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## EXAMINATION

Of the late Reverend  
P R E S I D E N T

EDWARDS'S

'Enquiry on Freedom of Will;'

More especially the FOUNDATION PRINCIPLE of his Book, with its TENDENCY, and CONSEQUENCES, and the Reasoning therein contained.

IN THREE PARTS:

PART. I. Of the supposed connection of volition with the highest motive.

PART II. Of the indissoluble connection of moral causes and effects.

PART III. Moral liberty belongs to moral agents. Or Mr. Edwards's necessity, if true in theory, is not applicable to *practice*.

With an APPENDIX, containing a specimen of coincidence between the principles of Mr. EDWARDS'S Book, and those of antient and modern FATALISTS.

*Seek not after that which is too hard for thee, and search not into things that are above thy strength.*

SON of SIRACH,

*It is not of HIM THAT WILLETH.*

ST. PAUL'S

B O S T O N . :

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# P R E F A C E.

**T**HE puzzle attending disputes on such kind of subjects as Mr. EDWARDS's book treats of, is probably the principal reason why no animadversions on his discourse have been yet published. It was presumed, that few who might read it would bestow attention enough to understand it; and of those who should attentively read and understand it, few would admit its foundation principles. The author of the present examination is not without apprehension, that the reason, which hath dissuaded others, will be thought sufficient to have dissuaded him, from such an undertaking. He acknowledgeth that he was discouraged with *only reading* this elaborate and intricate performance some years since. Yet from the great reputation of Mr. *Edwards*, and prevalence of his doctrine, he came to a resolution of giving this book another and attentive reading: In consequence of which, the following remarks were drawn up 'the motive' of his 'present writing' and publication 'is a persuasion of the falshood of' Mr. *Edwards*'s 'scheme; and this persuasion' he 'grants and sees is *necessary*,' he 'cannot help this judgment.' \* And as he hath no manner of doubt but the foundation principles of the book before him are false, so he esteems them of most dangerous tendency.

IN

† Jackson on human liberty, in answer to Cato's letters.

IN a *speculative and metaphysical* view, the subject hath been largely discussed by some of the ablest writers. The reader may be assured, that as little metaphysical reasoning as possible is used in the following pages. For such reasoning the author hath neither abilities, inclination or leisure; besides that there is no great occasion, and that he persuades himself it would not be edifying. His principal aim is to consider the subject in a *practical* view. In *this* view of liberty and necessity there is no puzzle, whatever difficulties attend the subject when considered abstractly. The inquisitive may find a full answer to the principal arguments of Mr. *Edwards's* book, speculatively considered, in Dr. *Samuel Clark's* demonstration of the being and attributes of GOD, in answer to *Hobbs, Spinoza*, and their followers; in the same learned writer's replies to papers from Mr. *Leibnitz*, and remarks on Mr. *Collins's* book on human liberty; in *Jackson's* defence of liberty against *Cato's* letters, and vindication of the same subject in answer to *Collins*. To whom the author gladly refers, as having saved him a task to which he pretends not to be equal. Others might be mentioned, who have answered similar arguments two thousand years ago.

As we are immediately conscious of liberty, as it is a truth of the highest importance, no embarrassments in theory attending the admission of it, can oblige us to give it up—especially as the denial of it plungeth us into a deeper labyrinth. The human intellect is imperfect; consequently, things may be consistent though we cannot see *how*. The principal purpose metaphysicks can serve on practical subjects is to obscure them.

Mr.

Mr. *Edwards* indeed professeth himself an advocate for liberty. Had he professedly denied it, the author would not have engaged in this intricate dispute : For he esteems the denial of liberty a like absurdity and extravagance as the denial of *motion* ; or a *material world* ; both which have been denied, and the contrary pretended to be demonstrated, against the universal experience of mankind. Those things which no man can deny without impeachment of absurdity and extravagance ; it seems absurd to attempt a formal proof of. Should a man, for example, endeavour to convince one who might require a string of syllogisms to prove, that the sun shines in a clear day, at twelve o'clock, he would have a very idle employment : Let him that questions it open his eyes, and he cannot want conviction. Let a man look into his own breast, and he cannot but perceive inward freedom—*Inward freedom*—For if freedom be not in the *mind*, it is no where. And liberty in the mind implies *self-determination*.

*This kind of liberty our author denies. In this sense of liberty alone hath he any controversy with the writers he opposeth. His disagreement with Lord *Kaims*, † is rather in words than any thing real, notwithstanding what our author hath published to screen himself from the imputation of being in the same scheme. Their general reasoning is the same. They reason on the same principles, and only differ about the meaning of the word *necessity*, and a few other words and phrases. Mr. *Edwards* affirms, that every volition and moral action is determined by a moral necessity, which is as absolute as natural ; and that moral habits*

are

† Author of the essays on the principles of morality and natural religion,

are owing to *the nature of things*. He allows only of *external* liberty, such as is the effect of necessity in the will—and constantly denies a power of self-determination. Lord *Kaims* and Mr. *Hume* affirm, ‘that man hath, in no case, a power of self-determination; but is, in all his actions, determined by a moral necessity’—which necessity they hold to be as real as any other. The only difference is, that Lord *Kaims*, while he allows that GOD has implanted in man’s nature an invincible feeling of liberty, maintains, that this feeling is *fallacious*: And Mr. *Hume* denies the subsistence of any such relation as we signify by the words cause and effect. But whether liberty, as maintained by Mr. *Edwards*, be not altogether *hypothetic*, may appear from the following pages. And as to his notion of cause and of effect, whenever he uses the former word for any *antecedent*, or the *occasion* of an event or thing, and the latter for the *consequence* of another thing (as he tells us he sometimes doth, p. 58. 59.) he so far agrees with Mr. *Hume* in *words* as well as *sense*.

THE author hath only given the outlines of some (among many other) arguments which occur’d to his mind to evince the aspect Mr. *Edwards*’s scheme hath on the moral perfections and government of GOD, and its consequent practical tendency. Had he enlarged on them, it would have lengthened out the ensuing examination much beyond what either he or the reader would chuse. The number of pages is now double to what he at first designed. He hopes for the patience and candor of the public, to whose opinion he submits these remarks. If they are just, they need no apology; if not, no apology can be of any service. If any should suppose

suppose that in one respect at least an apology should be made, viz. for undertaking to criticize the writings of so distinguished an author as Mr. *Edwards* ; the answer is, that if the particular design of the proposed examination is properly pursued and executed, and that respect preserved which is due to the character of a gentleman of Mr. *Edwards's* merit and eminence, the author hath not transgressed : But of these he is not *himself* a proper judge ; though he hopes to be acquitted (in the latter of these respects especially) by every one that is. Whatever reception his performance may meet with, he is conscious of the rectitude of his own intentions.

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INTRODUCTION

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# INTRODUCTION,

Exhibiting a general view of Mr. *Edwards's* scheme; with the design and method proposed in these remarks.

**I**T is quite beside the purpose of the following remarks to enquire, Whether the general scheme of doctrine Mr. *Edwards* intended to establish in his enquiry be rational and scriptural. It is only the *foundation principle* we aim to consider: The system built hereupon, whether true or false, is not, by the generality of Calvinistic Divines, made to depend on the *same* basis.

THE principal subject of the book before us is, 'What determines the will?' And through the whole performance great pains is taken to demonstrate, that moral necessity and liberty are convertible terms. The perplexity, confusion, and uncertainty, which disquisitions of this sort are attended with, is sufficiently known. We shall endeavour to keep out of the clouds as much as the nature of the subject will admit.

'THE position of chief importance,' we are told is, *That the will is necessarily determined by the strongest motive*; meaning by the strongest motive 'that, which, in the mind's present view, hath the greatest appearance of good.' 'Every act of the will hath a certain fixed connection herewith, and depends hereupon, as it's cause—'

or the ground and reason of it.' \* In support of which it is said, that 'nothing ever comes to pass without a proportionable cause—that the acts of the will, and material things, have a like necessary dependance on a cause without themselves—that moral causes may be causes in as proper a sense as any causes whatever—and moral necessity may be as absolute as natural.' †

INDEED, by the word *cause* Mr. *Edwards* explains himself to mean, not only 'that which hath a positive *efficiency*, or influence to *produce* a thing, or bring it to pass;' but 'sometimes any *antecedent*, either natural or moral, positive or negative, on which an event, either a thing, or the manner and circumstance of a thing, so depends, that it is the *ground and reason*, in whole, or in part, why it is rather than not; or why it is as it is, rather than otherwise.' ‡ At the same time he asserts, that every act of the will is an 'effect necessarily dependent and consequent on a cause, which he calls an *efficient* cause; to whose' determination and command volition is as much *subject*, as the motions of the hands and feet to the volitions which determine and command them—that the acts of the will are as '*passive* with respect to the antecedent cause, ground, or reason of them.' § He maintains, upon the whole, an universal necessity—that all beings, all events, the manner and all the circumstances of things are necessarily determined. Yet he professeth himself an advocate for liberty, and labours a distinction between natural and moral

\* Enquiry part I. sect. 2. † Enquiry p. 30, 40, 48, 58, 62, 66, and *passim*. ‡ Enquiry p. 57, 58, 9. § P. 183, 184.

moral necessity, which distinction he apprehends important—natural necessity being inconsistent with praise or blame, while moral is not. The liberty he admits is, however, merely *external*, and the result of *necessity in the mind*.

THIS is a general idea of his plan, so far as it will fall under present consideration. In pursuing our remarks on which, we shall,

FIRST, Examine the supposed connection of volition with the highest motive.

SECONDLY, The indissoluble connection of moral causes and effects.

THIRDLY, Shew that internal, moral liberty, as distinguished from external, or natural, belongs to moral agents: Or admitting Mr. *Edwards's* scheme of necessity to be true in *theory*, it is not applicable to *practice*. It is also proposed to add, in an appendix, a specimen of coincidence between Mr. *Edwards* and some celebrated infidels, antient and modern.

N. B. We have made use of the *London* edition. Wherever the reader finds particular pages referred to by numerical figures inclosed in a parenthesis, such place in Mr. *Edwards's* enquiry is meant, unless notice is given of our referring to some other author.

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## PART I

*On the Connection of Volition with the highest Motive.*

### SECT. I.

Mr. *Edwards* hath not shewn wherein the *energy* of motive consists.

**T**HE enquiry in this place is not, Whether the highest motive hath always a causal influence on the will? But, admitting this to be the case, what it is that *causeth* any supposed motive to be highest in the mind's view? wherein doth its *energy*, or power consist? In the next section, we shall examine, whether the will is indeed determined, in every act, by the highest motive.

WHEN, between two or more objects in the mind's view, one appears most agreeable; (from whatever cause,) this appearance is the highest or strongest motive, according to our author. Now as there is a manifest difference between an object's *actually appearing* most agreeable, and the *cause* of this appearance; the proper question, in the first place, is, What is the ground, reason, or cause of the agreeable appearance *itself*. For admitting the strongest motive to be the more *immediate* cause of volition, how doth this prove that it is the *original* cause? Whence is it that any proposed object hath the greatest appearance of good? From what cause? Hither we must *ultimately*

mately recur for the ground of volition; [Possibly not stop here.] Till the answer to this question is found, the original ground of volition is not discovered. For if every circumstance of things hath an answerable cause, then there is a cause why this or that motive is highest. \*

THOUGH Mr. *Edwards* supposed the resolution of this question was 'not necessary to his purpose,' † yet he hath, in several particulars, remarked what he apprehended may 'have influence' in causing 'the objects of volition to appear agreeable to the mind.' He assigns, for instance,

\* 'In the question, *What determines the will?* it is taken for granted, that *something* determines it. And the controversy on this head is, where the *foundation* of the will's determination is,' (p. 56.) Mr. *Edwards* saith expressly, 'That the act of volition itself (or the will) is *always* determined by that in the mind's view of an object, which *causes it to appear* most agreeable.' (p. 12) Here, then, is the FOUNDATION of the will's determination. Mr. *Edwards*'s business, therefore, according to his own state of the question, was, to point out what *causeth an object to appear* most agreeable. For if that which CAUSETH *this appearance* be the real cause of volition, then the agreeable appearance ITSELF cannot be the cause. The agreeable appearance, or highest motive, as he observes, is nothing *distinct* from volition, but the *very thing*, as will be particularly shewn in the next section. We would here just hint, by the way, that Mr. *Edwards* hath given ample testimony against 'the position of chief importance in his discourse.' For that the highest motive doth not *always* determine volition, is pretty apparent, if it is *always* determined by that in or about an object which *causeth* it to be, and appear, most agreeable. The will, in no instance whatsoever; is determined by the agreeable appearance, but by the cause of such appearance.

stance, 'the apparent nature and circumstances of the object—the manner of the mind's view of it—the state of the mind, by nature or education—or the frame it is in on a particular occasion.' But how is this any answer? Doth not the question immediately arise, *How* comes the object to have such a particular appearance to the mind? *Whence* is it apparently *circumstanced* as it is? *Whence* doth the mind view it in such a particular *manner*? Or from such a particular *idea* of it, whether 'faint, or clear, strong and lively?' *Whence* is the *state, temper, or frame* of the mind what it is? Until these things are solved, the question, *Whence* is it that 'a person's pleasure is wrong' or right? hath received no answer, unless 'a very impertinent one.'

'THERE is no great difficulty, saith Mr. *Edwards*, in shewing, not only that it *must needs be so*, but also *how it is so*, that the mind must be influenced in it's choice by something that hath a *preponderating* influence upon it.\* But if 'a preponderating influence on the mind' implies that the choice is *already made*, it may 'be a matter of no small difficulty' to shew, how the mind, in *making* it's choice, can 'be influenced by something that hath a preponderating influence upon it.'

While writing the first part of his book, Mr. *Edwards* seems to have been sensible, it was no very easy matter 'to shew *how it is so*,' or why, that the mind is always determined by the highest motive. His words are, (p. 12.) 'Particularly to enumerate all things pertaining to the mind's view of the objects of volition, which have

\* P. 83.

have influence in their appearing agreeable to the mind, *would be a matter of no small difficulty*, and might require a treatise by itself, and is not necessary to my present purpose.' But (without tarrying to reconcile this *seeming* contrast) is this a matter attended with greater difficulty, or of less importance, or would it require a larger treatise, than to shew, what determines the will to this side, or that ?

We allow, that 'the *common people* do not ascend up in their reflections and abstractions to the *metaphysical sources, relations and dependencies* of things, in order to form their notion of faultiness—They do not wait till they have decided by their *refinings*, what first determines the will ; whether it be determined by something *extrinsic* or *intrinsic*. If this were the case, multitudes, yea, the far greater part of mankind, nine hundred and ninety nine out of a thousand would live and die without having any such notion as that of fault ever entering into their heads ; or without so much as once having any conception, that any body was to be either blamed or commended for any thing. They do not take any part of their notion of fault or blame from the resolution of any such questions.' \* A fuller acknowledgment Mr. *Edwards* could not have made, that the grand question, the main subject of his book, *What determines the will ?* is a subtle and unprofitable one. We are therefore at a loss for the motive of his writing an elaborate volume to determine a point not to be determined—at least, by his own declaration, of no use to *one out of a thousand of mankind*.

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P. 39, 49.

\* P. 298, 99.

P. 39, 40. Our author observes, that 'into the meaning of the word *liberty* is not taken any thing of the *cause* or *original* of choice—*how* the person came to have such a volition; whether it was caused by some external motive, or internal, habitual bias; whether it was necessarily connected with something foregoing, or not connected. Let the person come by his volition or choice how he will, yet, if he is able, and there is nothing in the way to hinder his pursuing and executing his will, the man is fully and perfectly free, according to the primary and common notion of freedom'.

It hence appears, that Mr. *Edwards* esteemed it neither necessary nor useful for us to know the *cause* or *origin* of the will's determination—'how a person comes to have such a volition.' And yet it was a main point in his view to shew, that the strongest motive is the *immediate* cause of every act of choice. Now, as was before observed, it is just as necessary and important to know the *original* and *ultimate*, as the next and more immediate cause of volition. The next and immediate cause is but the effect of some *preceeding* cause; this of another, and so on. 'The determination of the will, saith Mr. *Edwards*, supposeth an *effect*, which must have a *cause*. If the will be *determined*, there must be a *determiner*.'  
 \* Granted. And if the strongest motive be the determiner, this also must be determined by some preceeding cause. There is a cause or reason of its being strongest—something from which it derives, and wherein lies, its great strength. If therefore, it was of any importance to shew, (conformable

formable to Mr. *Edwards's* design) what determines the will, and to prove that the strongest motive doth it; it was at least of equal importance to point out, what it is that causeth such motive to be, or appear, strongest. The real cause of volition is not found, till this matter is explained. The enquiry is not pursued to the end, and the plan of Mr. *Edwards's* book but half executed.

‘SUPPOSE a chain hung down out of the Heavens, from an *unknown* height; and although every link of it gravitated toward the earth, and what it hung upon was not visible, yet it did not descend, but kept its situation: And, upon this, a question should arise, What supported or kept up this chain? Would it be a sufficient answer, to say, that the *first*, or lowest link hung upon the second, or that next above it?’ without proceeding to shew what the second hung upon; ‘or rather, the *first and second together* ;’ and so on, until it was found ‘what supported the *whole*. Thus it is in a chain of causes and effects. The last or lowest is *suspended* upon the cause above it. This again, if it be not the first cause, is suspended, as an effect, upon something above it, &c.\* The original (that is, the *true and real*) cause of volition is, therefore, yet to be explained. For if it be the immediate effect of motive, still this cause is an effect in regard to something preceding—and whatever is the next or immediate cause of the strength or energy of motive itself, this again is an effect in relation to a cause preceding, as well as a  
cause

\* *Wollaston*, p. 67.

cause in relation to motive—And thus the enquiry may be pursued in *infinitum*. (Which shews, by the way, the *futility*, at least, of entering on such an enquiry as that which is the subject of Mr. *Edwards's* book.) Should it be said, that the energy of motive, in every case, is to be attributed to the first and supreme cause, as the immediate efficient—his, indeed, is making short work; but it is cutting the knot, rather than untying it. However, when it shall be shewn, that every act of will, in every creature, is an immediate, necessary effect of the supreme cause, the dispute will at once be at an end.

‘THE vulgar notion of blameworthiness, says Mr. *Edwards*, is, a person’s having his heart wrong, and doing wrong from the heart’ \* Now hath he shewn, whence a person’s heart comes to be wrong? He takes notice of this defect in ‘the author of the essay on the freedom of the will in GOD and the creatures;’ that he had not given a reason why an act of the will is, or why it is in this manner, rather than another. † Now how hath Mr. *Edwards* supplied this defect? Is what he hath said ‘a reason why an act of the will is, or why it is in this manner?’ Suppose the highest motive determines the will, he explains motive to be the apparent good in an object—Now what is it that makes, or causes an object to appear good? For this, by his own principles, is what determines the will. He ‘speaks of a certain sovereignty in motive, whereby it has power to determine volition. Wherein consists ‘this supposed sovereignty?’ From what cause

\* P. 298. † P. 72, 77.

cause doth it proceed? From what 'exercise' of it can either its sovereignty, or its cause, be inferred? \* 'And so the question returns *in infinitum*, and the like answer must be made *in infinitum*.' For granting that an object's appearing agreeable to the mind is the ground of the mind's choice, what account is this of the agreeable appearance itself? Is it a reason why an object appears beautiful or deformed, agreeable or disagreeable? Doth it shew us, *why* 'it is most agreeable to some men, to follow their reason? and to others, to follow their appetites?' Not at all. Nor consequently, doth it shew us 'wherein consists the strength of motive'—whence the motive that determines the will is prepollent—of what antecedent cause its determining power is the effect. Every circumstance of things, it is pleaded, must have a cause. Volition then is the effect of motive—the latter the effect of some prior cause—this of another—and this again of another, &c. &c. &c. Where then are we to seek for the true and original cause of volition?

ALTHOUGH Mr. *Edwards* cursorily passeth the question, Wherein consists the *energy* of motive? as beside 'the purpose of his discourse;' yet we must think, that his main 'position,' and 'the thing of chief importance' upon his scheme, absolutely required a clear 'explanation' and full discussion of this question. It is the hinge, on which the controversy, as stated by Mr. *Edwards*, must finally turn. He appears to have been scrupulous, whether he had not 'failed in explaining

plaining this thing,' from his hint that if he had, it did 'not overthrow the position itself, which was the thing of chief importance' in his enquiry, 'viz. That *the will is always determined by the strongest motive.*'\* This position may not be *overthrown* by a failure in 'explaining wherein the strength of motives consists;' but we might have expected, and should have been glad to have seen, a *rationale* of the position. If true, there is a cause, ground, or reason of its truth. That cause hath not been assigned, or discovered to our apprehension. It is soon enough to say, whether the position is true or false, when the foundation of it is understood. But whether it hath a solid support, or is *overthrown* by Mr. *Edwards* himself, may appear in the following section: We conclude the present with this remark.

ALTHOUGH we have no right to require an answer to so subtil a question as this [What determines the will?] from any but such as *undertake of their own accord* to explain the matter; yet, from Mr. *Edwards's* known abilities, we might have expected a more satisfactory and rational answer—especially as he seems to have apprehended, that the general question concerning liberty was thoroughly examined and decided in his discourse upon it. But since, after what Mr. *Edwards* hath said, it still remains *obscure* and undetermined, we conclude it must remain so. For no author we have seen hath wrote upon the subject with greater strength. And we cannot but observe; that Mr. *Edwards* in

in some parts of his book, appears to have been quite sensible that no subject is more intricate and puzzling than this concerning the determination of the will, considered in a speculative view. Should any 'find fault, that we have gone into metaphysical niceties and subtilties;' our reply is, that Mr. *Edwards's* enquiry is 'a metaphysical subtilty, and must be treated according to its nature.' \*

\* P. 347.

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SECT.

## S E C T. II.

The will not necessarily determined by the strongest Motive.

**I**T is not always the *nature* of the object *in itself*, or ' what *reason* dictates to be best, and most for the person's *happiness*, taking in the whole of his duration,' that is the strongest motive ; since the dictate of reason ' is often overcome by the greater weight of' other considerations.\* And indeed were the dictate of reason always the strongest motive, and were the will invariably determined by motive taken in this sense, it is plain, that sin would never have entered into the world. Now the preferableness of the object in its own nature, and as apprehended by reason, not being always the ground or cause of its appearing most agreeable, but something diverse or contrary, in many instances ; the question is, How came beings made upright to mistake their happiness upon the whole ? For mistake it they must ; (by supposition) or otherwise in the *first* act of sin they could not be determined by the greatest apparent good.

HERE we may enquire, Whether *in innocence* any thing but conformity and subjection to the Creator could appear to be the greatest good ? If not, then, on Mr. *Edwards's* hypothesis, an innocent creature could never rebel. If, on the other

\* P. 173

other hand, rebellion against the supreme cause had the appearance of the greatest good to *Adam* in innocence, and to apostate angels before their fall, how doth this consist with the general opinion that hath been entertained of the original extent of their rational faculties, and the spiritual image of GOD with which they were endowed? The powers of intellect in innocent *Adam*, for example, have been supposed so great, that consistently herewith it cannot be doubted but he had the fullest view of duty, and of his highest interest as connected with it; and consequently could have no apparent superior motive to transgress. If in innocence he could not hesitate but it was his highest duty to refrain from the forbidden fruit, he could not, (by supposition) hesitate but such act of forbearance was also his highest happiness. Therefore the greatest *apparent* good was to retain his integrity. Consequently, in transgressing, his will was not determined *by*, but *against*, the highest motive. Nor can we conceive of a *presumptuous* sinner, on any other supposition—meaning hereby, one who acts against *present conviction*—or *directly in opposition to the light he hath in the very article of sinning*.

