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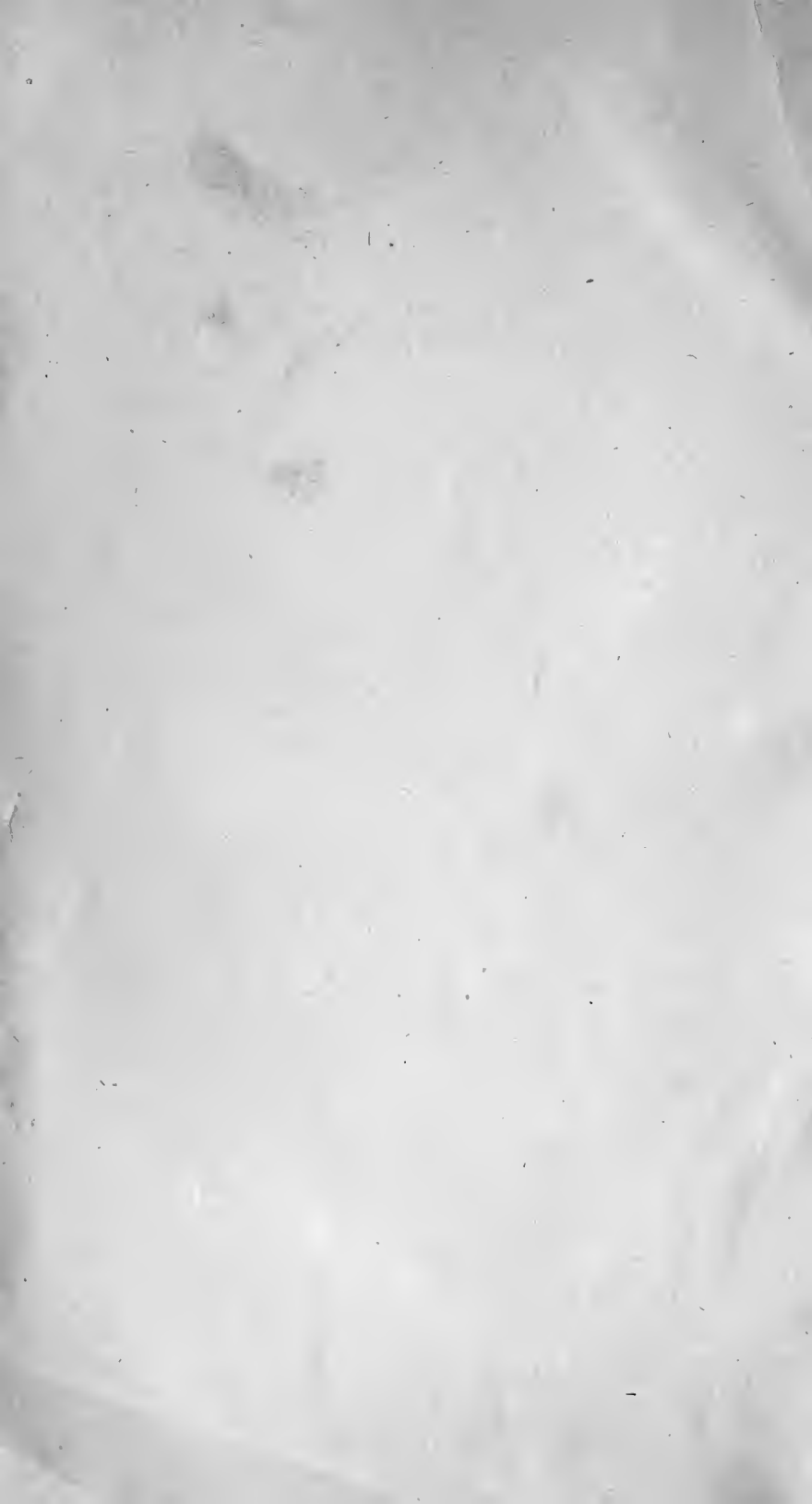
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A LETTER

TO THE

REV. NOAH PORTER, D.D.

PASTOR OF THE CONG. CHURCH, FARMINGTON, CON.

ON THE

STATEMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR.

IN REFERENCE TO

DR. BELLAMY'S DOCTRINES.

FROM No. XV. OF VIEWS IN THEOLOGY,
FOR NOV. 1834.

NEW-YORK:
JOHN P. HAVEN, 148 NASSAU-STREET,
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY'S HOUSE.

1834.

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ON THE STATEMENTS OF THE CHRISTIAN SPECTATOR
IN REFERENCE TO DR. BELLAMY'S DOCTRINES.

SIR,

REPORT, authorized, if I am not misinformed, by the Editor of the Christian Spectator, represents you to be the author of the article in the October number of that work, on "the Life and Character of Rev. Luther Hart," in which the following passages occur.

"For the June number of 1830, he prepared the review on the early history of the Congregational churches of New England"—
"The review of Bellamy appeared in the succeeding number."
p. 483.

"As to the origin of evil, Mr. Hart fully concedes that Bellamy and Strong reason chiefly and avowedly on the theory, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; or that the moral system includes more good than it could have done, had there been no sin and punishment, and was therefore preferred by the Creator to any other system possible or conceivable. This of course must be admitted to be the doctrine which these great men held. Yet this subject does not appear to have come before them in the form in which it is now presented, as a distinct subject of contemplation and argument. They assumed the common theory of the day, as it had come down to them, without distinctly inquiring, whether there was any alternative consistent with the Calvinistic faith, or following this out in its bearings on other known and admitted truths. Hence it is not wonderful, if when they met with difficulties of which this theory

did not afford a satisfactory solution, they unconsciously gave their arguments a shape which involved the assumption of the other. This is the less surprising, when it is considered that both theories occupy so much common ground—the doctrines of God's eternal purpose—of his permission of sin, in order to the greatest good—of his universal providence overruling it for good—and in short, all the essential attributes of his nature, and all the revealed principles of his government. This Mr. Hart thought was the fact, and referred to the passages in their writings which induced this belief. This was not claiming them as having adopted the theory attributed to the New Haven theology. It was claiming only, that this is a theory, to which those powerful minds, contrary to 'the tradition received from the fathers,' unconsciously resorted in explaining and vindicating certain revealed truths; and the only inference is, that it is a theory which commends itself to the mind, in view of the revealed character and government of God." *Christian Spectator* for 1834. p. 491.

It is a satisfaction, sir, when one meets with serious difficulties in the perusal of a work, to be able to resort immediately to the author, and solicit from him such reconciliations or corrections, as his inconsistencies and errors may require. I notice that in a late letter given to the public, you made professions of strong attachment to truth, and expressed ardent wishes for the prevalence of just views respecting the New Haven theologians and their theology. It is reasonable to expect that one who is so ready, without solicitation, to step forth for the maintenance of right in the cause of others, will exhibit at least an equal promptness in furnishing such light as may be necessary for the vindication of his own representations and doctrines. I take leave therefore, to invite your notice to several statements and implications in the above cited passages, which I find myself unable to reconcile with truth.

I. The first topic to which I solicit your attention is, the view which you give of the representation put forth in that "review of Bellamy," of his theory respecting "the origin of evil."

Your statement is, that “as to the origin of evil, Mr Hart fully concedes that Bellamy and Strong reason chiefly and avowedly on the theory, that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; or that the moral system includes more good than it could have done, had there been no sin and punishment, and was therefore preferred by the Creator to any other system possible or conceivable;” and that he only represented that “they *unconsciously* gave their arguments a shape which *involved* the assumption of the other” “theory attributed to the New Haven theology;”—not that he claimed that they “avowedly” adopted that theory.

This statement, I regret, sir, to be obliged to say—so far as the review of Bellamy, to which I shall confine my remarks, is concerned—is directly the reverse of fact. The open, the bold, the unqualified representation of that review is, that the theory on which Dr. Bellamy constructed his main reasonings, and chiefly proceeded throughout his discussion, is the theory which Dr. Taylor has advanced; and that it was only by “inadvertence,” and from “the pressure of difficulties of which *this* theory did not afford a satisfactory solution,” that he was driven to adopt the hypothesis that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good.

He begins his remarks on the subject with the following declaration.

“Dr. Bellamy, in accounting for God’s permission of sin, has not adhered throughout to any one hypothesis. On the contrary, he has at different times, reasoned on at least two different hypotheses, according to the nature of the difficulties which were presented to his view. These are:

1. That sin is the *necessary means* of the greatest good.
2. That the *system* or *plan* which God adopted, (not the sin which was incidental to it, as a certain consequence) is the necessary means of the greatest good.

“This latter hypothesis, we need hardly say, is the one of which we have affirmed, in common with Dr. Taylor in his sermon on the

nature of sin—not that it *is* true, or can be supported by absolutely decisive evidence—but that it *may* be true, and that it has never yet been *proved to be false*.”—Christian Spectator, for 1830, pp. 529–530.

He here simply affirms that Dr. Bellamy “reasoned on *at least* two different hypotheses, according to the nature of the difficulties which were presented to his view;” without stating which it is that he professedly maintained. After endeavouring to account for Dr. Bellamy’s reasoning “in different parts of his treatise on different and inconsistent hypotheses”—an endeavour that for injustice and absurdity has scarce a parallel, except on Dr. Taylor’s pages—he presents, in the following language, his concession that Dr. Bellamy reasoned at times on the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good.

“In ascribing to Dr. Bellamy the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, *it is but just to remark*, that he proposes it *often* in the form of a mere hypothesis, or as what *may be true*.” “In other *instances*, however, he adopts the form of positive assertion. He states too, that ‘if God had pleased, he *could* have hindered the existence of sin.’ And this he supposes might have been done in perfect consistency with free agency. It is obvious, therefore, that Dr. Bellamy *in a part of his reasoning* proceeds on the supposition that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good. And we are perfectly willing that such statements, on his part, should have all the weight to which they are entitled on a full view of the facts.” p. 531.

Such is the obscure and stifled concession, which he makes, that Bellamy *sometimes reasoned* on the hypothesis that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good—not as truth required, that that was the theory which he openly and formally advanced and maintained, to the utter rejection and condemnation, not only of that which Dr. Taylor holds, but of every other. To this reluctant and smothered admission, he adds:—

“Should it appear, however, that these statements are not more irreconcilable with the views which we have expressed, than with many things advanced by himself—that he was led to adopt this theory through the inadvertence we have already specified—that in stating the question at issue, in many of his reasonings, and especially in answering objections to the perfection of the divine character and government, he has virtually adopted the position that sin (in respect to the divine prevention) is *incidental* to the best system;” then may his authority be appealed to with *equal or even greater propriety* in support of the principles which we have advocated on this subject.” p. 531—532.

