

THE THEOLOGICAL DISPUTATION *DE DIVINA  
HOMINUM PRAEDESTINATIONE* (1643),  
WITH JOHANNES MACCOVIUS PRESIDING AND JOHANNES  
FRIDERICUS HERBST RESPONDING

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BELOW IS A TRANSLATION of a disputation held at the University of Franeker under the presiding Johannes Maccovius (1588–1644): *Disputatio theologica de divina hominum praedestinatione*, held 2 September 1643, with Johannes Fridericus Herbst as respondent. Drafted and defended the year before Maccovius’s death, the fifty-one theses disputation yields insight into Maccovius’s views on predestination, which throughout his career as a theologian caused no small angst for him and other Reformed theologians.

The man himself was born Jan Makowski in Poland, and was the first to receive a doctorate from Franeker University; upon this, there he eventually took a chair as doctor of theology, a seat he occupied the rest of his career. As is well-known, the inimitable Maccovius comes down to us historically as something of a rabble-rouser, a portraiture in large part due to his extended debate on predestination with Sibrandus Lubbertus (1555–1625) at Franeker—discussed even at the great 1618–1619 Synod of Dordt, where Maccovius was brought forward under charge of heresy. It would not be the only dispute of Maccovius’s career; prior to his appearance at the Synod, prior to his seat at Franeker, Maccovius would already show himself a *theologus polemicus*. Educated early on under the important Bartholomew Keckerman at Gdansk, the young Pole then debated Jesuits at Prague; Socinians at Lublin; Jesuits again at Heidelberg while tutoring—and all this before taking his doctorate at twenty-six.

He came to Franeker as a doctoral student 24 October 1613, and took his degree 8 March 1614. The old theology professor Lubbertus was there; and while early on relations between the two theologians were cordial, this would change.<sup>1</sup> The infralapsarian Lubbertus took issue with the young Maccovius—or, perhaps, *vice versa*; they would engage the topic of predestination in future years, facing-off in earnest starting roughly in 1616.

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1. For the biography on Lubbertus, see C. van der Woude, *Sibrandus Lubbertus. Leven en werk, in het bijzonder naar zijn correspondentie* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1963).

I will not survey all historical details<sup>2</sup> of what would become a “Maccovius affair.”<sup>3</sup> Things began in 1616: a student under the presiding Maccovius disputed on a number of themes bearing on predestination in his *de praedestinatione*—at which Lubbertus likely filed a complaint with the ecclesiastical authorities at Franeker. More critically, 1 April 1617 saw another Maccovian student, Thomas Parker, dispute seventy theses *de traductione hominis peccatoris ad vitam*,<sup>4</sup> with Lubbertus again opposed. The result was Maccovius charged with and pronounced guilty of heresy in 1618 by local ecclesiastical authorities, with the case making its way to the Great Synod of Dordt. On 25 April 1619, Maccovius read his defense. The day following heard the specifics of the charge, “containing fifty points already known from the theses presented by Parker and Makowski.”<sup>5</sup> The Synod issued its verdict 4 May. Kiedron summarizes the three points the Synod proposed: (1) Maccovius was in fact not a heretic; (2) Maccovius was “reprimanded” to avoid hard formulae in the future but seek “select topics of disputations that would reaffirm young people in the orthodox doctrine” (as Kiedron says)—roughly speaking, he ought to avoid declaring the infralapsarian position as straightforwardly in error—and (3) any future charges against him should be supported by *graviora documenta*.<sup>6</sup>

This ought to have settled things; but it did not. The year following saw an outbreak again between Lubbertus and Maccovius; the extended conflict was to last, with flashes and fireworks, until Lubbertus’s death in 1625, after which it subsided somewhat. It was not with Lubbertus only that Maccovius had issues. By the time of Lubbertus’s death, the Puritan William Ames had already arrived to sit on the faculty of theology (1622), giving opportunity for tensions between him and Maccovius that lasted until Ames left in 1633 for Rotterdam. Between the two theologians at least two basic things stood at issue: per Ames’s opinion, Maccovius lacked marks of outward piety required of a Christian and certainly a theologian; and Maccovius held a number of theological issues at-odds with Ames’s own views. The latter, for Ames, stemmed from Maccovius’s (over?) philosophical commitments, especially to Aristotelianism. All told, *after* Ames left, and *after* two other sitting professors had passed away—

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2. For a good introduction, see especially the translator’s Introduction to *Scholastic Discourse: Johannes Maccovius (1588–1644) on Theological and Philosophical Distinctions and Rules*, tr. and ed. William J. van Asselt, Michael D. Bell, Gert van den Brink, Rein Ferwerda (Apeldoorn: Instituut voor Reformatieonderzoek, 2009). I have made use of this source for much of the bibliographical data in this introduction.

