

### **SEC 31:** (3.0.00)

Erasmus taught that this doctrine should not be taught but rather loving Christ and Pious living.

KEY QUOTE: “you exalt the decrees of the Popes: you honor the authority of man: and you try all means to draw us aside into these strange things and contrary to the Holy Scriptures: but you consider not the things that are necessary, how that, by so doing we should corrupt the simplicity and sincerity of the Scriptures, and confound them with the added inventions of men.” (65)

Key Argument in this section is Peter – showed his flaws when he told Christ not to be crucified (Mt 16:22) and when he advised Christ to depart from the boat (Lk 5:8). All of Peter’s words were not perfect – these words were horrible. MEN have the ability to get it wrong.

This section concerns the ability of men to teach wrong things. Just because they are in authority does not mean that everything, they teach is correct. That ONLY applies to Jesus, not the apostles, not the saints, not Jerome.

### **SEC 32:** (3.5:24)

The challenge seems to be the SECOND STEP of reason (first step being “Look Who Is On My Side and Look Who Is On Your Side). Second step, God would not permit the church to be in error for so long. If Luther was right in his teaching on Free Will and it being in bondage and can only will ill religiously, then this is against what the church has taught. This section addresses Erasmus’ statement that God would overlook a central doctrinal or orthodox error in His church. Jesus said no one will pluck true believers out of his hand (John 10:28).

Many kings were in error in Israel and Elijah the prophet – midst idolatry – felt there was no other righteous person, however, God had left 7,000 (Romans 11:4). **God had always a remnant that was faithful (Ps 78:31; Is 1:9, 10:20-22, 11:11-16)**

**Key Quote: “What happened under Christ Himself, when all the Apostles were offended at Him, when He was denied and condemned by all the people, and there were only a Joseph, a Nicodemus, and a thief upon the cross preserved? Were they then said to be the people of God? There was, indeed, a people of God remaining, but it was not called the people of God; and that which was so called, was not the people of God.” (68)**

During the Arian period there were five bishops that resisted that heresy. God ensures that His church will remain pure.

### **SEC 33:** (3.11:45)

This is a section about the visible and invisible church. We humans are not like God in that we do not know exactly who is and is not in the church. We can only see outward actions. We can call someone a saint by the law of charity but not of the law of faith.

The Church is precious, and God keeps hidden it from the wicked (1 Cor 2:8).

No one knows exactly who the church is and who the saints are – but Luther calls them as such, and recognizes those who call themselves Christians, through the law of charity not according to a law of faith. That which thinks the best of everyone. Charity can be wrong. God decides who is of the faith. The Pope recognizes some everyone knows they are not of the faith.

Some have born witness of the flesh and not of the Spirit.

**SEC 34:** (3.15:37)

If Saints are perfectly unknown and the church is hidden, what shall we do? How can we find who is really of the church?

There are those who boast that they know Scripture and their interpretation is correct in their opinion. Luther sets himself against those, and even the pope who asserts similarly. Also, **the pope teaches that when the Scriptures are ambiguous and obscure the interpreter should rely upon ROME.**

Luther said nothing could be MORE destructive. Men have placed themselves above Scripture.

Man has exalted themselves above Scripture. This is from the devil himself.

The spirits are to be tried and proved by twofold judgement:

1. The internal through which the Holy Spirit, can judge or determine the doctrines and sentiments of all men concerning personal salvation (1 Cor 2:15) “The Spiritual man judge th all things but he himself is judged by no man.” This is of faith and can be done by every private Christian, not just the leaders, popes, Rome.

2. The other is an external judgement by which we just with certainty the spirits and doctrines of all men, not just for personal but for others also. For their salvation. This comes from the public ministry of the Word – which is done by those who are teachers and preachers of the word. With we strengthen the weak in faith and refute adversaries. This is done from the external clearness of the Holy Scripture.

All things should be judged in the church and by Scripture.

**SEC 35:** (3.20:12)

Because the scriptures in places are obscure and ambiguous Luther was compelled to illustrate how the first principle in sec 34 works. Some Sophists taught that Luther’s principle was absurd and impossible to be done. He wants to illustrate how it can be done.

Dt 17:8 If things are too hard to determine the men are to go to priests who are to judge according to the law of the Lord. How can this be done if the Law of the Lord is perfectly clear? He did not say according to their own spirit.

Ps 19:8 Law is clear and enlightens the eyes – that which enlightens can't be obscure or ambig.

Psalm 119:130 the door of God words give light to the simple.

Is 8:20 all questions to the law and to the testimony

Mal 2:7 they should seek the law from the mouth of the priest as being a messenger of the Lord of hosts.

Ps 119 always and constantly says that the Law is clear, good, light, a way and a path.

### **SEC 36:** (3.24:30)

The thought continues in this section from previous section but moves to N.T. scriptures.