Here, sir, is no such full concession as you ascribe to Mr. Hart, that Bellamy reasons “chiefly and avowedly on the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good”: and that when he deviated from it, he did it “unconsciously,” and by becoming inconsistent with himself. There is no concession indeed whatever to that effect. In place of that, it is claimed, that in ascribing that theory to Dr. Bellamy, justice requires that it should be stated that he proposes it *often* in the form of a *mere hypothesis*, or merely as what may possibly be true: and in the admission that he sometimes adopts the form of positive assertion, and proceeds on the supposition that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, it is intimated that it is only in “instances,” and “a part of his reasoning;” whilst, on the other hand, it is represented that “he was led to adopt this theory through the inadvertence” to which the reviewer had before referred it; and that so far was he from chiefly and avowedly reasoning on it throughout his discussion; that “in stating the question at issue; in many of his reasonings; and especially in answering objections to the perfection of the divine character and government; he virtually adopted” Dr. Taylor’s hypothesis; and that “his authority,” therefore, “may be appealed to with equal, or even greater propriety, in support of the *principles*” of that the-

ory. 'The reviewer accordingly, after offering some explanation of the meaning of his terms, employs the remainder of the article in endeavoring to verify that representation, by laboring to show that Dr. Bellamy "introduces the subject of his discussion to his readers on the basis of this theory;" that his exhibition of sin as taking place by God's permission, "renders the inference unavoidable," that he regarded this as the true theory; that he "most explicitly concedes that sin is *no part of God's* scheme or plan;" that he teaches that the existence of moral evil is not a necessary means to the highest glory of God; that he sanctions this theory in his statements in regard to the tendency of sin; that "he resorts to it" in "answering some principal objections;" that "all that" he "says respecting holy beings, as moral agents, is *full in proof*" of the same "point;" and at length, that "it is manifest, from the manner in which Dr. Bellamy *generally* speaks of the results of the system, that *he did not regard sin as the necessary means of the greatest good*;" and finally, in closing the review, he says he "takes leave of the treatise with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret;—pleasure to find Dr. Bellamy meeting the enemies of divine sovereignty on that vantage ground," assumed by Dr. Taylor—which he thinks ought "never to be relinquished;—regret that in *any instance* he should yield it to his opponent, and be thus *driven* to adopt a theory which *made him inconsistent with himself*." p. 539.

The statement you give of the representation of the review, you thus perceive, sir, is directly the opposite of fact. The writer of that article, instead of fully conceding that Dr. Bellamy reasons chiefly and avowedly on the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; or that the moral system includes more good than it could have done, had there been no sin and punishment; and representing that it was only through inadvertence, and by be-

coming inconsistent with his avowed principles, that he deviates from that theory: makes it his specific object to demonstrate the direct reverse: that Dr. Bellamy encountered the enemies with whom he was contending on the vantage ground of Dr. Taylor's hypothesis; that he introduced his discussion, conducted his reasonings, and met the principal objections, which he attempted to obviate, on that theory: and that he abandoned it, and slid into the other, only by inadvertence, and becoming wholly self-inconsistent.

Such being the fact—too clearly to admit of disputation, —I take leave to ask of you, sir, how it happened that you put forth such a representation of it? By what theory is it that this blank and startling falsification is to be explained? Is it, that you are ignorant of the import of that review? You thought proper, in your letter to the editor of the Vermont Chronicle, to exhibit yourself as enjoying a very intimate acquaintance with the New Haven controversies and doctrines. Is this then to be taken as an exemplification of the accuracy of your knowledge, and the trust to which your testimony is entitled? Ignorant of the import of the review? How is it then, that you have undertaken to testify respecting its representations? Was it “through inadvertence” that you fell into this glaring misrepresentation? You must possess a singular tact at blundering, to commit such an error unconsciously, when fulfilling the solemn office of biographer and eulogist over the ashes of a cherished friend! Your co-labourers at New Haven must also be equal adepts in the art, to allow it to pass through their hands without detection! What a guileless, thoughtless set of beings! How forgetful of the controversies in which they have been engaged; of the means by which they have endeavoured to vindicate their peculiar doctrines; and of the aids in their efforts that have been rendered them by their friends! Yet there is, you cannot

but be aware, besides these, but one other hypothesis on which your falling into this extraordinary error can be accounted for. The nature of that, however, it cannot be necessary that I should hint to you. If, unhappily, it coincides with fact, you will need but to search with the aids of conscience to find it graven on the tablets of your memory.

Let the reason of the mis-statement, however, have been what it may, I trust you will feel the necessity, not only of correcting it with promptitude and frankness, but also of making a full explanation of its origin. As to allow it to remain unrectified, will be to exhibit an open disregard to the claims of truth ; so, to retract it, without satisfactorily accounting for its occurrence, will be, at best, to leave your reader without such evidences as your vindication needs, that you have not attempted deliberately to mislead him.

II. But whatever may be the proper solution of the incorrect statement which you have thus put forth ; gross as it is, it is not more glaring than the utter erroneousness of the view which the reviewer gives in that article of Dr. Bellamy's theory.

The next favour accordingly, which I have to ask of you is, that you will explain to me how it happened that he put forth such a misrepresentation of that writer's doctrines.

That the view which he gives of Dr. Bellamy's theory is totally and palpably false, I have already made manifest, by showing that the hypothesis which he imputes to him is directly the reverse of that which you represent Mr. Hart as conceding that he avowedly teaches, and which you grant it must be admitted to be indisputable that he held. You say, "Mr. Hart fully concedes that Bellamy and Strong reason chiefly and avowedly on the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good ; or that the moral system includes more good than it could have done

had there been no sin and punishment; and was therefore preferred by the Creator to any other system possible or conceivable. *This*," you add, "*of course, must be admitted to be the doctrine which these great men held.*" You here, in effect, pronounce the reviewer to be guilty of totally misrepresenting Dr. Bellamy, in exhibiting him, on the one hand, as openly and generally denying that doctrine, and never teaching it except through inadvertence; and on the other, as professedly maintaining the hypothesis advocated by Dr. Taylor, and never deviating from it but by unconsciously becoming inconsistent with himself. How consummate his injustice to Dr. Bellamy is, may be more fully seen, by adverting to the nature of the hypothesis which he represents him as maintaining.

1. That hypothesis is, that "the system or plan which God adopted," includes none of the actions which his creatures exert, but only embraces his own agency. This theory he represents Dr. Bellamy as formally teaching. His language is: "This plan, according to Dr. Bellamy, does not include sin as an integral part of it, but consists only of what God *does*." If it "consists only of what God does",—it obviously not only wholly excludes sin, but every portion likewise of the agency of creatures, good as well as evil. "Dr. Bellamy most explicitly concedes that sin is *no part* of God's scheme or plan; and affirms that if God's conduct in permitting sin be approved of, even without regarding sin as any part of God's scheme or plan, *his point* is gained." pp. 535—536.

2. The theory teaches that the sin that takes place, is not only not included in God's plan, but likewise that it is to him an unavoidable consequence of his creating and upholding such a system of moral agents: that it takes place not by his permission, but in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it. "Dr. Bellamy, if language can do it, vindicates the

government of God in view of existing evil, on the theory that 'the evil (in respect to divine prevention) is *incidental* to,' that is, a *necessary* attendant of "the best plan."

3. This alleged impossibility to God of preventing his creatures from sinning, is constituted, the theory represents, by their nature as moral agents. It exhibits the power of volition as a power of exerting choices, wholly independently of influences: as a power, therefore, that by its very nature is incapable of being controlled or restrained.

"What finite being then, we ask," says the reviewer, "can know that a universe of free-agents, who possess of course the *power* of sinning, could have been held back from the *exercise* of that power in every possible conjuncture of circumstances, even by all the influences to obedience, which God could exert upon them, without destroying their freedom? These influences must of necessity be subjected to one limitation; viz: *the nature of that on which they are called to act*;—and in acting upon mind, omnipotence must operate according to the laws of moral agency, or there is an end, at once, both to sin and holiness."—Christian Spectator, for 1830, p. 533.

"As free agents have *power* to sin, notwithstanding all the influences to obedience which God can exert upon them, they *may* use that power, and therefore on this hypothesis, sin, as to God's preventing it, is necessarily incidental to a moral system."—Christian Spectator for 1830,—p. 530.

Such are the main elements of the hypothesis which the reviewer imputes to Dr. Bellamy;—an hypothesis which, first contemplating the power of exerting volitions as a power of acting from mere self-determination, or putting forth choices wholly independently and irrespectively of influences and reasons; thence, on the one hand, denies to God the possibility of exerting a controlling influence on moral agents; and then, on the other, exhibits him in accordance with such an inability, as wholly excluding the events of their agency from his designs.

That the reviewer produced nothing whatever to sustain his ascription of this theory to Dr. Bellamy, I need not apprise you. Neither you, nor any one who has read the *Sermons and Vindication*, can have failed to see that the attempt to make out that he held or sanctioned it, is a sheer misrepresentation:—as causeless and daring a libel, as recklessness and mendacity ever fabricated.

There is not a shadow of truth in the pretence that Dr. Bellamy attempted to vindicate God in the permission of the sin that exists, on the ground that he is unable to prevent it. In place of that, he every where throughout his discussion, contemplates God as perfectly able to withhold his creatures from it, without destroying their freedom, and makes it his avowed and sole aim to demonstrate his wisdom in thus intentionally permitting when he might prevent it.

Nor is there a shadow of truth in the pretence that he *virtually* founded his attempts to vindicate the divine administration on that theory. Not an argument nor a proposition exists in his discussion, that either lends that pretence any support, or can save it from the infamy of deliberate falsehood.

In place of openly advocating in any instance, or virtually sanctioning that hypothesis, he in the most explicit and decisive terms, denounced it as utterly contradictory to the plainest representations of the scriptures, and dictates of reason; and unequivocally asserted the perfect power of God, if he chose, to prevent his creatures from sin, and confirm them universally in holiness. The most ample proofs of these facts will occur in the progress of this discussion.

It is an utter absurdity indeed to represent Dr. Taylor's theory, as a theory of the permission of sin; and the intimation that Dr. Bellamy attempted to account for its permission on that hypothesis, is as grossly insulting to his sense,

as it is unjust to his piety. Account for God's voluntarily permitting the existence of sin, by denying that he voluntarily permits it ! Could any but an idiot or a madman be guilty of such a solecism ?

