

## The Bondage of the Will

[Martin Luther](#)

### ERASMUS' SCEPTICISM.

#### Section IV.

Sect. IV. — WHAT you adduce, therefore, about the darkness of the Corycian cavern, amounts to nothing; matters are not so in the Scriptures. For those things which are of the greatest majesty, and the most abstruse mysteries, are no longer in the dark corner, but before the very doors, nay, brought forth and manifested openly. For Christ has opened our understanding to understand the Scriptures, Luke xxiv. 45. And the Gospel is preached to every creature. (Mark xvi. 15, Col. i. 23.) "Their sound is gone out into all the earth." (Psalm xix. 4.) And "All things that are written, are written for our instruction." (Rom. xv. 4.) And again, "All Scripture is inspired from above, and is profitable for instruction." (2 Tim. iii. 16.) .

You, therefore, when you adduce Paul, saying, "His judgments are incomprehensible," seem to make the pronoun His (ejus) refer to Scripture (Scriptura). Whereas Paul does not say, The judgments of the Scripture are incomprehensible, but the judgments of God. So also Isaiah xl. 13, does not say, Who has known the mind of the Scripture, but, who has known "the mind of the Lord?" Although Paul asserts that the mind of the Lord is known to Christians: but it is in those things which are freely given unto us: as he saith also in the same place, 1 Cor. ii. 10, 16. You see, therefore, how sleepily you have looked over these places of the Scripture: and you cite them just as aptly as you cite nearly all the passages in defense of "Free-will."

In like manner, your examples which you subjoin, not without suspicion and bitterness, are nothing at all to the purpose. Such are those concerning the distinction of Persons: the union of the Divine and human natures: the unpardonable sin: the ambiguity attached to which, you say, has never been cleared up. — If you mean the questions of Sophists that have been agitated upon those subjects, well. But what has the all-innocent Scripture done to you, that you impute the abuse of the most wicked of men to its purity? The Scripture simply confesses the Trinity of God, the humanity of Christ, and the unpardonable sin. There is nothing here of obscurity or ambiguity. But how these things are the Scripture does not say, nor is it necessary to be known. The Sophists employ their dreams here; attack and condemn them, and acquit the Scripture. — But, if you mean the reality of the matter, I say again, attack not the Scriptures, but the Arians, and those to whom the Gospel is hid, that, through the working of Satan, they might not

see the all-manifest testimonies concerning the Trinity of the Godhead, and the humanity of Christ.

But to be brief. The clearness of the Scripture is twofold; even as the obscurity is twofold also. The one is external, placed in the ministry of the word; the other internal, placed in the understanding of the heart. If you speak of the internal clearness, no man sees one iota in the Scriptures, but he that hath the Spirit of God. All have a darkened heart; so that, even if they know how to speak of, and set forth, all things in the Scripture, yet, they cannot feel them nor know them: nor do they believe that they are the creatures of God, nor any thing else: according to that of Psalm xiv. 1. "The fool hath said in his heart, God is nothing." For the Spirit is required to understand the whole of the Scripture and every part of it. If you speak of the external clearness, nothing whatever is left obscure or ambiguous; but all things that are in the Scriptures, are by the Word brought forth into the clearest light, and proclaimed to the whole world.

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