It will, perhaps, be said, that innocent *Adam's* highest good was to *forfeit his integrity*. And indeed, on any other hypothesis, the controversy seems to be brought to an issue, and the opinion of being always necessarily determined by the highest motive given up. Now should this be said, (which is at least imply'd, if not expressed, in what Mr. *Edwards* hath remarked \* on

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\* Part iv. Sec. 9.

the advantage of sin to the creation) we might ask, whether sin could appear most agreeable to an innocent creature from the *nature of the object in itself*? This, we presume Mr. *Edwards* would not say. And if it could not thus appear from its nature, it will be difficult to shew how sin could be, in any sense, the creature's highest good—Or how an *innocent* creature could apprehend it to be so. But whenever it can be shewn, that innocent man, or rebel angels before their fall, had a full view of the superior advantages of sin above innocence and righteousness, we believe no body will think it worth while to controvert farther about any doctrine of religion. An hypothesis so extraordinary, requires extraordinary proof. We shall have occasion to resume this point under another part of our remarks.

In regard to the first entrance of sin into the world, we acknowledge it is an event, which *all* denominations of professing *christians* are equally holden to account for—yea, *deists* as much as christians. Even *atheists* are no otherwise excused than as, by their principles, they are not obliged to account for any thing. The truth is, no body can solve this matter. But if the *first sinful volition* was the necessary product of the highest motive; then rebellion against GOD was discerned to be the highest good, *when reason and judgment freely dictated and governed*; which they certainly did *while the creature continued innocent*. Yea, it follows, that the highest motive to the *Creator*, as well as creature, was in behalf of moral evil. How then is sin such an *infinite evil* as we have been taught to believe it? Does it not turn out an *infinite good*? Rather, how can that deserve the name of *sin*, which appears

*most*

most agreeable even to the Deity himself? Or allowing sin to be the greatest evil, that man must have an hard task, who undertakes to shew, that it is also the greatest good: And if not the greatest good, how it could have this appearance to creatures in a state of rectitude—and even to Almighty GOD himself. Or if it could not have this appearance to any being in a state of rectitude, how was it then possible for beings made upright to fall; on supposition that no instance of volition can be mentioned but what is the effect of, or determined by, the greatest apparent good? The very idea of *moral perfection* appears to be lost, if we pursue to the end such an enquiry as Mr. *Edwards* hath led us into.

“ THAT the will always follows the last practical judgment of the understanding, hath passed current as a maxim in the schools: So that if a sick man shall, in contradiction to his physician’s judgment, and his own, indulge his appetite for meat or drink, he must be supposed previously to have convinced himself, that his present indulgence is of more value to him than his health, or even his life. If other men indulge their unreasonable inclinations at the expence of interest, reputation, inward peace, and everlasting salvation, they must be supposed to judge with themselves, that this vicious indulgence ought to be preferred to interest, reputation, peace of conscience, and everlasting salvation: This way of thinking, which passeth so easily with the learned, goes mighty ill down with men of plain understanding; who, on the contrary, incline to believe, that in the practice of vice men either do not think at all, but act like

like mere animals by the blind impulse of appetite and affection ; or if they attend to what they are doing, that they basely and absurdly prefer a present gratification to what they *know* to be their most valuable interests in this life and the next.

THE truth is, that man is a compound of rational and animal affections, that without attending to himself, sometimes the one, and at other times the other, must of necessity prevail, as they happen to be strongest ; and that, through the love of present pleasure, and aversion to present pain, or through mere pusillanimity, we too often decline the combat ; and, in contradiction to our reason, our conscience, and all the most weighty considerations of honour and interest, respecting this life and the next, suffer the animal to prevail over the rational affections.

FOR the remedy, then, of this greatest of all evils, it is not enough the judgment be well informed, ; because however desirous we are of having the authority of our judgment for whatever we do, and however much we will endeavour to reconcile our judgment with our inclination ; yet when that cannot be done, we will too often pursue our inclination in contradiction to our judgment. The only remedy therefore under heaven is, to endeavour, by all means in our power, to make our rational a match, and, as much as possible, an overmatch, for our animal affections : In which employment we have a title to all the assistance, which the teachers of mankind can afford us ; and to stimulate,

stimulate, direct, and support us in this arduous task, seems to be *their chief business.*" \*

‘ THE thing of *chief importance* in his discourse,’

\* Dr. Oswald's appeal to common sense in behalf of religion, p. 156, 7, 8. margin.

‘ The perception or last judgment of the understanding, is as distinct from the actual exertion of the self-motive power, as seeing the way is from *walking* in it. Nor will it follow, because the perception of the understanding is denied to be the immediate, efficient, necessary cause of the exertion of the self-motive power, that therefore *unintelligent matter* may be capable of self-motion; any more than it will follow, if a man's eyes be denied to be the immediate, efficient, necessary cause of his walking, that therefore the man may be capable of walking, though he has neither legs nor life. A man's understanding judges of what he is to do, as his eyes discern the way. But a blind or winking man has power to walk without seeing. What resemblance is there between an *action*, and a *perception* of the mind? There must therefore be some distinct principle of motion and action, independent on the perceptive faculty. That ‘ *exertion* which makes *action* to be *action* is entirely a distinct thing from that *perception* or *judgment*, by which a man determines beforehand concerning the *reasonableness* or fitness of what he is about to act: An agent not acting according to the last judgment of his understanding, is like a man shutting his eyes, and walking at a venture down a precipice.’ (Dr. Samuel Clark's answer to a third letter from a Gentleman of the University of Cambridge, annexed to a collection of papers between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Clarke.)

IT is no uncommon thing for men to rebel against the light. That which they do, they allow not. The law in the members wareth against the law in the mind.  
Instead

course,' Mr. *Edwards* tells us is this, ' That *the will is always determined by the strongest motive.*' This, he insists, ' is the PREVIOUS ground and reason of every act of volition ; so that in the nature of things volition cannot take place without, but is connected with it, as the PRODUCING, EFFICIENT cause.' In this principle his whole scheme

—Video, meliora proboque ;

*Deteriora sequor.*

Instead of saying, that presumptuous offenders follow the last judgment of their *understanding*, when *their thoughts the mean while accuse them*, it is more proper to say, that they follow the dictate of *lust, passion, or appetite*. Mr. *Edwards* allows, that men do not always follow the dictate of *reason* : (p. 17) They therefore sometimes follow the dictate of some *other faculty, distinct* from, and in opposition to it. Mr. *Edwards*, indeed, includes more than *reason* and *judgment* in the phrase, the dictate of the *understanding* : But taking the *understanding* in his sense for ' the whole faculty of perception,' it is as different from animal affection and appetite as any two things can be. And ' if strict propriety of speech be insisted on,' a man must be said to follow the dictate of *that faculty which hath the ascendant* at any time ; whether it be the *understanding* or animal appetite : Otherwise we confound the distinction between that faculty, in respect of which *GOD hath taught us more than the beasts of the field*, and the appetites he hath given us in common with them.

' INTELLIGENT beings act sometimes on the view of *strong motives*, sometimes upon *weak ones*, sometimes where things are absolutely *indifferent*. In which last case there may be very good reason to act, though two or more ways of acting may be absolutely *indifferent* : The *motive*, or thing considered as in view, is something *extrinsic* to the mind. The *impression* made upon the mind by the motive, is the *perceptive quality*, in which the mind is passive : The

*doing*

scheme is founded—(without having shewn what it is that gives strength and energy to the motive that determines the will—what it is that gives or constitutes the agreeable appearance in an object of choice—to what the preponderancy, or efficiency of it upon the will is to be ascribed) Let us enquire how this ‘position of chief importance’ is supported.

As no authority can be of equal weight to overthrow this main position as the author’s own, we beg the reader would consider the following passage ; which is so *full* to our purpose, that we are saved the trouble of a laboured confutation of the principle alluded to. ‘I have rather chose to express myself thus, that the will always is AS the greatest apparent good, or AS what appears most agreeable, is, than to say, that the will IS DETERMINED BY the greatest apparent good, or *by* what seems most agreeable : Because an *appearing most agreeable* ; or *pleasing* to the mind, and the mind’s *preferring and choosing*, seem hardly to be properly and perfectly DISTINCT. If strict propriety of speech be insisted on, it may more properly be said, that the *voluntary ACTION*, which is the immediate FRUIT and CONSEQUENCE of the mind’s volition

*doing* of any thing upon and after, or in consequence of that perception, this is the *power of self-motion, or action*—Which, in all *animate* agents, is *spontaneity* ; and in *moral* agents, what we call *liberty*. The not *distinguishing* these things, but confounding the *motive* with the *principle of action*, and denying the mind to have any *principle of action* besides the *motive*, is the ground of the whole error.’ Papers between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Clark, p. 281, 283.

tion or choice, IS DETERMINED by that which appears *most agreeable*, than the preference or choice ITSELF.\*

HERE it is fully declared, that, 'properly speaking,' volition and the highest motive are not DISTINCT things—that the former is only *as* the latter, and not *determined by* it. Motive cannot be the *ground* and *determiner* of volition, and at the same time the *act* of volition *itself*. It is not the *cause* of volition, but the *thing*, 'if strict propriety of speech be insisted on.' Instead of the strongest *motive's* being the cause of volition, the real truth is, that *volition* is the cause of *external action*. It is this only, 'which is the immediate *fruit and consequence* of the mind's volition, that is *determined by*' the strongest motive. The reason is obvious: 'For an appearing *most agreeable* to the mind, and the mind's *actually preferring and choosing*, are not *distinct*,' but the *same* thing. 'It is not, therefore, good sense' to lay the former *determines* the latter—to speak of motive as the *previous ground, reason, or cause* of the EXERTION of an act of the will—that volition cannot TAKE PLACE without this as the *antecedent* cause. 'It is not good sense to speak of volition as FROM *motive*—FROM THE INFLUENCE of the *motive*, and from the influence that the *motive* hath on the man for the PRODUCTION of an *act* of volition. †

WHEN Mr. Edwards saith, 'it is the *voluntary action*, and not the *will*, which is determined by the highest motive,' there can be no doubt but he means *corporeal* action: For thus he explains

\* P. 11, 12.

† P. 122, 123.

plains himself, 'the voluntary action, which is the *fruit* and *consequence* of the mind's volition or choice'—expressly distinguishing it (as in the next following words) from 'the act of volition, or the preference and choice itself.' Instead of shewing, therefore, (as he undertook) what determines the *will*, Mr. *Edwards* hath only laboured to prove, that the will determines the actions of the *body*—For instance, 'the will determines, by an act of volition or choice, which way the hands and feet shall move.'\* Bodily action is the *effect*, *fruit*, *consequence* of the will's determination, dependent on it, and connected with it, as its cause and determiner. The will *itself* is exercised in preferring, chusing, determining; the body in those motions and operations, which are the effect of the will's determination.

Thus volition being nothing diverse from the strongest motive, but the same thing with it—it being improper to say, that the will is determined by the strongest motive; there can be 'no such relation between' motive and volition 'as is signified by the terms *cause* and *effect*.' We are 'brought to the contradiction of a cause and no cause; that which is the ground and reason of the existence of a thing, and at the same time is not the ground and reason of its existence'—(p. 103, 105) the strongest motive 'is determiner and determined; mover and moved; a cause that acts and produceth effects upon itself'—(p. 7) 'volition is from a cause, and no cause; the fruit of motive, and not the fruit

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of motive ; the beginning of motion and exertion, and yet consequent on previous exertion ; self-originated, and hath its original from something else. Cause and effect, though, terms of opposite signification, are the same thing—Volition is the effect of volition. and the cause of volition—choice is subject to choice, commanded by, and the produce of, an antecedent act of choice. Motive 'is the *previous ground and reason* of the acts of the will—Yea, the necessary ground and reason of their exertion ; without which they will not be exerted, and cannot, in the nature of things, take place : And they do excite these acts of the will, and do this by a prevailing influence ; yea, an influence which prevails to the production of the act of the will, and for the disposing of the mind to it. Now if motives dispose the mind to action, then they cause the mind to be disposed ; and to cause the mind to be disposed, is to cause it to be willing ; and to cause it to be willing, is to cause it to will ; and that is the same thing as to be the cause of an act of the will. And yet it is hardly proper to suppose motive to be a cause of an act of the will ; or that a principle of will is moved, or caused to be exerted by it ; or that it has any causality in the production of it : And that for this very good reason, that they are not DISTINCT. \*

We 'hope' we 'need not labour at all' to shew the absurdity of this scheme, 'and what an whole heap of inconsistencies we have here. The matter is already so plain, as to render any reasoning upon it impertinent.'

MR.

Mr. *Edwards* asserts, as well as Mr. *Chubb*, 'that volition is not governed by superior strength of the motive that is followed, beyond motives to the contrary, PREVIOUS to volition itself.' (p. 124) It appears, on Mr. *Edwards*'s 'supposition, that volition must be without any previous ground in any motive; thus: If it be, as he supposeth, that the will is not determined' by the greatest apparent good—that this is nothing 'distinct' from volition; then volition cannot be owing to any previous ground, or causality, or superior strength of the motive that is followed, any more than on the supposition of the will's determining itself, there being no distinction between the highest motive, and the act of volition. To say, therefore, that the former determines the latter, is to say, that the will is self-determined. Yet Mr. *Edwards* says, 'There is such a thing as a diversity of strength in motives to choice previous to the choice itself.' (p. 125) He has not shewn us wherein this diversity lies; or how motives have a strength previous to choice, and yet are not distinct from it. Would he say, that motives have a superior strength previous to their standing in the mind's view? or is their appearing strongest to the mind antecedent to the choice; or co-temporary with it. The latter doubtless: For this appearance is not distinct from the mind's choice. Had Mr. *Edwards* proved, (as he asserts) that there is a 'preponderancy of the inclination previous to the act of choice,' (p. 260) it might have cleared the matter. But 'certainly, there is no need of multiplying words. We presume there is nothing more unintelligible, and void of distinct, consistent meaning, in all the writings of

Duns Scotus, and Thomas Aquinas.\* (p. 122)

THAT we have not taken advantage of a passage inadvertently wrote by Mr. Edwards, the reader may see by turning to it. (p. 11, 12) He is there exhibiting his plan, and intimates his care to express himself with precision, and so as not to be misapprehended. It is at his entrance on his work. Says he, 'I have rather chosen to express myself thus, that the will always is as the greatest apparent good, than to say, the will is determined by the greatest apparent good'; and proceeds to assign a reason for his thus expressing himself: 'Because an appearing most agreeable to the mind, and the mind's choosing, seem hardly to be properly and perfectly distinct. If strict propriety of speech be insisted on, it may more properly be said, that the voluntary action, which is the fruit and consequence of the mind's choice, is determined by that which appears most agreeable, than the preference or choice itself.' Who will say Mr. Edwards hath not here expressed himself with strict propriety, and given a good reason for 'expressing himself thus?'

'FROM things that have been' remarked, we think

\* 'It is indeed impossible to offer' Mr. Edwards's 'argument without overthrowing it; the thing supposed in it being inconsistent with itself, and that which denies itself.' (p. 82) Motive goes before, and is the producer of volition, which follows it, but is not distinct from it. By his argument, 'the first sinful volition was determined by a foregoing sinful volition; the first sinful act of choice was before the first sinful act of choice 'and chosen and determined by it.' (p. 377-8.) For the highest motive is the same as volition, and the first sinful volition sprang from the highest motive: Mr. Edwards also speaks of choosing as a man pleaseth—i. e. as he chuseth.

think it clearly follows, that Mr. *Edwards* hath equally failed in pointing out the more *immediate* cause of volition, as its *original* cause. By his own declaration, the will is not determined *by*, but the *same* thing with, the strongest motive. He hath only shewn what determines *external action or conduct*—a point very different from the determination of the *will*. And hence (according to Mr. *Edwards*'s own reasoning) the enquiry, 'What determines the will?' is precisely the same with this, 'What *causeth* an object to appear most agreeable?' A very different enquiry, surely, from this, Whether volition is *as*, or according to, the agreeable appearance of an object? unless we will confound cause and effect. The agreeable appearance, saith Mr. *Edwards*, is the mind's preference, choice, or determination. But *antecedent* to the mind's view of the object, there must be something in it [the object] to cause it to appear agreeable when viewed—something independent on, and prior to the view—or the mind must be in such a particular state, frame, or temper—or view the object under such and such circumstances, in order to it's appearing thus and thus agreeable. Now when it can be distinctly shewn, what *that* is in any object itself, or in the state, manner, and circumstances of the mind viewing it, which *causeth* (*produceth*) the agreeable appearance; then, perhaps, the *determining* cause of volition may be discovered. That which causeth the agreeable appearance, produceth the highest motive, that is, volition. Upon Mr. *Edwards*'s own state of the question, there is no making any sense of his words, to say, that the highest motive is the cause, or determiner of volition.

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This he hath, in *express* terms denied. And yet great part of his book was wrote to prove it. It is the 'position of chief importance in his discourse.'

It will possibly be said, 'There is no need of supposing the strongest motive to be *prior* to, or *distinct* from, volition; but that the latter is determined by the former in the very act of volition'. To this it is sufficient to answer in Mr. *Edwards's* own words, 'that the will is not determined by the greatest apparent good, but the action, which is the *fruit* of volition, is determined hereby'. Though we may insist on this as a full reply to the objection; yet we may also add, with much propriety, Mr. *Edwards's* remarks \* on the scheme of his opponents, with the small alteration, which the reader will observe by the words not included under inverted commas.

FIRST, 'If the determining act' (the highest motive) 'be before the determined in order of nature, being the cause, ground, or reason of its existence, this as much proves it to be *distinct* from it, and *independent* on it, as if it were in order of time'.

SECONDLY, 'If the determining act' (the strongest motive) 'is not before the determined, in order of time or nature, nor distinct from it—I would on this observe, that the thing in question seems to be forgotten, or kept out of sight, in a *darkness and unintelligibility of speech*'. The question

is,

is, What influenceth, directs, or determines the mind or will to come to such a choice as it does? or what is the cause, ground, or reason, why it concludes thus, and not otherwise? Now it must be answered, according to, Mr. *Edwards's* 'notion, that the will influences, orders, and determines itself'. For the will is determined by the strongest motive, and this is nothing *distinct* from volition. Now that the strongest motive 'causeth, influenceth, and determineth the will, and yet is not antecedent to it;' nor distinct from it, 'is a contradiction.' To say that one 'thing is the cause or reason of another, is to say, that the former is prior to the latter. The cause is distinct from the effect, and prior to it. To say, that the strongest motive, 'orders, influences, determines the act of volition,' and yet is not 'properly distinct, is to make the exertion both cause and effect. The question is, What is the cause and reason of the soul's exerting such an act? To which the answer is, the soul exerts such an act, and that is the cause of it. And so, by this, the exertion must be prior to, and distinct from itself.'

THIRDLY, 'If the meaning be, that volition has no cause, and is no effect, but comes into existence *of itself*, without any ground or reason'; Mr. *Edwards* then, 'doth nothing but confound himself and others with words without a meaning.\* There is a great noise made about 'motive's

\* Mr. *Edwards* had a common right with others to express his thoughts in his own way. But we should have been glad, if he had fixed a precise meaning to his own terms; And though he hath spent a large number

tive's sovereignty and energy', as the source of all acts of the will ; but when the matter comes to be explained, the meaning is, that these acts arise from nothing, no cause, no power, no influence, being at all concerned in the matter.'

And

number of pages ( from p. 1, —43. ) in explaining terms, yet his definitions are so lengthy and lax, his use of some words so different from what is common, yea, so differently does he himself use the same terms, that the reader is almost unavoidably confounded in a jumble of indeterminate words and phrases. We shall give a few instances. The term *will* is sometimes used for an *abstract* power, property, or faculty ; ( p. 38, 39. ) Sometimes it is confounded with *motive* ; ( p. 11, 12. ) while at other times, and indeed more generally, it is used to denote the *agent*—As where the will is said to be *the subject of commands*, &c —where the *acts* of the will are spoken of—where motives are represented as *influencing* and *determining* it, i. e. the agent. ( For motives do not influence meer properties. )

By *motive* ( the highest ) he explains himself to mean the same as *volition* ; ( p. 11. 12. ) while he also understands by it something *extrinsic* standing in the mind's view, and having a *tendency*, by the appearance it makes, to excite and engage the mind to such and such volitions—i. e. to incline and dispose it to such and such a choice. Again, he means by motives, *inclination* or *disposition*, and expressly blends 'moral motives and inducements' with '*habits and dispositions* of the heart,' making them the same. ( p. 29, 31. ) That is, motives are something *without* themselves, and have a *tendency* to excite and engage to themselves, and are not *distinct* from themselves. ( p. 8, 9, 11. )

In like manner, while he is taking pains to make out a distinction between *natural* and *moral necessity*, he confounds

And yet it is maintained, that 'all acts of volition have a prior ground and reason of their particular existence; a cause; which antecedently determines them to be, and to be just as they are. Now how can these things hang together?'

MR. *Edwards* criticiseth Dr. *Clark* for admitting 'the necessary connection of volition with the last dictate of the understanding;' and yet 'supposing the latter not to be *diverse* from the act of the will itself.' He hath this remark on the Doctor. 'If the dictate of the understanding be the very *same* with the determination of the will or choice, then this determination is no *fruit or effect* of choice.' And onwards: If these 'be the *same*, then liberty consists in the mind's having power to have what dictates of the understanding it pleases, having opportunity to chuse its own dictates of understanding.'

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confounds them—(at least in our apprehension, Part I. Sect. 4.)

THE term *cause*, as it hath been generally used, denotes *efficiency*, and has relation to an effect produced—And Mr. *Edwards* himself says (after *Spinoza and Hobbs*) 'that if it be not sufficient to produce the effect, or doth not always *necessarily* produce it, there is no such relation subsisting as we signify by the terms *cause and effect*. That which seems to be the cause, can be no cause.' Yet he tells us, 'that he sometimes uses the word *cause* to signify any *antecedent*, which is perhaps rather an *occasion* than a cause of an event or thing; and the word *effect*, for the *consequence* of another thing'. (p. 58, 59, 103.) But who ever supposed the meer *occasion* of a thing or event to be the *cause*

standing.' \* Might not one in Dr. Clark's behalf thus reply? 'Mr. Edwards supposeth that volition hath a necessary connection with the highest motive—and that the later is not properly distinct from the act of the will. If the highest motive be the very *same* with the determination of the will or choice, then this determination is no *fruit* or *effect* of motive. Moreover, Mr. Edwards hath expressed himself thus, it is not proper to say, 'that the act of volition itself is determined by 'the highest motive.' If these be the same, then liberty consists in a man's having power to have what *motives* he pleases, having opportunity to chuse

*cause* thereof, in such a sense as that the thing or event is *necessarily* dependent on, connected with, and proceeds from the occasion of it? Our Lord's coming was the antecedent and occasion of discord and war. Did these necessarily proceed from his coming? Was there no more in the consequent than in the antecedent? Had Mr. Edwards used the terms occasion and consequence, instead of cause and effect, in those parts of his book, where (by his own acknowledgement) the former would have been more proper, he might have been better understood, and would have taken a likelier method to 'cut off occasion from cavillers and objectors.' (p. 59, 393, 394, margin.)

THE reader will also take notice of the *promiscuous* use of the words *cause*, *ground*, *reason*. So far as an action is conformable to right reason, so much *reason* there is for it, and no more. Every instance of the divine conduct hath a *sufficient* reason: It is not so with the conduct of the creature. As much *sin* as there is in the world, so much action there is *without* *reason*.

\* P. 114, 115.

refuse his own motives. But this is absurd : For it supposeth the choice is already made, before the motive has its effect ; and that the volition is *already exerted* : That is, choice is prior to choice. Mr. *Edwards* recurs to the old absurdity of one determination before another, and the cause of it ; and another before that, determining that ; and so on *in infinitum*.' Thus might his criticism on Dr. *Clark* be replied to.

UPON the whole : The question, What determines the will ? is ' unanswer'd, and yet returns ' For aught that appears from Mr. *Edwards*'s discourse, the will is not properly determined at all. ' Instead of solving the difficulty, or answering the question with regard to volition, namely, How it comes to exist ? ( as he proposeth it) he forgets himself, and answers another question quite diverse, and wholly' remote, namely, What determines *material* action ? The question is, How volition itself comes to exist ? By what cause it is produced ? ' Why the soul exerts such an act, and not another ? Or why it acts with such a particular determination ? Why its action is thus and thus limited, directed, determined ?' If it be said, its acts proceed from the strongest motive, this is saying, they are self-determined ; (the strongest motive and volition not being distinct) which is, upon the whole, saying, they exist without a cause.

