

### **SEC 11:**

Even heathen poets use “FATE” (Virgil) Those outside the Church know about the will of God.

### **SEC 12:**

If the bondage of the will and God choosing who to bring to life

*“ . . . there can neither be faith nor any worship of God, not to know them is to be in reality ignorant of God, with which ignorance of salvation, it is well known, cannot consist. **If you doubt, or disdain to know that God foreknows and will all things, not contingently, but necessarily and immutably, how can you believe confidently, trust to and depend upon His promises?**” (33)*

Luther is still speaking outside of Scripture in justifying God’s will. This attribute of God is a source to praise God. TO now know it is to be ignorant of God.

**KEY THOUGHT:** If God does not foreknow and will all things, and is not immutable, how can we trust in Him and depend upon His promises? God is able to do what He promises.

Romans 3:4, Romans 9:6 (For the word of God is NOT WITHOUT EFFECT!) , 2 Timothy 2:19, Titus 1:2, Hebrews 11:6 all passages that point to God immutable will.

One of the things we believers can rely on is that **God has a will and that will cannot be resisted, changed or hindered, this is a great consolation to believers.**

### **SEC 13:**

**KEY THOUGHT:** Erasmus was teaching that we should not know the prescience of God and teaches that it is something we should not pursue knowledge – yet this teaching means we should seek after the ignorance of God (which is in us by nature) disregard faith, leave the promises of God and account the consolations of the Spirit as nothing of all.

Erasmus would look negatively on the Christian who would seek after the powerful attributes of God as they are vain – but praise the people who refuse to look into as pious and good.

Luther thinks Erasmus book is blasphemous. Yet he is not judging Erasmus heart.

The thinkers of that day had considered this topic of the will and the will of God. Even though they did not believe in YHWH God – Luther is using this fact to show how the looking into this topic is not a thing to be frowned upon.

### **SEC 14:**

Luther is defending (in this section and the sections leading up to this one) the VALIDITY of looking into this topic. Erasmus says that to talk about this, to consider it is not only a waste of

time but it is not necessary. Erasmus thinks it is prostituting in the ears of everyone who hears it. Erasmus brings the sacred to the profane. Luther says that not making a distinction between the two (what man can will and what God can and does will). and this injures God.

Everything in the Bible is good and wholesome which includes this topic. Erasmus teaches that ALL the Bible need to be taught to everyone.

### **SEC 15:**

Erasmus does not think ALL things in Scripture needs to be spoken of openly.

### **SEC 16:**

This section is about speaking of earthly realities in pious ways. For example, the virgin birth, the death of Christ, the Christ being in human body. There is a fact that God is everywhere. That Jesus had a human body and the stench that comes with having a body did come to Christ. There are proper ways to speak of improper things.

God does not just live in ornamented churches.

*"For your thoughts concerning God are too human." (37)*

### **SEC 17:**

The accusation by Luther to Erasmus is that in order not to cause a stir with the pope, he has tiptoed with caution to not take sides with Luther or the popes. He has thrown off both God and conscience.

Luther does say he will not write in hostility toward the bad theology of the popes. Theologians who teach bad theology are tyrants, ravening wolves, robbers and plunderers of souls. By supporting the papacy or not condemning the papacy Erasmus is recommending it.

### **SEC 18:**

Erasmus has said that sometimes it is not expedient to always speak all truth. Luther said the topic before them is a deep topic not between just two people. Luther says that this is a great topic.

To keep the peace Luther says that Erasmus does not think ALL things should be taught to common believers.

*"I am, in this discussion, seeking an object solemn and essential; nay, such, and so great, that it ought to be maintained and defended through death itself;" (39)*

This topic has brought a lot of persecution to Luther. “The World was enraged against him” (p.40) Luther would rather suffer for Christ’s sake in this truth than to give in. Luther says Erasmus will speak only to keep the popes happy.