3. Cf. Van Asselt, “On the Maccovius Affair,” in *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt (1618–1619)*, ed. Aza Goudriaan and Fred van Lieburg (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

4. The disputation had been refused at Leiden, but Parker was permitted to defend it under Maccovius at Franeker.

5. Stefan Kiedron, “Jan Makowski (1588–1644). Polish Theologian in Frisian Franeker,” *Odrodzenie i Reformacja w Polsce* (2013): 217. For the full documentation and reconstruction of the entire case as handled at Dordt, see *Algemeen Rijksarchief, ‘s-Gravenhage, Tweede afdeling* in the *Oud Synodaal Archief*, esp. inv. nr. 125, pp. 277–79. I owe this reference to Van Asselt, “On the Maccovius Affair,” in *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt*, 220, n. 12. Van Asselt also provides a helpful summary of this, pp. 220–22.

6. Kiedron, “Jan Makowski,” 218–19.

Amama (d. 1629) and Hatching (d. 1630)—things settled. Maccovius was now a more senior professor, and things had gone the gambit.

This portraiture would be amiss if it neglected to note Maccovius's views "on several issues that became standard in seventeenth-century Reformed scholasticism," as Van Asselt notes.<sup>7</sup> While he was the subject of continual controversy, at least in part of his own making, it was not as though he was deeply at odds with "the Reformed." But apart from issues of (im?)piety and a penchant for overweening about philosophy's use in theology, what was, in fact, Maccovius's controversial position? His fairly rigorous supralapsarianism.

There is not place here to give more than a bare thumbnail sketch of Maccovius's views on predestinatory topics. His supralapsarianism stands out not because he was unique among Reformed systematians in holding a "supra" view; he is known due to controversies that surrounded his holding the view, and for arguing it fairly consistently and tempestuously. What he offers can be summarized neatly by how he views the *objectum praedestinationis*. As laid out in his *Loci communes* (published by Maccovius himself in 1641, but expanded and republished in 1650, then again in 1658),<sup>8</sup> the *objectum* can be considered either *ratione finis qua in intentione*, or *qua in executione*: the former comports to man as *creabilis*, and the latter as man *condendus, conditus, permittendus in lapsum, et lapsus*.

We will see this distinction made in the translation below. In fact, comparison between the *Loci* and its chapters dealing with predestination and the present, far shorter disputation unexpectedly reveal deep resemblance to each other. The value of this disputation, in contrast to the *Loci* or other works, is it offers avenue into Maccovius's understanding of predestination that is concise, "boiled-down," so to say. Disputations are important data for the presiding theologian's views. And in Maccovius's own case, student disputations held important place throughout the predestination debates at Franeker (not to mention the parallel happenings in Leiden).<sup>9</sup> It is therefore of interest to examine a theses set far removed from the earlier controversy, held after the heat had cooled—held, in fact, the year before Maccovius died.

Thus the translation of the disputation below: "The Divine Predestination of Men."<sup>10</sup> As mentioned, the respondent was one Johannes Fridericus Herbestius, and the disputation was held publicly 2 September 1643 with Maccovius presiding. The question of precise authorship of disputations is complex, specifically the relationship

7. Van Asselt, "On the Maccovius Affair," in *Revisiting the Synod of Dordt*, 218. Van Asselt notes that at least Gisbertus Voetius, Franciscus Gomarus, Melchior Leydekker, John Owen, and Alexander Comrie "spoke very appreciately of [Maccovius's] work."

8. For a survey of Maccovius's works, both those published during his lifetime and those published posthumously, see the helpful dissertation by Michael Daniel Bell, "Propter Potestatem, Scientiam, ac Beneplacitum Dei: The Doctrine of the Object of Predestination in the Theology of Johannes Maccovius" (PhD diss., Westminster Theological Seminary, 1986), 29–37.

9. An interesting parallel to the predestination debates at Franeker is the more famous debates held at Leiden during roughly the same period between Arminius and Gomarus.

10. The text I have used for this translation is available at the ever-helpful prdl.org.

between the presiding professor and the responding student in the actual drafting of theses. This disputation lists Herbestius as *both* “author” and “respondent”; yet it is important to recall that Maccovius presiding entails some sort of sign-off on his part. It is also highly unlikely Maccovius would permit a student disputation at-odds with his own views, given his history with the topic. And, while I have not shown this here, the disputation below follows lines in the *Loci communes*. I therefore take this disputation to be at the least consistent with Maccovius’s own views, presented under his supervision, and therefore helpful to explicate Maccovius’s own thoughts on the matter.

A word on the text below. Translation itself is rough business, not least when it is of a text dealing with a hard theological topic. Here, I strove to preserve the specificity of the disputation with my eye on what is at issue. Thus, while my English could be more flowing and prosaic, I trust it preserves what it ought to and errs, if it does, in that pursuit. I have kept explanatory footnotes to a minimum and generally let the text stand on its own legs for what it is: an “Englishing” of a primary source.

