



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 Calvinifts is discovered; particularly Mr. Calvin, Mr. Finch, and his little Pracurfor.

To which is prefixed, The folid Testimony of Mr. George Wither against Calvinism, the worst of Doctrines.

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

R. George Wither, a Man of great Judgment in many things, and a faithful Moniso tor of the English Nation for many Years; did, in the Year 166d, publish his Parallellogrammaton; wherein he does much perswade to Repensance and Brotherly-Love. And observing some great Impediments to both, Tip. 61. he confiders the Doctrine of the Calvinifts, in denying univerfal 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 e perswade, will never be effectually arrain'd unto by them, which knowingly, premeditately, and wilfully persevere in denying the universal Redemption of Manhind 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 dise pleased 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 re-'pugnant (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 recessary 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 Holine's which smust compleat the Designs of Antichrist; and there is not any one single Heresy or Wickedness, which doth so secretly, and so mischievously suppleme 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 Calvinifts, that they will hardly

be reconciled until all Controversies are at an end.

Let us therefore confider well what depends upon it; how much it concerns the Glory of God; how much he is dishonoured 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 Treasons to clip it. · A

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*A professed denial of the universality of humane Redemption, seems to me a cursed Counter-Callot, 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 gloristed, 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 sew, and those sew also left without assurance they were of that small number, whatsoever they should endeavour, if there should be an Ex-

ception from the Act of Grace, as many fancy? Doubtless if it had been so, it would have given occasion rather of howling than of finging, and been rather sad than glad Tidings, in regard of that great Terror which might have 6 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 in possibility to be faved, and how few of their dearly beloved Parents, Children, and Friends might be of these sew, for whom Christ took upon him humane Nature. O hor-'rible and unparallel'd Blasphemy! But, blessed be God's Name, it is not so. When the Chil-6 dren of Israel were redeemed out of their Egyptian Bondage, which was a Type of our unie versal Redemption, there was not one Soul, no not a Hoof lest 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 Sin, 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 uncapable. Nay, our Incredulity hath oput him to his Oath to affure every Sinner. And if nevertheless we still distrust him, concinue in our misbelief of his Word and Oath, and labour to draw others into the same Crime; 6 it cannot be an ordinary Punishment which God will at last inslict for so extraordinary and 6 so high an Affront; it being a Sin more hainous than Murder, Adultery, and all other meer 6 carnal Sins put together; yea, more hainous than those the Jews committed by their Idolatries, killing the Prophets, and crucifying Christ in the Flesh; for the last was but a Sin aegainst 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 6 Christ with the concomitant Doctrines, and the Consequences thence raised, and the im-5 puting 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 harred 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.

Go 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 Blashemy is professed and indulged as Orthodox Doctrine, antil 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 obstinate in this Judgment, yet am neither assaid nor ashamed to declare my Conscience therein; or in whatsoever else I think may concern God's Glory, and the Peace of my Country. Thus

far Mr. Geo. Wither.

The 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 Pracurfor, &c.

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

N Pfal. 94. 20. this Question is put, Shall the Throne of Iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth Mischief by a Law? The Sense of

the place is, No such thing can please God, &c.

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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 manifest-

The Calvinists make God to establish all the mischievous Actions of Men and Devils by an unalterable Decree, so as that they must be done of necessity. O borrible!

ly appear to be the Doctrine of the principal Men of the Presbyterian and Calvinifical Perfwafion, yet I will here add one Paffage more out of Mr. Cabvin, Inft. L. 3. c. 24. Sect. 6. where he boldly tells us, That God doth none 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 Foreknowledg, 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 saich, Damus Reprobos necessitate peccandi, eoque & pereundi, ex hac Dei ordinatione conftringi, atque ita conftringi ut nequeant non peccare atque periere: That is, We grant that Reprobates are held so fast under God's Almighty Decree.

that they cannot but fin 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 fenfible 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 required 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 Privity 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 felf, a paultry groveling Fellow. And Mr. Finch calls me, a boisterous quarrelsom Man, one that hath the Spirit of Slumber, as a check and punishment to defame such a Man as Calvin; and to extol Servetus, an Antitrinitarian; and says, I have loft 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 plain, for he

* Libenter fateor (inquit Calvinus de se) ac præ me fero prodisse accusatore, spero capitale saltem seret judicium. Calv. Ep. ad Farrel.

faith, I freely confess the Accuser came out from me, I hope at the least he shall be put to death *. I have not then desamed 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, &cc. 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 Servetus 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 Servetus? 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 Servetus, 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 sully knows this great and glorious Mystery as he ought to do? I am far from justifying Servetus 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 faid before me, in the Case of Ser-
- 1. Grotius, a Man that had but few Equals for Wisdom and Moderation, tells us; Servetus Libri non Geneva tantum, sed in aliis Locis, per Calvini diligentiam exusti sunt; sateor tamen unum me exemplum vidisse Libri Servetiani, in quo certe ea non reperi qua si objicit Calvinus, Vot. pro pace, p. 16. That is, By the Diligence of Calvin, all the Books of Servetus were not only burnt at Geneva, but in other Places. Yet I have seen one Copy of Servetus's Books, in which truly I do not find the Things which Calvin does object against him.

And faith Dr. Pierce, (a Learned and Able Minister of the Church of England) "Servetus" was burnt at Geneva for less than being a Sociolan, and who was not so bad as Mr. B. (a

" Presbyterian) hath laboured to fancy me.