Rom 1:2 Gospel was promised by the Prophets in the Holy Scriptures.

Rom 3:21 the righteousness of faith was testified by the Law and the prophets

Paul calls the Gospel throughout his writings as word of light, Gospel of clearness (ie. 2 Cor 3:4).

Peter (2 Peter 1:19) word of prophecy should be taken seriously as a light shining in a dark place.

Jesus a light in the world Jn 8:12, 9:5, John the Baptist a burning and shining light (jn 5:35)

Phil 2:15 Paul calls Philippians the lights of the world. Because of the word that was administered to them.

Life without the word is a life uncertain and obscure (Ph 2:16)

Scriptures were to be searched night and day. The Scriptures were the source of wisdom and light

KEY QUOTE: *"In a word, if the Scripture be obscure or ambiguous, what need was there for its being sent down from heaven? . . . what will become of that of the apostle, 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof and for correction. (2 Tim 3:16)'"* (p.75)

### **SEC 37:** (3.30:15)

Scriptures are NOT everywhere obscure. Just in some places. The word of God is a bright lamp. All of it.

**KEY THOUGHT:** *"the word of God is to us a "lamp shining in a dark place." (2 Peter i. 19.) **But if any part of this lamp do not shine, it is rather a part of the dark place than of the lamp itself.** For Christ has not so illuminated us, as to wish that any part of His word should remain obscure, even while He commands us to attend to it: for if it be not shiningly plain, His commanding us to attend to it is in vain."* (p76)

The doctrine of Free Will is obscure and ambiguous, (not taught in Scripture) it should be avoided like those old fables (1 Tim 4:7) But it belongs to Christians – it should be dealt with, defended, taught.

Jesus argued and confuted with Sadducees and Pharisees. So did Stephen. He argued in a way that they could not refute him (Act 6). Yet even though Jesus and Stephen were not changed – they still believed and argued falsely.

Even in the time of Luther – John Huss taught against the Pope using Scripture. Huss was teaching that the church (Met 16:18) was NOT the pope and his church – but something else.

Jesus taught that adversaries to the Gospel and Word of God would not be able to resist (Luke 21:15). The examples above are a few among many. There will be some who can't resist, to resist.

The world is the kingdom of Satan and humans have a nature of blindness that is engendered to our flesh. There is a hardness and a blindness in humanity.

### **SEC 38:** (3.38.50)

Luther as a rhetorical question: if Scriptures are clear on free will why have learned men through so much time been blind upon this topic?

KEY QUOTE: *“why have men of renowned talent, through so many ages, been blind upon this point?” I answer: they have been thus blind, to the praise and glory of “Free-will;” in order that, that highly boasted-of ‘power,’ **by which a man is ‘able to apply himself unto those things that pertain unto eternal salvation,’ might be eminently displayed; that very exalted power, which neither sees those things which it sees, nor hears those things which it hears, and much less, understands and seeks after them.**” (79)*

Because hearing glorifies God. (Is 6:9)

KEY QUOTE: *“**Free will or the human heart, is so bound by the power of Satan that unless it be quickened up in a wonderful way by the Spirit of God, it cannot itself see or hear those things which strike against the eyes and ears so manifestly as to be as it were palpable by the hand. So great is the misery and blindness of the human race!”** (p.79)*

The light shines in darkness (john 1:5) and darkness understands it not. This is key in understanding the free will – we need help to understand. 1 Cor 2:8 none of princes of this world knew the wisdom of God.

KEY QUOTE: *“**Who could believe this? Who hath heard the like — that the light should shine in darkness, and yet, the darkness still remain darkness, and not be enlightened!**” (80)*

These doctrines can be defended – but some may not understand them or accept it because they are blinded by Satan. But if they fear God then they are to be numbered among the elect. Christ sends His word to the weak ones.

KEY QUOTE: “For what is the whole human race together, without the Spirit, but the kingdom of the devil (as I have said) and a confused chaos of darkness? And therefore it is, that Paul, (Ephes. vi. 12,) calls the devils, “the rulers of this darkness.” (80)

We resist the Word of God because it is the wickedness of Satan enthroned and reigning in our weakness and resisting the Word of God. (81)

**SEC 39:** (3.44:02)

Criticism of Erasmus work because it collected all things(ideas) but asserted nothing.

Erasmus gave greater credit to humans who were of high esteem in the church who agree with Erasmus.

**Luther here applies logic: 1. Erasmus praises men of old, priests, popes, saints, martyrs etc. who agree with him in his judgement on Free Will yet 2. In the same light says that the scriptures are ambiguous or unclear on the subject. He can't have it both ways.**

**SEC 40:** (3.47:52)

One or the other Erasmus' assertions are false (in the above logic) They were Men of greatest understanding of Scripture and martyrs of Christ.