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## A THEOLOGICAL DISPUTATION: THE DIVINE PREDESTINATION OF MEN

**Thesis 1.** Because we are going to deal with divine predestination of men, we thought it worthwhile to handle the term “predestination” first. The word in Greek is προορισμος and is taken απο του προοριζειν [from “to preordain”]; it includes two things in its signification. First, it denotes to decide<sup>11</sup> certainly something of some other thing, before it happens; second, to direct the same thing to a certain end or goal.<sup>12</sup> For the former signification, see Acts 2:23; the latter, Genesis 50:20.

**Thesis 2.** The Fathers, understanding this term generally, applied it to election and likewise to reprobation, so that it expressed both. Augustine in *The City of God* writes, “Mystically, we speak of two cities, that is, societies of men. One of them was predestined to reign forever with God, and the other to undergo eternal judgment with the devil.”<sup>13</sup> He also teaches in his *Enchiridion*, “God uses well even evil things as unto a supreme good for the damnation of those he justly predestined for punishment, and for the salvation of those he mercifully predestined for grace.”<sup>14</sup>

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11. *Constituere*.

12. *Ad finem certum, seu scopum*.

13. Book 15, chap. 1.

14. Chapter 100.

**Thesis 3.** Many, being scrupulous, have erred with the term “predestination,” arguing it denotes election alone and is spoken just about good things—this despite the fact the Holy Spirit used the same term in speaking about evil things (Acts 4:23). This is because predestination of a thing is the determination<sup>15</sup> of it to its end. But these people deny this is the sort of end that is the destruction<sup>16</sup> of the reprobate (seeing that such is an evil thing) and further that the term “predestination” is applied wrongly to them. *Answer.* Though we concede it is indeed an evil thing with respect to those reprobate, still, with respect to God reprobating, which is their final<sup>17</sup> destruction or end, he without doubt intends the declaration of his righteousness and power (Prov. 16:4; Rom. 9:17, 21–22).

**Thesis 4.** This divine predestination even includes angels. Some of these are termed elect (1 Tim. 5:21), while the rest are spoken of as being kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgement of that great day (Jude 6). Here, we will only handle the predestination of men.

**Thesis 5.** The predestination of men is God’s eternal, immutable decree about man’s last end and the means tending to it (Rom. 9:21–23).

**Thesis 6.** Generally,<sup>18</sup> we derive the definition of predestination partly from its object and partly from its end. On the one hand, its object is something under the concept of its end<sup>19</sup> as it is in its intention; as such, the object is man creatable.<sup>20</sup> This is because an end does not concern nothing but something. Now we consider that which the end concerns either as what is about to be or as what it could be.<sup>21</sup> With respect to God, we cannot consider the end as what is about to be, for on that line God would have decreed with an uncertain end something about to exist. Therefore, certainly the end here is what could be. On the other hand, the object of predestination is under the concept of an end just as it is in execution. On this line, the object is man about to be created, having been created, about to be permitted unto the Fall, and having fallen. This is because God could not—not due to a defect of his power, but the defect of the object—accomplish this end he declared to himself in the showing of his vindictive justice, unless he had decreed man as about to be made, having been made, and having been permitted unto the Fall.

**Thesis 7.** The end predestination guides and directs intelligent creatures<sup>22</sup> through various means toward<sup>23</sup> is not a natural or temporal state, but an eternal one. For that

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15. *Destinatio.*

16. *Exitum.* Tr. note: Possibly “departure”; cf. Matt. 7:23.

17. *Optimum.*

18. Tr. note: More specifically, “according to its genus” (*in genere*).

19. *Ratione finis.*

20. *Homo creabilis.*

21. *Vel ut quod futurum sit, vel ut quod fieri possit.*

22. *Creaturas intelligentes.*

23. *Per varia media.*

matter, it does not belong to all commonly, but belongs to each singularly in the order of those predestined—whether blessed or miserable, of salvation or destruction, of glory or disgrace (Isa. 65:13–14; Matt. 25:31–41; Rom. 9:21–23).

**Thesis 8.** The means tending to this end are effectual calling,<sup>24</sup> justification, and sanctification, and the opposite for the reprobate: the privation of effectual grace, continuation in the state of condemnation, and just blinding and hardening, all which presuppose the Fall and condition of sin. We will deal with all this further in what follows.

**Thesis 9.** So, our adversaries charge us falsely that we establish predestination absolute in every way,<sup>25</sup> because we say it is only absolute with respect to the impelling cause existing in man, or a cause differing from God’s good pleasure. This is because, if it were some impulsive cause that moved God toward this or that thing about to be done, thus God would be the cause who depends with respect to that cause by which he is moved. This is absurd. Furthermore, predestination is not absolutized<sup>26</sup> from the end and means (as is clear in the preceding thoughts), because God, absolutely wise, wills nothing without an end. So he decreed to render sinners saved, so that he might manifest his grace in them with respect to his mercy, but to condemn the reprobate, so that he might manifest his glory in them under the concept of his justice.<sup>27</sup> Nothing is without means. Thus, he decreed to save the faithful, but through and on account of Christ; and he decreed to condemn the reprobate, but on account of sins.

**Thesis 10.** There are two parts or species<sup>28</sup> of predestination: election and reprobation (Rom. 9:11ff; Eph. 1:4–5; Matt. 25:31, 41).