But even supposing Dr. Taylor's theory respecting the divine inability to be true ; it can furnish no vindication whatever of the Most High in respect to the existence of sin : the pretence that it does, is ridiculous : for while it proceeds on the assumption that it is requisite in order to his vindication, that he should pursue that agency which is necessary on his part to the production or existence of the greatest good ; and that that good consists of the holiness and happiness of his moral creatures ; its representation is, that his agency, plan and power, in fact, extend only to the creation and support of his works ; not in the slightest degree to the actions of his intelligent creatures : that the whole of their agency ; their holiness and happiness therefore, and consequently the greatest good ; alike lie wholly without the circle of his plan, and the sphere of his influences ! The proof which the theory pretends to furnish, that God exerts all the agency within his ability that can contribute to the production of the greatest good, thus turns out to be an express and solemn asseveration that he has neither any power or design to produce that good—that it is not among the ends at which he aims !

Such is the complication of ignorance and impiety which the reviewer attributes to Dr. Bellamy ; and not only without a shadow of authority, but against the most palpable, the most abundant, the most unmixed and resistless demonstration, that the views of that writer were the direct reverse of those which he ascribes to him. An instance of misrepresentation surpassing it in enormity cannot be pointed out, in the whole annals of even unprincipled polemics.

I now ask you, sir, how it is to be accounted for, that the

reviewer put forth this misrepresentation? I do not inquire of you how it is to be apologized for. It does not admit of excuse or palliation. But I ask you to make known the reasons of his perpetrating it. How was it, sir, that the author of that article, after having carefully perused Dr. Bellamy's Sermons and Vindication, sat down and deliberately penned this stupendous misrepresentation; not only without one solitary proof, or consideration to support him; but against a glare of evidence, which no eye, however dull, could fail to see; against the clear and unpervertible testimony of every page, of every proposition, of every sentence in the volume? Unveil to us, I pray you, sir, the reasons of this extraordinary act;—that its author, if a thoughtless trifler, may at least be disarmed of his influence; or if a deliberate falsifier, may meet the infamy that his depravity deserves.

III. When you have fulfilled this office, be good enough to allow me to call your attention to some further statements which you thought proper to make in the passage quoted from you at the commencement of this article.

After affirming that Mr. Hart fully concedes that Bellamy and Strong reason chiefly and avowedly on the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good; or that the moral system includes more good than it could have done, had there been no sin and punishment, and was therefore preferred by the Creator to any other system, possible or conceivable;” and granting that “this must be admitted to be the doctrine which these great men held;”—you add:

“Yet this subject does not appear to have come before them in the form in which it is now presented, *as a distinct subject of contemplation and argument.*”

A flat denial that Dr. Bellamy made the theory that sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, a distinct sub-

ject of contemplation and argument! And this after you have not only affirmed, that it must be admitted that he held that doctrine; but stated also, that Mr. Hart fully concedes that he chiefly and *avowedly* reasons on it throughout his Sermons and Vindication! A bold unqualified denial that there is any appearance that Dr. Bellamy, in his voluminous discussions on these identical themes, ever made the question a distinct subject of contemplation and argument, whether sin is the necessary means of the greatest good—whether the moral system includes more good than it could, had there been no sin and punishment—and whether it was therefore preferred by the Creator to any other system possible or conceivable! If such flagrant self-contradictions—such startling and unheard of misrepresentations, do not give the coup de grace to your testimony, the trust of the public must be made of sterner stuff, than I have hitherto suspected. Pray, sir, have you ever read the volume on the permission of sin, of whose contents you venture to give such a representation? How then is it, that you can have formed such a judgment of the passages like the following, that are to be found on almost every one of its pages?

“*Doctrine.* A sight of the wisdom of God in the permission of sin, is very useful to promote holiness of heart and life. It has a great tendency to make us feel right, and behave well.

“The truth of the doctrine being plain and evident, I shall only attempt to show,

- I. What we are to understand by God's *permitting* sin. And,
- II. The *wisdom* of God in the permission of sin. And then,
- III. Conclude with a practical improvement.

I. What are we to understand by God's *permitting* sin?

“1. Not that he loves sin, or that there is any thing in the nature of sin that he approves of, for it is the abominable thing which his soul hateth.

“2. Much less are we to imagine that God, in permitting sin, deprives the sinner of the freedom of his will.

“3. God's permitting sin, consists merely in not hindering of it. He

saw that Joseph's brethren would certainly kill him, unless he interposed to hinder it; and he could have hindered their selling, as easily as he hindered their murdering him. But he did not. He let them take their course.

4. And yet it is self-evident, God never permits sin in the character of an unconcerned spectator, as not caring how affairs go; but as having weighed all circumstances and consequences: Therefore,

5. God never permits sin, but only when, on the whole, all things considered, he judges it best not to hinder it: and therefore,

6. At whatever time God forbears to interpose to hinder the commission of any act of sin, he is not only justifiable in his conduct, but even commendable and praiseworthy; because he has chosen to act in the wisest and best manner. But this leads me,

II. To show the *wisdom* of God in the permission of sin: and I will, in the first place, begin with some instances that are more plain and easy, and afterwards proceed to what is more intricate and difficult.

1st. Instance. And to begin with the affair of Joseph, there needs little to be said to show the manifold wisdom of God in it.

2d. Instance. When the king in Egypt, to enrich himself, attempted to bring the Israelites into a perpetual bondage.

3d. Instance. When Pharaoh resolved never to let Israel go.

4th. Other instances of the wisdom of God in the permission of sin, in his providence over the Israelites. Bellamy's Works, vol. II. p. 10—20.

The object of his argument in respect to each of these instances is, to show that God exhibited infinite wisdom in permitting the Israelites and Egyptians to sin as they did, in place of preventing them.

"Nothing," he says, "impresses the heart of a human creature like *facts*. Nor could any series of facts have been better contrived than these, to reach their hearts, and make them feel what they were in the sight of infinite holiness, and to bring them to fear the glorious and fearful name of the Lord their God.

"It was most for the honour of God, and most for the interest of religion; and so really for the best good of the Israelites, that they should be thus tried; left to act out their hearts, and then punished, subdued, humbled, and brought into subjection to the divine authority, before they entered into possession of the promised land, although it cost them six hundred thousand lives, and many a dreadful day."—pp. 24—26.

He closes his argument on these heads with the following remarks.

“1. That in all these instances of God’s permitting sin, he had a view to the manifestation of himself. They gave him opportunities to act out his heart ; and so to show what he was, and how he stood affected: and he intended, by his conduct, to set himself, i. e. all his perfections, in a full, clear, strong point of light: that it might be known that he was the Lord, and that the whole earth might be filled with his glory.

2. And he intended to let his creatures give a true specimen of themselves, that it might be known what was in their hearts. But,

3. The advantages of acquaintance with God and ourselves are innumerable. We can be neither humble, holy, nor happy without it: so that,

4. It may easily be seen how that God, in the permission of sin, may design to advance his own glory and the good of his creatures. And that this was really God’s design in the instances which have been under consideration, is manifest from the five books of Moses in which the history of these things is recorded at large.” pp. 27, 28. -

Before proceeding to other quotations, I beg leave to call your notice to several facts that are settled by these passages.

1. That it was the professed and sole object of Dr. Belamy’s discussion, to demonstrate the wisdom of God in the permission of sin:—a pretty satisfactory proof, I venture to suggest, that he made it “a distinct subject of contemplation and argument,” notwithstanding your assertion to the contrary.

2. That the sin of which he treats, is the sin that actually exists in the universe, and especially in this world.

3. That the permission which he ascribes to the Most High of this sin, is a voluntary permission of it by his moral and providential administration:—the direct reverse fo Dr. Taylor’s theory, who exhibits his permission of sin as comprised wholly in the act of creating intelligent agents,

by the gift to them of a nature which is incapable of being controlled in volition:—and of upholding them in existence.

4. That he in the most open and explicit manner asserts God's perfect ability to hinder them by his providence and Spirit both from the sins which they commit, and from all others—exhibits him as forbearing to withhold them from transgression, from moral reasons solely:—not from a want of ability to prevent them from it, without destroying their freedom:—the exact opposite of the theory, which the reviewer ascribes to him, and that is held by Dr. Taylor.

Of these facts, equally decisive proofs are seen in the following passages.

“ After having viewed the wisdom of God in the permission of sin in various plain instances,” I “ proceed humbly to search into the wisdom of God in *ever* permitting sin and misery to enter the world: And,

1. “ As all God's works are uniform, so we may justly argue, from the wisdom and beauty of particular parts, to the wisdom and beauty of the whole. As God's nature is always the same, and as he always acts like himself, so therefore his works are always harmonious and consistent: so that if we can see the wisdom of God in the permission of sin in some instances, we may justly argue to his wisdom in his whole grand scheme.

“ 2. Yea, were there no particular instance in which we could see the wisdom of God in the permission of sin, yet, from the perfections of the divine nature alone, we have such full evidence that he must always act in the wisest and best manner, as that we ought not in the least to doubt it. In the days of eternity, long before the foundation of the world, this system, now in existence, and this plan which now takes place, and all other possible systems, and all other possible plans, more in number perhaps than the very sands on the seashore, all equally lay open to the divine view, and one as easy to Almighty as another. He had his choice. He had none to please but himself: besides him there was no being. He had a perfectly good taste, and nothing to bias his judgment, and was infinite in wisdom: this he chose; and this, of all possible systems, therefore, was the best, infinite wisdom and perfect rectitude being judges. If, therefore, the whole were as absolutely incomprehensible by us as it is by

children of four years old, yet we ought firmly to believe the whole to be perfect in wisdom, glory, and beauty.

“3. But if all God’s works are uniform, as has been said, we may not only argue from the wisdom of particular parts to the wisdom of the whole, but also from the special *nature* of particular parts to the special nature of the whole: and so from a right idea of particular parts which we are able to comprehend, we may have some right conceptions of the whole, although the whole is too great for our conceptions: and so here is a clue which will lead us to a right view of the true nature of the whole moral system, and help us, at least to some partial view of the wisdom, glory, and beauty of the whole.

“4. And indeed it seems to have been God’s design, in this state of instruction and discipline, where we first come into existence, and from small beginnings are to grow up to a more full knowledge of God and insight into his moral government,—to suit things to the present weakness of our capacities, by representing the general nature of the whole moral system, in some select parts of it, giving us a kind of a **PICTURE** of the whole in miniature, to lead us to some right notions of the nature of the whole.

“It is certain, that as all God’s works are uniform, amidst all their infinite variety, so it has been his method, in his lesser works in the moral world, designedly to give a faint image of his greater, and hereby prepare the way for their being more easily understood.