Luther says that both are false: 1. Scripture is clear and 2. Those men were not brilliant.

From here forward Luther's work deals with Erasmus work specifically in refutation:

1. Destroy arguments for free will
2. Defend what others have said for Son of God
3. Contend, uplift, highlight God's grace.

**SEC 41:** (3.50:49)

**Discussion First Part**

Free will defined by Erasmus: “***That it is a power in the human will by which a man may apply himself to those things which lead unto eternal salvation or turn away from the same.***” (p.84)

Only God can have free will. You can't give to humans same will God has. Angels and humans live under the all-overruling command of God. BOTH CANNOT EXIST BY THEIR OWN POWER. We are not totally free agents.

The term and definition rule against each other. The term is one thing the definition in experience is found to be another.

It is more proper to say MUTABLE WILL. This destroys the GLORY and FORCE of free-will. Seems to be a better description. Less lofty and inflated

**SEC 42:** (3.53:25)

For clarity sake the definition is these – Power of a human will and by which a man can and also, unto eternal salvation.

Rephrased: Power of the human will – a power, faculty or disposition or aptitude to will or not to will to choose or refuse to approve or disapprove and what other actions soever belong to the will.

KEY QUOTE: “And as to those words, ‘which lead unto eternal salvation,’ I suppose by them are meant the words and works of God, which are offered to the human will, that it might either apply itself to them, or turn away from them. But I call both the Law and the Gospel the words of God. By the law, works are required; and by the Gospel, faith. For there are no other things which lead either unto the grace of God, or unto eternal salvation, but the word and the work of God: because grace or the spirit is the life itself, to which we are led by the word and the work of God.” (p.86)

**SEC 43:** (3.57:25)

Eternal matters are outside the capacity for humans to understand (1 Cor 2:9)

KEY QUOTE *“Paul shews, out of Isaiah, (1 Cor. ii. 9.) “Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.” For when we speak of eternal life, we speak of that which is numbered among the chieftest articles of our faith. And what “Freewill” avails in this article Paul testifies, (1 Cor. ii. 10.) Also: “God (saith he) **hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit.**” As though he had said, the heart of no man will ever understand or think of any of those things, unless the Spirit shall reveal them; so far is it from possibility, that he should ever apply himself unto them or seek after them.”* (86)

Paul reveals what Free will avails in 1 Cor 2:10. Which means the heart of no man will ever understand or think of any of these things unless the Spirit reveal them.

Those who were the most educated and exalted in this life the more ridiculous the resurrection and eternal life appeared to them: Philosophers and Greeks in Athens (Acts 17:18) Portius Festus (Acts 26:24) **Only people with the Holy Spirit will want salvation.**

“And certainly, no man upon earth, unless imbued with the Holy Spirit, ever secretly knows, or believes in, or wishes for, eternal salvation” (87)

**SEC 44:** (3.59:50)

Erasmus is redefined again: Free will is a power of the human will which can of itself will and not will to embrace the word and work of God by which it is to be led to those things which are beyond its capacity and comprehension.

If it can will it can love and hate. If it can love and hate, then it can do the law. This is to ascribe divinity to free will. If we can do all these things on our own what need is there of God's grace?

KEY QUOTE: "For to will to embrace the Law and the Gospel not to will sin, and to will death, belongs to the power of God alone: as Paul testifies in more places than one." (p.87)

No one since the Pelagians have written more rightly concerning free will than Erasmus. Free-will is a divine term and signifies divine power.

Pelagians divide free will into two parts: 1. The power of discerning (ability to reason) 2. The power of choosing (ability to practice will).

KEY THOUGHT: **Can something give motion to itself?**

Erasmus **AMBIGUOUSLY** speaks two ways on Free will: 1. Human will is utterly infective without grace and 2. Human will has the power by which it can effectively apply itself to those thing will pertain to eternal salvation.

Erasmus HAS SAID THAT (in another place) the HUMAN WILL IS UTTERLY INEFFECTIVE WITHOUT GRACE. But then later says that " THE HUMNAN WILL HAS THAT POWER BY WHICH IT CAN EFFECTIVELY APPLY ITSELF TO THOSE THINGS WHICH PERTAIN UNTO ETERNAL WHICH PERTAIN UNTO ETERNAL SALVATION."

**SEC 45:** (3. 1:03:16)

Erasmus' argument contradicts itself. He assigns everything to free will

Peter Lombard (Theologian in early 1100's) Agrees with Augustine, **free will is the faculty of discerning and then choosing also good if we have grace but choosing evil if we lack grace.** Luther says Lombard definition is much more accurate.

Augustine in book 2 calls Free will under bondage rather than free.