And he tells us also, "That Oecolampadius (a Learned Protestant) was offended at the barbarity of the Sentence. Nor find I any thing (faith he) pretended against Servetus, 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 Informer of his Assairs, we may guess by his Epistles, 164, 165, which he writ to the Four Helvetian 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 Servetus 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 Gratius, that in the Copy which he saw, he could not find those things which were objected by Mr. Calvin; what Melanston wrote, it was meerly on supposition that Calvin's Narrative was true. Thus far the Learned Pierce, in dislike of Calvin's Cruelty against Servetus.

And by this we may perceive, how little Credit there is to be given to Dr. Owen and Mr. Finch, or his Little Pracurfor, not one of them having feen the Book which they con-

demn, 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 be for this be burnt to death? Why then, Dr. Owen, Mr. Finch, and his Little Lawyer, would make 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 feeing 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 stature 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 Profesfors and Prophane.

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

Sober Protestants.

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(1.) He is thought to err in the Mystery of the Trinity as well as Servetus, though perhaps not fo 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 Prefumptuousness. I would to God (fays 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 Ghoft. " the Son, but distinct by certain Properties. Institut. L. 1. c. 13. Sect. 2. And this his Tres Proprietates, is objected against him by some of the Learned Protestants. And I am of Opinion, should I write of the Bleffed Trinity as Mr. Calvin has done, Mr. Finch and his Forerunner would cry out Blasphemy.

(2.) He condemns the Ancient 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 is the Gift of his Son. He brands them (faith a Learned Protestant) as Pelagianising in their

Opinions.

But (3.) his rudeness of Speech was incolerable: He called great and good Men by Titles unfeemly; as Serpent, Peft, Lofel, Fool, Knave, Devil, filthy Dog, impudent Haneman, Sec. And Bucer (a Learned Protestant) calls him, Fratricide, a Marderer of his Brethren. And Grotius fays, He grew morfe and worfe; and that Calvin's Difciples are fuch themselves in Differ-

fition, as they make God to be in their Imaginations towards the greater part of Manhind.

And truly this is too apparent in two of his Followers, I mean, the Little Practifor and Mr. Fineh, whose study has been to render me very odious, though I am sure they know no Evil by me, more (no nor fo much) as they know by themselves. And yet thus I am represented by them, viz. audacious, impudent, turbulent, impertuous, impertinent, scurrilous, prejudic'd Mechanick; a Fool, despicable, wife Mr. Grantham, a despised Man, Coxcomb, addle-Brain, dull Kitching-pate, Clown, Blunderbuss, diffembling Prater, Bramler, bellowing, bideone, bleat, thick-skull Momus, one decreed to steal, wrangling Fellow, Dolt, poor Fop, soft-pated Clod, Caviller, Brazen-forchead, inconfiderate Fellow, gagling Goofe, a quarrelforne buifteroiss Man, one that has loft all Credit and Esteem with all wife and knowing Christians that worship the Holy Trinity; one, like a Woman scolding and quarrelling in the Streets, one like an importment Woman, &cc. So that I think these two Calvinst have come near the pitch of their Master. And fuch 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 Epiffle and Book, and that is a talk of pecial 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 Panish-

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ment less in Hell, as you may see in p. 15. of his Answer; which is a piece of as woful Di-

vinity as ever was heard furely.

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 savour, and such as in its Nature and Essect (if it be all that he design'd for thee, be it never so little) will certainly lead thee to Heaven, thou being a faithful improver of it, sincerely, though under many Instrmities; 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 Essicacy, if improved, and to leave the Receiver under unpardonable Guilt is 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 Reprodution; being indeed fierce and of a cruel Disposition, full of Passion, quickly angry, &c. These things I have sound 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 Conceit 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 Soveraignty. 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 split themselves, let us consider, That though God's Soveraignty is incomprehensible, yet it is every way better both in its Mercy and Justice, and in the exercise of both, than any Soveraignty that Men do receive or exercise under him. Now we know, that what Prince soever exerts his Soveraign 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 Soveraignty. 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 Soveraign 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 Insants, to be damned, and that unspeakable Time, before there was either Angel or Man created; and this, not because God foresaw they would sin, and despise the Riches of his Goodness; but he also ordained 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 Soveraignty 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 own Pens, as alledged against them by their fellow Protestants; and Mr. Finch 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 Mens; 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 att, &c. when indeed he makes the Case far worse: for this 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 Ifratl, 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 what soever comes to pass. O unwife Expositor! 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 Gofpel to them, he never intended them any Salvation by it. And thus Mr. Finch, and all fuch Preachers as he is, are meer Hypocrites, for they cannot intend any Salvation to all they preach unto, but only to a very few, and they know not fo much as one of them.

Nay, so 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, so God may, if he please, glorify his Justice upon Infants, though they die in their Infancy, p. 88, 89. And thus our gracious God is made more cruel to his Off-spring, (for such is all Mankind, Acts 17.28.) than the very Wolves and Foxes are to their young Ones. And what is now become of that gracious Speech of Almighty God, Pfal. 145. His tender Mercies are over all his Works? Sure, damned Infants have no share at all in his Mercy, no not fo

much as a Toad by a thonfand degrees. O ye Fools, when will ye be wife? Pfal. 94.8.

Mr. Finch quarrels with the Title of my Book, and fays, 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 manifestation of Christ 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 bleffed 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 Meffenger of the Baptized Churches, &c. But of this I have given an account, in my Book intituled, Christianismus Primie tivus, to which I refer the inquisitive Reader, and remain,

Norwich, Aug. 14. 1.691.

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for Tesus's sake,

THO. GRANTHAM.