**Thesis 11.** From the term’s original property and common use, election (Greek, εκλογη) denotes at times the selection of some instead of others and from others. Hence, the elect are also referred to as those selected to some political or ecclesiastical office (1 Sam. 10:15; Luke 6:13). It means at other times a general calling for participation in the covenant (Deut. 4:37; 7:6–8). And it means still other times the separation and determination<sup>29</sup> for salvation (Eph. 1:4; 2 Thess. 2:13). The latter is twofold: either in time, which is the calling of the unfaithful<sup>30</sup> from the world to faith (John 15:19); or from eternity, which is the predestination of some instead of others for salvation through faith (Eph. 1:4; John 13:18). We will deal with the latter here particularly. Finally, the term also at points denotes the object of election, that is, the elect themselves, like Romans 11:7 speaks about.

24. *Vocatio efficax.*

25. *Praedestinationem omnimodo absolutam.*

26. Tr. note: *Absolutam.* The sense here is, absolutized *from* the end and means.

27. *Respectu misericordiae...ratione iustitiae.*

28. Tr. note: Recall the above dealt with predestination *in genere.*

29. *Destinationem.*

30. *Infidelium.* Tr. note: Perhaps “lacking faith.”

**Thesis 12.** Thus is what the explanation of the term is, now its definition follows. Election is that by which God decreed to save certain men from fallen human kind graciously through Christ and through faith in Him, and that some means lead to salvation.<sup>31</sup>

**Thesis 13.** First, God decreed to save certain men: from this, one deduces that the decree does not concern the salvation of all men universally, as the Lutherans allege, but only of single persons, as is clear from Luke 12:32 and Acts 13:48. First Thessalonians 5:9 includes the council about the salvation of some: “God did not destine us for wrath”—just as others, which God ascribes for damnation, as in Jude 4—“but for the purpose of obtaining salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

**Thesis 14.** Second, election is through Christ and through faith in him: thus, God the Father deems no one worthy of salvation except through Christ, and he decreed to communicate his good things to no one except through Christ—for this reason, calling, justification, and glorification are made through Christ. Thus also election has been made in Christ, and outside of Christ no one has ever been elected, or called, or justified, or glorified, or can be.

**Thesis 15.** Third, some means lead to salvation—by which we understand calling, justification, and glorification, for all these are means, which occur for salvation to be achieved. Of these, the first and supreme means is Christ, not as God absolutely (for as such he himself has elected [John 15:16, 19]), neither as pure man (for as such he is not capable<sup>32</sup> of so great an office and dignity), but as mediator θεανθρωπος, in whom God elects us before the foundation of the world was laid (Eph. 2:4; 2 Tim. 1:9).

**Thesis 16.** Our opponents reckon that great absurdity follows when we say Christ is the means<sup>33</sup> for the salvation to be achieved. They assert, if Christ is the means for our salvation to be achieved, therefore Christ is more unworthy than we, because a means is more unworthy than an end. *Response.* The latter is true, but no absurdity follows from this, if you hold here the distinction that every means *qua* means is more unworthy than its end, despite the fact that according to its absolute nature it can be incomparably more worthy than its end. Thus, the angels of God, said to have been created on account of man (Heb. 11:14) and the incarnation of the Son of God, his prophetic, priestly, and kingly office all have greater perfection than the redemption of man if you consider each absolutely, even though for the sake of this redemption all these were undertaken.

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31. *Electio est qua Deus decrevit ex genere humano lapso certos quosdam homines gratis servare per Christum & per fidem in ipsum, aliaque media ad salutem perducere.* Tr. note: Take note that over the next several theses, each part of this definition will be explained.

32. *Capex non est.* Tr. note: Recall, *finitum non capax est infiniti.*

33. *Medium.* Tr. note: Sic throughout.

**Thesis 17.** Fourth, election is graciously done, and from this it is clear God elected certain ones absent any human merits, not having been moved toward those to be elected unto life by any thing other than by his mere will, or by his eternal love toward us. Paul speaks this way: “So thus, at this time, a reserve has been made according to gratuitous election, which if...,” etc. (Rom. 11:5–6); “Who predestined us whom he adopted unto sons through Jesus Christ unto himself, on account of the benevolent affection of his will, for the praise of his glorious grace, by which he graciously rendered us as accepted to himself in him who was beloved” (Eph. 1:5–6).

**Thesis 18.** The matter<sup>34</sup> from which God graciously elects certain ones is the genus of men from their primal integrity prolapse in their fault and guilty before him of eternal death on account of sin.<sup>35</sup> For God did not establish this election from some genus of men other than the sort as were those who were to be propagated; but Scripture pronounces that the whole world is now thrust into evil (1 John 5:19); likewise, that all Jews and Greeks are under sin, and there is none righteous, not even one (Rom. 3:9, 19), and that every mouth is stopped up and the whole world liable to the condemnation of God.