THEREFORE the supposed strength of motive ' affords no relief from the difficulties, which' Mr. *Edwards*'s ' notion of a *self-determining* power in the will is attended with ; nor will it help,

in the least, its absurdities and inconsistencies.\* Whether corporeal action be always determined by the will, or the greatest apparent good, we shall briefly enquire in the next section.

\* P. 67, 68, 71.

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### S E C T. III.

*External Action or Conduct not determined by the Will, upon Mr. Edwards's Scheme.*

**A**LL moral good or evil consisting in the *disposition or state of the mind or will*, it is of small moment, comparatively, what determines material action. Suppose this is indeed determined by the will, the enquiry of chief importance is, What determines the will itself. The question, What determineth the motions and actions of the body? is quite *foreign* to the subject. But as Mr. *Edwards* affirms, that the will is the true cause of external action or conduct, and makes the whole of liberty to lie here, we will examine this position, on his own principles.

‘THE voluntary action, which is the fruit and consequence of volition, is determined by that which appears most agreeable;’ or by the will which ‘always is as the greatest apparent good,’ and ‘not properly distinct’ from it. ‘Liberty is a power, opportunity any one has of doing, or conducting according to his will, being free from external hindrance or compulsion.—Or a power of *executing* his will. There are two things that are contrary to liberty. One is *constraint*; the same is otherwise called *force* and *coaction*; which is a person’s being necessitated to do a thing *contrary* to his will. The other is *restraint*; which is his being hindered, and not having power to do according to his will.’

will' \* In the determination of the will *itself*, he supposeth a man cannot be free. 'To talk of liberty, or the contrary, as belonging to the very will *itself*, is not to speak good sense.' † He censures Dr *Whitby* as saying, 'That a man exerciseth liberty, not only in *external* actions, but in the acts of the will *themselves*.' ‡ (p. 76, 77) He supposeth there is a cause, *prior* to the will's own acts, determining volition. 'Let the person come by his volition how he will, if there is nothing in the way to hinder his *pursuing* and *executing* it, he is fully and perfectly free'. Upon the whole, liberty consists not in a power of *willing*

\* Part I. Sect. 5. † Part II. Sect. 1. ‡ P 76, 77.

‡ Quære, When St. *Paul* saith, 'To will is present with me; but how to *perform* that which is good I find not', is he to be understood as speaking of *external* or *internal* impediment? If of the latter, then there are other things opposed to liberty beside outward constraint or restraint. If of the former, this wholly frees from moral blame. When he also speaks of a man's 'having power over his own will', (in a particular instance alluded to) doth he mean power over the *external* acts? If this be the meaning, could a man have power here without first *purposing* in his *heart* to refrain in the thing spoken of. And if in this purpose he hath not power over himself (i. e. if it be not his *own* purpose) how could he be said to have power over the outward act?

AGAIN, the same apostle observes, 'The spirit lusteth against the flesh, and the flesh against the spirit, so that ye cannot do the things which ye would.' Is this to be understood of *external* impediment? Is the 'law in the members warring against the law of the mind,' an *external* law? 'The good that I would, I do not: But the evil which I would not, that I do.' Is this meant of an *external* will?

*willing*, but in an opportunity of *doing* what is already willed—of *executing* a choice already made, not in a power of *abusing*. It is not at all applicable to the *mind*. The *state* of the will is fixed by necessity—and from hence proceed external actions.

Now how is it possible that action and conduct should be free, and yet be the effects of a necessary cause? 'There is not more in the effect than in the cause. Those things which are indissolubly connected with other things that are necessary, are themselves necessary.' How is corporeal action determined by the will, when 'the will in no instance is its own determiner', consequently not in the particular determination to move the body? At least, the will determines this no otherwise than as it is itself determined hereto by an antecedent, necessary cause. Or how can that be called a voluntary determination, which is the effect of necessity? or that a voluntary action to which a man is necessarily determined? If the act of the will, which is supposed to determine and fix the external acts of the body, be not itself free, according to Mr. *Edwards's* own reasoning, the actions proceeding herefrom cannot be so. \* 'An act of the will is an act of choice'. Now if there be

\* HAD Mr. *Edwards* attended to his *own* reasoning, he would not have affirmed, that external actions might be free, when the will, which determines them, is subject to necessity. For, says he, 'if the *determining* act be necessary, the man cannot be the subject of command or government in his *external actions*; because these are all necessary, being the necessary effects of the acts of the will themselves'. (P. 224, 225, 256, also p. 46, 47, 48.)

be no liberty exercised in chusing, preferring, wherein is liberty exercised at all? What is choice distinct from liberty? Yet we are told, that liberty is exercised only in the *execution* of choice. That we have not a power of election or liberty in the act of volition, at least not in the first and leading act of choice, which determines all the rest.

IF, therefore, freedom be not *in the will*, we should be glad to know *where* it is? Whether any being can be said to *do*, or *conduct* according to *his pleasure* or *choice*. Choice and pleasure (so called) is fixed by a previous necessary cause—and doing or conducting fixed by volition—Now the immediate fruit and consequences of volition must be of the same nature with their cause—alike necessary. In other words, the will is no cause at all. For a necessary cause is not properly speaking a cause; it is nothing distinct from a meer instrument. A cause, strictly so called, must be *free*; at least so far as praise or blame, reward or punishment, belong to it.

UPON the whole, external actions must ultimately be determined, not by the will, but by that cause which determineth the will, agreeable to our author's own principles. The will being in no instance it's own determiner, there is in no instance a power or capacity of choice in mankind. For choice is the same as the will's determination: A power or capacity of choice, therefore, would be a power of self-determination, which Mr. *Edwards's* whole scheme is designed to shew the absurdity of.

THE sum of Mr. *Edwards's* scheme appears to be this. Liberty consists in a man's power to  
*execute*

*execute* his will—to *do* or *conduct* according to what is willed. His will is (not *determined* by, but is) the greatest apparent good. And yet every volition is the necessary *effect* of the greatest apparent good, *produced and determined* by it as the *efficient* cause—which cause, however, is nothing distinct from the effect produced. From what particular cause any object comes to have the greatest appearance of good is yet a secret, of no use to be known to nine hundred and ninety nine out a thousand of mankind. For the satisfaction of the thousandth person, Mr. *Edwards* has laboured to explore this secret; and yet his ‘having failed here doth not overthrow the position, which was the thing of chief importance in his discourse;’ for it only remains to be—— explained and proved. Antecedent necessity determines the will; this determines corporeal actions; and action is voluntary; i. e. is willed, or caused to be willed—there is no *outward compulsion* or restraint in the case, but *only a necessary inward determination*. Liberty is indeed necessary to praise or blame. But the acts of the *body* being free from outward coercion or impediment, there is no need of liberty in the *mind*, as a foundation of moral government.

THESE, as near as we can come at them, are Mr. *Edwards*'s sentiments: The mention of which sufficiently exposeth the absurdity of the scheme—it's repugnancy to itself; to common sense, to all morality and religion; and consequently the perplexity and folly of applying metaphysical reasoning to a subject, which can be obscured only by the subtilty of argument.

## P A R T II.

*An examination of Mr. Edwards's doctrine respecting the indissoluble connection of moral causes and effects.*

WERE we remarking on the writings of an avowed FATALIST, a somewhat different method might be expected from what we shall pursue. But our controversy being with an eminent CHRISTIAN DIVINE, several things may be taken for granted, which, in arguing with a fatalist, would need proof. Accordingly we desire these few obvious principles of natural religion not less than christianity, may be considered as *data* in the present argument.

FIRST, That there is an *intelligent, designing* author of nature; or original cause of all beings and things; who (by the terms) is *uncaused*—existing prior to, and exclusive of, all design contributing to his existence. \* Whence it follows,  
SECONDLY,

\* Mr. Edwards has intimated, indeed, ‘that there is in the nature of things a foundation for the knowledge of the being of a GOD, without any evidence of it *from his works*’—but adds, ‘We have not strength of mind to comprehend ‘his existence’ in this *independent manner*’. The way that mankind come to the knowledge of his being is that which the apostle speaks of, *Rom. 1. 20.* We first *ascend* and prove a *posteriori*, or from *effects*, that there must be an eternal cause. And then, secondly, prove by argumentation, not intuition, that this being must be necessarily existent. And then, thirdly, from the proved necessity of his existence, we may *descend*, and prove many of his perfections *à priori*’ (P. 60, 61.)

BUT

SECONDLY, That all things are originally *wha. the creator mad: them, and intended they should be.* Whether animate or inanimate, rational or irrational, throughout all worlds—they have all such powers and properties, such relations, connections

But is it arguing *à priori* to argue from *effects*? 'If strict propriety of speech be insisted on,' doth not this peculiar kind of argument suppose, that the being of a GOD may be proved 'without ANY evidence of it from his works?' If so, there seems to be some jumble in *descending* to this argument 'from the *proved* necessity of GOD's existence'. We cannot but take notice, that in what we have here extracted, the terms are changed in the latter part of the paragraph from what they were in the beginning of it. It is first given as the author's opinion, that there is a foundation in nature for our coming to the knowledge of the BEING of a GOD, *without any evidence of it from his works.* But at the close of the paragraph it is observed, that 'from the *proved* necessity of his existence, we may prove *many of his PERFECTIONS à priori.*' In the same place Mr. *Edwards* observes, 'we argue his being, from our own being, and the being of other things'—which is the only *medium* to prove the being of a GOD (p. 386.) What 'foundation is there then, in the nature of things, for the knowledge of the BEING of a GOD, without any evidence of it from his works'? What *medium* of proof?

Dr. SAMUEL CLARK, in his 'demonstration of the being and attributes of GOD,' undertakes to prove, that he 'exists by a necessity absolute in the nature of the thing itself'—'a necessity antecedent. (in the order of nature, and of our ideas, though not of time) to the supposition of his existence'—which necessity he assigns as 'the natural ground, foundation, cause, or reason of GOD's being.'

Now though we would not chuse to dissent from such a master of reason, yet the enquiry in a manner forgeth

nections and destination, as the great former of them has given and intended. Causes and effects can be traced no higher. We must stop at the author of nature, the first and original cause.

THIRDLY, Besides absolute or *natural* perfections (as eternity, self existence, independance, infinity, &c.) the first cause is a being of a particular *moral* character—is immutably just, holy good, true, &c.

FOURTHLY,

ceth itself upon us, Where is the propriety of supposing any thing, in any sense, to be the PRIOR ground of the existence of the *first* cause? Doth not this convey the idea of an *effect produced*? The Dr. remarks on *Spinoza's* doctrine of necessity, (or 'the necessary following of an effect from it's cause') that 'this necessity must still be determined by something *antecedent*, and so on *infinitely*.' Might not a Spinozist reply, that *that* necessity, which Dr. Clark saith is the cause of the existence of GOD must be determined by something antecedent? and so on?

The Dr. takes his rise to the necessity of the divine existence from hence, That 'there hath existed from eternity some one independent being, the author of all other beings.' (vid. p. 8, — 15. Edit. 10th.) On this *postulatum* he proceeds. Hence, and from things said in his seventh letter, it is probable he really meant not to prove the *certain existence* of GOD *à priori*, but his particular *perfections*. 'The infinity, eternity, unity of GOD, &c must be demonstrated from the nature of necessary existence; from the nature and consequences of that necessity, by which the first cause exists.' And yet, speaking of the 'scholastic way of proving the EXISTENCE of the self-existent being, from the absolute perfection of his nature,' the Dr. remarks, 'All or any perfections *presuppose* existence; which is *petitio principii*. But bare necessity of existence doth not *presuppose*, but *infer* existence. In this case, here must *nothing be presupposed, no nature whatsoever*.' (Letter 6th, p. 490, 491.)

WHY

FOURTHLY, That the moral perfections of GOD correspond to the *moral discernment he hath given to us*. For when we say, God is holy, just, good &c, we speak altogether unintelligibly, if we suppose these perfections in him to be essentially

WHY then did the Dr. lay down his two first propositions ( p. 8, 11.) as the *media* of proof? If necessity doth not *presuppose*, but *infer* existence; yet the *method* the Dr. takes to prove this necessity PRESUPPOSES a nature and existence: It supposeth that there *exists* an eternal, independent being—the author of all other beings. The very thing to be proved.

ADMITTING the Dr's position, that necessity is the *cause* of the divine existence; to what purpose is it with an atheist? It takes for granted the thing in question. The enquiry is not, *How* GOD exists? but, *Whether* he exists? Existence, and the *cause* of existence, are very distinct. An enquiry about the latter plainly presupposeth the former. So that while the Dr. endeavours to prove, that GOD exists 'from a cause within himself,' he takes for granted, that *there is a GOD*; and only accounts for a peculiar *circumstance*, or this *mode* of his existence, that it is 'by a necessity of nature.' Whereas the subject of enquiry between an atheist and a theist is not the *modus* of existence, but the simple truth or *fact*—is there in *reality* 'an eternal, independent being, the author of all other beings? Now from what can this point possibly be argued but from the *phænomena* of nature? If, from surveying visible creation, the atheist is not convinced that GOD IS, how can we go a step farther with him? Must he not think it impertinent, and *petitio principii*, if we undertake to shew him—HOW GOD exists? Or to assign a *ground* and *reason* of an existence, which he believes nothing of? But if from the frame of nature he is convinced of the *certain existence* of GOD, he is no longer an atheist, and therefore needs not the argument *à priori* for his conviction.

Or

ally different from the perceptions implanted in us. Not but the deity possesseth these moral perfections in a *degree* far above finite conception; yet as in these he proposeth his own example to our imitation, so that which may be known

Or suppose the atheist, for argument's sake, to admit that GOD is, but demands to have the *cause* or *ground* of his existence assign'd and explained. Is any theist holden to shew him, *how* the divine being existed from eternity? Can this be done? Hath Dr. Clark attempted it? In one word, are the phænomena of nature sufficient to prove the being and perfections of GOD? If they are; what need of any other argument than that *à posteriori*? If they are not, it is certain the argument *à priori* can produce no conviction: For this resolves itself into the argument *à posteriori*.

THAT the being of a GOD is indeed necessary, every thing round us declares. If the things that are seen were *created and made*, the self-existence and eternity of the creator is proved beyond doubt. For whatever hath a *beginning* exists from some cause *without* itself. Now as this cannot be said of the creator of all things and beings, it follows, that he must be *self-existent and eternal*.

THE Dr. tells us, that 'the *eternity* of GOD' (either *à parte ante*, or *à parte post*) 'can no otherwise be proved than by the argument *à priori*.' But, admitting *an author of nature*, doth it not follow, that he existed, not merely from the beginning of the phænomena of nature, but from *everlasting*? and being independent, must always continue to exist? Do not these things follow, without considering the 'intrinsic nature or *necessary existence*'? (which is allowed to be *inexplicable*) Do not they follow from this simple consideration, that the original cause exists from no *external* cause? St. Paul supposeth the *eternity* of GOD is no less evident from the things that

known of God in this regard is manifest from the moral faculty in man, whereby he is a law to himself. (Not meaning to exclude the help and improvement derived from *revelation*.)

FIFTHLY, That the moral character of God is that *foundation of religion*, as the moral nature of man is of his accountableness

ON the footing of these principles, we shall proceed to examine Mr. *Edwards's* doctrine of necessity.

SECT.

that are made, than his existence, power, and godhead. *The invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are CLEARLY seen, being understood by the things that are made, EVEN HIS ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD; so that they are without excuse, who will not admit this proof.*

THE Dr. observes upon the whole, that 'the proof *à priori* is capable of being understood only by a *few attentive minds*; because it is of use only against *learned and metaphysical difficulties*'—while the proof *à posteriori* is level to *all men's capacities*'—that this, therefore, 'is by far the *most generally useful argument*, and what GOD expects moral agents should be *determined by*' But if the eternity and immortality of GOD cannot be proved *à posteriori*, how is this argument sufficient with *common people*? Do not they need an argument to prove that GOD is eternal and immortal as well as *philosophers*? Are the generality incapable of receiving any proof on this point? Or is it the privilege of the learned, that 'GOD, as moral governor,' does not 'expect they should be determined by' that evidence, whereby '*moral agents should be determined*'?

WHAT the Dr. says concerning the *unity and infinity* of GOD, that they are proveable only *à priori*, we think liable to much the same exceptions. *Metaphysical reasoning* on this subject, as well as *some other points of theology*, instead of relieving any philosophical difficulty, hath, on the contrary, given great advantage to infidelity.

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S E C T. I.

*Whether the will be necessarily determined by an extrinsic cause ?*

**M**R. Edwards would have his readers observe, that when he speaks of *connection of causes and effects*, he hath respect to moral causes, as well as those that are called *natural* in distinction from them—that the acts of the will may be *ascertainly and indissolubly* connected with the moral cause, as natural effects with their natural causes—that the connection is as *sure and perfect* between moral causes and effects, as natural; that moral necessity may be as *absolute* as natural necessity.\* Yea, he adviseth us, that ‘where he useth this distinction of moral and natural necessity, he would not be understood to suppose, that if any thing comes to pass by the former kind of necessity, *the nature of things* is not concerned in it, as well as in the latter. I do not mean to determine, that when a moral motive is so strong, that the act of the will infallibly follows, this is not owing to the nature of things. I suppose that necessity, which is called natural, in distinction from moral, is so called because *meer* nature is concerned, without any thing of *choice*; not because nature has never any hand in our choice: For choice arises from nature as truly as other events.’ So that, upon the whole, much the same rules are supposed to take place in the moral world, in GOD’s government of moral

\* Part 1. Sect. 4. p. 30, 31, 32.

moral agents (*so called*) as in the adjustment and disposal of natural things. What Mr. *Edwards*. intended by a moral cause, we cannot satisfy ourselves. Sometimes he appears to reason as if he supposed there was *really no distinction* between a moral and natural cause, (31, 32.) or none to be perceived; while more generally he seems to suppose a distinction of great importance; which, however, he hath not so clearly pointed out as were to be wished.

INDEED, if there be not a real and important distinction between moral causes and natural, it plainly follows, that Mr. *Edwards* hath taken pains to no purpose to shew, that natural necessity wholly precludes from praise or blame, while moral necessity doth not at all. And if there be a real and important distinction, it is of importance that it be clearly seen.

IN the section last referred to, Mr. *Edwards* suggests, that 'when we speak of choice as *distinct* from nature, it is without *reflection and research*; names being given to things according to what is most *obvious*. But though the dependance and connection between acts of volition or choice, and their causes, according to *established laws*, is not so sensible and obvious, as that established law and order which is seen in the material world; and though men make a distinction between nature and choice *as if they were* compleatly and universally distinct; yet choice arises from nature as truly as other events. However, these are the names that these two kinds of necessity have usually been called by; (*viz.* natural and moral) and they must be distinguished by some names or other; for there is a distinction

or difference between them, that is very important in it's consequences: Which difference does not lie so much in the *nature* of the *connection*, as in the *two terms connected*.' The difference is *important*, but not *sensible and obvious*. 'The cause, with which the effect is connected, is of a particular kind, viz of a *moral nature*—the effect also is of a particular kind, being of a *moral nature*.' But are we not told in this same place, that the effect is also connected with the *natural cause*, and is owing to the nature of things? There is the *joint influence* of moral and natural necessity in moral events—their influence is closely linked together. Now till the *measure* of influence to be ascribed to *moral necessity* is distinctly apprehended, it is impossible to tell when, and how far, a person is rewardable or punishable—natural necessity (by supposition) being inconsistent with reward or punishment. But let any one examine Mr. *Edwards's* book, and say, whether he hath shewn when and how far the acts of the will proceed from natural necessity, and when, or how far from moral. Whether the so much labour'd distinction, or difference between natural and moral causes is not confounded and exploded?

It is difficult to determine whether Mr. *Edwards* supposed the acts of the will to be the necessary effects of an *intrinsic* cause, or an *extrinsic*. These are used so promiscuously and indeterminedly through his book, volition being sometimes ascribed to the one, sometimes to the other, that, though they are essentially different and opposite, it is hard to say which he more especially intended by that moral necessity, to which he every where supposeth the will is subject. Either  
*internal,*

internal, original bias, or something extrinsic, is the cause, to whose efficiency, determination, command, decision, the will is as much subject, as the motion of the body to the will—this being ‘as *passive* and necessary with respect to the antecedent determining cause of it,’ as the motions of the hands and feet with respect to the determination of the will. (183, 184.)

WE rather think it was Mr. *Edwards's* opinion, that the will is determined by an *extrinsic* cause. But since this is by no means certain from his book—since he hath not expressed himself clearly, or we are incapable judges of this intricate subject, we shall take liberty to examine his doctrine on both suppositions—either of an *extrinsic*, or *intrinsic* cause. The former shall be the subject of the present section.

WHETHER volition is necessarily determined by an *extrinsic* cause ? Mr. *Edwards* asserts, that the acts of the will are not necessary *in themselves*, or in their own *nature* ; but by their *connection* with some cause that is necessary *in itself*. In his own words, they ‘are necessary by a necessity of *consequence*.’ The only way that any thing that is to come to pass *hereafter*, is, or can be, necessary, is by a *connection* with something that is necessary in it's own nature, or something that already is, or has been ; so that the one being supposed, the other certainly follows. This also is the only way that all things *past*, (excepting those which were from eternity) could be necessary *before they came to pass*, or could come to pass necessarily ; and therefore the only way in which *any* effect or event, or any thing whatsoever that ever has had, or will have a beginning,

has

has come into being necessarily, or will hereafter necessarily exist. And therefore THIS is the necessity which especially belongs to controversies about the acts of the will.\* From all which it follows, that the acts of the will are necessary ONLY by their connection with the self-existent being. For he only existed from eternity. His existence only is necessary in itself. He therefore is the necessary cause of all volition—of sinful volitions equally as holy ones. Either therefore the acts of the will do not come to pass necessarily, † (as Mr. Edwards supposes) or GOD is the author and source of that necessity by which they come to pass. Whether the latter is reconcilable with divine moral rectitude, ‘let those who have human understanding in exercise judge.’

THE voluntary, designing cause of the great wickedness creatures are guilty of, must be either GOD or themselves. The whole wickedness must be charged to the one or the other. Now that creatures are not the voluntary designing cause of their own wickedness (if we may call it their own) appears from hence, that wickedness lies in the state of the will, not in the actions which proceed from, or are the fruits of it. Mr. Edwards teacheth, that men must be the authors of external actions, by being the causes of them by an act of will or choice, in order to praise or blame; but that no such thing holds with respect to the acts of

\* P. 25, 102, 103.

† Unless it be said, that they are necessary by a connection with this proposition, ‘two and two make four’—or this, ‘all lines drawn from the centre of a circle to the circumference are equal.’ (p. 24.)

of the will THEMSELVES, that they are the designing, voluntary cause of them. ( 277. ) In the *internal* act, (viz volition) the agent, or rather *subject*, is not self-determined; i. e. is not the cause of it. 'Freedom of *will* is not essential to the *nature* of virtue and vice.' ( 256. )

'IN *external* actions men are self-directed, self-determined; and their wills are the cause of the motions of their bodies, and the external things that are done; so that unless men do them voluntarily, and the action be determined by their antecedent volition, it is no action or doing of theirs.' ( 286. 287. ) That is, they are the voluntary cause, not of the evil will in them, which is the *essence* of vice, but only of the external action, which is the *meer body* and *form* of it. The cause of sin is *without* themselves. In what constitutes it's nature, they are directed, determined, by some superior agent, who is the cause of every internal act of the will. For volition hath a cause itself, as well as is the cause of corporeal action. Any one sees, that men's being the authors of corporeal action *meerly*, 'is no moral evil, any more than sickness, or some other natural calamity, which arises from a' natural 'cause'.

ESPECIALLY when it is farther considered, in what sense men are the authors of corporeal action, upon Mr. *Edwards's* scheme, will it appear, that they cannot, on this account, be chargeable with moral evil. 'Every act of the will is necessary, because dependent and consequent on a necessary cause.' \* Therefore the actions of the  
body

\* " There is as much reason to believe that *all* things are voluntary, as that all things are *necessary*; and I desire

body are necessary, being dependent and consequent on the determination of the will, which is dependant and consequent on a prior cause—'indissolubly connected with what is necessary in it's own nature.' Therefore men are not the authors, the cause, of corporeal action, in any proper sense at all; as they are not the authors of inward volition. For 'it cannot be, that' they 'should be the active, voluntary, determining cause of' their '*own volitions*'—or 'of the *first* and leading volition, which determines the *whole affair*.' (214, 225, 70, 71.)