“5. Yea, we may venture to affirm, that of necessity it must be the case, that the nature of the parts will certainly show the nature of the whole in a moral system, under the government of him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. For while he constantly acts like himself, his whole conduct will be of a piece, always like itself;—and so one part of it will illustrate the nature of another; and so, from the knowledge of the nature of various parts, we may certainly argue to the nature of the whole.

“Show me, therefore, his views and design in suffering Joseph to be sold; Israel to be oppressed; Pharaoh to harden his heart; Israel to murmur and rebel, and fall in the wilderness; and let me into the wisdom of his conduct in these particular parts of his grand scheme, and then assure me that the whole system is governed by the same infinitely wise being: and how can I doubt the wisdom of the whole, while I behold the wisdom of the particular parts? Or how can I be at a loss for the general nature of the whole, while I behold the nature of the particular parts, and firmly believe that God always acts like himself, and keeps up a constant uniformity through all the infinite varieties of cases and circumstances that ever occur in his moral government of the world?

“6. If therefore, the plan which infinite wisdom contrived, to bring Jacob’s family into Egypt, and from thence through the Red sea and wilderness into Canaan, in which so much sin was permitted, and so much misery endured, was, all things considered, the wisest and best, as being so exactly suited to set all the perfections of God in the fullest and strongest point of light, and at the same time to unmask their hearts, and set their absolute dependence on God, and great obligations to him, and the infinite evil of sin, in such a light, as had the most powerful tendency to induce them with penitent, humble, broken hearts, in an entire self-diffidence to put their trust only in God, and be wholly devoted to him; to fear him and love him, and walk in his ways, and keep all his commands, seeking his glory; I say, if that plan was the wisest that could have been contrived to answer these ends, and so the best suited to promote the glory of God, and the best good of the Israelites, and to answer many noble ends in that age and in all succeeding generations: such no doubt must be the whole of God’s moral government of the world; in which immensely great plan so much sin is permitted, and so much misery endured; i. e. it must be the best contrived scheme possible, to advance the glory of God, and the best good of the moral system.

“I am sensible there are many objections which will be apt to arise in the reader’s mind, and which are capable of being put into a very plausible dress, and which at first sight may seem to appear quite unanswerable. Nor am I unwilling they should be set in their strongest light. It is best to look on all sides, and that with the utmost care and impartiality.

“The objections are as follows:

“1. How could it be for the honor of the Supreme Lord and Governor of the universe, to suffer Satan, his enemy, by his lies, to deceive, seduce and persuade innocent man to rebel against his sacred Majesty, and subject himself and all his race to death and ruin?

“2. How could it be to the best good of the moral system that this lower world, instead of being inhabited by a race of incarnate angels, ever celebrating the praises of their great Creator, perfectly happy in his image and favor, should sink down into so near a resemblance to hell, in wickedness and wo? O how infinitely better would it have been, if instead of sin and misery here, and eternal pains of hell hereafter, to be suffered by such innumerable multitudes, all had been for ever holy and happy!

“3. How can it be made to appear that sin and misery were at all needful, much less absolutely necessary, in a system originally holy and happy, to answer any valuable ends? Would it not be to limit the Holy One of Israel, to say that he could find out no other way so

good as this to exalt God, and render the system holy and happy
Besides,

“ 4. If God wills sin, then it seems sin is agreeable to his will. And if from all eternity he decreed the misery of his creatures, then it seems their misery suits him. Both which, as is granted on all hands, are directly contrary to reason and to scripture.

“ Before we attempt a direct answer to these objections, let three or four things be premised.

“ 1. Be it so, that God’s permitting sin and misery to enter into the world, appears to us ever so dark, yet this is no argument at all against the wisdom, glory, and beauty of the divine conduct, in this affair, for there have been instances of the divine conduct in all appearance dark to perfection, which in the result have proved perfect in wisdom and beauty.

“ 2. That it is not at all strange that God’s conduct in the permission of sin, should appear exceeding dark to us, how wise, glorious, and beautiful soever it is in itself, and in the eyes of God. (1) Because our views of God’s grand plan are so very imperfect; (2) considering how ill a taste we have.

“ 3. When I think over former dispensations of providence; Joseph’s affair, and how dark it appeared to Jacob: the case of the Israelites, and how dark it appeared to Moses: and that this Jacob and this Moses were the best of men, and the favorites of heaven; and yet the divine conduct to them was absolutely unaccountable: and as I look along through the bible, I can think of other instances of the like nature, one after another till I come to the crucifixion of Christ; the most horrid sin that ever was committed; an affair exceeding dark to the disciples, the best of men then in the world: I say when I consider these, I cannot but conclude that if the most holy and knowing men on earth were entirely unable to solve the forementioned difficulties relative to the permission of sin, yet it would be no just inducement to doubt of the divine wisdom. Yea,

“ 4. However dark the affair appears, or however unanswerable the objections may seem to be, yet we have strict demonstration that of all possible plans this is the best; for before the foundation of the world, it was at God’s election to create; or not to create; and of all possible systems he had his choice, nor was there any thing to bias his judgment; nor was it possible he should make a mistake; all things were open and naked before him; he knew which was the best, and he chose this; and therefore this to him appeared preferable to any other: and therefore it was really the best.

“ And what then if we are not able fully to solve the difficulties?

Is it not altogether reasonable to conclude, that it is owing to our not seeing the whole plan, or to our want of a good taste, or both?

“Some of the heathen philosophers, who knew no better, imagined there were two gods; a good god, the author of all good in the system; and an evil god, the author of all evil in the system.

“Some who profess to adhere to divine revelation, in order to solve the difficulties relative to God’s permission of sin, affirm it came to pass unexpectedly to the divine Being: as he was not capable of foreseeing what would be the conduct of free agents. But it is enough for us to confute this hypothesis, that we have hundreds of instances in scripture of God’s foreknowledge of the conduct of free agents; and that it is a doctrine constantly taught and inculcated in the bible.

“Others, to solve the difficulties, have asserted, that it was not in the power of God to prevent the fall of free agents, without destroying their free agency, and turning them into intelligent machines, incapable of virtue as well as of vice. But it is enough for us to confute this hypothesis, that it is contrary to plain scripture representations; which teach us, that the man Christ Jesus, our second Adam, was a free agent, capable of the highest virtue, and yet in a confirmed state, so that he could not sin; as are also all the saints and angels now in heaven. From whence it appears that it was in God’s power to have confirmed all intelligences at first, and left them moral agents notwithstanding.

Others to solve the difficulties still more fully, have not only asserted as above, but also denied the eternity of hell torments, and affirmed the universal salvation of men and devils. But it is enough for us to confute this hypothesis, that instead of its being taught in scripture, it is, contrary to what those infallible writings affirm in language as plain and express and repeated, as could have been expected, if God had intended to establish us ever so fully in the belief of the eternity of hell torments. p. 34—50

Let me pause again for a moment and call your attention to the evidences which these passages furnish;

First, That Dr. Bellamy regarded the divine “plan” as including not only what God does, but all the actions likewise of his creatures, sinful as well as holy. No fact respecting his sentiments is more wholly incontrovertible than this. It is the explicit, the uniform representation of his pages; affirmed in his doctrine; asserted in his reasonings; proceeded on in all his answers to objections.

Secondly, That he not only regarded the existence of evil, at least to some extent, as necessary to the accomplishment of the greatest good, but held that the identical sin that is in fact permitted, is indispensable to the highest display of God's glory, and advancement of the holiness and happiness of his empire. It is this position that it is his express object to demonstrate ; to which all his reasonings are directed ; and without which they are destitute of any intelligent object. This, sir, is not only the fact, but is too palpably so, I take leave to tell you, to be controverted or overlooked with innocence. What then is it, but at once to set truth and decency at open defiance, to deny that he formally treated of this theme ? No proposition could have been embodied by you in language carrying with it a more flagrant and unpardonable contradiction to fact, than your assertion that there is no appearance that he ever made this a distinct subject of contemplation and argument.

Thirdly, That Dr. Taylor's theory " that it was not in the power of God to prevent the fall of free agents, without destroying their free agency, and turning them into intelligent machines, incapable of virtue as well of vice ;" was not only made by him " a distinct subject of contemplation and argument," but was formally and indignantly rejected by him as " contrary to plain scripture representations" both in regard to " the man Christ Jesus," " and all the saints and angels now in heaven," which demonstrate " that it was in God's power to have confirmed all intelligences at first, and left them moral agents, notwithstanding."

What now, sir, I take the liberty to inquire of you again, am I to think of the author of the review who, with these facts before him, solemnly asserted and labored to make it appear, that Dr. Bellamy conducted the main part of his reasonings on the theory held by Dr. Taylor " that it was not in the power of God to prevent the fall of free agents ;"

claimed that it is “manifest from the manner in which he *generally* speaks of the results of the system, that he did not regard sin as the necessary means of the greatest good ;” and affirmed that it was only by inadvertence and the grossest self-inconsistency that he in any instance slid into the latter hypothesis ! What am I to think of your equally confident declaration that “ this subject does not appear to have come before him in the form in which it is now presented, *as a distinct subject of contemplation and argument ?*” That your representations have any pretensions to accuracy—that they are not totally and most flagrantly false—no one, I suspect, will have the courage to claim. How came it to pass, I call upon you to make known, that he and you penned and sent them forth to the churches?—Where lay the causes ? What were your reasons ?

Dr. Bellamy’s third Sermon abounds with additional evidences of the total error and injustice both of the reviewer’s and your statements. His object in it is to unfold the reasons that the Most High did not immediately on their creation, confirm all intelligences in holiness ; but in place of it subjected them to trial, and permitted them to sin as they have ; and to show that they were wholly of a moral nature ; reasons of wisdom and benevolence ; not at all a want of power to prevent his creatures from sinning. It will be sufficient to verify this, to transcribe a few passages. He says :

1. “ God knew that it belonged to the nature of all finite beings to be mutable and peccable ; and that the best might degenerate so far as to become the worst ; no being in the system being by nature immutable but God alone.” That “how much soever of the honor of God and to the good of the system, and how desirable soever in these two respects it might appear in the sight of God, that the intelligent system should unanimously adhere and cleave forever to the Lord, yet in the nature of things there could be no certain secu-

rity for this, unless he himself, the only immutable being, should undertake and become surety for all his creatures. There could be no certain dependence upon creatures, left to themselves, how great and excellent soever their original powers, because, after all, they were finite; and therefore must have new views, and so were liable to wrong determinations.