**Thesis 19.** Hence it is shown to be the case that God decided to elect from eternity his own out of the same genus of men; and for that reason the number of those elect is certain and cannot be increased or diminished. “He knows in very fact those who are his” (John 10:27)—that is, those he elected (13:18), and they considered absolutely<sup>36</sup> are many (Matt. 8:11), but compared with those who are reprobates they are naught except few. This is why Christ teaches there are “few elect” (20:18), and “few enter the narrow road of salvation” (ch. 7).

**Thesis 20.** Now that we have explained most components of our definition, it remains to inquire about election’s cause, which moved God toward certain persons who were to be elected. Men have here various and differing opinions and comments. Many assert it is previewed<sup>37</sup> works (as Pelagius holds), but they err—for God previews in us nothing pertaining to good works or the will [to them] that he had not decided to effect in us, and which he had not prepared in us by predestining—like Ephesians 2:10 says, “We are his work, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God prepared beforehand<sup>38</sup> so that we may walk in them”; and in the same epistle, “He elected us before the foundations of the world so that we may be holy and blameless before him” (1:4). Now if previewed good works were the cause of election for salvation, then they would also be the cause of our calling and justification. But the latter is false, because the apostle says in so many words, “Those whom he predestined, them he called; those whom he called, them he also justified; now those whom he justified, them he also

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34. Tr. note: Corresponding to material cause.

35. *Genus hominum e primaeva integritate sua culpa prolapsum, & propter peccatum coram eo aeternae mortis reum.*

36. *In se spectati.*

37. *Praevisa opera.*

38. *Praeparavit.* Tr. note: Here, as distinct from *paravit*.



glorified” (Rom. 8:30). They also speak against the apostle in explicit terms: “He called us not according to our works, but according to his purpose and grace,” etc. (2 Tim. 1:9); and again, “According to the purpose of his will, which he had purposed in himself” (Eph. 1:5). Therefore, God considered nothing beyond himself in those to be elected.<sup>39</sup>

**Thesis 21.** These enemies of God’s grace judged that they themselves—if they ascribed salvation to their free choice<sup>40</sup>—were more secure about their salvation—as if our salvation were more secure in our hands than in God’s hand. But let us hear Augustine preaching about this matter: we live more secure, he says, if we give the whole thing to God; for where is our salvation more secure than in God’s firm, immutable will? If it were to depend on us, salvation would be uncertain, because man’s unstable will is bent here and there like a reed, which the wind stirs.<sup>41</sup>

**Thesis 22.** Some hold it is previewed faith, like the Semipelagians do; but they do so absurdly, because Scripture asserts we were elected to faith itself, and such on account of salvation. “For so many believed as were ordained” (Acts 13:41); further, “He elected us in the beginning to salvation through sanctification of his Spirit and faith had in the truth” (Eph. 2:23). Therefore, we are not made elect through faith, but because we are elected before, we are then made faithful. Still, we do not deny faith is required as a means by which we apply to ourselves the righteousness and salvation the gospel sets forth, but not as from ourselves, for it is God’s gift (Eph. 2:8). For that reason, if pre-knowledge<sup>42</sup> of faith as it is from us were held to be the cause of election, then consequently justification will not be entirely gratuitous. Besides, it is certain we are justified by faith as a means, and yet faith is not a cause of election. Beyond this, some of Christ’s sheep are called his friends before they believe: Christ calls<sup>43</sup> the good shepherd he who lays down his life for his sheep (John 10:11); he says he himself suffers death for his friends (15:13). Now if Christ died for his friends and for his sheep, then it is necessary that when he died for them, at that point he considered them as sheep and friends, even though many of them had not yet been called, as Christ testifies in the same chapter (v. 16).

**Thesis 23.** But we—from many clear passages of holy Scripture—hold the cause that moved God toward us who were to be elected, in contrast to the rest, is alone his good pleasure, or his absolutely free will or purpose. “For he will be merciful on whom he will be merciful, and will have compassion upon whom he will have compassion” (Rom. 9:15); “it does not pertain to he who wills, or runs, but to God who is merciful” (v. 16). And finally, verse 18: “he will be merciful on whom he wills.” Here, the Lord God in himself alone decided our salvation and ascribed alone his mercy and

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39. Tr. note: This sentence is italics like the verse preceding; probably a printer error.

40. *Liberio suo arbitrio*.

41. Tr. note: A reference to Matt. 11:7.

42. *Praescientia*.

43. One would expect a passive verb here, as a verse summary: “Christ is called the good shepherd.” However, it is clearly *Christus vocat bonum pastorem*. I expect this may be a slip.

compassion for its cause; therefore, he bequeaths no concept<sup>44</sup> [of this cause] to men, either [the concept] of themselves or of their works.