To what extrinsic cause then, or to whom, are the volitions of men to be ascribed, since they are

desire any one to shew me, that the one is more clear and certain than the other. If he says, that *motives* which determine or cause the mind to exert what I call *voluntary* actions, are *necessary*, and therefore the effects or actions following the motives are also necessary; this is just as true a consequence as that because *voluntary* actions concur to the production of *necessary* effects, therefore these effects are *voluntary*. As for example, the *motive* of my present writing is a persuasion of the *falseness* of *Cato's* scheme; and this *persuasion* I grant and see is *necessary*. I can't help this judgment; but still, my writing, I also see, is no more *necessary* than the encrease of the *motion of my blood*, or of the *beating of my pulse* is *voluntary*, though the cause concurring to it was my *voluntary* drinking a certain quantity of spirits. Nay I can with as much reason argue, that all *natural* effects are *voluntary* in their *immediate causes*, or proceed from their *choice* or *will*, because GOD their first cause is a *voluntary* and *free agent*; as *Cato* can argue from the second causes or motives of human actions being necessary, that the *immediate* cause, the mind, is a *necessary*, not a *voluntary* agent. But there is no end of arguing, or rather trifling, with such sort of fallacies.' *Jackson's defence of liberty against Cato's letters*, p. 64, 65.

are not the cause of them themselves ? By whom or what is the state of men's will determined ? According to Mr. *Edwards*, it is the strongest motive from without. But motives to choice are exhibited to the mind by some agent : By whom are they exhibited ? In regard to sinful volitions, we know that one man enticeth another, and Satan enticeth all mankind. But this will not be given as an answer to our question ; since the sinful act of one sinner in enticing another, and of Satan in tempting all men, must be determined by a previous cause—an antecedent highest motive exhibited by some other agent. (Though, by the way, it may be difficult to shew, how one man can be the cause of sin in another, when he cannot be the cause of it himself.) What we are enquiring after is, the cause of 'the *first and leading* sinful volition, *which determines the whole affair.*' Nor is there any stop, till we arrive at the first cause, 'whose immediate conduct Mr. *Edwards* saith, is first in the series of events, connected with nothing preceeding.'

WILL it now be said, that GOD is the cause of those dispositions of heart, and acts of the will, which are so odious in their own nature ? On Mr. *Edwards's* scheme this must be said. For the acts of the will, not being necessary in their *own* nature, but by connection with a cause that is so ; and no cause being thus necessary but he who existed from eternity, it undeniably follows, that every sinful volition proceeds ultimately from him, as the cause and source of it. And to say, that the volitions themselves are vicious, but that the cause is not so, equally militates against Mr. *Edwards's* own scheme, and common sense.

ON reading section 1. part IV. of Mr. *Edwards's* book, it was matter of much surprize to find a gentleman of his abilities using so weak an argument, descending to so thin a subtilty, as this, "that the essence of virtue and vice is not in their *cause*, but in their *nature*." The pains taken with this, (argument shall we call it?) the stress laid upon it, is indeed no mark of a good cause. But since every thing advanced by so eminent a writer may be thought to merit attention, we shall briefly consider the subject of this section. Mr. *Edwards's* own reasoning will assist us here, as in other parts of these remarks.

For 'there cannot be more in the effect than in the cause.' ( 62. ) Volition therefore cannot be virtuous or vicious farther than it's cause is so. We may not detach the nature of effects from the efficient. 'It may be wickedness' in the cause, that it produceth wickedness.' Supposing then, that 'the wicked act of the cause in producing wickedness, is *one* wickedness; and the wickedness produced another'—what follows is, that in every sinful volition there are *two* wickednesses— one chargeable to the cause, the other to the subject of the volition. Now if the cause be 'diverse from the subject of' volition, how doth it relieve the difficulty at all, if upon the scheme of necessary connection, GOD stands chargeable with doing wickedly? And is not this the plain consequence of the doctrine, 'that the acts of the will are indissolubly connected with a cause that is necessary in it's own nature'? And if it will be allowed, that GOD can do wickedly, considered as the *cause* of sinful volitions, we may just as well ascribe all moral evil to him.

## S E C T. II.

*Whether the will be necessarily determined by an intrinsic cause.*

HOWEVER repugnant this hypothesis is to that already examined, yet it is frequently made in Mr. *Edwards's* book. Our business is not to reconcile him with himself, but to remark on what we find. His meaning would doubtless have been clearer, had the subject he undertook been intelligible. He appears to have been bewildered at times in his own subtilty.

To say, that the acts of the will are necessary from internal, original bias, is not very consistent with saying, they are the necessary effects of an extrinsic cause. For what is this but saying, they are necessary in their *own nature*? therefore not necessary by a necessity of consequence? Yet Mr. *Edwards* expressly asserts, that every thing which ever had, or will have a *beginning*, is necessary only by a necessity of consequence. Now if the acts of the will are effects of an extrinsic cause *only*, then they cannot be the effects of an intrinsic cause *also*. But *original bias and inclination* is intrinsic. If this therefore necessarily determineth volition, then the other position of it's proceeding from an extrinsic, consequential necessity, (an eternal, necessary cause) must be given up. For 'how can these things hang together'? Or will any suppose, that Mr. *Edwards* when he saith, 'the state or act of the will is from the  
I determination

determination of an intrinsic cause, meant by this cause the Deity inhabiting and actuating every intelligent creature? by a positive efficiency producing every volition of theirs? Such a supposition, we cannot believe any one will make, however necessary to reconcile Mr. *Edwards* to himself. This is a sense of GOD's *working in men to will, and to do; of our living, moving, and having our being in him*, which we presume none will espouse. For if it makes him the author of *virtuous* dispositions in men, in the most *strict* and *absolute* sense; it will be remembered, that it also makes him, in the same sense, the author of every *vicious* inclination and propensity. On this hypothesis, there is properly but *one* agent in the universe.

'MORAL necessity,' saith Mr. *Edwards*, 'lies in the will, and is the will's *propensity*'. How then does it lie in something exhibited to the mind from without, which is *prior* to the will, and gives it a necessary determination? Surely the will's propensity is not prior to it's propensity. Nothing *in the will itself* can be the moral necessity by which it is determined, if this necessity be really *prior* to will. Besides, to be determined by a cause in itself, is to be *self-determined*, if words have any meaning. And moreover, this is making the will necessary in it's *own nature*. Both which are contrary to supposition. What confounding again of cause and effect! Volition is the antecedent, necessary cause of volition! The will is necessarily determined in every act by a necessity prior and superior to it; and yet this necessity is nothing diverse or distinct from volition!

MOREOVER, if an intrinsic cause, or original bias and propensity, be that necessity by which the will is determined, what is this but being determined by *nature* ? For original propensity is *natural* propensity. Original necessity is *natural* necessity. Agreeably Mr. *Edwards* saith, 'Moral necessity is a species of philosophical'—\* (294, 295. 302.) that 'moral events arise from nature as truly as others.' (31, 32.) Therefore, as was hinted before, moral necessity, as truly as natural, precludes from praise or blame—and that for this good reason, that moral necessity is natural. This is applicable to the necessity of the *first* sinful volition, if indeed it was necessary before it came to pass—And consequent sinful volitions being the effects of the first, it equally holds as to *these* also.

THERE seems, indeed, to be some difficulty, in regard to the principle implanted in the *regenerate* by the Spirit of GOD, upon this hypothesis of Mr. *Edwards*. For he, we presume, would not deny, that they were born in sin ; and that the bias in regeneration is *changed* from what it was by *nature*. Consequently, the holiness and perseverance of the saints is not necessary from native, original propensity, but from some other cause.

WHATEVER may be said in regard to the inability of *fallen* man ; Mr. *Edwards's* principle hath equal respect to the moral power of man in *innocence*, and of the rebel angels before their fall. *Their* original bias and inclination, it will be allowed, proceeded immediately from the creator.

\* *Natural* philosophy, we conclude he means—though indeed it is alike applicable to his *moral* philosophy, and that of many scepticks in our nation.

tor. If then their sin was the effect of a necessity originally in their will, or was their will's original propensity, it was so entirely owing to the *nature of things*, that (by supposition) it could not involve them in guilt—Or if connected with the eternal cause, who alone is necessary in his own nature, it could not upon our author's own scheme; be *their* sin. The whole guilt, if any, must be imputed to the first cause. For the first sin, of angels and man, was once future; and therefore could not be necessary in itself, but only by the aforesaid necessity of consequence. (p. 25.) And then, whatever moral impotency now cleaves to mankind, or damned spirits, this being connected with the first sin, which was connected with the original, necessary bias of innocence; it follows, that the sins of fallen creatures are necessary in the same way that the first sinful volition was—the only way in which all things and events whatsoever, which are not eternal, are, or can be necessary. They do not therefore partake of the essence of sin; or if they do, involve the creator in it.

INDEED the supposition of being necessarily determined by original, internal bias, does, upon the whole, lead to much the same consequences with that of supposing the acts of the will to be necessary by a necessity of consequence—since, agreeable to the second preliminary proposition, *original* bias must be ultimately ascribed to the original cause of all things. What is natural is the constitution of the author of nature. Moral events, Mr. *Edwards* instructs us, are owing, partly at least, to the nature of things—proceed, at least in part, from natural causes. Now, by his own principles, so far as the nature of things

things operates to their production, neither good nor ill desert is applicable to the subject of volition. Had he told us in what respects, and how far, volition is owing to natural necessity, we might have known wherein, and how far, the creature is accountable. For herein, and so far, Mr. *Edwards* grants, it [volition] is not properly his own act—he is not the proper subject of command, &c.

If volition be partly owing to natural causes, and the subject so far is not answerable; what is this but charging the moral turpitude of a sinful volition on GOD, *so far as it is the effect of natural necessity* ? Now as well may we attribute the *whole* moral turpitude to God, as the *least measure* of it.

It moreover follows, that the holiness of the angels, who never sinned, being among those moral events which are owing to the nature of things, is no holiness; unworthy of praise. The same thing follows with respect to the holiness of the man CHRIST JESUS, and of GOD himself. For 'natural necessity is wholly inconsistent with just praise and blame.' And would Mr. *Edwards* deny, that the holiness of GOD, his moral rectitude in general, is necessary *in it's own nature* ? And what is this, but to be necessary by a *natural necessity* ?

FARTHER, by Mr. *Edwards's* principles, all virtue and vice in creatures is *native* or *original*. For every act of volition is the necessary effect of internal, original bias—i. e. is owing to the original frame of the mind. The angels that fell, and our common progenitors, were therefore

fore 'made with a fixed, prevailing principle of sin in the heart'. Otherwise their sin proceeded not from internal, original bias—any more than from an 'indissoluble *connection* with a cause necessary in it's own nature.' If in truth their original bias was not to evil—if they were endowed with the *moral* image of GOD, then their sinful volition was not the effect of original propensity—nor did the necessity of it lie *in the will*, in it's primitive state. Nor consequently will this account for the permanency of holiness in the angels in heaven. This cannot be the *rationale* of the abiding principle of holiness in them; since it appears from fact, that creatures endowed with the moral image of GOD, may deface and forfeit it.

SUPPOSE 'the essence of virtue and vice lies in the *nature* of volition, not in the cause'; it then follows, that the intrinsic cause, the internal bias or propensity (which is supposed to be the moral necessity that determines the will) is not that which *constitutes* the goodness, or wickedness, of the acts of the will. A vicious man's bias and inclination to sin, is not that which *makes* him sinful; the essence of his sin lying not in such bias or inclination, but in the *nature* of the wicked thing. A shrewd solution! as if the character of moral agents were not always estimated from their propensity to good or evil. If 'moral necessity lies in the will, and is the will's propensity,' it either follows, that there is no good or evil in any dispositions implanted in the hearts of men *by nature*; (contrary to assertion, p. 303.) or if there be any good or evil in such dispositions, this is entirely a distinct goodness or wickedness from the volitions themselves, which they are the cause of. 'It would imply a contradiction

diction to suppose, that these two are the same individual' goodness or 'wickedness. The 'good or 'wicked act of the cause, in producing' goodness or 'wickedness is one' goodness or 'wickedness; and the 'goodness or 'wickedness produced, if there be any produced, is another.' Will this be called arguing! What doth it amount to? The plain truth is, that when we set ourselves to judge of human actions, we must have no consideration of the source of them, but entirely detach them from their causes. Be the efficient who or what it will, all we have to attend to is, the effect produced—by this we must estimate the goodness or wickedness of men, whether they determine themselves, or are determined *ab extra*—whether they have power over their own wills, or have not. He therefore that with one original talent makes as great improvement as another with five, is no more praiseworthy—that is, is not *accepted according to that he hath*. He that offends against five degrees of light originally given, is guilty in no higher degree than he that offends against but one degree of light. The volition, or act, in both cases, we suppose to be the same in regard to the subject matter of duty or sin—the same also in the general nature thereof. What then is the reason of different degrees of punishment for the same crime in different persons? Not the nature of the crime as abstracted from the *circumstances* of the agent, but as connected and compared herewith. Now if men are not the cause of their own volitions, then a determination to sin against ten degrees of light differs nothing from the like determination against a single degree of light: In both cases, the determination itself is alike necessary and unavoidable. So that there is no foundation

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for different degrees of guilt; because, though we are won't to speak of superior and lesser advantages, yet there is no real ground for this distinction, intelligent creatures being in no case the authors, the voluntary designing cause of their inward determinations; at least not of the first and leading act, which decides the whole matter. How, then, without having recourse to the cause, can we judge of the nature of sin?

INDEED had Mr. *Edwards* succeeded in his attempt to shew, that the "essence of virtue and vice is not in their cause, but in their nature", he would not have obviated the objection so often made to the doctrine of necessity, but never answered, that it is charging GOD with sin.

FOR admitting GOD to be the original cause of volition, but that being the cause of a sinful volition in the creature is a distinct wickedness from that which the cause produceth in the effect; still the supreme cause is supposed in fault; is charged with *producing* sin. There is no evading the consequence, indeed, that the *whole* guilt of men's evil dispositions is chargeable on GOD; not themselves, or on blind necessity and fatality, if the things Mr. *Edwards* advanceth be true. For who will charge another with what he is acknowledged not to be the author or cause of? If therefore men's volitions are virtuous or vicious, and they not the designing causes of them themselves; (which Mr. *Edwards* throughout his book saith they are not) it follows, that the virtue or vice of their volitions is to be ascribed to the cause, whoever or whatever this cause is. This consequence may appear more plainly to follow from the scheme of necessity we are examining, in the succeeding sections.

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S E C T. III.

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Upon Mr. Edwards's own Scheme, there cannot be natural Liberty without moral.

WE acknowledge the title of this section contains a position directly repugnant to Mr. Edwards's whole scheme, and yet trust we shall make it appear that the thing asserted plainly follows from things he hath advanced.

LIBERTY with respect to *natural* actions can be neither more nor less than according to the freedom of the *will*, or *mind*. For natural actions, by supposition, are dependent and consequent on, the fruits and effects of, the will's determination, which is the cause of them. Now 'there cannot be more in the effect than in the cause. Those things which are indissolubly connected with other things that are necessary, are themselves necessary.' Therefore if the acts of the will are necessary, those outward acts, which are the effects of necessity in the will, must be necessary 'by a necessity of *consequence*.' Now every act of the will is said to be necessary. 'The soul itself is the object of something acting upon, and influencing it. The first and determining act of choice, which decides the whole affair, is out of our power.' So that in natural actions we are 'caused to act by some other agent.' Mr. Edwards saith, 'it is no more a contradiction, to suppose that action may be the effect of some other cause, besides the *agent* or *being* that acts, than

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than to suppose that life may be the effect of some other cause besides the liver, or being that lives, in whom life is caused to be.' \* ( 286. ) The acts of the soul or will being, therefore, necessary effects of some other cause than the agent, let it be shewn how there can be so much as natural liberty—meaning hereby a freedom from outward constraint or restraint.

MR. *Edwards* asserts, 'The liberty of the will is not exercised in any thing but what the will *does*'. (99.) 'The will in no instance whatever is it's *own* determiner'. Therefore the liberty of the will is not exercised in any of the *determinations* of the will. Therefore not in determining to move the *body*. Therefore corporeal action is not *voluntary*. Therefore the will *does* nothing. Therefore it is *exercised* in nothing. Mr. *Edwards* promiseth to 'demonstrate', that 'if the *first* act in the train, determining and fixing the rest, be not free, none of them all are free.' And asserts, that '*GOD*'s own immediate conduct is *original* in the series.'

In one word, external action is no more in our power than internal. To say that the will determines the former is not true: For this would be to suppose it is its own determiner at least in this particular determination to move the body; contrary to assertion, that it is in no instance whatever it's own determiner. But suppose material actions to be determined by the will, that herein men are the voluntary causes of their own actions—this is really attributing no power to the will or agent—since all the acts of the will suppose an answerable cause

\* Is a man active in that act by which he is brought into being?

cause without, as much as creation supposeth a creator. (62.)

If material actions are subject to, and commanded by, the will, still this is subject to and determined by preceeding necessity. So that natural liberty is given up. For that is a strange kind of liberty, which is founded in, and results out of, necessity. Whether this necessity be natural or moral—whether it proceeds from an extrinsic or intrinsic cause, it equally militates against the supposition of freedom. The intelligent system is a curious piece of mechanism.

Page 232 (and elsewhere) Mr. *Edwards* hath an evasion, which scarce deserves a serious answer. It is this, 'that a man may be said to have a thing in his power, if he has it at his *election*; i. e. if he *now* pleaseth, and has a *direct and immediate* desire for it, he is not unable to do it.' This, in most writers, would be esteemed meer quibbling. For if a man is morally incapable of a 'direct and immediate desire' to a thing, how can he be said to have it in his power? Would Mr. *Edwards* say, that things are in or out of men's power, farther than *choosing or refusing* is so, as well as the consequent acts depending hereon? It is not improper to say, 'that a person' *cannot* 'perform those actions, which depend on an act of will, when the act of will itself cannot be present, but is forever impossible'—when the disposition to the contrary is 'as strong and immoveable as the bars of a castle,' by *nature*—when want of inclination proceeds from *nature*; or original bias. For 'the event is dependent on it's cause.' And the cause not being put, the event cannot take place. Admitting that such a state of the will may be  
required

required as is forever impossible; this can be only on a supposition of an ability once given and possessed, but lost. Who will say, that a man has in his power what is and must be impossible? So that when we are told, 'that the common people, in their notion of a faulty or praise-worthy deed, suppose the man does it in the exercise of *liberty*; but that their notion of liberty is only a person's having opportunity of doing as he pleases'—i. e. of *executing* a choice already made, we must esteem this trifling. For what liberty is there when choice itself is out of a man's power—is the effect of an antecedent necessary cause? 'In the *first* act of choice, which decides the whole matter,' he is necessarily determined. In this Mr. *Edwards* constantly asserts a man has not power, or liberty of choice, while he grants him a power or capacity of *consequent* choice. That is, in other words, a capacity of being acted upon by some other cause or agent.

Upon the whole: Mr. *Edwards* allows, that liberty is essential to praise or blame, reward or punishment; but teacheth, that the internal state of the mind or will proceeds not from, is not determined by, ourselves. \* External action only is determined by us. With what truth and propriety even this can be said on Mr. *Edwards's* scheme, we trust is sufficiently manifest.

## SECT.

\* Quære, Whether Mr. *Edwards's* motto at all favors this opinion? It is taken from Rom. ix. xvi. *It is not of him that willeth.* That is, (if we attend to the words taken by themselves, or in their connection) *outward action* is not of him that willeth. It is supposed he hath *willed*, and that the will is *from himself*—HIM that willeth. But he hath not power or opportunity to *execute* his will. *Isaac* did really will to give the blessing to *Esau*—*Esau* did run for venison to obtain it. But the will of the one, and the running of the other, were over-ruled.

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## S E C T. IV.

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*Of GOD's being the Author of Sin, upon Mr. Edwards's Scheme of necessity ; and in what Sense he admits this to be the Consequence of his Doctrine.*

**M**R *Edwards* teacheth, 'That GOD, when he had made man, so ordered his circumstances, that *from these circumstances*, together with the withholding divine influence and assistance, his sin *infallibly followed*.' And when it is asked hereupon, 'why might not GOD as well have first made man with a fixed, prevailing principle of sin in his heart?' Mr. *Edwards* intimates in his answer, that GOD might indeed have done so; but adds, that if man had been thus made at first, 'it would not have been so *visible*, that sin did not arise from GOD, as the positive cause, and real source of it—that therefore *it was meet* man should not be made with sin in his heart, that sin might appear to arise from the imperfection of the creature, and not from GOD as the efficient or fountain.' He allows GOD to be the author of sin in any sense but being 'the *agent*, or *actor* of sin, or *doer* of the wicked thing.' He 'disposeth the state of events in such a manner, that sin most certainly follows therefrom. In such a sense, I do not deny, that GOD is the author of sin. It is no reproach for the most high to be thus the author of sin. In such a manner GOD is the *orderer and disposer* of sin, though not the *actor* of it, or *doer* of the wicked thing.' (Part iv. sect. 9, 10. and p. 402, 408.

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Now how doth it appear, on these principles, that God is not the positive cause, and real source of moral evil? Every one perceives a difference between *doing* (or being the *subject* of) a wicked thing, and being the *efficient cause* and *fountain* of it—Mr. *Edwards* allows, that the moral turpitude lies wholly in the inward propensity, and can no farther be applied to the corporeal action, than as a vicious principle is supposed to be the source of it. If then we have no power of self-determination in relation to the internal acts and exercises of the mind—if the only thing wherein human liberty consists, is, a power of *executing* what is already willed—if volition springs not from man as the source, cause, or efficient of it—if he is only the *subject*, the *doer*, the *actor* of sin—Who then is the *positive cause and fountain* of it? if not the creature, who but the creator? Every thing but the *action* or *doing* of wickedness, Mr. *Edwards* expressly affirms GOD to be the author of, and saith it is no reproach to him. So that unless he would confound cause and effect—unless he would allow men to be ‘the designing voluntary cause of their own volitions;’ (which he constantly denies) there is no evading the consequence, that GOD is the source and fountain, the positive cause and efficient, of moral evil—yea, Mr. *Edwards* saith, that he ‘decisively orders all the volitions of moral agents by a positive influence’—(405) which is nothing less than saying in exprels terms, that he is the positive cause and efficient of them.

Mr. *Edwards*’s notion of human liberty, as being exercised and concerned in *outward* actions only, in contradistinction from an inward power of self-determination (or activity in *voliti-*

on—or liberty in the *mind* or *will*) if viewed in it's direct and immediate consequences, we think must appear to subvert the very foundation of religion and morality. This appears to be the plain consequence by his own principles. For he very justly observes, that 'the essence of all moral good or evil lies in the internal inclinations, dispositions, volitions'—that as these 'are the *cause* of *outward* actions, so the moral good or evil of such actions doth not lie at all in the actions *themselves*, which taken by themselves are nothing of a moral nature ; but in the *internal* inclinations and volitions which are the cause of them'—(276) that 'vice and virtue lie in the state or frame of the *soul*, and in this only'—that 'the very *willing* is the *doing* ; when once a man has willed, the thing is performed, and nothing else remains to be done—that the will *itself* is the proper object of commands, as well as those *actions* which are the *effects* of the will. It is manifest the *soul* only is properly and directly the subject of precepts or commands, that only being capable of receiving or perceiving them. The motions or state of the *body* are matter of command only as they are *subject* to the soul, and connected with it's acts.' \* Now if *inward* freedom enters not into the notion of human liberty (33, 38, 39, 40, 131, 132, 189, 194, 213,—215, 234, 236, 256,—289, and *passim*.) then we are not free in that wherein lies the *essence* of virtue and vice : And if we are not free in this respect especially, how are we free in any sense that is of the least importance ? how can we be virtuous or vicious, if liberty (as Mr. Edwards grants) is necessary to moral good or evil ? Yea, if we are not free with respect to the thoughts,

\* Part 3. Sect. 4. & 5.

thoughts, affections and purposes of our hearts, our inward inclinations and volitions, hath not Mr. *Edwards* shewn undeniably that we cannot be free in regard to outward actions? 'If there be a series of acts, the *determining* act is more especially the subject of command—because it is this act that determines the whole affair.' So that we are not at liberty in that which determines the *whole character*. Nothing can be more futile than the evasion, that 'the essence of virtue and vice lies in the *nature* of volition, not in the *cause*'—as if meer effects might be virtuous or vicious, and the cause that produceth them not so—Or supposing the cause (of a sinful volition, for instance) to be vicious, as if the *passive* effect would be another and distinct wickedness. Besides, if the subject of such a volition, who is altogether passive herein, is vicious notwithstanding, then how is liberty necessary to praise or blame? If he is vicious at all, he is so on account of the volition itself, and on this account only—Whether he has power or opportunity to execute the volition, does not come into consideration.