“2. However, innocent holy beings, who as yet never felt the least inclination to swerve from God, but on the contrary were entirely wrapt up in him, could not easily perceive how it should be possible for them to turn away from the Deity, and become apostate. Yea, such a thing would naturally appear to be impossible, as they felt no inclination that way, nor had in view any thing which seemed to be of the nature of a temptation to it. Therefore,

“3. If God in a sense of their mutability, out of his own mere goodness and sovereign grace, to prevent their apostacy, and the infinitely dreadful consequences which in a government so perfectly holy as his, sin must expose them to, all which lay open to his view: I say, if God had become surety for all intelligences, if the only immutable Being had in such circumstances undertaken by his ever watchful eye, and the constant influences of his spirit, to have rendered all intelligences immutably good: although the kindness done them in God’s account, had been full infinitely great, yet not so in theirs; for they would not have been in the capacity to have discerned the kindness scarce at all, much less to have been so thoroughly sensible of their absolute dependence on God, and infinite obligations to him, as now, according to the present plan, the saved will forever be.

“In a word, God would not have been exalted so highly, nor would these intelligences have looked on themselves so infinitely beneath him: so dependent; so much obliged; nor would divine sovereign grace have stood in such a clear and striking point of light, as was really desirable. The truth would have lain in a measure concealed beyond the reach of finite capacities, there being in nature no means provided, whereby they could have come to the clear and full knowledge of it. Therefore,

“4. They were not fit to be confirmed; nor would it have been to the honor of God, to have confirmed them as things stood. They were not prepared to feel that they stood in need of this *super-creation-grace*, (if I may so call it) not as yet knowing, nor for aught appears, so much as suspecting that they were in any danger.

“5. It was but paying proper honor to the Deity, for God as moral governor of the world—in the sight of all created intelligences, to seat himself upon his throne and proclaim his own infinite supremacy, and let all know their infinite obligations to love, and honor and obey

him, on pain of his everlasting displeasure, and their everlasting banishment from his glorious presence. *To have concerned himself only for his creatures' good*, unsolicitous for the rights of the Godhead, in the very beginning of his reign, and when the first foundations of his everlasting kingdom were laying, had been to counteract his own nature, and his chief maxims of government. And indeed, as he is the Great Being, and in a sense the onlybeing all the creation being nothing compared with him,—so it was fit all intelligences should early be taught to view him in that light. And what method could be better suited to this end, than to let all the intelligent system know that their everlasting welfare was suspended on the condition of their paying supreme honor and yielding constant obedience to this glorious Monarch of the Universe; in the meantime leaving them to their own reflections and to their own choice; as being conscious to himself of their infinite obligations to yield everlasting obedience to his law?" p. 57—64.

Here, sir, you will be good enough to notice, the doctrine he advances is, that there is a limit, beyond which the rights and perfections of the Deity do not permit him to carry his efforts to excite his creatures to obedience; that in place of being—as Dr. Taylor teaches—imperiously obliged by justice and benevolence to employ every means within his power to withhold them from sin; neither their claims on him, nor the due assertion of his rights over them, and maintenance of his dignity, require or allow him to employ a larger sum of influence than that which he in fact exerts to secure them in obedience. He proceeds,

“And if, in this state of things, any of his creatures should venture to rise in rebellion against his glorious Majesty, the way would be open for him to take such steps as would have the most effectual tendency to discountenance sin; to exalt God, to humble the sinner, and glorify grace; and to prepare the way for the confirmation of innumerable multitudes of intelligences in holiness and happiness to the best advantage.

“6. The state of things in the moral system was not such immediately after the creation, as was suitable to the confirmation of intelligences in a way agreeable to the ends of moral government. God must have done all *immediately*, and *without their so much as discern-*

ing their need of it: for there were as yet, comparatively speaking, no means of confirmation. They had not had opportunity in any instance to see the infinitely evil nature and dreadful consequences of sin; nor did it yet appear what infinite abhorrence the Almighty had of iniquity, by any thing he had *done*. Nor did they so much as know their danger, and their need of the divine interposition. Things therefore were by no means ripe for a general confirmation.

“*Indeed God could have confirmed created intelligences then*; but not in a way so agreeable to the ends of moral government as afterwards; *i. e.* not so much to the honour of the moral governor and to the spiritual advantage of his creatures. When Satan, a glorious archangel, revolted, and drew off a third part (perhaps) of the inhabitants of heaven; and when, for their sin, they were driven out from the presence of God, down to an eternal hell, and when the elect angels had stood by, and with a perfect astonishment beheld this unexpected revolt of their companions, and with sacred dread seen divine wrath blaze out from the eternal throne of heaven’s Almighty Monarch, driving the rebel host from those celestial regions down to darkness and endless woes; and when the elect angels soon after saw our first parents turn away from God, and for their sin driven out of Paradise, and all this lower world doomed to death; and when they had stood by three or four thousand years, and been spectators of the judgments inflicted by God on a wicked world;—I say, when the elect angels had seen all these things, and had full time for consideration, their thoughts of God, of themselves, of sin, would be almost infinitely different from what they were immediately after their creation. And now, if God should see cause to confirm them, that they might never fall, it would appear to them a kindness infinitely great and infinitely free. Their absolute dependence on God, and infinite obligations to him, and the infinite malignity of sin, would naturally be so deeply impressed on their hearts by an attentive view of all these things, as would greatly tend to their everlasting confirmation, and prepare them to receive, with suitable gratitude, a kindness of such infinite value at the hands of God.

“The angels who stood, being no where, in scripture, denominated elect, until after the exaltation of Christ, some have thought they were held in a state of trial till then; when, by their confirmation, God’s eternal designs of love toward them were manifested. And it is certain that when they had been spectators of all God’s works in heaven, earth, and hell, through so long a period, they must have been in almost an infinitely better capacity to receive confirmation than immediately after their creation; and their confirmation now

would be infinitely more to God's honour, than if it had been granted at their first existence; and their own humility, holiness, and happiness, be increased an hundred or a thousand, or perhaps ten thousand fold. Therefore,

“7. On supposition that a third part were fallen and lost, yet it is easy to see how there may be eternally more holiness and happiness in the angelic world, than if sin and misery had been for ever unknown.” p. 64—67.

What now, sir, in view of these passages, have you to say of the reviewer's declaration, that “it is manifest, from the manner in which Dr. Bellamy *generally* speaks of *the results of the system*, that he did not regard sin as the necessary means of the greatest good?” Is it true? Is it credible that he can have believed it to be true? Is it possible that he could, by any process, have so bewildered himself, as not to have known that it was utterly and inexcusably false?

What have you to say of your declaration, that “this subject does not appear to have come before him in the form in which it is now presented, as a distinct subject of contemplation and argument?” Is it true, that there is no appearance that he ever made the question, whether sin is the necessary means of the greatest good, a distinct subject of consideration and reasoning? Is it true, that there is no appearance that he ever made the question, whether “it was in the power of God to prevent the fall of free agents, without destroying their free agency,” and to have confirmed all created intelligences immediately after their creation in immutable holiness, “a distinct subject of contemplation and argument?” Will you be good enough to favour me with a direct and full reply to these interrogatories?

I might add a multitude of other passages, from the fourth Sermon and the Vindication, presenting the fullest confutation of your declaration and the pretences of the

reviewer ; but I content myself with the following. After endeavouring to show the necessity of sin, to the production of the greatest good, on the ground that “ nothing can be known of God by created intelligences, be their capacities ever so great, any farther than he manifests himself ;” and that “ the apostacy of angels and men has given” him “ an opportunity to set all his perfections in the clearest and most striking point of light, and, as it were, to open all his heart to the view of finite intelligences ;”—he proceeds to notice, among others, the following objections.

“ Objection. But was there no other way in which God could have made angels and men as holy and happy, without the permission of sin ?

“ Answer. No ! Not if there were no other way in which he could so clearly and fully manifest, and so advantageously communicate himself to his creatures as this. Now if I am not able to prove there was no way, yet the objector cannot possibly contrive a way in which God could have given such clear and full manifestations of himself, and communicate good to his creatures in every respect so advantageously, sin and misery being for ever unknown, as he has and will, upon the present plan ; so that, for aught the objector or I know, this of all possible plans may be the best contrived to give a full and clear manifestation of the Deity, and raise intelligences to the highest pitch of moral perfection and happiness ; *and its being chosen by infinite wisdom before all others, demonstrates that this is actually the case.*

“ As for those who leave the honor of God, the infinitely great and glorious God, the Author, Proprietor, and King of the whole system, absolutely out of the account,—and imagine that the good of God’s *creatures and subjects* is the only thing to be attended unto in all the divine conduct as moral governor of the world ; it is impossible to reconcile any part of God’s plan to their fundamental maxim ; for if nothing was of importance but the creature’s good, why was not that solely attended to ? Why were all put on trial ? And why eternal destruction threatened for the first offence ? or ever threatened at all ? or the sinning angels expelled the heavenly world, and the human race all doomed to death for the *first transgression* ? And if our good is all that God now has in view, why have not more pains been taken for our recovery from age to age from the beginning of

the world? Yea, why are not infinite wisdom and almighty power, effectually exerted to render all eternally happy?

“Strange are the positions which the Chevalier Ramsay has laid down in order to reconcile the divine conduct to this notion. He maintains that God did not certainly know that his creatures would fall; *and if he had known it, he could not have hindered it consistently with their free agency. He has been trying ever since to reclaim them.* But if God meant to use the most powerful means with a fallen world *he possibly could*, and that in every age, as upon that hypothesis it must be supposed, why did he send but *one* Noah to the old world? Why not two or three thousand? Why did he raise up but one Moses, and but one Elijah, and send them only to the Israelites? Why did he not raise up thousands in every age and nation under heaven, and make thorough work? And why does he not take more pains with us of this age? Raise up thousands as well qualified to preach as St. Paul? And pour out his spirit on all flesh, as he did on the three thousand on the day of Pentecost?” p. 97—106.

How unfortunate, that in your conscientious and diligent examination of Bellamy's pages, for the purpose of enabling the churches to form a just view of his doctrine, neither you nor the reviewer, happened to meet with either of these passages; nor any of the hundreds and thousands of similar import that are to be found in his discussion! Since, however, they are now fairly presented to your notice, what, allow me to ask, do you think of his meaning in them? Do you see in them any indication that he held, that the reason that sin is admitted into the universe, is, that God is unable to exclude it, without giving up the system? that it is impossible to prove that God can prevent moral agents from sinning, without destroying their freedom? Do you discover any evidences that he did not regard sin as the necessary means of the greatest good? Or find any authority for the assertion, that “this subject does not appear to have come before him in the form in which it is now presented as a distinct subject of contemplation and argument?”