**Thesis 24.** The following renders certain things badly: that election should not be referred otherwise than to the choice of divine will,<sup>45</sup> and thence [our opponents] say it follows that according to our opinion God is an acceptor of persons. But Scripture openly contradicts this: “There is no accepting of persons with God” (Rom. 2:11). They infer, therefore there is respect of merits in God’s election. *Response.* We admit likewise that God is not an acceptor of persons—but still not in that sense by which they pass this judgment. For the word “person” does not signify a “man” but those things that usually kindle favor, worth, or hate and contempt among men: such things are, e.g., riches, power, nobility, or likewise poverty, dishonor, disgrace, and similar things. Moreover, such does not distinguish among men, nor does it have an argument in those matters of theirs to be judged (Acts 2:10; Gal. 3:28; James 2:5). To this they themselves are forced to admit there is nothing in him who is received that may incline God’s mind to him. Therefore, God does not have respect for a man, but solicits the cause of election from the free choice of his will.

**Thesis 25.** Our opponents do not even dread God to argue his injustice, because he does not give equal things to equal people. Thus, in this argument they reduce God as it were into an order.<sup>46</sup> In distributive justice we confess indeed this argument succeeds, when distribution happens from what is owed, but not when someone distributes freely and out of grace. This is because the latter one can give more or less as he wills and to whom he wills, without injustice. Augustine puts this forward extremely well in a similar way, saying: “Because God grants his un-owed mercy to others being converted by gracious calling, this is not to be referred to injustice of the one who so dispenses, but to the absolutely merciful goodness of the giver. Will you, the debtor, dare to denounce the creator as being of iniquity, if while giving to another, he extracts from him what he will owe? If therefore this is the case among human contracts, who, so wicked of word, will break into such insanity that he denounces God as unrighteous, if he give to one un-owed grace, and he extracts from another owed penalty?”

**Thesis 26.** The form<sup>47</sup> of election is the separation of certain ones from the number of those who remain, and the determining both to salvation as well as to the means for salvation. It clearly is the separation of certain ones. “If you were from the world, the world would love what is its own; but because you were not from the world, but I chose you from the world, thus the world hates you” (John 15:19). “Inasmuch as you gave authority to him over all flesh, so that, as many as you gave to him, he may give

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44. Tr. note: I’ve taken *rationem* as concept: i.e., there is no concept of the cause assigned to man. It is possible though that “argument” is intended, thinking of e.g., Rom. 9:20 or Eph. 2:9.

45. *Ad divinae voluntatis arbitrium.*

46. Tr. note: Probably, reduce him to the order of creatures or order of causes here. At issue is the fact that God is not ordered to any but all are ordered to him.

47. Tr. note: Corresponding to formal cause.

to such eternal life” (17:2). It is clear that it is the determining to salvation—“God established us for the salvation that was to be obtained,” etc. (1 Thess. 5:9)—and the determining to the means (see Rom. 8:39<sup>48</sup>; for about both of these,<sup>49</sup> 2 Thess. 2:13–14).

**Thesis 27.** The end<sup>50</sup> of election is twofold: one supreme and one subalternate.

**Thesis 28.** The supreme end of election is the glory of God who elects (Rom. 11:35–36; 1 Peter 2:23), both indeed the glory of his mercy in the salvation of those elect (Rom. 9:23), and so that he might make marked out<sup>51</sup> the riches of his glory toward the vessels of his mercy that he prepared for glory.

**Thesis 29.** The subalternate end is partly the sanctification of the elect themselves (John 15:16; Eph. 1:4; 2:20) and partly the eternal glory of the same (Matt. 25:34; 2 Thess. 2:13–14).

**Thesis 30.** The effects or means of election follow, by which God leads the elect on through to salvation considered as an end. These means are effectual calling to Christ, and likewise justification and glorification—and fundamental for all these is Christ as Mediator and King with the whole work of his humiliation and glory, as Peter testifies about the immaculate, spotless Lamb, by whose precious blood we have been redeemed (1 Peter 1:20), who was in fact made known in these last times for those believing, but preordained before the foundations of the world were laid. Augustine says it with skill in his *Predestination of the Saints*: “He, the one, was predestined so that he may be our head; and we, the many, were predestined so that we may be his members.”<sup>52</sup>

**Thesis 31.** It appears from this that the proper cause of the sending and suffering<sup>53</sup> of the Son of God was the salvation of those elect. This is because, unless he had been ordained mediator of the elect, there would not be a reason why he came in the flesh—not to mention why he put forth himself to a death of such extreme dishonor. It is not for the reason that the elect were then wavering<sup>54</sup> about their salvation; for Christ became incarnate and suffered for their sakes. The rest of the means that must be known were prepared in Christ, such as effectual calling, justification, and sanctification. The one who distinguishes these in himself—that is, he sees himself called, he feels himself converted, forgiven by faith, and justified—can know with

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48. Tr. note: An interesting text that seems to link the means to being “in Christ.”

49. *De utraque ista*. Tr. note: Unclear from the Latin what is in view, but the passage mentions it is “through sanctification of the Spirit and belief in the truth”; thus, these two means are what are in view.

50. Tr. note: Corresponding to final cause.

51. *Notas faceret divitias*.

52. Chapter 15.

53. *Missionis & passionis*.