By Erasmus avoiding the topic of God’s prescience (foreknowledge), the will of man and the will of God, which is the topic they are “debating” – he is, by this avoidance, putting off God, faith, salvation and Christianity all together. But the teaching of the Bible is that we should despise the whole world, not the Bible or its teaching.

### **SEC 19:**

Matthew 10:34, Luke 12:49; 2 Cor 6:5; Psalm 2: Christ came to send tumult, sword, fire. Why should we avoid such difficult topics? Paul threw both Gentiles and Jews in tumult and commotion. Those who take a stand FOR Christ will face persecution. Erasmus seems to try to avoid the persecution on this topic of the will.

*“The world and its god (2 Cor. iv. 4,) cannot and will not bear the Word of the true God: and the true God cannot and will not keep silence. While, therefore, these two Gods are at war with each other what else can there be but tumult?” (41)*

KEY PHRASE: It is as if Christ said, *“multitude, height, wealth, power, wisdom, righteousness and whatever is great in the world sets itself against the word of God.” (P40)*

The Bible is full of suffering saints thrown into tumult Acts 17:6; 1 Kings 18:17; 2 Cor 4:4

God’s word is made to change the world. Change comes with tumult. Avoiding this is like putting out a fire with straw.

Erasmus was praised by Luther to have elegant and excellent similitudes but when they are applied, he says that they are done childishly and perversely.

### **SEC 20:**

The Word of God and the traditions of men are opposed to each other with implacable discord. There was a fear that if those out. The prince of this world is set to destroy any good of God. Those who are saved love the word of God. Was not the world always drowned in war, fraud, violence and discord?

*“For if all cannot be saved, yet some are saved; for whose sake the word of God is sent; and these, on that account, love it the more fervently, and assent to it the more solemnly. For, what evils did not impious men commit before, when there was no word? Nay, what good did they do? Was not the world always drowned in war, fraud, violence, discord, and every kind of iniquity? For if Micah (vii. 4) compares the best among them to a thorn hedge, what do you suppose he would call the rest?”*

***But now the Gospel is come, men begin to impute unto it, that the world is evil. Whereas, the truth is, that by the good Gospel, it is more manifest how evil it was, while, without the Gospel, it did all its works in darkness. Thus also the illiterate attribute it to learning, that, by its flourishing, their ignorance becomes known. This is the return we make for the word of life and salvation!"*** (43) THIS IS A TERRIFIC ARGUMENT ON THE BONDAGE OF MAN!

ABOVE EXPLAINED IN PART: The gospel has come, and it shows how evil the world is. The gospel set us free from the law of Moses – but also it was preached that the law of liberty should not be used to allow the flesh to act according to the flesh (Gal 5:13)

### **SEC 21:**

Luther attacks Erasmus' argument that the topic at hand is not meant for everyone's ears. Erasmus uses 1 Cor 6:12 as justification. Luther says that Paul did not apply this passage to **doctrine**. Phil 1:15-18 that Christ., truth and doctrine should be preached to all, at all times and all places.

KEY QUOTE: *"Who gave you the power or committed to you the right of confirming Christian doctrine to persons places, times, and causes when Christ will it to be proclaimed and to reign freely throughout the world."* (p.44)

*"Truth and doctrine are to be preached always, openly, and firmly and are never to be dissembled or concealed for there is no offense in them, they are the staff of uprightness. And who gave you the power, or committed to you, the right, of confining the Christian doctrine to persons, places, times, and causes, when Christ wills it to be proclaimed, and to reign freely, throughout the world?"* (p.44)

### **SEC 22:**

Another attack (which is justified) by Luther on Erasmus. Erasmus said that if the councils got something wrong, then it should not be openly confessed – because it may affect the authority of the fathers. This is exactly what the pope wanted Erasmus to say, "he hears it with my joy than the gospel itself."

Human statutes cannot be observed with the Word of God for they are opposed to each other. IF the statutes are not written according to the word of God then they should be torn asunder.