In enumerating in, his Vindication, the various points in which he and his opponent agreed, he makes the following statements :

“ We agree, that if God had pleased, he could have hindered the existence of sin, and caused misery to have been forever unknown in his dominions with as much ease, as to have suffered things to take their present course.

“ We agree, that God knew with infallible certainty, that things would take their present course and issue as they will issue, in the eternal ruin of millions, unless he himself should interpose, and effectually hinder it.

“ We agree, that God did, as it were, stand by and take a perfect view of the whole chain of events, in which his honor and the good of his creation was infinitely interested ; and in a full view, and under a most lively sense of the whole, *did deliberately forbear to interpose effectually to hinder the introduction of sin into his world, when he could have hindered it as easily as not.*” p. 126.

What now are the conclusions to which the impartial must find themselves carried by these passages, in respect to your and the reviewer's statements? Can any fact be clearer, than that the whole tissue of his pretences that Dr. Bellamy concurred with Dr. Taylor, is utterly unauthorised ; a misrepresentation the most causeless, the most stupendous, and the most calumnious? Or, could any mass of evidence render the conviction more resistless that it was so intentionally? a falsification as deliberate and malicious as it is unequalled in magnitude and daring. What consideration have you to offer that can justly shield him from this verdict? What exculpatory explanation have you to give of the assertion you have ventured to make, that “ this subject does not appear to have come before” Dr. Bellamy, “ in the form in which it is now presented, as a distinct subject of contemplation and argument?” You will find it necessary, I suspect, not only to allow these interrogations

to come before you, as a distinct subject of contemplation but to give them very explicit answers, in order to extricate yourself from the difficulties in which you "appear" to be involved.

IV. You will find it an equally perplexing task, I conjecture, to give a justificatory reason for the statements you have made in your next sentence. After saying that this subject does not appear to have come before them as a distinct subject of contemplation and argument, you add :

"They assumed the common theory of the day, as it had come down to them, without distinctly inquiring whether there was any alternative consistent with the Calvinistic faith, or following this out in its bearings on other known and admitted truths."

Assumed the common theory of the day as it had come down to him, and wrote a volume in explanation, proof and vindication of it, without ever making it a distinct subject of contemplation and argument! What a singular air of accuracy this representation wears! In what an admirable light it exhibits the anxious endeavors of the reviewer and the New Haven theologians, to make out that Dr. Bellamy's "*authority* may be appealed to with equal or even greater propriety, in support of the principles which they have advocated on the subject;" than of "the common theory" which he assumed and maintained! The testimony of a man on a metaphysical question, which had never come before him as a distinct subject of argument, or even of contemplation, must be truly admirable *authority*! How enviable the condition of theologians, who find it necessary to bolster up their theory by the suffrage of one of whom, to lend any color to their claim to his support, they are obliged to give such a representation!

But "they assumed the common theory of the day,"

you say, "without distinctly inquiring whether there was any alternative consistent with the Calvinistic faith, or following this out in its bearings on other known and admitted truths." You will find it necessary, I suspect, to make this representation "a distinct subject of contemplation and argument," in order to exculpate yourself from the reproach of an egregious and most childish misstatement. How is your assertion that Dr. Bellamy assumed the common theory without ever inquiring whether there was any alternative consistent with the Calvinistic faith, to be reconciled with the fact that in reply to the objector's question, whether "there was no other way in which God could have made angels and men as holy and happy without the permission of sin;" he explicitly answered, "no!" and declared that the fact "that infinite wisdom" has actually "chosen the present, before all other plans, demonstrates that it is of all possible plans, the best contrived to give a full and clear manifestation of the Deity, and raise intelligences to the highest pitch of moral perfection and happiness?" How is it to be reconciled with the fact that he not only discussed the question whether several other theories that had been advanced were consistent with the scriptures; but that he formally raised that inquiry respecting the hypothesis advocated at that period by the Chevalier Ramsay, and now put forth by Dr. Taylor, that the Most High cannot hinder his creatures from the sins which they commit, "consistently with their free agency:" "that it was not in the power of God to prevent the fall of free agents, without turning them into intelligent machines, incapable of virtue as well as of vice;" and that he rejected and denounced this hypothesis in the most full and unequivocal terms, as confuted by "plain scripture representations," which demonstrate "that it was in God's power to have confirmed all intelligences at first, and left them moral agents, notwithstanding?"

How is your declaration to be vindicated, that he assumed the common theory, without following it "out in its bearings on other known and admitted truths?" What acknowledged or known truth is there, sir, *with which the New Haven theologians regard it as inconsistent*, on which Dr. Bellamy did not treat and follow his theory out in its bearings? Is it a known and admitted truth that sin and misery are great evils; that sin is the object of God's abhorrence; that he is sincere in requiring a perfect obedience from his creatures and in inviting them to repentance and faith; that he, in itself considered, desires the holiness and happiness of each of his moral creatures; that his perfections assure us that he chooses that course of agency which secures the greatest practicable sum of good; that his creatures are moral agents; and that all the measures of his administration over them, to be wise and just, must be adapted to their natures, as such? But he has expressly recognized and treated each of these truths in its bearings on his theory, and replied to the objections that are founded on them! as he has every other, which has been offered by the New Haven gentlemen, as contradicting his hypothesis. I challenge you, sir, to point out a solitary exception, of any significance, to this statement. Here is, certainly, a wide field for the display of your perspicacity and love of justice; a liberal offer of an opportunity, if in your power, to extricate at least one of your declarations from the disgrace of a total inconsistency with truth! I recommend it to you, to avail yourself of it, if you can. If you succeed, you will entitle yourself not only to my hearty congratulations, but to "the praise which our admiration confers on the highest intellectual attainments."

Should you, however, enjoy a success in this undertaking equal to your most ardent wishes, your embarrassments will

not have terminated. Your next sentence demands an equal share of attention and skill. You say,

“Hence it is not wonderful if when they met with difficulties of which this theory did not afford a satisfactory solution, they unconsciously gave their arguments a shape which involved the assumption of the other.”

What difficulties, sir, did Dr. Bellamy meet with, of which, *in his judgment*, his “theory did not afford a satisfactory solution?” Has the reviewer pointed out; can you designate any such? Is not the intimation that there were any, totally unauthorized and unjust? But apart from the detestable unfairness of the passage,—what logic! Supposing Dr. Bellamy had in fact adopted the common theory, without inquiring whether there was any other attended with a smaller share of difficulties, or following it out in its bearings on other known and admitted truths;—pray, sir, how would it thence follow, that it ought not to excite our surprise, that when he met with difficulties of which this theory did not afford a satisfactory solution, he should have unconsciously given his argument a shape implying it to be totally false, and involving the assumption of the opposite hypothesis? One would naturally presume, if he had met with such difficulties, he would have paused and made them a distinct subject of contemplation; traced them out in all their bearings on his hypothesis; and if he found them insuperable, that in place of disguising them by false and deceptive reasonings, he would have frankly admitted his perplexities. I beg leave, sir, to think that it would be “wonderful” if a man of Dr. Bellamy’s uprightness and candour, had pursued any other than such a course. It is the weak-minded, sir, the shuffling, the unprincipled; they whose object is, at all events, to uphold a party, or give

currency to an opinion, whether right or wrong, who shift their principles at every new difficulty, and frame their arguments, now on this theory, and now on that, as the exigencies of the moment may seem to be best subserved! Men of integrity do not resort to such expedients. “Not wonderful,”—if he met with difficulties that he could not satisfactorily solve on his own theory,—that he should unconsciously abandon it and undertake to obviate them on principles which he distinctly rejected, and denounced as at war with the plainest representations of the scriptures! Not a matter of any surprise that he should be utterly forgetful of his own principles, when in the act of endeavoring to obviate the difficulties of which those principles were seen and felt to be the origin! If he found himself unable to vindicate the administration of the Most High, on the theory, that he voluntarily permits the sin that exists, for wise and benevolent reasons, when he might with perfect ease prevent it;—“not wonderful” that he should unconsciously abandon that theory, and attempt to justify him on the assumption that sin is not voluntarily permitted by him, but takes place in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it! What a satisfactory solution of the inconsistency which you impute to him! How happy for his reputation that he has fallen into the hands of so impartial and sagacious an apologist!

You go on to say,

“This is the less surprising, when it is considered that both theories occupy so much common ground—the doctrine of God’s eternal purpose—of his permission of sin in order to the greatest good—of his universal providence overruling it for good—and in short, all the essential attributes of his nature, and all the revealed principles of his government.”

Again, what dialectics! By your own concession in respect to Dr. Bellamy’s doctrine, it is indisputable that the

theories occupied directly opposite ground in regard to the questions whether sin is the necessary means of the greatest good ; whether it is voluntarily permitted by the Most High, or takes place in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it ; and whether, or not, it is included in his eternal purpose, or universal plan. Now inasmuch as the views of Dr. Bellamy were the direct opposite of those entertained by Dr. Taylor on each of these topics—the great theme of their theories ; how can the circumstance that their hypotheses occupy common ground in respect to some other subjects—supposing it to be a fact, though I do not admit it—serve to render it a matter of no surprise that he should abandon and contradict his peculiar views on *these questions*, and assume the hypothesis which he rejected? If men concur in their views on some subjects, though at antipodes on others—it ought never to excite our surprise, your doctrine is, at any moment, to find their partial coincidence, sliding into a universal agreement ; to see them unconsciously abandoning their most cherished principles ; refuting their most peculiar views ; and adopting and verifying the doctrines which they intelligently and strenuously disown ! In what a hopeful condition must be your cause, when you find it necessary to resort to such logic for its support !

But, sir, the artifice by which you attempt to cheat your readers into the impression that the theories occupy common ground in respect to the topics which you enumerate, is as detestable as your reasoning is weak. Dr. Bellamy's theory relative to God's eternal purpose is, that his plan embraces all the events which transpire in his empire ; and the sin which his creatures commit, as well as the holiness which they exercise. But Dr. Taylor's theory is, that his " plan consists only of what *God does ;*" neither including therefore the sins nor the obedience of his creatures ! Dr.