MOREOVER, outward actions being determined by the will, and partaking of the nature of moral good or evil only with reference to their cause, viz. internal volition—how is *this* (internal volition) virtuous or vicious in its *own nature*, when the acts of the *body* are not? Volition hath a cause, a prior determiner, no less than external conduct. Why then are outward acts declared virtuous or vicious only with reference to their cause, while this is denied of volition? Hath every act of volition an antecedent, necessary cause,

cause, which determineth not only volition, but, of consequence, outward actions? And is not the virtue or vice of volition to be attributed to its cause, as much as the evil of external acts to the inward disposition and determination? 'Thus' Mr. *Edwards's* 'notion of liberty, consisting' in external freedom, 'is repugnant to itself, and shuts itself wholly out of the world.'

WERE it indeed true, as Mr. *Edwards* incidentally observes, (contrary to the general doctrine of his book, and his whole scheme) that we 'have command over our *thoughts*'—(p. 394) that 'the acts of the *will* are free'—that 'the *soul* has freedom'—(p. 116, 224) this might solve the difficulty, as it would be to make men the voluntary designing cause of those inward acts wherein the nature of virtue and vice consists. But, as before observed, Mr. *Edwards* constantly denies an inward principle, source, or power of activity—and blames those divines who contend for the freedom of the soul *in willing*. He allows, that a man hath 'power to move his body agreeably to an antecedent act of choice, but not to use or exert the faculties of his soul.' (p. 131) How then 'hath the soul a power of volition or choice?' (p. 39) of chusing for instance, to move the body, when it hath not a power of exerting its own faculties? How much more consistent would it have been for Mr. *Edwards* to have said, that the will's determining is a *necessary* determining—for the soul to act *necessarilly* is evermore to act necessarily?—(that is, the will does not determine, the soul does not act) than to say, 'the will's determining is a *free* determining—for the soul to act *voluntarily* is evermore to act *electively*'?

The will, the soul, may be *acted upon*, and have such a volition or choice produced in it, *in consequence*, and as the *effect*, of some cause operating on it, *deciding* and *determining* the volition. What Mr *Edwards* calls the soul's *voluntary, elective* acts, are the effects of a cause independent on man. The acts and exercises of the human mind (if they may be called its acts) are owing not to any active power in the mind, to any thing within its power, but entirely to the energy of a necessary cause, which is prior to what are called its own acts. Volition is free or voluntary *with a freedom of moral necessity*—a necessity *as absolute as natural*. And thus it is, that a man's heart comes to be wrong or right.

MR. *Edwards* teacheth, that GOD 'orders the volitions of moral agents, among other events, with such a *decisive* disposal, that the events are infallibly connected with his disposal—that an universal, *determining* providence infers an infallible, previous fixedness of all events—that GOD's own immediate conduct is first in the series, and this alone unconnected with any thing preceeding—that he causeth the disposition of the mind to be more in favour of such acts'—(vicious no less than virtuous) 'or bringeth the mind more into view of powerful motives and inducements'—that all things are invariably settled—and 'necessity belongs to all moral agents.' His scheme, upon the whole, appears to be nearly the same with that exhibited by the celebrated Mr. *Hume*, an *epicurean atheist*, which we shall give the reader in his own words. 'There is a continued chain of necessary causes, fore-ordained, and pre-determined,

terminated, reaching from the original cause of all to every single volition of every human creature. While we act, we are, at the same time, acted upon. The ultimate author of all our volitions is the Creator of the world, who first bestowed motion on this immense machine, and placed all beings in that position, whence every subsequent event, by an inevitable necessity, must result.

To this scheme, Mr. *Hume* supposeth it will be objected in the following form. 'Human actions, therefore, either can have no moral turpitude at all, as proceeding from so good a cause; or if they have any turpitude, they involve our Creator in the same guilt, while he is acknowledged to be their ultimate cause and author. Wherever a continued chain of necessary causes is fixed, that being, either finite or infinite, who produces the first, is likewise the author of all the rest, and must both bear the blame, and acquire the praise, which belong to them. Our clearest and most unalterable ideas of morality establish this rule upon unquestionable reasons; when we examine the consequences of any *human* action; and these reasons must still have greater force, when applied to the volitions and intentions of a being *infinitely wise and powerful*. Ignorance or impotence may be pleaded for so limited a creature as man; but those imperfections have no place in our Creator. He foresaw, he ordained, he intended all those actions of men, which we so rashly pronounce criminal. And we must conclude, therefore, either that they are not criminal, or that the Deity, not man, is accountable for them. But as either of these positions is ab-

lud and impious, it follows that the doctrine from which they are deduced cannot possibly be true, as being liable to all the same objections. An absurd consequence, if necessary, proves the original doctrine to be absurd, in the same manner that criminal actions render criminal the original cause, if the connection between them be necessary and inevitable.\*

THIS objection, which Mr. *Hume* states to himself, may be made with the same propriety to the general scheme of our author. From Mr. *Hume's* answer, it is sufficiently manifest what his principles were. He tells us, 'It is not possible to explain distinctly, how the Deity can be the immediate cause of all the actions of men, without being the author of sin and moral turpitude. These are mysteries, which *meer natural and unassisted reason is very unfit to handle*; and whatever system it embraces it must find itself involved in inextricable difficulties, and even contradictions, at every step which it takes with regard to such subjects.' †

MR. *Hume* acknowledgeth, that upon his scheme, the Deity is the *mediate, original* cause of all the actions of men; and virtually admits the consequence; (that he is therefore the author of sin and moral turpitude) by observing, that it is not possible distinctly to explain, how he can be the one, and not the other. Now let it be shewn, that Mr. *Edwards's* scheme is not liable

\* *Essays by David Hume, Esq;* vol. iii. p. 151, 152, 153.

† *Ibid* p. 156.

liable to the foregoing objection, or admitting the objection, let the consequence be shewn not to follow, and it will afford no small satisfaction to many, who are greatly embarrassed with Mr. *Edwards's* scheme of necessary connection. Whoever examines part ii. sect. 3d, 4th, 9th, 12th, and 13th. Part iii. sect. 3d, 4th, and 6th. Part iv. sect. 9th and 10th, and the conclusion of his discourse, must, we are persuaded, see the objection, as above stated, to be just— And if the consequence also be fairly drawn, doth it not prove the doctrine against which the objection lies to be false and absurd? absolutely irreconcilable with the moral character of GOD ?

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## S E C T. V.

*On the supposed Advantage of moral Evil to the Universe.*

HAVING taken notice of Mr. *Edwards's* doctrine, in asserting GOD to be the author of sin, except that he is not 'the *actor* of it, or *doer* of the wicked thing; and the evasion which such a doctrine *needed*, that 'the essence of a sinful volition is in its nature, not in its *cause*' ; the next advance he makes, in order to reconcile the existence of sin with the divine choice and determination, in the invariable necessity of it, is, that moral evil is *best* for the world—that therefore 'an infinitely wise being, who always chuses what is best, must chuse there should be such a thing'—that this is not chusing what is properly evil upon the whole, because 'of the great good which is the consequence of sin, for the sake' of which GOD is supposed to 'will sin.' He therefore asserts, that 'moral evil is not of a *bad, but good tendency*'—that 'the coming to pals of every individual act of sin is truly, all things considered, agreeable to infinite wisdom and goodness.' (Part iv. sect. 9th.)

FOR all this he quotes with approbation Dr. *Turnbull*, against whom he had before wrote and published part of an elaborate volume.

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When it is asked, *Whence comes evil?* this Gentleman denies the hypothesis, and answers, 'There is no evil in the universe. What! is there no misery, no vice in the world? or are not these evils? Evils indeed they are; that is, those of one sort are hurtful, and those of the other sort are equally hurtful and abominable: But they are *not evil* or mischievous with respect to the *whole*. The evil which happens is requisite to the *greater good*.'

THAT GOD may, and does many times; overrule things so, as to bring good out of moral evil, we deny not. From the apostacy of mankind, he hath taken occasion to manifest *the exceeding riches of his grace*. He also frequently improves vicious and profligate sinners (beside, and contrary to, their own intention) as instruments of great and general good. But doth it therefore follow, that profligate wickedness is not of bad, but good *tendency*? That every individual act of it is agreeable to perfect wisdom and goodness, and best for the world?

'THOUGH the constitution of our nature, from whence we are capable of vice and misery, may, as it undoubtedly does, contribute to the perfection and happiness of the world; and though the actual permission of evil may be beneficial to it: (that is, it would have been more mischievous, not that a wicked person had *himself* abstained from his own wickedness, but that *any one* had forcibly prevented it, than that it was permitted :) Yet notwithstanding, it might have been much better for the world, if this very evil had never been done. Nay, it is most clearly conceivable, that the very commission  
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of wickedness may be beneficial to the world, and yet, that it would be infinitely more beneficial for men to refrain from it. For thus, in the wise and good constitution of the natural world, there are disorders which bring their own cures; diseases, which are themselves remedies. Many a man would have died, had it not been for the gout or a fever; yet it would be thought madness to assert, that sickness is a better or a more perfect state than health; though the like, with regard to the moral world, has been asserted. \*

GOD's law, originally given to man, was doubtless good and perfect. It was doubtless agreeable to perfect wisdom and goodness, that he should yield a steady and uniform obedience to it. Thus he would have glorified his Creator, answered the end of his being, and provided for his own highest happiness. But supposing moral evil to be no evil upon the whole, but a great good, such consequences as these will follow. That the law given to man at first was imperfect—that it was better, all things considered, that the divine law (the law of man's nature) should be broke than kept—that GOD threatned disobedience with the penalty of death, and yet chose man should rebel, 'for the sake of the great good consequent on sin'—that the ends of infinite wisdom and goodness could be answered, no possible way devised to advance the *highest happiness* of the intelligent creation, but by the entrance of *infinite evil* into the world—that the revolt of men and angels was in compliance with the end of their being, and

\* *Butler's Analogy*, edit. 4, p. 188, 189.

and the wise and gracious intention of the Creator—(and if so, ‘ why did not GOD make them at first with a fixed prevailing principle of sin ?’) Yea, it follows, that intemperance, debauchery, oppression, murder, malice, envy, all the lusts of the flesh and spirit, greatly conduce to the good of the world, and are perfectly agreeable to the wise and good governor of it. What obligations do mankind owe to drunkards and gluttons, to fornicators and adulterers, to the fraudulent and oppressors, to thieves and liars, and false swearers, to robbers and murderers, and all that great multitude, whom the faithful and true witness hath expressly excluded from the heavenly Jerusalem, and consigned to one common lake of fire and brimstone ! \* Which judgment according to truth the world have been wont to testify their approbation of in their treatment of such persons—that is, their greatest benefactors ! Base ingratitude !

How sin came to be permitted is more than we can comprehend. To say it could not have been prevented is saying more than any one knows. To say that GOD chose it, and determined the will of the creature to it, is impious, even supposing it is in fact followed with greater good, than otherwise would have been—which supposition is, however, but meer conjecture at best, and without any solid foundation. For unless we can tell what would have been had sin never entered the world, it is impossible we should be able to judge, by way of comparison, of the greater good consequent upon it ; or be able to say, that it was best upon the

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\* *Rev.* xxi. 8. and xxii. 15.

whole. From the miseries of it, which we see and feel, we have no special reason to infer its superior advantages, and good tendency. And notwithstanding the infinite reason we have to receive it as a *faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that JESUS CHRIST came into the world to save sinners*; yet that he came to restore mankind to a *better* state than they would have been raised to, had they never sinned, is more than we have yet learned from the holy scriptures.

BE this as it will : Suppose it to be indeed true, that the consequence of sin is the greater good of the universe, it will not therefore follow, that GOD must chuse and determine it. If an apostle supposed their damnation to be just, who do evil with a view to greater good ; shall we venture to impute any thing like this to GOD ? Suppose (in the instances Mr. *Edwards* brings) *Joseph's* brethren had foreseen the *consequences* of their treatment of him, would this have justified their conduct, and rendered it meritorious ?—what as wise and good men they must have chose ? (p. 374, 375) The same question, on the same supposition, offers itself in relation to the murderers of our Savior. To say that GOD wills evil for the sake of its good tendency, is a reproach to an holy and good being, who cannot chuse moral evil at all—any more than a man of reason and conscience can chuse what he knows to be sinful, from the clearest prospect of great publick advantage. The moral Governor of the world will pursue the happiness of it, in such ways, and by such means only, as are just and holy. And we might with more propriety suppose, he will not  
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take care of the happiness of his creatures at all, than that he doth this by chusing sin as the only sure means of the greatest good. \*

THE late Rev. Mr. *Clap*, President of Yale-College, in Connecticut, in his ' history and vindication

\* To admit that any created being can act in a manner contrary to what it does, or fulfil any other end, is tantamount, saith Mr. *Collins*, to allowing it to be independent of the Deity ; and consequently, to have it in its election and power to thwart the schemes of the great author and superintendent of all things, &c. His answerer very justly replies, ' All this is nothing but supposing it a contradiction that GOD should endue the human *mind*, or any creature, with liberty of action. For if liberty is a perfection possible to be communicated to any creature, it follows from the nature of the thing, that it must be in the *power* and *election* of the *agent*, to act in a manner *contrary to what it does*, and to *fulfil another end*. But this liberty does not at all infer that man is *independent* of the *Deity* ; any more than the power of breaking human laws infers that subjects are independent of their governors. Man is ever subject to the providential government of GOD, and accountable to him for his actions ; and, as he does good or evil to himself or others, is liable to receive rewards or punishments. This sufficiently shews the *dependency* of man upon GOD ; and as much so, as if his actions were *necessary*. For as in the latter case, he would *depend* upon GOD as an *instrument* only in the hands of an agent ; or, as the inanimate creation *depends* upon him, meerly as a machine upon the framer and director of it ; so in the former case he depends upon GOD as a *moral* governor, who superintends his actions, and from whom he has reason to expect to be recompensed according to his work—And no power whatsoever can deliver him out of GOD's hands. Is such a creature then *independent* of GOD? On the contrary,

vindication of the doctrines of the New-England churches,' (p. 19) has exhibited 'a new scheme of religion,' which he apprehended was prevailing, in opposition to those doctrines—Mentioning 'this fundamental principle' of the new scheme, '*That the happiness of the creature is the sole end of the creation,*' the worthy President remarks, '*This naturally leads to most, if not all, of the rest*' (meaning all the other errors of the new scheme of divinity.) 'For this must be the *sole* rule of all GOD's conduct towards us, and of ours towards him; and it is certain, that GOD's *sole end* and ultimate design can never be frustrated.' Whether the President had Mr. Edwards's book in view, is uncertain. We can only say, that besides the authors

as his subjection to GOD's providential government and final judgment is the greatest, so it is the only *dependency* which a *rational* creature as such can be under unto GOD.

NOR again, is it any consequence of liberty, that man will have it in his *election* and *power* to *thwart the schemes,* and *resist the will* of the great author of his being—For, supposing *human liberty,* it must be supposed from the nature of it, that the *will* of GOD, and the scheme of his government formed by it, is a *moral* providence and superintendency, like that of a *rational* monarch over his subjects, who gives them laws, exjoining obedience to them, and establishing them with the sanction of rewards and punishments. It is the *will* of GOD, that we should *act freely,* and have it in our power either *to do* or *not do* his commandments, that he may appear to be a *moral* and *righteous* governor, by rewarding those who *chuse* to do that which is *right and good,* and by punishing those who *wilfully* commit *evil.*' Jackson's vindication of human liberty against A. Collins, Esq; p. 56,—59.

thors particularly set down, he mentions ' other books' from which he made his collection of errors, without informing us who the authors were. But though we apprehend Mr. *Edwards's* book as exceptionable as any mentioned by the President; yet we rather think this book was not in his view. For we were some years ago informed, (and upon enquiry found it to be true) that this book was introduced by the President to be recited by the students of the college—and suppose it is still continued.

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## S E C T. VI.

Containing general Observations and Reflections  
on the Scheme of Necessity exhibited in Mr. Ed-  
wards's Book.

**N**OTWITHSTANDING all Mr. *Edwards* hath said upon the distinction between *natural* and *moral necessity*, we cannot but think this 'distinction altogether impertinent in the present controversy.' For 'that which is necessary, is necessary, must be, and cannot be prevented.' If there be a real necessity on the mind in all its acts, it is quite immaterial whether this necessity, by which the mind is in every instance determined, be called natural or moral. Whether will and endeavour is overcome by external constraint; or whether such a state of the will or soul is produced by some necessary cause, extrinsic or intrinsic, amounts to much the same thing in the end. There is exactly the same propriety in saying, that such a thing *cannot* be done, is *impossible, unavoidable, necessary, &c.* where there is a *moral* inability to it, as in applying these epithets to a *physical* inability: For if the act of the mind, on which the natural act depends, be for ever impossible, the natural act must be alike impossible—unless it be said, that it is *possible* an effect may be produced without a cause. What Mr. *Edwards* hath said to shew, that natural acti-  
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ons, which are determined by the mind, are possible, when the determination of the mind *itself* respecting them is forever impossible, is unsatisfactory, and unintelligible to us. If no being can chuse or act otherwise than he doth, we cannot conceive of a necessity more absolute; and such is the necessity maintained by Mr. *Edwards*—only he approves not the terms *natural necessity*, and thinks the word *certainty* more proper—While he asserts all events to be *morally* necessary—and that in things thus necessary there is a ‘connection *prior* and *superior* to will and endeavour.’ (294.)

AFTER all that hath been said, *moral necessity* is, properly speaking, *natural necessity*; *moral power* is *natural power*. The one is as *original* to us as the other. The latter is interwoven in our frame no otherwise than the former. The moral faculty, or power, which Mr. *Edwards* saith belongs to moral agency, is a natural faculty or power. So that whatever moral capacity or incapacity is attributed to mankind, the same is natural. If man is a law to himself it is *by nature* that he is so, having the work of the law written on his heart. And as to the inability of man, Mr. *Edwards*, we presume, believed this to be derived from *nature*—to have it's source in ‘the want of original righteousness, and the corruption of the whole nature.’ Now an inability which has it's source in the very *nature* of man may surely be called a *natural* inability.

MUCH hath been said to shew, that every moral event must have an answerable cause. Be it so. Every such event must then have a *moral* cause. And whether any other than an *intelligent*

gent mind can be such a cause, let those who have common understanding judge. If it be admitted, that a moral cause must be a moral agent, then it will follow, that we are the causes of our own volitions, or that our maker is the cause of them. Mr. *Edwards* denies the first—therefore our volitions are to be attributed to GOD as their proper cause. But however this might be admitted of *holy* volitions, we cannot think it will be admitted of *sinful* ones. And if not, what regard should be had to a doctrine of which this is the direct consequence? We are self-determined, or determined by the deity. If there be any difference between a *cause*, and a meer *instrument*, the former denotes a mind that hath wisdom, power &c. in a greater or less degree, according to the effects ascribed to it. And if moral events, through a chain of second causes, centre in the deity, as natural effects do, what is this but running up morals to *mechanism*? any pains Mr. *Edwards* hath taken to avoid such an imputation on his scheme notwithstanding.

In our author's scheme, necessity is *universal*. The divine will is always determined by it, and the will of every creature. Now GOD is either the author of this necessity, to which he himself is subject, or he is not. If he is, then all the effects of it are to be ascribed to him as their proper cause. If he is not, then there is some cause *prior* to the *first* cause, binding and determining him—he is caused to determine as he doth by something *extrinsic* (For to say he is determined by something *intrinsic*, is to say he is *self-determined*—contrary to supposition) His being and volitions are *effects* as much as those of finite creatures. That necessity, which is  
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said to be the cause of every determination of the divine will, the cause and ground of his existence and perfections, is prior, by supposition, to his existence and volitions. And this necessity must be determined by something preceding, and so on. Yea, Mr. *Edwards* makes express mention of the *cause* of moral necessity—and says, that the cause of this necessity is equally necessary as of natural. That is, there is a necessary cause of this cause, and so on *in infinitum*. Thus we are run back far into non-entity, and have to enquire, By what cause the first cause exists—which cause is an effect in relation to something preceding, and this an effect with relation to something still preceding, &c. &c. And if something exterior and prior to the Deity determines him, what is this but affirming him to be the almighty minister of *fate*? However Mr. *Edwards* hath expressed his disinclination to fatalism, (in which we doubt not his sincerity) we think his reasoning is plainly on the side of absolute fatality; and suppose he was caught in his own subtilty. Upon his scheme it follows, that the actions of all finite beings are the agency of the Deity; and his is not properly speaking *agency*, but *instrumentality*—a subjection to blind necessity and fate. There is no self-mover, self-direction, self-determination, or source of activity, in the universe. Liberty is banished out of the world—and the world must have been eternal.

WHETHER GOD could have acted otherwise than he hath? is a curious rather than profitable enquiry. And as to the notion of 'fitness of things, independent of the things themselves, and without reference to the sovereign mind,'

it is difficult even to imagine it ; to say nothing of the impiety implied in such a thought.

WE have represented what we apprehend is the plain tendency, and indeed only consistent sense, of the scheme of necessity before us. Whether it was copied from Mr. *Hume*, *Hobbs*, *Spinoza*, or any of the old heathen Philosophers we do not say. We hint the thing because of a remarkable coincidence we have exhibited at the close of these remarks, in some extracts from them, set over against similar passages of Mr. *Edwards's* book. Though we have a right to renew valid objections, how oft soever they have been made before, until some tolerable answer is given to them (especially when the old doctrines, to which the like objections were formerly made, but not answered, are received.) Yet we would not repeat the charge, without giving a specimen in support of it. We really are persuaded, that there can be no possible confutation of fatalism on the principles of Mr. *Edwards's* book. He speaks with satisfaction of the progress of *metaphysic science* ; (325) of which and its 'terrible doings,' his own book, among others on fatality, is an alarming proof. [*Epicurus*, Mr. *Edwards* reminds us, was 'the father of *atheism* and *licentiousness*.' *David Hume*, Esq; is the father of modern *epicurism* : And whoever hath read his essays and Mr. *Edwards's* enquiry is better able to judge than one can from the few select passages we have extracted, of the agreement between them.]

NOT that we suppose Mr. *Edwards* saw, or allowed, the tendency and consequences of his scheme to be such as we have here represented ;  
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he hath repeatedly declared the contrary. Still if the consequences are fairly deduced—if in those passages wherein he professes himself a friend to liberty he is either repugnant to himself or allows no liberty that is of any moment, connected with moral agency—let any reason say, whether his scheme can be consistent with his doctrine of necessary connection, if reducible to the consequences we have seen, if consistent with itself only in that sense, if we have taken it, will be rejected by all men of due regard to the moral perfections of God for which we doubt not in the least Mr. Edwards had a supreme veneration. And good men are not always wise.