54. *Ambigant*. Tr. note: This seems to refer to lacking assurance.

certainly he is elect. This conclusion is confirmed, on account of the fact that the following three things are what render the elect more certain they have been elected unto life. The first is the gospel, whose word is, “All who believe are elect,” because faith does not in fact pertain to every man (2 Thess. 3:2), but it does to the elect (Acts 13:48; Titus 1:1)—concerning which faith, it belongs to them certainly (2 Cor. 13:5; 2 Tim. 1:12). The second is the testimony of the Holy Spirit: “The Holy Spirit searches the depths, and reveals to us what God has graced to us” (1 Cor. 2:10–12); “He testifies with our spirit that we are sons of God” (Rom. 8:16). The third is the earnest zeal for good works by which we render our calling and election firm (2 Peter 1:20).

**Thesis 32.** Eternity and immutability are election’s adjuncts.

**Thesis 33.** It is settled that election is eternal, that is, done from eternity, because we have been elected in Christ before the foundations of the world were laid (Eph. 1:8). Thus, the opinion of the sophists is foreign to the truth when they deny God predestines in the past, but rather affirm he predestines always in the present, because God is not in time. However, the contrary is clear from the passages offered;<sup>55</sup> for even though God is not under time, still we who are predestined are under time.

**Thesis 34.** Election is demonstrated to be immutable, first, from the perfection of divine nature; because change of mind signifies imperfection of judgment.<sup>56</sup> Thus the psalmist says: “The counsel of the Lord stands forever, and the individual thoughts of his heart unto the ages (Ps. 35:11); “My counsel stands, and I do every will of mine” (Isa. 46:10). Thus, the apostle preaches the immutability of God’s counsel (Heb. 6:17). Second, election is shown to be immutable on account of the fact that the gifts of God are *αμεταμελητα* [not to be repented of] (Rom. 11:29). Hence, Matthew 24:24 and John 10:28–29 proclaim that the elect are led astray into destruction, *οι*<sup>57</sup> they are *αδυνατον* [unable] to be snatched from the hands of Christ or the Father.

**Thesis 35.** Now that we have explained the first part of predestination, it remains outstanding that we deal with the second part as well; for even though the important doctrine of reprobation is known partly<sup>58</sup> from the things we set out about election, still let us also lay out a few things that ought to be opined about reprobation.

**Thesis 36.** We begin by saying what relates to the word “reprobation” is not in fact expressly present in the Scriptures, but still its conjunct stands out, which is “rejected.”<sup>59</sup> The Greek, *αδοκιμον*—that is, what is disapproved<sup>60</sup> and rejected, just as

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55. Tr. note: It is unclear which passages are in mind, but clearly some proof texts in the preceding.

56. *Mutatio sententiae imperfectionem iudicii significat.*

57. *Aut.* Tr. note: Here presenting a disjunct, only one of which propositions (the second) are held to be true; the point is, if the election were not immutable, the elect would fall away.

58. *Ex parte.*

59. *Reprobum.*

60. Tr. note: Or, condemned.

in Jeremiah 6:30—God speaks of the greatest part of his people; they will be called rejected silver, because Jehovah cast them away<sup>61</sup> or reprobated them. The apostle uses this word in a similar signification: “vessels fitted for ruin” (Rom. 9:22).

**Thesis 37.** Reprobation is God’s eternal decree according to which God out of his mere good pleasure decided to leave some in the fall and for that reason to punish them for his righteousness to be manifested.<sup>62</sup>

**Thesis 38.** There are two parts or acts to this. The prior<sup>63</sup> is the determining of those reprobated to eternal death, or, the determining of those reprobated concerning salvation not-going-to-be-given, concerning means not-going-to-be-conferred of salvation.<sup>64</sup> This prior part scholastics call negative reprobation. The posterior part is the determining of the means going to accomplish this decree of reprobation, or the determining of the means concerning damnation, blinding, and hardening going to be inflicted.<sup>65</sup> Scholastics call this affirmative reprobation. Scripture lays out the doctrine of reprobation in either way, in fact: negatively, “I do not know you. You are not of my sheep” (Matt. 7:23; 25:12; John 12:39–40); affirmatively, “I have considered Esau in hatred” (Rom. 9:13); “they could not believe, because he blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts,” etc. (John 12:39–40).

**Thesis 39.** The impulsive cause of reprobation is not sin, like a large number of the fathers want it to be; this is because we can permit no cause outside God for his decree or divine will, not even to mention the fact that if sin should be the cause of reprobation, then all would have been reprobated—seeing that all are under sin, sons of wrath and eternal death. The highly famous theologian [William] Twisse speaks keenly about this matter: as much as the merits of Christ are the potency<sup>66</sup> for predestination, so much so the sins of whomsoever are the potency for reprobation; but lest the merits of Christ be in fact the cause of the predestination of the elect, so neither are sins the cause of reprobation; therefore, it remains the case that the impulsive cause is God’s will or good pleasure alone, which is clear in Romans 9:18: “He is merciful on whom he wills, while he hardens whom he wills.”