*"Christ is better than the authority of the fathers."* (p.46)

### **SEC 23:**

ERASMUS TEACHING OF LUTHER'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE WILL is "it is a useless paradox by us, is not done by Free-will but from mere necessity."

This section deals with the heart of the Sovereignty of God questions. This would be right at the center of Reformed Teaching.

Erasmus did not like Augustine's teaching that God works HIS GOOD WILL in us, and God works in us both good and evil (this evil can be explained more properly and fully by R.C. Sproul that we are not made to do evil by God. God can't do that, but he will leave us to ourselves and we will work evil of our own doing and nature). Erasmus would then ask – if what Augustine teaches is true then who would war against his flesh? Who would believe that he was loved of God? Who would amend his life?

THIS IS THE COMMON QUESTION BY MOST – “where then would be found FREE WILL?” (p.46)

Again, Luther returns to Erasmus' statements that this doctrine should not be openly taught. Luther challenges Erasmus in sarcasm (p.47). Luther says that Paul discourses this thing not in a corner but in public (Roma 9:18, 22) “who He will He hardens”. Also Christ and John (Matt 22:14; John 8:18). All of these on the elect, predestined and chosen of God.

Preaching and teaching the gospel relies nothing on offending the hearer.

Why does God work in the way that he does? There are some things that are secret, and God hides from us. Don't condemn people who want to look into mysteries of God and try to understand them. We are to adore God and be reverent before Him. Who are you “oh man” that you contend with God? (Rom 9:20)

### **SEC 24:** (2.29:26)

**THIS SECTION IS KEY TO UNDERSTANDING OUR WILL!**

Who will amend His life? No one – not without the Holy Spirit. The elect will.  
Who will believe that he is loved by God? No one, not without the Holy Spirit, the elect will.

To the elect is a way unto righteousness. Erasmus says that we should hide from these truths because no one would come to love or fear God.

God has willed that the divine things should be proclaimed. It is His good, perfect, secret will.

God has promised His grace to the humble. It is humbling to know that salvation is beyond our power to bring about.

KEY QUOTE: *“But a man cannot be thoroughly humbled until he comes to know that his salvation is utterly beyond his own powers, counsel, pleasure, will and works and absolutely depending on the will, counsel, pleasure and work of another that is of God only.”* (p.49)

If a man thinks he can do something to save himself – has something to be confident about.

**KEY QUOTE:** *“For if, as long as he has any persuasion that he can do even the least thing himself towards his own salvation, he retain a confidence in himself and do not utterly despair in himself, so long he is not humbled before God; but he proposes to himself some place, some time, or some work, whereby he may at length attain unto salvation. But he who hesitates not to depend wholly upon the good-will of God, he totally despairs in himself, chooses nothing for himself, but waits for God to work in him; and such an one, is the nearest unto grace, that he might be saved.*

*These things, therefore, are openly proclaimed for the sake of the Elect: that, being by these means humbled and brought down to nothing, they might be saved. The rest resist this humiliation; nay, they condemn the teaching of self desperation; they wish to have left a little something that they may do themselves. These secretly remain proud, and adversaries to the grace of God. This, I say, is one reason — that those who fear God, being humbled, might know, call upon, and receive the grace of God.*

*The other reason is — **that faith is, in things not seen. Therefore, that there might be room for faith, it is necessary that all those things which are believed should be hidden. But they are not hidden more deeply, than under the contrary of sight, sense, and experience. Thus, when God makes alive, He does it by killing; when He justifies, He does it by bringing in guilty: when He exalts to Heaven, He does it by bringing down to hell: as the Scripture saith, “The Lord killeth and maketh alive, He bringeth down to the grave and raiseth up,”** (1 Sam. ii. 6.); concerning which, there is no need that I should here speak more at large, for those who read my writings, are well acquainted with these things. Thus He conceals His eternal mercy and loving-kindness behind His eternal wrath: His righteousness, behind apparent iniquity.”* (49-50)

God makes alive by killing. (1 Sam 2:6)

What can't be comprehended of God is of Faith.