As much Mr. Edwards's method to answer objections by endeavouring to reduce his adversaries to the same absurdity, though it be a good argument *ad hominem*, no means satisfactory. We might have some other answer in particular to the objections of *the fate of the heathen, making men machines, making men authors of sin*, as well as other objections, which he has given. But as we may presume to answer what appeared to him the most plausible and such like objections to his doctrine of necessity; so we conclude from the want of a solid answer to these objections; otherwise he would not have filled the world with such an oppressive ones. Though we may think those answers to objections, which we must take the liberty

THOUGH we think no book hath been published in this country of more dangerous tendency, yet did we not at the same time suppose the author to have been a serious believer of religion, natural and revealed; zealously concerned for the interest of piety and godliness, we should not have taken the liberty to enter on this puzzling subject of liberty and necessity—which, as Mr. *Hume* remarks, is the most contentious question of metaphysics, and the most contentious science.' If what is here remarked is sufficient to shew the dangerous consequences of admitting a necessary connection of moral causes and effects from the beginning of the world, or a connection of moral acts with a supposed cause preceding, as of natural events with their causes; the inconsistency of our actions with themselves; and the perfect futurity of all events, into nice disquisitions on such subjects, is the main end of these remarks hitherto answered. But as it may be thought that to have done this in some measure, by proceeding to exhibit a scheme manifestly contrary to truth and reason, this is what is intended in the following part of our subject.

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their probation, possess it in some measure and degree.

MR. *Edwards*, as hath been shewn, denies all self-determining power, and inward liberty—asserting, that ‘every determination of the will in chusing and refusing is necessary.’ (p 111, 113) But that an inward principle of activity, and power of volition or choice, belongs to mankind, we think is in a manner self-evident. For it is granted on all hands, that moral good and evil lie in the state of the mind, or prevailing internal disposition of the agent. Liberty therefore, if at all necessary to virtue and vice, must be exercised in that wherein the *nature* of morality and religion consists—that is, in the inward man. A freedom from *external constraint* is a liberty belonging to fools and madmen, and to the brute creatures. These, therefore, are as capable of virtue and vice, praise and blame, as beings endowed with, and in the exercise of reason, if this external (hypothetical) liberty is the only thing necessary to moral agency. Fools, madmen, and brutes, if they are not bound or imprisoned, have natural liberty. They have a power, faculty, or property called *will*. Their actions are as voluntary (in many respects) as those of mankind, who are of a sound understanding. The actions of brutes proceed from inclination and design—an inclination and design proceeding from nature, or internal, original bias.

IF then an action’s being *voluntary* (in the sense of Mr. *Edwards*’s book) makes it virtuous or vicious, the lower animals are so as really as intelligent creatures. As we are not accustomed

ed to talk of virtuous or vicious herds of cattle, the epithets, as applied to them, may sound something odd and harsh at first; but by the help of metaphysics we may in time be reconciled to such language. We are not, indeed, to suppose our oxen and horses are morally good or bad in those actions of theirs which are against their wills—to which they are externally *impelled*—Or in regard to any instances of forbearance, which are owing to external *impediment*—to which they have a will, and endeavour to perform, but are hindered from doing as they would. But the cases of *coaction* and *restraint* excepted, let it be shewn, on the present hypothesis, that they are not proper subjects of commendation or blame, reward or punishment—and by the same arguments we presume it may be shewn, that mankind are not. If power or opportunity to *execute* a will or choice already produced by some extrinsic cause, be all that is meant by liberty, or that is necessary to moral agency, liberty is perfectly *ideal*, and the controversy about it is about a meer *word*. But if liberty be *really* essential to moral agency, as Mr. *Edwards* admits; and if there cannot be liberty of acting or conducting farther than there is liberty of willing, chusing, preferring, as hath been shewn—the plain consequence is, that liberty in the *mind* is essential to moral agency. Upon Mr. *Edwards's* scheme of liberty, it is not for the acts and exercises of their minds that men are accountable, but only for their outward actions. There is no moral turpitude in such a state of the soul or will as our Saviour describes, *Matt. v. 28, 32*, but only in the *execution* of such a disposition. We know, indeed, that Mr. *Edwards* intended not to assert any such thing as  
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this, that malice, envy, pride, impure desires, &c. are innocent until they become effects : But is not this the consequence of his allowing, that liberty is necessary to moral agency, while he makes this liberty consist only in a power a man hath to *execute* his will. If Mr. *Edwards* intended not to assert the above consequence, (as it is plain he did not) then in the enquiry wherein the liberty of man consists, something farther is to be considered than material action—There must be internal liberty, if liberty enters into the notion of a praise-worthy deed, or the contrary. The proper question, is, *Whether we have and exercise liberty in that wherein the nature of virtue and vice consists?* And one might think this would not be made a question.

To say that the mind is necessarily determined in all its acts, is making mankind necessary agents in *that* thing which distinguisheth them from the inferior creatures. Without moral liberty, it is plain their actions cannot be of a moral nature, any more than those can be called naturally free actions, which proceed from natural necessity. Abridge a man's natural liberty ever so much, his moral freedom may remain ; and if it doth, the willing or unwilling mind is rewardable or punishable. On the contrary, suppose moral liberty taken away, or rather, never to have been possessed, and there is an utter incapacity of moral action. \*

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THAT

\* ' Man either has within himself a *principle of action*, properly speaking, that is, a *self-moving* faculty, a *principle or power of beginning motion* ; or he has not. If he has within himself such a principle, then he is a *free*, and not a *necessary agent*. For every necessary agent

THAT we have internal liberty is apparent from our *moral discernment*, that faculty Mr. *Edwards* himself speaks of. We shall rest the whole proof of our doctrine on this single point. This

*agent* is moved *necessarily* by something else; and then that which *moved* it, not the thing itself which is moved, is the *true* and *only cause* of the action. If man *has not* within himself a principle or *power* of *self-motion*, then every *motion* and *action* of man is strictly and properly produced by the *efficiency* of some *extrinsic cause*: Which *cause* must be either what we usually call the *motive* or *reason*, upon which a man acts; or else it must be some insensible *subtle matter*, or *some other being* or *substance* making an impression upon him.

If the *reasons* or *motives* upon which a man acts, be the *immediate* or *efficient cause* of the action; then either *abstract notions* (as all reasons and motives are) are themselves *substances*; or else that *which has itself no real substance* can put a body into motion: Either of which is manifestly absurd.

If insensible *subtle matter*, or any *other being* or *substance*, continually making impression upon a man, be the *immediate* and *efficient cause* of his acting; then the *motion* of that *subtle matter* or *substance* must be caused by some *other substance*, and the motion of that by some *other*, till at last we arrive at a *free agent*; and then *liberty* is a *possible* thing; and then *man* possibly may have liberty: And if he may *possibly* have it, then *experience* will prove that he *probably*, nay, that he *certainly* has it. If we *never* arrive at any *free cause*; then there is *in infinitum* a progression of *motions* without any *mover*, of *effects* without any *cause*, things *acted* without any *agent*.

DR. *Samuel Clark*'s remarks on the 'philosophical enquiry concerning human liberty,' wrote by A. *Collins*, Esq; p. 42, 43, 44.

This moral discernment, it is allowed, is the principal power that distinguisheth us from the brute creation: In respect of this our maker having taught us more than the beasts of the

THE author of *Cato's* letters replies to Dr. *Clark*, 'We see and feel, that desires and fears, that abstract notions or images of the brain, alter the disposition of the whole fabric, and often destroy the whole contexture of it.' 'This is true, says his answerer (Mr. *Jackson*) but nothing to the purpose to shew, that *abstract notions* are the *immediate and efficient cause of action* or active motion, which is Dr. *Clark's* argument.

I GRANT that *abstract notions*, such as *sudden surprises*, *violent passions*, or *madness* will, by a forcible and irresistible impulse, compel the mind to move the body; in such cases, though the *abstract notions* do not immediately themselves move the body, yet (which is all one) they force the mind to move it whether it will or no; but then this motion (though called *action*) is no more really or properly *action*, than the *motion* of a man, who is driven by a *storm* or *whirlwind*, is an *action*. If it shall still be insisted on, that every *event* or *effect*, howsoever produced, is an *action*; then the *motions* of *ships* and *clocks* are *actions*, and all *motion* is *action*, and there will be no such thing as *passion* in nature: And yet nevertheless there will appear to be as much difference betwixt these *natural motions* and *human actions*, as between the ideas of *necessity* and *freedom*.' *Jackson's* answer to *Cato's* letters, p. 198, 199.

DR. *Clark*, (in his 'demonstration of the being and attributes of GOD,' (tenth edition p. 83, 86) has argued the *possibility* and *reality* of the communication of liberty to man in the following clear and conclusive manner. 'As a power of beginning motion, is not *in itself* an impossible thing; because it must of necessity be in the supreme cause: So neither is it impossible to be communicated to created beings. The

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the field, and made us wiser than the fowls of heaven : In respect of this man is *by nature a law to himself, having the work of the law written on his heart.*

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reason is plain : Because no powers are impossible to be communicated, but only those which imply *self-existence*, and absolute *independency*—I know, the maintainers of fate are very confident, that a power of beginning motion, is nothing less than being really independent, or being able to act independently from any superior cause. But this is only a childish trifling with words : For a power of acting independently *in this sense*, communicated at the pleasure of the supreme cause, and continued only during the same good pleasure, is no more real and absolute independency, than the power of *existing*—or than the power of *being conscious*, or any other power whatsoever, can be said to imply *independency*. In reality, it is altogether as hard to conceive, how *consciousness*, or the power of *perception*, should be communicated to a created being, as how the power of *self-motion* should be so—Yet no man doubts, but that he himself, and all others, have truly a power of *perception*. And therefore in like manner (however hard it may be to conceive, as to the *manner* of it ; yet since, as has been now proved, it can never be shown to be impossible and expressly contradictory, that a power of *self-motion* should be communicated.) I suppose no considering man can doubt, but that he actually has also a power of *self-motion*. For the arguments drawn from continual *experience* and observation, to prove that we *have* such a power, are so strong, that nothing less than a strict demonstration that the thing is absolutely impossible, and implies an express contradiction, can make us in the least doubt that we have it not. We have all the same experience, the same marks and evidence exactly of our having really a power of *self-motion* ; as the most rigid fatalist could possibly contrive to require, if he was to make the *supposition* of a man's being endued with that power.

THAT we have a power of deliberating, judging, preferring, will not be disputed, being matter of experience. The perception of right and wrong, good and ill-desert, Mr. *Edwards* justly observes, 'is one of the first ideas children have.'

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er. There is no one thing that such a man can imagine *ought* to follow from the supposition of *self-motion*, which every man does not now as much feel and *actually* experience in himself, as it can possibly be imagined any man *would* do, supposing the thing were true. Wherefore to affirm, notwithstanding all this, that the spirits, by which a man moves the members of his body, and ranges the thoughts of his mind, are themselves moved wholly by air or subtler matter inspired into the body; and that again by other external matter, and so on; as the wheels of a clock are moved by the weights, and those weights by gravitation, and so on; without a man's having the least power, by any *principle within himself*, to think any one thought, or impel his own spirits in order to move any member of his body: All this is so contrary to experience and the reason of things, that unless the idea of *self-motion* were in itself as evidently and clearly a *contradiction*, as that two and two should make five, a man ought to be ashamed to talk at that rate. Nay, a man of any considerable degree of modesty, would even in that case be almost tempted rather to doubt the truth of his faculties, than take upon him to assert one such intolerable absurdity, merely for the avoiding of another. There are some indeed, who denying men the power of *beginning motion*, would yet seem in some manner to account for their actions, by allowing them a power of *determining motion*. But this also is a mere ludicrous trifling with words. For if that power of *determining motion*, be no other in a man, than that which is in a stone to reflect a ball *one certain way*, this is just nothing at all. But if he has a power of determining the motion of his spirits *any way*, as he himself pleases; this is in all respects the very same as *the power of beginning motion.*

This faculty approves some actions, and condemns others, detached from the consideration of their effects and consequences. The exercises of our minds, our thoughts, affections, designs, are the object of this faculty, no less than the conduct they lead to. Yea, for these especially (if not only) it approves or condemns us, as these are the foundation of life and conduct. In censoring or commending the conduct of others, we go upon a supposition of intelligence and design: For we judge very differently of the same actions as performed by an idiot, or madman, and by one in possession of reason. And when it appears that an action proceeded not from design, or that a different and contrary purpose was intended from what is actually effected, our opinion of it is changed. We approve good intentions, and condemn evil ones, in ourselves, (and in others so far as such intentions can be known) though evil comes of what was meant for good, *and vice versa*.

Now our estimating the moral character from internal dispositions is on a supposition that *these* are within the power of the agent. Whether he shall *execute* his will or not, depends not on himself. He may be hindered herefrom, or compelled to do contrary to his will—which alters not the internal character. If we are made the means or instruments of what we do not intend, or are externally hindered from what we do intend, we are judged according to what we *would* have done. The reason is, that we have internal liberty in many instances, when we have not external. It is therefore much more proper to say, that natural necessity, in any supposed case, though it executeth an external  
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act, or the omission of such an act, yet hinders not but the state of the will may be right or wrong in such case ; than to say, that moral necessity is consistent with praise or blame, *because not attended with natural necessity*. We are condemned or approved of ourselves for a willing or unwilling mind, and have a natural apprehension, that the judgment of GOD will second our own. But did ever any man commend or accuse himself for what he knew to be necessary and unavoidable—not within his power, or not determined by himself ? The inward perturbation vicious men feel proceeds from a conviction that they might have cultivated another frame of heart. If external constraint, or natural necessity, renders a person incapable of such commands as respect *material* action, moral necessity, or internal constraint, must render him equally incapable of such commands as respect the exercises of the *mind*, or acts of volition—(admitting this to be *original*, and not the consequence of internal liberty abused.) We are said to be the ‘voluntary, designing causes of corporeal action.’ Be it so, ‘the essence of virtue and vice lies not in their cause.’ And moreover, in a series of acts, connected and dependent, the praise or blame is to be attributed to the original act. But of this (which determines all the rest) we are not the voluntary causes. (p. 48, 224, 256) To return from this short digression.

THE moral capacity we have been speaking of, including moral obligation, undeniably proves the internal liberty of mankind. As it implies a rule or guide of life, with authority and sanctions, as we have an inward perception of good  
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or ill-desert, according as we have followed, or departed from, the direction of this leading principle ; so we could not perceive ourselves to be under it as a *law*, and reproach ourselves for disobedience, were we fully persuaded such disobedience was a matter of real necessity. We experience, that ‘our happiness or misery is not our *fate*’—Meaning here by these terms, not so much that kind of happiness or misery which depends on a man’s *outward* condition and circumstances, as that which we signify by the words, *peace, serenity, and joy of heart*, on the one hand ; and *disquietude of mind, vexation or anguish* of spirit on the other. *The good man is satisfied from himself. The wicked is like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest.* These different and opposite sensations, which constitute our chief happiness or misery in this world, and are accompanied more or less with hope or fear for futurity, it is impossible we should have, were we not internally free. We may suppose them to be as strong in those who are wholly deprived of external freedom, as in those who are fully possessed of it. So that however external necessity may wholly prevent our being rewardable or punishable for the outward action, it by no means doth for the inward disposition, provided this depends on ourselves. Hence the injunction, *Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life.* It is in the power of *man* to lay any external necessity upon us, but no internal one. No chains can bind the soul but those of our own imposing. The captive, prisoner, &c. may be as free, in the religious sense, as any man. A person wholly deprived of his bodily powers of action may yet be free in the noblest sense.

We shall now proceed to shew, that internal liberty, in finite beings placed upon trial, implies an opportunity and capacity of *chusing and acting otherwise than they in fact do*. Finite beings, we say; because we pretend not to know what the perfect liberty of the *Infinite Being* is. 'So far as we are *free*, we are not *necessarily determined*, so that we could not but make the choice we do.'

WHETHER the holy angels ever had a moral ability of falling, we need not enquire; though we have no ground to determine the contrary. Beings made upright, we know, have revolted. Now if the malignity of apostate spirits against GOD, their unalterable opposition to him, be the consequence of perverting a moral power they once had, it shews that finite beings may possess a liberty of chusing and acting otherwise than they do; and consequently, that liberty may be distinguished from, and opposed to, moral necessity. So with respect to apostate man, if he had originally a moral power of retaining his innocence, the inference is, that he possessed liberty, not only as opposed to constraint from without, but as opposed to moral necessity. From the fall of angels and man, the inference therefore is not, that they were morally unable to keep their first estate; but that they had a moral power, and abused it. Indeed, in the case of their first sin, moral necessity must have been strictly *natural*—Not, as we are wont to call habits, a *second* nature, but a *first* nature. So that *moral* or *criminal* inability supposeth a moral power once *possessed* but *forfeited*.

If, on the contrary, it be supposed, that nei-  
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ther man, nor the angels that fell, had a moral ability at first to continue in a state of rectitude, to whom but their Creator must their fall be attributed? Their original powers were such as he endowed them with. They could be required to exert no other. Their abilities, relations, and destination being such as their great Former gave and intended, they could be answerable only for what was given. If, therefore, the first act of sin 'necessarily followed from GOD's withholding assistance, or if that assistance was not afforded, which was absolutely necessary to the avoiding' the first transgression, what is this but making GOD the proper author of it? How consistent this is with his moral character, or *the possibility of sin*, we need not say. But if GOD be the immediate author of the first act of disobedience in the creature, he is consequentially the author of all the moral defilement and inability proceeding therefrom; since 'the first act in the train determines and fixes the rest.' So that if 'there is not, and never can be, either in existence or idea, a freedom from moral necessity, or a power of self-determination—if every moral event is *immediately* or *ultimately* ordered and determined by GOD'—(403, 404.) the consequence is, either that there is not, and never can be, sin in the world; or if there is, it is wholly chargeable on the first cause. The only way to evade this consequence is to admit, that the duty of angels and man, before their fall, was no other than they had a moral as well as natural power to do. To suppose their duty exceeded their abilities would be the injustice, which the slothful servant charged his Lord with.

FROM what hath been said, it appears, that  
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there is no need of our examining into any *moral impotency* derived from the fall, or the moral inability of *fallen* man. For Mr. *Edwards* supposeth this kind of impotency to have taken place in *innocence*, as really as since the apostacy. That is, there was a moral necessity of the first sin—therefore a moral incapacity of refraining from it. \* And if the moral necessity of the first sin, though as *real*, (p. 230) was not in the same degree with that of subsequent sins; yet the *increased*

\* Mr. *Edwards's* doctrine manifestly implies a moral inability in man and angels *before* their fall. He saith he 'has demonstrated, that the futurity of all events is established by previous necessity, either natural or moral; and that it is manifest that the sovereign Creator and Disposer of the world has ordered this necessity, by ordering his own conduct, either in designedly acting, or forbearing to act. That the whole series of events is connected with something in the state of things, either positive or negative, which is original in the series; i. e. something which is connected with nothing preceeding that, but GOD'S OWN IMMEDIATE conduct'—and in regard 'to the state and acts of the will, EVERY event of this kind is necessary by a moral necessity.'—(p. 402, 403, 405, 406) 'The will always has an inability to act otherwise than it does'; (p. 35) that is, the man, or agent, or soul—'for the faculty of will doth not act, but the agent that hath it.' GOD does decisively in his providence determine all the volitions and actions of moral agents, either by positive influence or permission—meaning by permission, not only 'the not hindering sin, but disposing the state and circumstances of things in such a manner, that sin certainly and infallibly follows from his disposal—that GOD, *when he had made man, so ordered his circumstances, that from these circumstances, together with the withholding divine influence and assistance, his sin infallibly followed.*' (p. 376)

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creased imbecility being a necessary effect of what was original, that is finally to be resolved into this; and this to be attributed to the first cause—who made man upright indeed, in his own moral image, but really incapable of retaining his primitive rectitude.

WHATEVER hath been supposed to be the present moral inability of mankind, Calvinistic divines

THE first sin of angels and man was then morally necessary, and proceeded from their original state and circumstances—from GOD'S withholding necessary assistance. And this proves their original moral inability; which inability being 'connected with nothing preceding, BUT GOD'S OWN IMMEDIATE CONDUCT, which is ORIGINAL in the series,' he must be the author of it. For if he himself necessitated them to sin, by doing or forbearing what rendered the first sin unavoidable—if sin followed from his ordering and disposal, that maxim in philosophy is strictly applicable, '*Causa deficiens, in rebus necessariis, ad causam perse efficientem reducenda est.*' In things necessary, the deficient cause must be reduced to the efficient. And in this case the reason is evident; because the not doing what is required, or not avoiding what is forbidden, must follow from the position of the necessary cause of the deficiency.' The moral necessity Mr. Edwards contends for, as it runs up to the first entrance of sin into the world, supposeth an inability in the time of innocence—and that GOD'S own immediate conduct is first in the series of causes [and effects; so to say the first sin, or any other, was not necessary by a natural necessity, no way relieves the difficulty. For natural liberty depends on moral liberty, by his own principles. And to say that the first cause and supreme orderer of all things made angels and men so at first, as that their original sin became necessary in consequence of a moral inability they were created with, is making the supreme cause 'the proper author,

divines have ever maintained, not that it was *original*, but *consequent to the fall*—the judicial animadversion of the Deity upon the first offence. We are inclined to think Mr. *Edwards* was in the same opinion upon the whole, though he hath expressed himself so as to give full reason for our attributing the contrary to him— that is, bringing a charge of self-repugnancy. For Mr. *Edwards* asserts, that man was ‘endowed at first with the moral or spiritual image

thor, the efficient cause,’ of all the sins of men and devils. To which objection it is really surprizing to find Mr. *Edwards* returning this answer, that the doctrine of his opposers is involved in the same difficulty. For admit it to be so, is this a proper answer? If either his doctrine or theirs is justly chargeable with such a consequence, by all the regard we owe to a Deity and moral Governor we are bound to reject a scheme which contains such an imputation upon him.

It hence appears, that the case Mr. *Edwards* instanceth in, ‘of a man for his rebellion cast into prison, and loaded with chains, on whom his Prince hath compassion, orders his chains to be knocked off, and the prison doors to be set open—but who is full of such malignity, that he cannot be willing to accept the offer of forgiveness’—(p. 305, 306) that this case is quite aliene from the purpose, and no way applicable to Mr. *Edwards*’s doctrine. For by his principles, there is a necessity on the minds of men, strong as grates of brass, and bars of iron—which necessity extends to the first entrance of sin into the world. Hence the angels that fell, and our common progenitors, *could not be willing* to abide in their primitive state. Hence sinners continue impenitent. Internal chains, strong as the bars of a castle bound the morning stars to revolt from Heaven—bound *Adam* and *Eve* to sin—and bind all who stand out against the gospel invitation,

image of GOD,' in distinction from his *natural* image—By the latter also he explains himself to mean, 'an understanding to perceive the difference between moral good and evil.; a capacity of discerning that moral worthiness and demerit, by which some things are praise-worthy, others deserving of blame and punishment; and also a *capacity of choice*, and choice guided by understanding, and a *power of acting* according to choice.' (p. 41, 43) Consequently, he had a capacity of making *this* choice, to continue in the state of moral rectitude wherein he was created. Consequently, a (*moral*) power of abiding in that state. Consequently, his fall from it was not an event morally *necessary*. Consequently, not *infallibly connected with the divine disposal and determination*. Consequently, the supposed fixed connection of *every* moral event with a previous moral cause, could not *antecede* the apostacy, but must (if real) be *subsequent* to it. Consequently, in every such event 'GOD's own immediate conduct' cannot be supposed to be '*original* in the series.' The difficulty arising from divine prescience we pretend not to be able to clear. It is sufficient that it equally lies against Mr. *Edwards's* doctrine.

UPON admitting, with the generality of Calvinistic divines, *original, internal* freedom in man; that his moral imbecility was *consequent* to, and the *punishment* of, the first offence; that the moral impotency of apostate spirits also is the *fruit* and *effect* of their revolt; the moral perfections of GOD are vindicated, and he is freed from the impious charge of being the author of their sin: But how this charge can be removed on the foundation Mr. *Edwards* proceeds upon is difficult

to conceive; nor indeed has he taken much pains to remove it, though he allows it 'is infinitely to be abhorred, and denies it to be the consequence of what he has laid down.' In what sense he thought it was to be 'abhorred,' and will not allow it to be the 'consequence' of what he hath said, has been already remarked. \* However great that impotency is which mankind derive from *Adam*, there is a manifest difference between a moral inability or necessity *derived from the fall of man*, and a like kind of inability or necessity *original to the human race*. Mr. *Edwards's* doctrine of necessity is inconsistent with the opinion of our having lost our power in *Adam*; since he could not *lose* a power he never had.