Bellamy's theory relative to the permission of sin is, that God voluntarily permits it by his providence, when he could have hindered it, and "caused misery to have been forever unknown in his dominions, with as much ease, as to have suffered things to take their present course." But Dr. Taylor's theory in respect to it is, that God does not voluntarily permit it by his providential administration, but that it is exerted by his creatures solely because he is unable to prevent it by any providential or spiritual influence that he can exert, without destroying their freedom! Dr. Bellamy's theory is, that God overrules the sin that is exerted by his creatures, in such a manner, as to produce an immeasurably greater sum of holiness and happiness, than could have existed, had not that sin been permitted. But Dr. Taylor's theory is, that God neither does, nor can so overrule that sin, as to secure as much holiness and happiness as would have existed, had sin never been committed, but obedience been universally exerted in its place! Dr. Bellamy's theory, to say the least, does not directly deny any of the essential attributes of the divine nature, nor revealed principles of the divine government. But Dr. Taylor's theory is a direct denial of God's power to exert either such a providential or spiritual influence on a moral agent, as to prevent him from sin, or efficiently to excite him to any act: and thereby denies all the essential attributes of God's nature, and not only all the revealed principles of his government, but the reality of his government itself!

Your intimation then, that their theories occupy common ground in relation to these great themes,—if restricted in its import to truth; must mean simply that they both actually *respect, or are theories of these subjects*; though they are exact opposites in the views they exhibit of them! and this fact you have the effrontery to offer as a reason that no surprise should be felt, that Dr. Bellamy, if he found his own

theory perplexed with difficulties, unconsciously abandoned it, and adopted the other!

This wretched farrago of impudence and chicane, you at length wind up with the following declarations.

“This Mr. Hart thought was the fact, and referred to the passages in their writings which induced this belief. This was not claiming them as having adopted the theory attributed to the New Haven theology. It was claiming only that this is a theory to which those powerful minds, contrary to the tradition received from the fathers, unconsciously resorted in explaining and vindicating certain revealed truths; and the only inference is, that it is a theory which commends itself to the mind in view of the revealed character and government of God.”

As to the pretence that the reviewer did not exhibit Dr. Bellamy as conducting all the main branches of his discussion on the theory of the New Haven theology, and never deviating from it, except by inadvertence and becoming inconsistent with himself;—but only claimed that he resorted to it unconsciously, and by abandoning his own hypothesis;—its sheer and impudent falsehood I have already demonstrated.

As to your statement, that Mr. Hart really thought that the account given in that article of Dr. Bellamy's theory and reasoning, was correct; and that he was induced to that conviction, by the passages in his writings, to which he refers;—I find the same difficulty in crediting it, as in assenting to your other unsupported and unsupportable representations. The whole mass of that article bears the most unequivocal marks, in my judgment, of an intentional, deliberate, and malicious falsification; perpetrated, sir, with a full consciousness of its enormity;—for the purpose of advancing the interests of an unprincipled party, at the double price of deceiving the churches in regard to its doctrines, and traducing the principles of an eminent servant of God.

If it is in your power to demonstrate, or exhibit any rational probability that such was not the fact; I have already solicited you to do it, and now repeat the invitation. In the meantime, a single example will show of what an unrighteous perversion he was guilty, of the passages by which he attempted to support his representations. Dr. Bellamy exhibits his opponent as thus objecting to his theory and arguments.

“I grant this reasoning looks plausible, and that some pious conscientious persons may have been induced to believe the wisdom of God in the permission of sin by it; but it does not convince me. For if once I should believe that it was wisest and best in God to permit sin, most for his glory and for the good of the system; I should feel myself under a necessity to look upon sin as being *in its own nature* a good thing, for the glory of God, and good of the system; and that God delights in it as such. And that, therefore, instead of hating sin, mourning for it in ourselves, lamenting it in others, we ought rather to esteem it as really a good and virtuous thing; and as such to rejoice in it, and even to keep an everlasting jubilee in remembrance of Satan’s revolt, and Adam’s fall; events so infinitely glorious:—Absurdities so shocking that I never can believe them.”
p. 144.

To this objection Dr. Bellamy replies,

“And absurdities, let me tell you, that if you did but understand the scheme you are opposing, you would know, are so far from following from it, that they are absolutely inconsistent with it.

“For the doctrine of the wisdom of God in the permission of sin, supposes sin in itself, and in all its natural tendencies to be infinitely evil, infinitely contrary to the honor of God, and good of the system. For herein consists the wisdom of God in the affair—not in bringing good out of good—but in bringing infinite good out of infinite evil, and never suffering one sin to happen in all his dominions, but which, notwithstanding its infinitely evil nature and tendency, infinite wisdom can and will overrule to greater good on the whole. So that all these objections are without weight.

For sin in itself and its natural tendencies, being just as evil at though God never meant to, and in fact never did bring any good out

of it, is as much to be hated for its evil nature and tendency, to be repented of in ourselves, and lamented in others, mourned for, watched and prayed and preached against, as if no good was ever to be brought out of it." p. 145.

Now, sir, two of the eight arguments which the author of that review employs to verify his assertion that Dr. Bellamy decisively countenanced Dr. Taylor's hypothesis, that sin is not the necessary means of the greatest good, and that it is exerted by his creatures, not by his voluntary permission, but in spite of his utmost efforts to prevent it; are founded on these passages: and one is the identical argument of the objector to whose reasoning Dr. Bellamy replied; and the other is founded on his reply to that reasoning, and is nothing more nor less than a slightly varied repetition and reassertion of that objection! The following are the passages.

"2. Dr. Bellamy uniformly exhibits sin as taking place by God's *permission*." Now we ask, why is he always so careful to speak of it as *'permitted'*? Does the Almighty merely *'permit'* or only not hinder the existence of that, which is really demanded by the supreme good of the universe? If the nature of sin is such, as to render it essential to an object of infinite magnitude; or if, as some maintain, [an implication that Bellamy is not of that number] it is an integral part of that system, and on the whole advantageous rather than hurtful—a good rather than an evil, why talk of its being only *'permitted'*? Is God honored by being represented as merely *permitting* or not *hindering* the best means of the best end? Surely if sin is this means, instead of supposing simply that God would not *hinder* it, we ought to believe that he made obvious and special arrangements for its introduction *into* the universe, and that he is in the strict and proper sense the author of sin. The nature of the case requires this supposition. The honor of God, and the good of the universe require it. But this is totally incompatible with the notion of mere *permission*." "No one can with the least propriety speak of permitting an evil, while he views the evil as the necessary means of the greatest good." "The inference, we think, is unavoidable, that at times certainly, and with good reason, Dr. B.

regarded sin, not as the necessary means of the greatest good—but as a baleful evil, *incident* to the best system.” Christian Spectator, for 1830. p. 534, 535.

Here, sir, you perceive he adopts the identical objection and reasoning of Dr. Bellamy’s opponent; and yet, in the face of the fact that Dr. Bellamy pronounced both the objection and argument to be wholly without weight, and asserted the truth of his theory in contradiction to them; the reviewer boldly alleges this objection as demonstrating that Dr. Bellamy did not maintain his own theory, but held the directly opposite hypothesis now advocated by Dr. Taylor! What think you, sir, of the reviewer’s honesty, in thus treating this passage?

But the effrontery of his logic is equal to its unfairness. Look at it, sir. He alleges the fact that Dr. Bellamy uniformly exhibits sin as permitted by the Most High, as the necessary means of the greatest good; as rendering the inference unavoidable, that he did not regard it as the necessary means of the greatest good; but contemplated it as a baleful evil! And the fact that Dr. B. represented God as *voluntarily* permitting it, when he might have hindered it as easily as not; as forcing us to the conclusion, that he did not regard it as voluntarily permitted; but as an evil “necessarily incidental to the best system,” and taking place in spite of the utmost efforts of the Most High to prevent it! Do you flatter yourself, sir, that honest men can be led to regard such reasoning as having emanated from a conscientious, upright mind? Does it not bear the most indubitable marks of intentional and malicious misrepresentation?

The other argument is not a shade better.

“5. The *tendency* of sin, according to Dr. Bellamy, is *only* evil.—“It *naturally* tends to evil, and *only* to evil, to dishonour God and ruin the system:” p. 126. “In *all* its natural tendencies it is infinitely evil, infinitely contrary to the honour of God and good of the sys-

tem." p. 145. "But how can a thing be, in *any* case, a necessary means of God's glory, if it tends, in *every* case, to dethrone him, and to cast him into the deepest contempt? It may be over-ruled as an *instrument* of good, but how can it be the *means* of an end, towards which it has no tendency? Nothing can be plainer, than that in using such language as Dr. Bellamy has used on this subject, he failed through inadvertence, to perceive that a thing which in its very *nature* tends *only* to evil, cannot, according to the nature of things, be the necessary means of the greatest good. For if it is really the necessary means of the greatest good, then it is of such a nature and *tendency* as are *fitted* to produce this result. Surely then Dr. B. in asserting so strongly as he has, the tendency of sin to evil, and to evil *only*, contradicts the theory on which he *elsewhere* reasons, that sin has the *strongest tendency*, viz. that of a *necessary* means of the greatest good." p. 536, 537.

One of the sentences here quoted from Dr. Bellamy, you see, sir, is taken from a passage which I transcribed from him above. What judgment should be formed of the morals of the reviewer, this complication of misrepresentation and sophistry can leave upright minds in no doubt. Though the language of Dr. Bellamy respecting the evil nature and tendency of sin, here animadverted on, is quoted from a passage in which he expressly declares,—in answer to the identical objection now repeated by the reviewer,—that that nature and tendency are not only compatible with, but essential to its being overruled, as his theory represents, so as to be made the means of the greatest good;—yet the reviewer has the daring injustice to intimate that it was "*elsewhere*" only that he reasoned on that theory! As though this objection had never suggested itself, nor been presented by an opponent to his notice! as though, if it had been offered to his consideration, it could not but have forced him to relinquish his theory!

But beyond this, he declares that "nothing can be plainer than that Dr. Bellamy, in using this language, failed through *inadvertence*;" and used it because of that inadver-

tent failure, the intimation is; “to perceive that a thing, which in its very *nature* tends only to evil, cannot, according to the nature of things, be the necessary means of the greatest good:”—not only as though Dr. Bellamy had never made this objection “a distinct subject of contemplation and argument;” but in defiance of the fact, that the express object of a great proportion of his pages is, to unfold and demonstrate the *mode* in which sin—though infinitely evil in its nature and tendency, and because thus evil—is so over-ruled by the Most High, as to be the means of the greatest good! What, sir, must be the state of a man’s mind to be capable of perpetrating such consummate injustice? Can any thing be plainer than his utter destitution of veracity?