**Thesis 40.** The matter or object of reprobation are those men whom God hates, whom he willed to leave in the fall, upon whom he nilled<sup>67</sup> to be merciful, but whom he wills to harden (Rom. 9:13, 18). Further, the number of these is not less definite than the

61. *Abiecit.*

62. *Secundum quod ex mero suo beneplacito statuit Deus aliquos in lapsu relinquere & eos propterea punire ad manifestandam iustitiam suam.*

63. Tr. note: In contrast to “first”; logical priority is in view.

64. *Prior est destinatio reprobatorum ad mortem aeternam, sive de non danda salute, de non conferendis salutis mediis.*

65. *Posterior est destinatio mediorum exequendi decretum reprobationis, sive de inferenda damnatione, excoecatione, & induratione.*

66. *Potentia.*

67. *Noluit.* Tr. note: I.e., “willed that not.”

number of the elect; even if he does not know them insofar as endowed of his love (Matt. 7:23), as his (2 Tim. 2:19), still he knows them as the Creator does creatures, as the Lord the subjects, as the Judge the captives and guilty (Heb. 4:25; Rom. 9:11–13).

**Thesis 41.** The end of reprobation, no less than that of election, is supreme and subalternate.

**Thesis 42.** Its supreme end is the glory of God who reprobates (Prov. 16:4; Rom. 11:35–36), because God willed to declare in reprobation his absolutely free will, right, and power unto all creatures—both his mercy toward the elect, and on the other hand his righteousness and wrath upon the reprobate.

**Thesis 43.** The subalternate end is considered in a distinct way: with respect to those elect, so that they may know the severity upon the others and the kindness of God toward them so much more correctly, that they may stand in awe of the former and praise the latter, and that they may thus work out their salvation with fear and trembling (Phil. 2:12). With respect to those reprobate, the end of reprobation is the just damnation of them on account of their sins (Matt. 25:41–43).

**Thesis 44.** Reprobation's effects are desertion and hardening.

**Thesis 45.** Desertion is nothing but the divine spiritual punishment by which God keeps back or withdraws<sup>68</sup> his grace from the reprobate, and deserts them in wickedness.

**Thesis 46.** Now hardening is spiritual punishment by which God does not in fact harden their [previously] tender hearts, nor pours into them a new vice, but rather in his just judgment renders harder the souls of the impious that were hard beforehand in their nature, so that still their faults cannot be imputed to him nor their impiety<sup>69</sup> be excused.

**Thesis 47.** Thus, those who say such hardening or blinding occurs only by God's permitting but not also by his will are in error, because God openly witnesses that he hardens and he blinds: "I will harden Pharaoh's heart so that he nills to let the people go" (Ex. 4:21; Ezek. 2:3; 12:2; Jer. 1:10; Isa. 6:9). If God were to harden Pharaoh's heart only by permitting it, then what was necessary about the so-often repeated command concerning the people to be let go, all the many signs and published predictions, in all of which the tyrant was more hardened and enraged. Thus, the blinding and hardening will not be able to be translated into a vice for God, but to men themselves on account of their own stubbornness.

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68. *Negat vel subtrahit.*

69. Tr. note: Text reads here "nupii," which as far as I'm aware doesn't exist; I assume *impii* is intended.

**Thesis 48.** Reprobation's adjuncts are eternity and immutability.

**Thesis 49.** Its eternity is proved from Matthew 25:34–35; 1 Thessalonians 5:29; and Jude 4: they were prescribed for damnation—namely, from eternity. For whatever God does in time, he decreed such within himself from eternity (Acts 15:18).

**Thesis 50.** Its immutability is demonstrated from Romans 9:11; Isaiah 14:27; 46:10; 33:11. A twofold necessity for the reprobate follows from this immutability: they are left in their sins, into which they flung themselves head-on; and they never turned<sup>70</sup> to God—indeed, they in fact earnestly, constantly aspire to not be turned, but the contrary, they slacken the bridle upon their desires and bring themselves unto greater blindness of mind and hardness of heart (Romans 11; John 3:6; Matt. 7:17–18). Upon these the judgment of damnation ensues at last in the righteousness of God (Rom. 1:32; 6:23).

**Thesis 51.** These impious ones roar and complain, “What does it matter how someone behaves himself, when immutable predestination allows nothing to be impeded or carried through by one's work? Let them rush therefore into whatsoever lust they bring forth, since if God decreed salvation, their vices will not come in the way of it, if however this is tended to without death as an effect.” But who does not see such disjoin the subordinated things and conjoin *αυστατα* [confusion]; for the end of election was ordained unto holiness of life, the mediation of which we ought not disturb, not for an excuse for idleness. Further, the whole order of election is turned upside down: we were elected so we may display a holy life (Eph. 1:4), not so we may continue on steadily in our vices. And thus let these things we have said about the divine predestination of men suffice.

To the triune God be praise, honor, and glory forever, Amen.

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70. *Convertuntur.*