WE have but one thing farther to add. While we acknowledge the fallen state of our nature, and the impotency derived from the fall, the proper question on the *gospel* plan is, Whether salvation is offered to sinners on *practicable* terms? The offer presupposeth our lost and perishing state. Is it then adapted to *this* state of mankind? Is there a possibility of accepting it? Rather, is there *no* impropriety, is there not a palpable contradiction, in speaking of an *offer* on terms known to be *morally* impossible? The present question is not, Whether fallen man hath power, *independently of the aids of grace*, to accept the *gospel* proposals? but, Whether such assistances are tendered with the call of the *gospel* as that an acceptance of it is *morally* possible?

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OR suppose it morally impossible, that great numbers, who are externally called by the gospel, should accept the invitation of it—suppose their final condemnation to be just notwithstanding, in consequence of their relation to *Adam*; and the moral inability derived from him; yet who will say that they merit a *sover* punishment, a *greater* damnation, when their rejecting the gospel is supposed to be the necessary consequence of GOD's *withholding that assistance*, without which they cannot embrace it? A proposal of pardon and life to rebels against heaven, on impracticable terms, accompanied with a threatening of aggravated condemnation, seems hardly reconcilable with the discoveries GOD hath made of himself, as having shewn *the exceeding riches of his grace in CHRIST JESUS—Not willing any should perish, but that all should come to repentance—Commanding all men every where to repent—Whoever will, let him come, and take the waters of life freely.*

It may be said, 'True indeed, whosoever will let him come. We grant, if they have a will, they may come. But we assert, that none but such as actually come can will to come.' Now what saith the scripture? When our Saviour upbraids the Jews, 'Ye *will not* come to me that ye might have life,' doth this imply that it was forever morally impossible for them to have come? or doth it suppose, on the contrary, that they might have willed to come? Why else are they upbraided for not coming? How oft would he have gathered them, but they would not? Was there not a time, therefore, when they might have known the things belonging to their peace? I set before you life and death,

death, blessing and cursing ; therefore CHUSE life—implying a moral capacity of *chusing* as well as *conducting* according to choice : And indeed, without supposing the former, how can the latter be said to be in any one's power ? It is so only in *consequence* of volition or choice. If the *cause* be out of our power, the *effect* must be of course. Besides, 'the very willing or chusing is the doing : When once a man hath willed or chosen, the thing is done.' Had not that servant, who received the single talent, a moral power to have improved that talent well ? In consequence of such improvement, would he not have received more ? According to that, 'To him that hath, shall be given,' &c. Was he not condemned out of his own mouth ?

LET us add here, that the supposition of sinners being *abandoned and given up of GOD*, implies, that they *once* had a moral power to turn and live—Always remembering to include the means and influences of grace when we speak of such a power. *For it is GOD that worketh in us to WILL and to DO* ; which is the argument to our *working out our own salvation*. Doth not the demand of the Prophet, *What could have been done more to my vineyard ?* imply that means and influences on GOD's part are afforded, or tendered, in such measure to sinners, as renders their compliance with the terms of salvation possible at least ? We have, indeed, no warrant to say *absolutely*, that he could not have done more for the conversion of the Jews—that he could not have converted them by an immediate, irresistible influence. He that 'is able to raise up children to *Abraham* out of the stones,' could, no doubt, have done this, had he seen fit. It is enough

that the means used with them were *sufficient*, though not unconquerable.

BUT we may dismiss this matter. Mr. *Edwards's* doctrine is, that the *first* sin of angels and man as was *really* necessary, as the wickedness of abandoned sinners and apostate spirits—So that what hath been last observed, relating to the necessity of the sins of fallen creatures, while on probation, and in the time of GOD's grace and visitation, no way affects our main argument. Mr. *Edwards* hath offered a chain of reasoning in proof that man hath in no case, and never had, a power of self-determination; but is, and always was, determined by a *moral necessity*, which necessity is as real as any other. This necessity, he affirms, belongs to all finite beings, and to the Creator himself—At the same time he hath taken great pains to shew, that it is consistent with the most perfect liberty.

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SECT.

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## S E C T. II.

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*Internal moral liberty, as distinct from external, consistent with the influence of motives, and use of commands, exhortations, promises, warnings, threatenings, &c.*

**W**E readily grant, there can be no act of choice without some motive or inducement. But if what hath been observed, with respect to the power of creatures made upright to retain or forfeit their innocence, be admitted, it clearly follows, that the application of commands, invitations, monitions, &c. is consistent with a freedom to *either* side. For who questions but rebel angels had the highest inducements, before their fall, to abide in their first estate? We need not scruple to say, the strongest possible motives could not be wanting in the presence of GOD—that it was the highest *apparent* good, as well as their highest duty, and what they had a moral ability for, to continue subject to the great Creator. And it is really one of the most inexplicable events, that beings in their situation should fall. This event shews, beyond question, that a liberty to either side is consistent with the most powerful motives to bias and incline the will to one side.

So in the case of innocent *Adam*, no one will say, that the motives in paradise, to hold fast his integrity, were insufficient—or that their not proving effectual necessarily proceeded from the  
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original, moral state of his will, possessed of the moral image of GOD. That he had a moral capacity to sustain the federal trial is here taken for granted. Among other commands, written on his heart, or communicated by special intercourse with Deity, he had one prohibition properly positive, which was made the test of his fidelity, accompanied with an express threat, that he should die in case of non-forbearance in that instance; and implying a promise of life, if he refrained in this article. Whatever be understood by the death threatened, the threatening was sufficiently awful. Yet against the clearest warning, against the highest motives to the contrary, he ventured to take and eat. Commands, invitations, promises, admonitions, &c. are therefore consistent with a moral ability to hearken or not hearken to them.

FOR the same reason that *sin* could not be morally necessary at first, it will be difficult to prove, that the continued *holiness* of good angels was morally necessary from the beginning. Mr. *Edwards* seems to suppose a difference as to the *degree* of moral necessity; but expressly maintains, that the *reality* of it is the same in all instances.\* That is to say, though every act of every creature is certain and fixed decisively beforehand, yet there are different degrees of absolute certainty.

FARTHER, with regard to fallen man, Mr. *Edwards* allows, that commands, &c. are given to, and means used with sinners, in unregeneracy. From hence he partly argues his doctrine  
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of necessity. † They have a moral understanding, and the same natural powers of action, with holy and good men—To which end moral inducements of various kinds are laid before them.

THE doctrine of necessary connection of means and ends, as stated by Mr. *Edwards*, implies one or other of the following things : Either that no means are employed with the unregenerate in order to their conversion—or none that have a tendency to the end—or that they have not a moral power of using them—or their use of them is certainly and infallibly successful.

THAT *means are used with unregenerate sinners*, Mr. *Edwards* grants. But since the doctrine he defends may seem to imply, that means are never used with the finally impenitent, (at least not to bring them to repentance, but only to confirm them in wickedness, and lead them to destruction) we shall just hint, that the whole œconomy of providence and grace is a means used with the righteous and wicked in common, for the confirmation, improvement and comfort of the former, and conviction and reformation of the latter. Extraordinary and ordinary means are used to this end. Of the former kind are miracles, prophecy, tongues, vouchsafed at special seasons, and in divers manners; together with singular and alarming interpositions of providence. To the latter kind belong a written, standing revelation, a public ministry and institutions of worship, the strivings of the divine spirit, various providential allotments &c. The word of truth in particular is an external appointed

† Ibid. and Sect. 7. and p. 384.

pointed means of regeneration, repentance from dead works, conversion, or that faith by which those live who are passed from death to life. If any reject the tender of salvation, the messengers of it are directed to wipe off the dust of their feet as a testimony against the despisers of their message; leaving with them this solemn protestation, 'Be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of GOD is come unto you.' We might mention the patience of GOD towards sinners, &c.—whence it is apparent that means, powerful means, are used for the conversion even of those, who are at length resigned up to their own hearts lust. But as this matter appears not to be contested by Mr. *Edwards*, we shall pass to the next thing above mentioned.

WHETHER the means used with the unregenerate have any *tendency* to the end? The very proposing of this question is enough. For whenever we use the *means*, it is in relation to some end. We intend by it the *media* through which any end is attained. So that to speak of means, and deny their conduciveness to the end, is an affront to common sense, as nothing can properly be called a means farther than it hath, or is supposed to have, a tendency to accomplish an end. And as all who maintain there are any instituted means of conversion, allow them to have been ordained by infinite wisdom, it would be impeaching supreme wisdom and goodness to say, they are not calculated *in the best manner* to lead sinners to repentance.

NOT that any external means are efficacious in themselves, but only through the divine concurrence with them. So it is in temporal and worldly

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ly matters ; and so it is in the concerns of religion. Means and endeavors do not ensure worldly success. They are in vain except GOD worketh with them. Yet who hesitates one moment, whether the divine concurrence is to be expected in the use, and through the instrumentality, of the means he hath prescribed, or the contrary? Exempt cases there are wherein means are superseded in mens temporal affairs : There may be like instances in the affairs of salvation. But these being *exempt* cases is a reason why spiritual blessings are much rather to be expected in the use, than in the neglect of means.

IT is the united voice of all Calvinistic divines, that there is the greatest possible encouragement to the endeavours of unconverted men in the use of the means of salvation. Mr. *Edwards* allows, that moral inducements are used with them ; and says, ‘it is of the nature of such inducements, that they have something *inviting*, some tendency to *induce* and *dispose* to virtuous volition ; to give the mind an *inclination* or *bias* to virtue—that they can operate only by biasing the will, and giving it a certain inclination one way—(p. 119, 125.) that motives have in themselves this nature and tendency in different degrees, some greater, others less.’ Now by Mr. *Edwards*’s principles every inclination, however weak, is of the nature of a disposition to virtue, and leading to it. (For there can be no inducements to virtue but such as operate by giving the mind an inclination to it.) If then the motives used with the unregenerate may excite a virtuous inclination, though in the *lowest* degree, we may, for the same reason, suppose this inclination increased to that degree as to become *prepollent*,  
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through the influence of moral means and inducements, in subordination to him who worketh all in all. And in proportion to the preponderation of the mind in favor of virtue, is the degree of virtue. How consistent these things are with Mr. *Edwards's* 4th and 5th Sect. part 3d. and other things said in his book, those may judge, who will be at the pains to examine and compare them.

If it be said, in the next place, that the unregenerate have not a *moral power to use the means of grace*: This is the same absurdity as to say, the means have no tendency to the end. For how can means be said to be afforded, which cannot be used? At best, they are as if not afforded. How then can the gospel be preached for a *witness* to such as finally reject it? Why is it taken from some, because they bring not forth the fruit of the kingdom, when they never had it in their power to receive its testimony? Can they be liable to an aggravated punishment for not using means, which they could not improve to any purpose? We repeat, it to prevent mistakes that when we speak of the ability of unregenerate men to use the means of grace, we mean not an independent power in themselves: (This the *regenerate* have not) But that such influences of grace are vouchsafed, together with external means, as that those might embrace the gospel call, who, in event, reject it against themselves.

MOREOVER, there is a wide difference in the characters of unregenerate men. Some such are *nearer* the kingdom of GOD than others. There is more hope of some than others of this character—

racter—Which things cannot be said consistently with the supposition of unregenerate men's being utterly incapable of any good effect from the means of grace, through their own endeavours in the use of them, and the common strivings of GOD's spirit. And yet, what less is implied in the assertion, that they cannot use the means that are employed with them, cannot improve a supposed price in their hands? For how then is the gospel a dispensation of *grace* to them? Is it not rather a dispensation of *wrath*? To say that their incapacity is not *natural*, but *moral*, is saying nothing to the purpose, as we trust hath been shewn. If the incapacity be *real*, it is no matter under what name it goes. Is it determined beforehand, that any of the unregenerate shall not use the means of grace, or shall not succeed? If it is, let any man shew, how the gospel can be a privilege to them, or they liable to a greater damnation for abusing it.

To say lastly, that the endeavours of the unregenerate in the use of the means of grace are infallibly connected with *success*, is to say, that no means are employed with those who die in their sins; contrary to what Mr. *Edwards* expressly allows. And yet he must either say this, or else that none but the regenerate can use the means of grace. We may just as well affirm, that all converted men must profit *equally* under the means of salvation, as that none can improve them at all but they who succeed. One may venture to assert, that such as hear the word, and anon with joy receive it, use the means of grace, though they should endure but a while.

THE means of religion, as those of this life, are used with different degrees of application by

different persons ; which is the true ground (ordinarily) of their different success. But we deny that any are commanded, invited, exhorted, &c. to exert powers and faculties they are not possessed of—to act from principles they are not endowed with—to use means out of their power. Such faculties, principles, powers, and affections as they are possessed of, such means as are within their power are the only ones they are possessed of, such means as are within their power are the only ones they can be required to act from and improve. Arguments laid before wicked men are adapted to operate on their reason and moral discernment—on the principle of ingenuity and gratitude—on their hope, fear, joy, sorrow, and the various movements of the mind. Nor can it be proposed they should act from the highest spiritual principles while unregenerate, but from such as they are capable of being influenced by as reasonable beings, possessed of a moral faculty, and subjects of moral government—who have an advocate for GOD within them, to whom he hath deputed his authority—a principle which is by nature *supreme*, and implanted to give law to the animal affections and appetites.

‘THE end of laws, we acknowledge, is to *bind to one side* ; and the end of commands is to turn the will one way.’ But we cannot agree with Mr. *Edwards*, ‘that laws and commands are therefore of *no use, unless they actually turn the will that way*’ which they require. \* Mr *Edwards* would not say, that any of GOD’s laws or commands are useless—that he might not justly require subjection to his anointed from those who said, *Let us break their bands asunder, and*

cast away their cords from us. The title of the section, from which we have extracted the above words, is, *Commands consistent with moral inability.* Now is the will of those, who are under moral necessity of disobeying, turned and biased that way the command is? Mr. *Edwards* has offered many reasons why their will *ought* to be turned to this side—to evince the propriety of the commands given them notwithstanding their *original inability to turn this way.* But he hath not shewn clearly, that ‘commands and laws are therefore of *no use,*’ because the subject will not be bound thereby. Or admitting he had shewn this, we need not say how much or how little it makes for his purpose. One thing is hence obvious, that by his own confession and argument, commands, invitations &c, are of no use where there is a moral necessity of being biased, or going, the contrary way.

MOREOVER, as wicked men may have inducements to virtue, consistent with the supposition of their persisting in vice; in like manner good men have allurements to vice. Such allurements they meet with from the flesh, the world, and the devil. Hence they are called to watch and pray, that they enter not into temptation—to fight—to strive for the mastery—to deny themselves, and take up the cross—to take heed lest they fall—and in general to work out their own salvation with fear and trembling. Now temptations and allurements to sin ‘operate by giving the mind an inclination to it—biasing the will this way.’ So that as inducements to holiness may be consistently used with those who at present are under the dominion of sin, with a prospect of changing their present prevailing bias and inclination; allurements to sin may also be

be laid before those whose prevailing bias is to holiness, not without a possibility and prospect of their being overcome—with which view they are always proposed by the tempter. *Adam*, endowed with the moral image of *GOD*, was overcome: And are his fallen sons exempt from danger? The regenerate fall from virtue frequently through inadvertence, and the strength of a present temptation. They are, therefore, under no moral necessity of being *perfect*, nor indeed can be free from sin in this life. Or will any undertake to shew, that the sins they fall into are morally necessary? According to Mr. *Edwards's* doctrine they are so indeed. To suppose farther, as his doctrine doth, that the *imperfect* holiness of the saints in this life is necessary by a moral necessity, is a palpable contradiction: For such a necessity being supposed would prove them incapable of any lapse whatever. Necessity is *fixed* and *uniform*, admitting of no *variety* or *dissonancy* of character: Whereas the moral characters of good christians are mixed, and in many instances contradictory. *David's* murder and adultery were very inconsistent with his general character, and cannot be supposed to have been morally necessary, consistent with the opinion, that by the same necessity he was a man after *GOD's* own heart.

UPON the whole, powerful motives to holiness, joined with a prevailing propensity this way are yet to be found where there are in many instances contrary volitions; and in some instances, on some occasions, to an high degree. Nor have the maintainers of the doctrine of the saints perseverance went to ground it on the supposed *indefectibility* of the spiritual principle in them, in itself considered, but on the *covenant* and *power* of *GOD* engaged to them,

Mr. *Edwards* very justly observes, that some crimes are *more heinous* than others in their own nature : Nor would he deny, but that of some *more* is required than of others. We may ask, On what ground ? if all volition and action is necessary, in the sense of his book. How is a person under previous obligation to consider beforehand in some cases more than others ? (p. 262) Can he consider without motives to consideration presented to his mind ? Can he be the cause of new motives to himself ? Doth he necessarily follow those exhibited *ab extra* ? Could he, among many motives to choice, have viewed any one otherwise than he in fact doth ? The whole controversy, in a manner, turns on the resolution of these questions. Every reader perceives on which side Mr. *Edwards* was in regard to them : And every reader, from the bare proposal of them, may see at once, whether or no, or how far Mr. *Edwards*'s doctrine is reconcilable with the supposition of *different degrees* of guilt, and obligations to consider previous to making choice. It seems hardly proper to speak of *tendency* and *influence* in motives to choice, when all things are *settled and determined beforehand by established laws in nature*, so that every intelligent creature is necessitated to chuse and improve, or refuse and neglect such and such things, called means. So *sure* and *perfect* a connection of causes and effects, antecedents and consequents, as he hath endeavoured to make appear, leaves no room to speak of a *meer tendency* in motives, which have a certain *sovereignty* in determining every act of every being in the universe.

S E C T.

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## S E C T. III.

*Allowing Mr. Edwards's scheme of necessity to be true in theory, it is not applicable to practice.*

AS we have supposed the doctrine of necessity maintained in Mr. *Edwards's* enquiry runs up to *absolute fatality*, we shall in this section consider it in this view. We shall suppose such a necessity to be indeed agreeable to philosophic truth. Taking for granted the coincidence between Mr. *Edwards* and a strict fatalist, Dr. *Butler's* reasoning with the latter is in a good measure applicable to the former. We shall accordingly take the liberty to extract from the chapter of his analogy, entitled, 'Of the opinion of necessity, considered as influencing *practice*.' He introduces what he there observes with this apology to his readers: 'As the puzzle and obscurity, which must unavoidably arise from arguing upon so absurd a supposition as that of universal necessity, will, I fear, easily be seen; it will, I hope, as easily be excused.'

WHEN it is said by a fatalist, that the whole constitution of nature, and the actions of men, that every thing, and every mode and circumstance of every thing, is necessary and could not possibly have been otherwise; it is to be observed, that this necessity does not exclude deliberation, choice, preference, and acting from certain principles, and to certain ends: Because all this is matter of undoubted experience, acknowledged by all, and what every man may, every moment, be conscious of. And hence it follows,  
that

that necessity, alone and of itself, is in no sort an account of the constitution of nature, and how things came *to be* and *to continue* as they are, but only an account of this *circumstance*, relating to their origin and continuance, that they could not have been otherwise than they are and have been.

NECESSITY as much requires and supposes a necessary agent, as freedom requires and supposes a free agent, to be the former of the world. And the appearances of *design* and of *final causes* in the constitution of nature, as really prove this acting agent, to be an *intelligent* designer, or to act from choice, upon the scheme of necessity, supposed possible, as upon that of freedom.

SUPPOSE then a fatalist to educate any one, from his youth up, in his own principles, that the child should reason upon them, and conclude that since he cannot possibly behave otherwise than he does, he is not a subject of blame or commendation, nor can deserve to be rewarded or punished: Imagine him to eradicate the very perceptions of blame and commendation out of his mind, by means of this system; to form his temper, and character, and behaviour to it; and from it to judge of the treatment he was to expect, say, from reasonable men, upon his coming abroad into the world—I cannot forbear stopping here to ask, Whether anyone of common sense would think fit, that a child should be put upon these speculations, and be left to apply them to practice? And a man has little pretence to reason, who is not sensible, that we are all children in speculations of this kind. However, the child would doubtless be highly delighted to find himself freed from the restraints of fear and shame, with which his play-fellows were fettered  
and

and embarrassed ; and highly conceited in his superior knowledge so far beyond his years. But conceit and vanity would be the least bad part of the influence, which these principles must have, when thus reasoned and acted upon, during the course of his education. He must either be allowed to go on, and be the plague of all about him; and himself too, even to his own destruction : Or else correction must be continually made use of; to supply the want of those natural perceptions of blame and commendation, which we have supposed to be removed; and to give him a practical impression, of what he had reasoned himself out of the belief of, that he was in fact an accountable child, and to be punished for doing what he was forbid. It is therefore in reality impossible, but that the correction which he must meet with, in the course of his education, must convince him, that if the scheme he was instructed in were not false ; yet that he reasoned inconclusively upon it, and some how or other misapplied it to practice and common life. But supposing the child's temper could remain still formed to the system, and his expectation of the treatment he was to have in the world be regulated by it ; so as to expect that no reasonable man would blame or punish him, for any thing which he should do, because he could not help doing it : Upon this supposition, it is manifest he would, upon his coming abroad into the world, be insupportable to society, and the treatment he would receive from it, would render it so to him ; and he could not fail of doing somewhat, very soon, for which he would be delivered over into the hands of civil justice. And thus, in the end, he would be convinced of the obligations he was under to his wise instructor. Or  
suppose

suppose this scheme of fatality, in any other way, applied to practice, such practical application of it will be found equally absurd ; equally fallacious in a practical sense : For instance, that if a man be destined to live such a time, he shall live to it, though he take no care of his own preservation ; or if he be destined to die before that time, no care can prevent it. Therefore all care to preserve one's own life is to be neglected, which is the fallacy instanced in by the antients.

BUT now on the contrary, none of these practical absurdities can be drawn, from reasoning upon the supposition, that we are free, but all such reasoning with regard to the common affairs of life, is justified by experience. And therefore, though it were admitted that this opinion of necessity were speculatively true ; yet, with regard to practice, it is as if it were false, so far as our experience reacheth ; that is, to the whole of our present life. For, the constitution of the world, and the condition in which we are actually placed, is, as if we were free. And it may perhaps justly be concluded, that since the whole process of action, through every step of it, suspense, deliberation, inclining one way, determining, and at last doing as we determine ; is as if we were free, therefore we are so. But the thing here insisted on is, that under the present natural government of the world, we find we are treated and dealt with, as if we were free, prior to all consideration whether we are or not. Were this opinion therefore of necessity admitted to be ever so true ; yet such is in fact our condition and the natural course of things, that whenever we apply it to life and practice,

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this

this application of it always misleads us, and cannot but mislead us, in a most dreadful manner, with regard to our present interest. And how can people think themselves so very secure then, that the same application of the same opinion may not mislead them also, in some analogous manner, with respect to a future, a more general and more important interest? For religion being a practical subject; and the analogy of nature shewing us, that we have not faculties to apply this opinion, were it a true one, to practical subjects; whenever we do apply it to the subject of religion, and thence conclude that we are free from its obligations, it is plain this conclusion cannot be depended upon.

THE notion of necessity, with respect to practical subjects, therefore is as it were not true. Nor doth this contain any reflection upon reason; but only upon what is unreasonable. For to pretend to act upon reason, in opposition to practical principles, which the author of our nature gave us to act upon; and to pretend to apply our reason to subjects, with regard to which, our own short views, and even our experience, will shew us, it cannot be depended upon; and such, at best, the subject of necessity must be; this is vanity, conceit and unreasonableness.

BUT this is not all. For we find within ourselves a will, and are conscious of a character. Now if this, in us, be reconcileable with fate, it is reconcileable with it, in the author of nature. And besides, natural government and final causes imply a character and a will in the governor and designer; a will concerning the creatures whom he governs. The author of nature then being  
certainly,

certainly of some character or other, notwithstanding necessity ; it is evident this necessity is as reconcileable with the particular character of benevolence, veracity, and justice in him, which attributes are the foundation of religion, as with any other character : Sure we find this necessity no more hinders *men* from being benevolent than cruel ; true, than faultless ; just than unjust.