### **SEC 25:** (2.37:15)

Erasmus taught that whatever is done by us is NOT done by freewill but done by necessity

A MAIN POINT LUTHER is trying to teach in this work is that salvation is apart from our own strength and counsel and depends on the working of God alone. We do nothing unto salvation before the working of God in us.

**KEY POINT:** *“Here then, I observe, that if it be proved that our salvation is apart from our own strength and counsel, and depends on the working of God alone, (which I hope I shall clearly prove hereafter, in the course of this discussion,) does it not evidently follow, that when God is not present with us to work in us, every thing that we do is evil, and that we of necessity do those things which are of no avail unto salvation? For if it is not we ourselves, but God only, that works salvation in us, it must follow, whether or no, that we do nothing unto salvation before the working of God in us.”* (51)

KEY QUOTE: *“A Man void of the Spirit of God, does not evil against his will as by violence or as if he were taken by the neck and forced to it, in the same way as a thief or cut-throat is dragged to punishment against his will; but he does it spontaneously and with a desirous willingness.”* (p.51)

The Will cannot change itself nor give itself another bent – the change of our will is God acting.

KEY DEFINITION: *“This is what we mean by the necessity of immutability: — that the will cannot change itself, nor give itself another bent; but rather the more it is resisted, the more it is irritated to crave; as is manifest from its indignation.”* (52)

This is the importance in the necessity of immutability. When God acts upon us it does not act from compulsion but responsively. It begins to crave after that which is good.

**LUTHER DEFINES THE SPIRIT CHANGED BELIEVER:** *“But again, on the other hand, when God works in us, the will, being changed and sweetly breathed on by the Spirit of God, desires and acts, not from compulsion, but responsively, from pure willingness, inclination, and accord; so that it cannot be turned another way by any thing contrary, nor be compelled or overcome even by the gates of hell; but it still goes on to desire, crave after, and love that which is good; even as before, it desired, craved after, and loved that which was evil. This, again, experience proves. How invincible and unshaken are holy men, when, by violence and other oppressions, they are only compelled and irritated the more to crave after good! **Even as fire, is rather fanned into flames than extinguished, by the wind.** So that neither is there here any willingness, or “Free-will,” to turn itself into another direction, or to desire any thing else, while the influence of the Spirit and grace of God remain in the man.”* (52)

2 Tim 2:26 if we are under the God of this world, we cannot will anything but that which the devil wills.

**There is a difference between will and compulsion.**

KEY QUOTE: *“All of this we do willingly and desiringly, according the nature of will: for it if were forced, it would no longer be will. For compulsion is (so to speak) unwillingness. But if the ‘stronger than he’ come and overcome him and take us as His spoils, then, through the Spirit, we are His servants and captive (which is the royal liberty) that we may desire and do willingly what He wills.”* (p.52)

Will is not in the power of its own. The rider of the person decides who will have it and hold it.

**SEC 26:** (2.42:28)

Erasmus does teach that God’s grace can change the will. If we were to take the free will argument at its face it takes away God’s will. God reigns supreme.

It appears the current “PREVENIENT GRACE” argument is used by Erasmus. That without humanity does need God’s grace, even a small degree, to do what God says is good.

KEY QUOTE: *“Free- will,” without the grace of God is, absolutely, not FREE; but, immutably, the servant and bond-slave of evil; because, it cannot turn itself unto good. . . without the grace of God, it is ineffective. Because, then you will at once take from it all power: for, what is ineffective power, but plainly, no power at all?”*(53)

Erasmus’ argument contradicted itself. He says that the will is free, and it has power but that it is ineffective. If it had no power at all it would be ineffective. Free will by Erasmus’ thoughts was that by which a man is fitted to be caught by the Spirit. A man has the ability to put himself in the right place to be touched by the grace of God. In other words, free will can indeed will and begin but it cannot make a soul perfect.

