ did more tender their Bodies than their Souls: It seems he had ordained the Devil should lead them to Hell, but for this Christ would not weep as a Mediator, but he wept as Man only for that they should be destroyed by the *Romans*; and yet, if you found him to the bottom, it was *infallibly* and *unchangeably* decreed by Christ as God, that they should be destroyed by the *Romans*, for he holds that God *did unchangeably decree whatsoever comes to pass*. O unwise Explicitor! and thus does he abuse most of the Texts which he meddles with, which speak of God's Love to Mankind universally, as every careful Reader may perceive: And very unworthily declares, That God hath many holy Ends in affording the preaching of the Word to *many*, upon whom he never purposed nor intended to bestow special and saving Grace, p. 15. And what is this, but to tell the World, that God meerly mocks the greatest part of Men to whom the Gospel is preached? for whatever he speaks by the Gospel to them, he never intended them any Salvation by it. And thus Mr. Finch, and all such Preachers as he is, are *mere Hypocrites*, for they cannot intend any Salvation to all they preach unto, but only to a very few, and they know not so much as one of them.

Nay, its greedily does he fancy that God will absolutely damn the greatest part of Mankind; that he will not spare the poor dying Infants, but cast them into Hell also; and his Reason is, That as *Men do kill the young Cubs of Foxes and Wolves, though they never yet did any Mischief to God nor, if he please, bring his Justice upon Infants, though they die in their Infancy*, p. 28, 29. And then our gracious God is made more cruel to his Offspring. (for such is all Mankind, *Acts 17. 26.*) than the very Wolves and Foxes are to their young Ones. And what is now become of that gracious Speech of Almighty God, *Psal. 145. His tender Mercies are over all his Works?* Sure, damned Infants have no share at all in his Mercy, no not so much as a *Toad* by a thousand degrees. *O ye Fools, when will ye be wise?* *Psal. 94. 8.*

Mr. Finch quarrels with the Title of my Book, and says, *We read of John the Baptist, not of Thomas the Baptist*. But this only shews his weakness; I speak not of *Thomas the Baptist*. I intend by the Baptist, all that own the Doctrine and Baptism of Repentance for remission of Sins, including *John the Baptist* as the first Teacher of that Baptism, for the *remission of Sin to Israel, and that all Men through him might believe*, *John 1. 7, 31.* This Doctrine Mr. Finch and the *Presbyterians* do oppose, both in the extent of this blessed Object of Faith for all Men, by narrowing it up to they know not who, and therefore preach they know not what. And also by Sprinkling poor Infants (many times fast asleep) in opposition to *John the Baptist*, who baptized Repentant Believers in the River, or where there was much Water, *Mark 1. 17. John 3. 23.* Mr. Finch also quarrels my Office as a *Messenger of the Baptized Churches*, &c. But of this I have given an account, in my Book intituled, *Christianismus Primitivus*, to which I refer the injudicious Reader, and remain,

A Friend and Servant to all Men,  
for Jesus's sake,

T. H. O. GRANTHAM.

Northwich,  
Aug. 14.  
1691.