WE find GOD exercises the same kind of government over us, with that a father exercises over his children, and a civil magistrate over his subjects. Now, whatever becomes of abstract questions concerning liberty and necessity, it evidently appears to us, that veracity and justice must be the natural rule and measure of exercising this government or authority, to a being, who can have no competitions, or interfering of interests, with his creatures and his subjects.

WE have endeavoured to keep in view the design we mentioned in the introduction, to examine only the *ground-work* of Mr. *Edwards's* book without entering into consideration of the particular doctrines built thereupon. Whether they stand or fall with the foundation, is beside our purpose to say—Or whether what has been offered at all weakens this foundation is not for us to determine. One thing, perhaps, appears, that men of strong powers and great abilities are wont to wade beyond their depth, and bewilder themselves and others with speculations abstruse and unprofitable—to say no worse. Great geniuses are fruitful, many times, of great errors. There is a shew of science, falsely so called, which is especially

especially incongruous in handling moral and religious subjects; wherein the simple (who make much the greater part of mankind) are alike concerned as the wise and learned—and which, therefore, ought to be treated with the utmost plainness.

WE do not deny but Mr. *Edwards* was 'worthy of the name of a *Philosopher* :' (p. 401) But we appeal to the publick, whether some of the most famed *Philosophers* in the English nation, for many years back, and at this day, have not philosophised themselves into scepticism? One of first distinction in particular (whose essays on some moral subjects are so nearly akin to Mr. *Edwards* on necessity, that a reader might think the latter copied from the former) appears plainly to be a disbeliever in natural religion, not less than revealed.\* However, we have not the least suspicion of Mr. *Edwards*'s inclination either to atheism or deism. We doubt not he had a strong practical sense of religion, which overbalanced his theory. But when great disputants are possessed of a particular hypothesis, they are apt to defend it many times by a method of reasoning, which leads to most dangerous consequences—without seeing or allowing those consequences, which, if fairly deduced, demonstrate the hypothesis itself to be wrong, or that they have argued wrong from it.

If we have misrepresented Mr. *Edwards*, it has not been through design; nor have we knowingly 'insisted on difficulties not belonging to the controversy.' Whether our 'indignation

\* *Hume's* essay, Vol. III. Sect. 7, 8, 10, 11. &c.

nation or disdain' hath been 'raised at the sight of his discourse,' others must be left to judge. No one, we may presume, will say, that much pains have been used to 'set forth' the doctrines of his book 'in colours shocking to the imaginations, and moving to the passions of those, who have either too little capacity, or too much confidence of the opinions they have imbibed, and contempt of the contrary, to try the matter by any serious and circumspect examination.' Mr. *Edwards*, it seems, was aware of being charged with maintaining 'horrid and blasphemous doctrines, the fate of the heathen, *Hobbs's* necessity, making men meer machines,' &c. Whether he had any reason to apprehend such an indictment is a matter we refer to the reader: To whose judgment we also submit the following proposed specimen of the coincidence between Mr. *Edwards's* doctrines, and those of some celebrated infidels.

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## APPENDIX.

*Exhibiting a specimen of coincidence between the principles of Mr. Edwards's book, and those of antient and modern Fatalists.*

A LEARNED writer, \* who hath distinctly examined the opinion of the antients concerning fate, in a defence of human liberty in answer to Cato's letters, hath clearly shewn, That the freedom of human actions was the almost unanimous doctrine of the philosophers—that it was taught by the five great sects among the heathen, which comprehended all the philosophy of Greece and Rome; viz. The Stoics, Platonics, Epicureans, Aristotelians and Academics—That the most reasonable of the antients, of all sects, were agreed, on the one hand, that NECESSITY was to be excluded from human actions, that so the distinction of virtue and vice, and the rewards and punishments both of divine and human laws founded upon them, might be preserved inviolated: On the other hand, that fate, even with respect to human actions (as well as to external events consequent upon them, in which it was absolute and uncontrollable) was so far to be retained, as that it was to be allowed that antecedent causes were motives of acting, though the principle and efficient cause of action was a natural power and free exertion of the mind itself. Some things they held to be destined, others not; and distinguished the causes of things into antecedent and efficient, that they might exempt some from necessity, and subject others to it; placing the human will among those which they allowed not to be under necessity—always meaning by the efficient cause of human actions a principle of self-motion and exertion in the mind or agent—by the antecedent cause, the motive of action to the general efficient cause. Absolute fatality or necessity, with respect to man, was understood only of external providential events, consequential to the nature of their actions, presupposed to be free, and in their own power.

THEIR

\* Jackson.

THEIR notion of liberty, upon the whole, was, First, a principle or power of action, self-motion, exertion, or causation in the mind. In other words, that the cause of voluntary motion is in the nature of the mind itself, whatever external motive may precede, or concur to the exertion of it. Hence, Secondly, That motives are only *assistant*, not *efficient* causes. Thirdly, They maintained a freedom from *necessity*, as well as from *external constraint* and *coaction*; allowing necessity only in regard to *providential* events. Fourthly, A power of *acting* or *not acting*, of chusing and acting *variously*, or *differently* from what we do.

THESE propositions express the sense in which liberty was asserted by all the antient philosophers of EMINENCE. The opposers of this doctrine were chiefly *Leucippus*, *Empedocles*, and *Democritus*, the first founders of the *Epicurean* sect; *Heraclitus*, *Diodorus*, and some astrologers and fortune-tellers among the Stoics; who maintained *universal, absolute fate*—To whom *Plutarch* joins *Thales*, *Parmenides*, *Pythagoras*, and others, who asserted, that ‘necessity is *omnipotent*, and exerciseth an empire over *every thing*’—‘that the world is infested by necessity.’ \*

THE asserters of universal fate had different notions about it. *Diodorus* and *Democritus* were of the *atomical* sect, who made every thing the necessary effect of the eternal motion and concurrence of atoms, supposing an eternal chain of *effects*, without any original *cause* or *agent* at all. *Heraclitus* derived every thing from the *first cause* of the universe as the *efficient*, stiling it *fate*; and supposing not only all other things which exist, but *the purposes of our minds* also, proceed from the efficient power of it—Which was making no agent in the world but the supreme cause, and human actions nothing but the operations of GOD in men, actuating them, and every thing else, as the soul doth the body.

The *astrological* notion of fate was, that every thing was effected by the circumvolution of the universe, and the positions and appearances of the planets and fixed stars.

ANOTHER

\* *Plutarch's* morals, vol. 3. c. 25. p. 170. translated from the Greek, 2d. edition, London.

ANOTHER notion of fatality was founded in the supposition of a *mutual, eternal concatenation and chain of causes* whereby things posterior always follow those which are antecedent, and are resolved into them, as existing by them, and *necessarily* consequent to those which precede them. This was the most plausible, and most insisted on by the maintainers of *necessity*—grounded on the supposition; that there was no internal principle or cause of motion or action in the mind at all: Concerning which *Cicero* says, that ‘as it deprives the mind of it’s *free will*, and subjects it to a *necessary fatality*, it is not tolerable.’ Whether or how far this was Mr. *Edwards*’s opinion, those who have read his book may easily judge: Also what presumption of it’s truth ariseth from it’s being rejected by the most reasonable and learned philosophers of all sects, who were full in the four propositions above-mentioned—all which are very expressly contradicted by Mr. *Edwards*, who allows not of a principle of *self-motion* in the mind—a freedom from *necessity*—a power of acting *otherwise* than we do—and ascribes *efficiency* to motives.

NOT that we suppose the oppugnation of Mr. *Edwards*’s scheme to the doctrine of the most eminent philosophers, and the agreement of it with their opinion who dissented from the common belief, proves it to be false. The wisest philosophers had but rude notions of religion and morality in general; (*The world by wisdom knew not GOD*) yet, on some things many of them expressed themselves justly; and on a point so evident as human liberty, they were capable judges, if on any.

THE same learned writer, to whom we have been chiefly indebted for the above account of the opinion of the *philosophers* on the subject before us, has also shewn, that the freedom of human actions was universally, and without any controversy, received and maintained by the *antient christians*. He refers us to *Origen* and *Eusebius*, two as learned writers, and as well skilled in the philosophy of their times, as any the world affords. He gives us the following passages, among others, from them. ‘If not only *external events*, but our *internal designs* proceeding from reason, are subject to *fate*; and if the minds of men are under the impulse of an *inexorable* \*  
necessity.

\* Mr. *Edwards* uses the word *irrefragable*.

*necessity*, then farewell philosophy ! farewell religion !— This opinion ( of *necessity* ) is an incentive and encouragement to *licentiousness*, *injustice*, and a thousand other evils, and directly tends to the subversion of every condition of life.\* ‘From the notion, (of *necessity*) saith *Origen*, it follows, That the faculty of *will* is wholly taken away ; and with it *praise* and *dispraise*, and the difference between things that are *commendable*, and things that are *blame-worthy* : And this being so, the so much proclaimed equity of the judgment of GOD vanisheth, and his threatenings to punish those who *commit sin*, and the promises of rewards and blessedness to those *who do well*, fall to the ground. For there is no reason for either the one or the other—If all events are *necessary*, it is *irrational* to intreat GOD for any thing—We confess that many things, which are *not in our power*, are causes of many things that are *in our power* ; without which, namely, those things which are *not in our power*, other things, which are *in our power*, would not be done. But those things which are *in our power*, and are done consequential to *antecedent* things, which are *not in our power*, are done so as that notwithstanding these antecedent things, we might have done *otherwise*. But if any one would have it, that our *free-will* is wholly independent of every thing in the world, so as that we do not *chuse* to do some things by reason of certain (preccdent) accidents, he forgets that he is a part of the world, and comprehended within human society, and the circumambient air.†

‘If *Cato* (says his answerer, p. 149.) had any regard for, or had ever read the writings of the *primitive Christians*, he must have seen and owned, that no doctrine was more unanimously and universally insisted on, and inculcated by them than that of *human liberty* : And the contrary doctrine of the *necessity* of human actions was a principal branch of the error of the *Valentinians*, *Marcionites*, and *Manichees*, who, in consequence of it, led most profligate and wicked lives.’

SOME of the most distinguished maintainers of universal necessity, in the last and present century, were

T Hobbs,

\* Præp. Evang. lib. 6. p. 242, 243. quoted in *Jackson's* defence of liberty, p. 205, 206.

† Orig. apud Euseb. præp. evang. lib. 6. p. 286, 283, 290, quoted by *Jackson*, p. 81, 82, 112, 113.

*Hobbs, Spinoza, Collins, Leibnitz, the authors of Cato's letters, Hume, among the Atheists and Deists; and Lord Kaims and Mr. Edwards among the advocates for revelation.* Our author's agreement with these on the article of necessity may more distinctly appear from the following extracts. We shall place the similar passages over against each other in different columns, that the reader may have a readier view of the coincidences.

## SPINOZA.

It was impossible for GOD to have produced things in any respect different from what they are. (*Clark's demonstration, p. 27, 28, 29, 49, 50*)

LEIBNITZ. The same. (Vid. papers between *Leibnitz* and *Dr. Clark*, p. 159, 161, 229, 233)

HOEBS. Every effect must needs be owing to some cause, and that cause must produce the effect NECESSARILY. Because if it be a sufficient cause, the effect cannot but follow; and if it be not a sufficient cause, it will not be at all a cause of that thing. (*Clark's demonstration, p. 88*)

## EDWARDS.

Neither the form, 'order, nor minutest circumstance or mode of existence of any thing could possibly have been in any respect different. (*Enquiry part iv, sect. 8*)

No event whatsoever, and particularly volition, can come to pass without a cause. To suppose there is any event not NECESSARILY connected with its cause is to suppose it hath a cause; which is not its cause. If the effect be not necessarily connected with the cause, then the cause may sometimes exert the same influence, and the effect not follow. And if this actually happens in any instance, the influence of the cause is not sufficient to produce the effect. That which seems to be the cause can be no cause in the supposed case. (Part ii. sect. 3, 4, 8. p. 102, — 106.)

LEIBNITZ.

Mr.

LEIBNITZ. Nothing happens without a sufficient reason why it is, or why it is thus rather than otherwise. A man never has a sufficient reason to *act*, when he has not also a sufficient reason to *act in a certain particular manner*. As often as a man has sufficient reason for a single action; he has also sufficient reason for all its requisites. The overthrowing this great principle of a *sufficient reason to every event*, would be overthrowing the best part of all philosophy. (Papers between Mr. Leibnitz and Dr. Clark, p. 55, 169, 171, 399)

HUME. The conjunction between motives and voluntary actions is as regular and uniform as that between the cause and effect in any part of nature. (Essays, vol. iii. p. 137)

P. 146. It is pretended some causes are necessary, others not: Let any body define a *cause* without a necessary connection with its effect.

SPINOZA. The will cannot be called a free, but a necessary cause. The will of any voluntary agent must of necessity be determined by some *external* cause, and not by any power

MR. Edward's principle of a cause, ground, or reason of every event, he says extends to things, and the manner and circumstances of things. There must be a sufficient reason why an act of the will, or any other event, *is* rather than not; or why it is *as* it is rather than otherwise. If this principle of common sense be taken away, all arguing from effects to causes ceaseth. (Part ii. sect. 3, 4. and p. 83—86, 102—106)

THE acts of the will and material things have a like necessary dependance on a cause without. Moral necessity may be as absolute as natural. Volition is as passive with respect to the antecedent cause, as the motions of the body to the volitions which determine them. (P. 183, 184—also p. 30, 40, 48, 58, 62, 66, &c.) Moral habits are owing to the nature of things. (P. 31. 32 33) If the acts of the will are excited by extrinsic motives, those motives are the *causes* of those acts of the will; which makes

## SPINOZA.

er of determining itself, inherent in itself. (*Clark's dem.* p. 89, 106)

CATO. The same. (*Letters*, vol. iv. p. 174, 195, 196). P. 190, 191, 193. Something must determine the actions of men, or else they could not be determined; and it is nothing to the purpose to say, that their choice determines them, if something else must determine that choice; for let it be what it will, the effect must be necessary, &c. &c.

COLLINS. Man is necessarily determined by particular, moral causes, and cannot possibly act contrary to what it does. (*Clark's remarks on Collins*, p. 18, 28) P. 13. To represent reasons to men—would be of no use, if men had free wills, or their wills were not moved by them.

HUME. Vol. iii. p. 149, 150. Actions not proceeding from a permanent, fixed cause (that is, from necessity) are neither virtuous nor vicious.

## EDWARDS.

makes them necessary, as effects necessarily follow the efficiency of the cause. (P. 103, 118, 261, 262, 278)

THE will is necessarily determined in every one of its acts, from a man's first existence, by a cause beside the will, and in no instance whatever its own determiner. (P. 113, *et passim*) There is not, and never can be, either in existence or idea, a freedom from moral necessity, or a power of self-determination. (P. 404)

NATURAL tendency and influence supposes causality, and that supposeth necessity of events. (P. 315) Moral necessity as much ascertains and fixes the event, as any. (P. 402)

LAWs and commands are of no use unless they turn the will that way which they require. (P. 226)

There is an established connection between means and end. The being of the effect is, on the one hand, connected with the means; and the want of the effect, with the want of the means (P. 309,—315)

SIN and virtue come to pass by a necessity consisting in a sure, established connection of causes and effects.

LEIBNITZ. The mind acts by virtue of motives, which are its *dispositions* to act. Motives comprehend all the dispositions, which the mind can have to act voluntarily. They include, not only the *reasons*, but also the *inclinations* arising from passions, or other preceding impressions. (Papers of Leibnitz and Clarke, p. 166, 167)

LEIBNITZ. Motives have the same relation to the will of an intelligent agent, as weights have to a ballance; so that of *two* things absolutely indifferent an intelligent agent can no more chuse *either* than a ballance can move itself when the weights on both sides are equal. (P. 121 of papers, &c.)

HUME. Liberty a power of acting or not acting according to the determination of the will—that is, if we chuse to remain at rest, we may; if we chuse to move, we may.

Now

effects. (P. 309) Moral habits are owing to the nature of things. (P. 31) The good or bad state of the moral world depends on the improvement they make of their *natural* agency. (P. 162)

MORAL causes and moral motives and inducements, such as *habits and dispositions of the heart*—A moral habit, or  *motive*. (P. 29, 30) Every thing that is properly called a motive has a tendency or advantage to move the will *previous* to the effect, or to the act of the will excited. (P. 8, that is, a motive, which is a moral habit, is yet previous to and excites the moral habit)

MR. Edwards's application of gravitation and the scale of a ballance (p. 93) to his subject, may serve to shew the coincidence in this place; especially if his general reasoning is also taken into consideration.

LIBERTY is a power, opportunity, or advantage that any one has, to *do as he pleases*—or power and opportunity to *pursue and execute* his choice—without taking into the meaning

Now this *hypothetical* liberty (as Mr. *Hume* justly files it) belongs (as he adds) to every body who is not a *prisoner*, and *in chains*. (Vol. iii. p. 145)

**COLLINS.** I contend for liberty as it signifies a power in man *to do as he wills or pleases*. (*Clark's* remarks on *Collins*, p. 14.)

**HOBBS.** Though the will be necessitated, yet *the doing what we will* is liberty. He is free to do a thing, who may do it if he have a will to do it, and may forbear, if he have the will to forbear, though the will to do the action be necessary, or though there be a necessity that he shall have a will to forbear. He who takes away the liberty of *doing according to our wills*, takes away the nature of sin; but he that denies the liberty to will doth not do so. The necessity of an action doth not make the law that prohibits it unjust; for it is not the necessity, but the will to break the law, that makes the action unjust; and what necessary cause so-

ever

ing of the word any thing of the cause or original of that choice. Two things are opposed to liberty, namely, *constraint and restraint*. (P. 38, 39, 40, 300, *et passim*) To say that a man exerciseth liberty, not only in *external* actions, but *in the acts of the will themselves*, is to say liberty consists in willing what he wills. (P. 74, 75, 76, 286, 287) He cannot be said to be unable to do a thing, who can do it *if he will*; though such a will may be required by command as is forever impossible.

(Part iii, sect. 4) A freedom from *coaction*, but not from *necessity*, is essential to virtue or vice, praise or dispraise, reward or punishment. (P. 194, 213, *et passim*) Commands and obligations to obedience are consistent with moral inability to obey. (Part iii, sect. 4)

THE will in every instance acts by moral necessity, (p. 230) and always has an inability to act otherwise than it doth; (p. 35) men are morally unable to will otherwise than they do will, as really, truly, and properly in one instance as another: yet the necessity of the will never renders any thing improperly

ever preceeds an action, yet if that action be forbidden, he that doth it *willingly*, may justly be punished. (*Whitby* on five points, p. 360, 361)

improperly the subject of command. The opposition or defect of the will in that which is *its original and determining act*, implies a moral inability. This inability alone (which consists in disinclination) never can excuse any person. (Part iii, sect. iv) In moral necessity, the connection between cause and effect is prior and superior to will and endeavour. (P. 294) In a series of acts, if there are five, ten, an hundred, or a thousand acts in the train, and the first not determined by the will, none of them are. (P. 48, 224, 225, 256, 257) *The essence of virtue and vice is not in their cause, but in their nature.*

**COLLINS.** GOD cannot communicate free-will to men, without being chargeable with their abuse of it. To admit that any being can act in a manner contrary to what it does, or fulfil any other end, is tantamount to allowing it to be independent of the Deity; and consequently, to have it in its election and power to thwart the schemes of the great author and superintendent of all things. (*Jackson's vindication*, p. 54—56)

**PART** iv, sect. ix, x. And p. 402, 408, Mr. *Edwards* chargeth the deniers of necessity with virtually saying, that GOD's will and desire is infinitely cross'd in every act of sin, provided moral evil is not for the best—that liberty, as opposed to necessity, argues an inferiority and servitude unworthy of the supream Being; really subjects the will of the Most High to the will of his creatures, and brings him into a dependence on them. (353)

CATO. The notion of liberty of action reflects upon GOD's wisdom or power—It intrrenches upon his providence and government of the universe, by giving part of his power out of his own hands and by leaving it to the discretion of inferior, weak beings to contradict himself, and disappoint his intentions. (Vol. iv. p. 179)

LEIBNITZ's 'pre-established harmony,' answers to *Cato's* resembling the creation (not excepting the intelligent part of it) to a *machine*; which if not so framed at first as to answer its end without the continual interposal of the Creator, is supposed to imply a defect of wisdom and power. (Vol. iv. p. 205, 206)

CATO. All causes must first or last center in the supream cause. (Vol. iv. p. 174, 178, 195, 196)

THE argument of the fatalists from prescience, is, either that all events are known and foretold by the gods, and *therefore necessary*;

UNLESS his scheme of necessity be admitted, Mr. *Edwards* says it will follow, that GOD must be exposed to be constantly changing his mind and intentions as to his future conduct; altering his measures, relinquishing his old designs, and forming new schemes and projections--continually putting his system to rights, as it gets out of order, and liable to be wholly frustrated of his end in the creation of the world. (P. 160—166, 353)

ON the scheme of self-determination, the will of man is left to the guidance of nothing but blind contingency: So that if it makes any difference between men and machines, it is for the worse; for machines are guided by an understanding cause, by the skillful hand of the workman or owner. (P. 318)

THINGS, which ever had or will have a beginning, are not necessary in their own nature, but are necessary by a connection with what is from eternity. (P. 25)

GOD orders the volitions of moral agents, among other events, in such a decisive manner, that the events are infallibly connected

*essary*; or some things are neither known nor taken care of by the gods. (*Jackson's answer to Cato*, p. 72, 73. Compare Mr. *Edwards*, part ii. sect. ii. particularly p. 160—166)

nected with his disposal. His own immediate conduct is original, or first in the series of events—and sin comes to pass because he *sees it needful and of importance* that it should come to pass. (Part iv, sect 9, 10, and p. 403, 405)

UPON the whole : One of the famous objections of the *fatalists* of old to the liberty of human actions, and which is urged for necessity by modern infidels, was, that every action results from a *precedent motive or reason*, which reason or motive is *out of our power*. (*Jackson's answer to Cato*, p. 100.) We need not produce any passage from Mr. *Edwards* to shew the coincidence. His whole scheme is founded on this principle.

WE fear our quotations have already been too numerous, or it were easy to add to them. We presume they have been sufficient to satisfy the attentive and impartial in regard to the coincidence we proposed to exhibit. What presumption of the falshood of Mr. *Edwards's* scheme ariseth from it's agreement with the doctrine of those who reject the evidence of the christian revelation, and even believed not (some of them) in the perfections and moral government of GOD, we shall not say; though the suspicion that it is fallacious, arising from the comparison we have made, will not, we trust, be thought inconsiderable, whether it can or cannot be distinctly perceived where the fallacy lies. After all, we should not have troubled the reader with this appendix but for a reason already assigned. For if his scheme hath the tendency, and is reducible to the consequences, we have attributed to it, all but infidels will allow this to be a full demonstration of it's falshood. Whether the fallacy of the reasoning of his book can be distinctly traced, or with what class of writers it coincides, is not the question—But whether the consequences are justly drawn.

If any, who may think the 'things which have been alledged worthy of being read, or of so much notice as to say much about them, should have their indignation or disdain raised,' we can truly say, that we meant to raise neither. We sat down with a determination to avoid every thing personal. If we have broken through this determination, it is an inadvertence we cannot recollect. Whatever we think of Mr. *Edwards's* system, we doubt not the goodness of his heart; and believe he is entered into the reward of a good and faithful servant, where even great men see they knew but in part while they tabernacled in flesh, and perhaps entertained some dangerous errors. For we have not so learned Christ as to infer the badness of any man's heart from the falshood of his speculative opinions.

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The Printer desires the reader to excuse some irregularity in numbering the pages in the beginning of this examination, and some other typographical errors. The most material that have been observed are here pointed out.

P. 57. l. 19 r. *accepted*—l. 20, r. *that*—p. 105. l. 16, for loose r. lose—p. 108, l. 15. r. was as—p. 119, l. 15, for terms r. turns—p. 124, l. 18, r. as if it were—p. 125. l. 8. for faultless r. faithless.





Σαυς 11623