KEY QUOTE: *“Free will is plainly a divine term and can be **applicable to none by the divine Majesty only: for He alone ‘doth (as the Psalm sings) what He will in Heaven and earth** (Ps 135:6)”* (p.54)

We should use free will to apply only to God – not to use it in any way to refer to man. We can use another term when speaking for people. Referring to humans as having free will is like using the term beggar to explain wealthy.

But if we want to continue to use this term free will (which Luther desires that we don’t) in reference to human abilities – then we should understand that it is NOT the same as God’s free will and additionally it can be over ruled by God’s will at any time God chooses.

Second paragraph page 55 good logical comparisons are made: a beggar who was given some wealth to him did not get it on his own. An illiterate was given learning by someone who was learned. Can those who are wealthy and learned now boast?

### **SEC 27:** (2.51.10)

All of these comments are in response to Erasmus preface.

### **SEC 28: Exordium** (2.53:54)

Erasmus has on his side of the argument many people, while Luther has Wycliff, Laurentius, Augustine. (Luther stands alone without genius)

Erasmus tire to BOLSTER his side by mentioning the “educated” people of “learning” that support his side and those who are of little significance that support Luther’s side

KEY THOUGHT: *“Which one among all those of whom you boast, you could to a certainty bring forth, either as having been a saint, or as having possessed the Spirit, or as having wrought miracles, I apprehend you would have hot work of it, and all in vain.”* (59)



## **Who can bring forth The Holy Spirit on their own? Who can be sanctified on their own?**

Luther asks three questions: 1. What is Manifestation of the Spirit? 2. What are miracles? 3. What is Sanctification?

Luther says that by reading Erasmus' books he does not think he has the ability to define these

### **SEC 29:** (2.59:04)

Erasmus asserts free will does not belong to the Spirit nor does it belong to Christ. Therefore, the Spirit who is promised to glorify Christ cannot preach Free will – and those who teach it or preach it are not preaching Christ but man.

Spirit, Sanctity and miracles (questions above) are brought by God. KEY QUOTE: “. . . *but no miracle was ever seen or heard of, as proceeding from God, in support of a doctrine of the human cause, only in support of the doctrines of the divine cause. And we are commanded to receive no doctrine whatever, that is not first proved by signs from on high.* (Duet 18:15-22)” (p.60-61)

EVERY DOCTRINE in BIBLE IS from OF GOD. It does not proceed from humanity.

***“Scripture calls man vanity and a lie which is nothing less than saying that all human things are vanities and lies. Come forward then! Come forward! I say, and prove that your doctrine proceeding from human vanity and a lie is true.”*** (61). Romans 3:4; ??

“Create one frog in the name and by virtue of “free-will”. Does a human have the freedom to do this? Sarcasm used here by Luther to prove his point that man does not have free will to do what God can do.

Same is that of Sanctity. That man has the ability to do one thing on their own is absurd and non-biblical.

There is NO DOCTRINE OF FREE WILL.

### **Sec 30:** (2.1:06:36)

When men who are holy call on God, they totally shed self, despairing self and crying unto Him for PURE GRACE ONLY – it is all grace. All their power is condemned as being only averse.

Luther says that he will not require Erasmus to answer the three questions from section 28. He then asks one question –

**KEY QUOTE: “*explain to us what work, what word, what through, that power of ‘Free Will’ can move, attempt, or perform, in order to apply itself unto grace. Whether that power must pray, or fast, or labor, or chastise the body, or give alms; or what other work of this kind it must do, or attempt. For it if be a power it must do some kind of work. . . Who shall certify us that such is truth, that it pleases God and that we are doing right, in safety?*” (p.63)**

Luther wants Erasmus to prove his doctrine or thoughts by Scripture and not just by his word. We can't just accept it because he said it. There must be Bible behind it.