**Erasmus makes free will can apply itself to do good and turn itself from evil. This excludes the Holy Spirit.**

KEY THOUGHT: ***"If anyone should tell you that that was free which of its own power could only go one way, that is, the bad way, and which could go the other way indeed, that is, the right way, but not by its own power, nay, only by the help of another – could you refrain from laughing in his face?. . .i would make it appear that a stone or a log of wood has free will because it can go upwards and downwards; although by its own power, it can only go downwards, but can go upwards only by the help of another."*** (p.89)

Luther will now spend time looking at the arguments that exalt the TERM

**SEC 46:** (3.1:07:34)

The challenge put for to Erasmus is to find Scriptural evidence for free will – what it can do and what it can't. Luther says that Erasmus definition makes Pelagius like an evangelist.

**SEC 47:** (3.1:10:50)

Out of one opinion of free will Erasmus make 3:

1. Those who deny that man can will good without special grace, who deny that man can will good without special grace, who deny that it can begin, who deny that it can make progress, perfect, etc., seems to be too severe but it may be very probable.
2. those who contend that free will avails unto nothing, but sin and that grace alone works good in us is MORE severe.
3. That the opinion of those who sat that free will is an empty term for that God works in us both good and evil is MOST severe. It is against this that Erasmus had to write is work.

Luther points out Erasmus inconsistencies and contradictions.

KEY QUOTE: *“And hence there are found in your “Free-will” both a YEA and a NAY:” so that, in one and the same doctrine and article, you approve and condemn us, and approve and condemn yourself. For do you think, that to ‘apply itself to those things which pertain unto eternal salvation,’ which power your definition assigns to “Free-will,” is not to do good, when, **if there were so much good in “Free-will,” that it could apply itself unto good, it would have no need of grace?**” (91)*

**SEC 48:** (4.0:00)

Luther seeks to clarify Erasmus and quotes his teachings on free will. He has said WITHOUT GRACE and Man's will can't will good.

**ERASMUS QUOTE in defining human will after sin:** *“Human will after sin, is so depraved that having lost its liberty, it is compelled to serve sin and cannot recall itself into a better state.” (p.92)*

The claim here is that Erasmus at one time taught this but then when Luther teaches it he is opposed by everyone and even by Erasmus who writes the Diatribe against Luther.

Erasmus even summarized the Pelagian view this way – which can't be further from the truth.

Free will lost its free will. Logic used by Luther explains that we can't lift ourselves out of sin or sin nature.

KEY THOUGHT *“**If therefore Free will without grace, when it has lost its liberty, is compelled to serve sin and cannot will good, I should be glad to know, what that desire is, what that***



*endeavor is, which that first probable opinion leaves it. It cannot be a good desire or a good endeavor because it cannot will good, as the opinion affirms and as you grant.” (p.92)*

**SEC 49:** (4.3:34)

BECAUSE OF ERASMUS teaching that is ambiguous saying “On extremes of can will good and cannot will good” – there is a medium. This is a humorous assertion from Luther to explain Erasmus. How can one in sin will good? Erasmus was in bondage to Free will. A medium state in will cannot be proven. ERASMUS seems to be trying to find a way not to be extreme Pelagian BUT not be the extreme Lutheran

Matthew 12:30 if you are not with Christ you are against Christ.

KEY QUOTE: *“He does not say, he **that is not with me is yet not against me but in the medium.** For if God be in us, Satan is from us, and it is present with us to will nothing but good. But if God be not in us, Satan is in us, and it is present with us to will evil only, Neither God nor Satan admit of a mere abstracted willing in us; but, as you yourself rightly said, when our liberty is lost we are compelled to serve sin: that is, we will sin and evil, we speak sin and evil, we do sin and evil.]” (p.94)*

Even though the Diatribe was set to speak against Luther, it actually speaks for him.

The first opinion of Erasmus summarized: Denies that a man can will anything good; but yet that a desire remains; which desire, however, is not his own!

**SEC 50:** (4.7:22)

Next opinion MORE SEVERE THAN FIRST: Free will avails unto nothing but to sin. Augustine taught this also.

Third opinion MOST SEVERE: Free will is a mere empty term and that everything which we do is done from necessity under the bondage of sin – these two things Erasmus Diatribe conflicts.

**When people debate/discuss “Free Will” this is the Biblical response.**

KEY QUOTE: *“Free will having once lost its liberty, is compulsively bound to the service of sin and cannot will anything good: I, from these words, can understand nothing else than that Free will is a mere empty term, whose reality is lost. And a lost liberty, according to my grammar, is no liberty at all. And to give the name of liberty to that which has no liberty, is to give it an empty term.” (P.95)*

You can't call one who lost health, healthy.

KEY THOUGHT: *“For if a man, when he has lost his liberty, is compelled to serve sin, and cannot will good, what conclusion concerning him can be more justly drawn, than that he can do nothing but sin, and will evil?”* (95)