But, sir, his reasoning is as unfair as his intimations are false. Admitting even that the objection he here urges is legitimate; it proves nothing more than simply, that Dr. Bellamy’s theory is incorrect: It does not demonstrate that he did not *hold* that theory, and that theory alone; much less, that he held the directly opposite hypothesis! Yet the reviewer is guilty of the injustice of alleging his asserting as he has, the tendency of sin to evil, as demonstrating that he contradicts the theory on which he reasons that sin—*being thus, evil in its tendency*—is the necessary means of the greatest good: and he places this among the eight arguments which he employs to show, that Dr. Bellamy decisively countenanced the hypothesis that sin is not the necessary means of the greatest good; and that it takes place, not by God’s voluntary permission, but in spite of all the providential and spiritual influences he can, consistently with the free agency of his creatures, exert to prevent it!

But sir, this sophistry, extraordinary as it is, is not the most exceptionable part of his reasoning. Its main element is still more dishonest. The assumption on which he founds

his argument, being, in direct contradiction to Dr. Bellamy's belief, that a thing in order to be a necessary means of good, that is, of holiness and happiness, must itself be morally good : he first argues from it, that Bellamy, in order consistently to maintain his theory, should have held sin to be morally good in its nature and tendency, in place of evil ; holiness instead of sin : and then boldly alleges the fact that he did not regard it as such, but held it to be *sin*, instead of holiness, as a demonstrative proof that he contradicted his theory that *being infinitely evil in its nature and tendency*, it is the necessary means of the greatest good ; and decisively countenanced the hypothesis that it is an evil that forces itself into the system against the wishes of the Almighty, solely because his power and wisdom are inadequate to exclude it without destroying the free agency of his creatures ! What think you, sir, of this logic ? Is it legitimate ? Is it honest ? Was there ever a more barefaced and shameless perversion of a writer's language ; or a more daring attempt to cheat and mislead readers ? Yet these two arguments are not more foul with sophistry and misrepresentation, than are all the others which he employed to make out his assertion that Dr. Bellamy's authority may be appealed to with equal or even greater propriety in support of the principles of Dr. Taylor's theory, than of his own.

V. I have conducted the foregoing discussion as though Mr. Hart were, in fact, as you intimate, the author of the review of Bellamy. I observe, however, sir, you do not expressly declare him to have written it. Your remark is, " For the June number of 1830, he prepared the review on the early history of the Congregational Churches of New England : The review of Bellamy *appeared* in the succeeding number." Your language, however, throughout the remainder of the passage, is framed precisely as though he wrote it ; and must leave every reader, who has no other

means of knowledge, under the fullest impression that he was its author.

I beg leave, however, sir, to inquire of you, on what grounds you gave that "shape" to your "argument?"—What evidence have you that Mr. Hart was the writer of that review? Did you ever hear him declare, or admit that he was its author? Has professor Goodrich or Dr. Taylor ever stated to you that he wrote it? Did you never hear Mr. Hart distinctly declare, that he was not responsible for its statements? or, at least, have you not heard, that, to shield himself from the odium which the report that he wrote it occasioned, he made such a declaration to others? Have you never heard the gentlemen at New Haven state, or admit, that such was the fact? Is it not, sir, in one word, within your certain knowledge, that that article, at least as to all the important portions of it, was not written by Mr. Hart, but came from the pen of the Dwight professor of theology in Yale College; aided doubtless, by professor Goodrich? I call upon you, sir, for a categorical answer to these questions; and take the liberty to apprise you, that there is more than one individual whose knowledge on the subject is such as to render it unsafe for you to return any other reply than is strictly coincident with fact.

What an edifying spectacle these transactions form for the contemplation of the churches! In what a becoming attitude they present the guileless and innocent gentlemen at New Haven, who are so averse to controversy; such assiduous lovers of truth, and cultivators of charity; and withal, so conscious of their integrity, as—though assailed by intimations that they have been guilty of the grossest deception in the management of their discussions,—to prefer to allow the attacks of their opponents to pass unre-

futed, rather than indulge in an appearance of contention with brethren !

Such, sir, are the animadversions I have to offer on your remarks on the review of Bellamy. I regret that throughout the whole passage on which I have dwelt, I have not been able to find a single sentence, nor proposition—with the exception of your admission that Bellamy held his own theory!—that is not either in glaring contradiction to fact, or at best, most essentially deficient in accuracy.

Of those misrepresentations and inaccuracies, to you the task now belongs, to unfold the causes, and furnish the requisite correction ;—a task you will find it necessary, I cannot but think, to discharge with eminent felicity, in order to meet either your exigences, or the just demands of the public. That such a tissue of blunders—if your errors belong to that category—of mis-statements and sophistries, should have been put forth by you in the *Christian Spectator* in reference to that review of Bellamy ;—itself a complication of misrepresentation and treachery ;—cannot fail to strike observers as a singular and startling fact ;—a fact that doubtless must have had its origin in an equally extraordinary cause. Why is it—the inquiry resistlessly presents itself—that these ministers of the gospel ; these teachers of theology ; who profess to be such independent and impartial inquirers after facts ; such ardent lovers of truth ; such disciples of charity ; have deliberately written and published, in reference to Dr. Bellamy's theory and their controversies respecting it, such a mass of statements, that are marked with every distinctive feature of studied falsehood ; and attempted to sustain them by a laboured array of reasoning, that is fraught with all the usual characteristics of intentional sophistry ? If assured of the truth of their theory, and of their competence to vindicate it to the churches,

why is it that they attempt to sustain it by such artifices? Why labour so assiduously to make out that it was decisively countenanced by Dr. Bellamy; instead of showing, that it is indubitably sanctioned by the pages of revelation? If satisfied of the accuracy of the statements and reasonings of the review of Bellamy; why put forth, in the article under notice, a representation of it so totally contradictory to fact, and adapted to mislead their incautious readers? If there is nothing in it to be retracted nor regretted; why attempt to screen themselves from responsibility for it, by ascribing it to one who is no longer here to answer for his errors, or expose their injustice? How is it that such a complication of mis-statements, sophistries, tergiversations, plots, under-plots, gyrations, and circumgyrations, as these articles and the transactions connected with them, exhibit; can have been the work of upright and guileless minds?—that in such a multiplicity of statements and reasonings, it can have come to pass “unconsciously,” and by sheer mistake, that they have not so framed their propositions, in one single instance, as to express the truth;—nor so shaped their argument as to correspond with fact? It certainly is utterly unlike the usual experience of the intelligent and upright. It is totally at variance with the law of chances!

But if this concatenated system of obliquities is not to be accounted for by mistake; what views are to be formed of its cause? What sort of men are its authors? What must be their sense of the condition of their theology, if it is felt to be necessary to resort to such expedients for its support and diffusion? If in these instances they are so utterly insincere and deceptive in their pretences; to what reliance are their professions entitled in any other? What assurance is there, that they will not exhibit equal treachery, whenever their interests require the profession of doctrines that they reject, or the intimation of purposes which

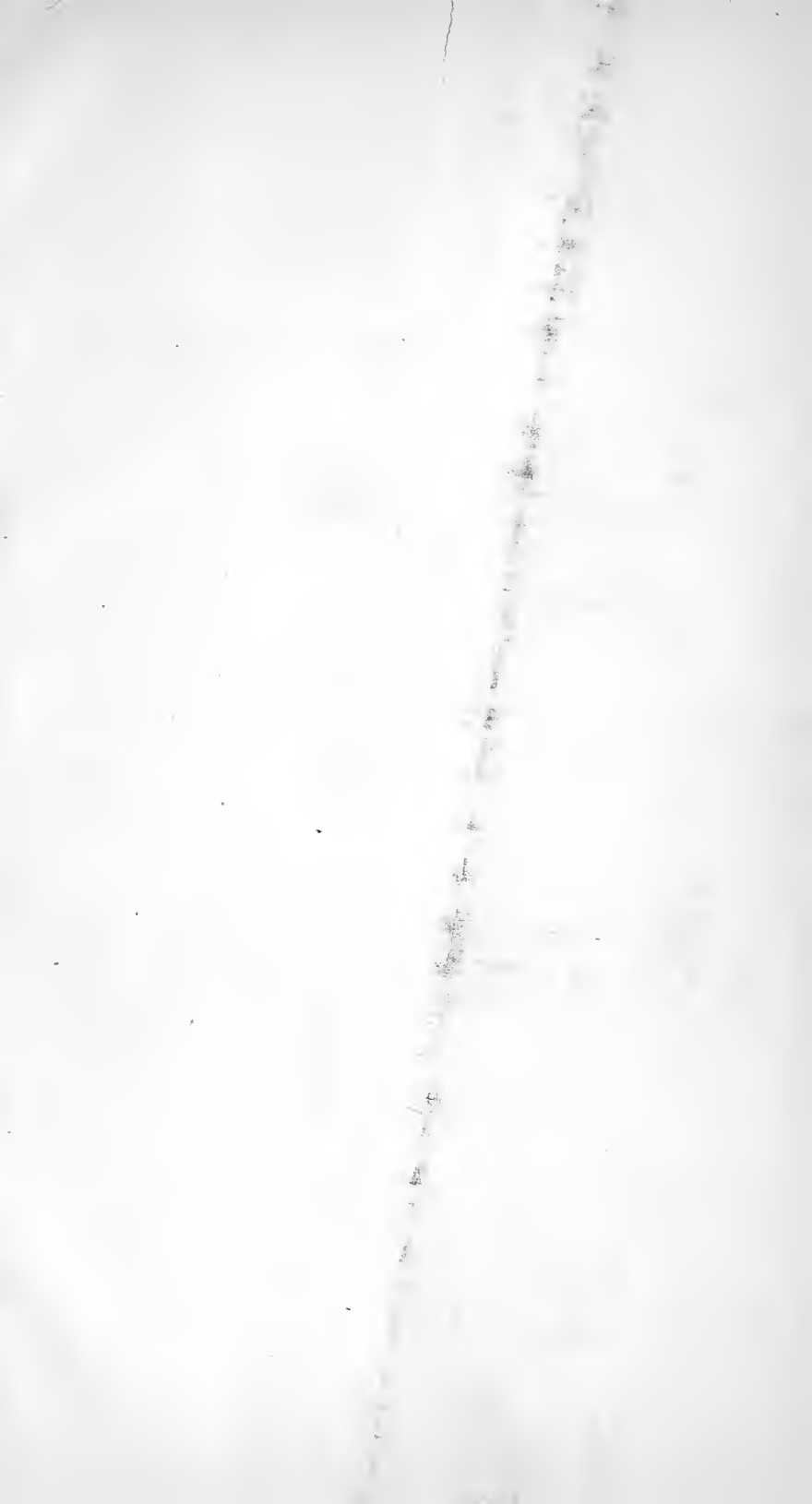
they have no design to fulfill? What qualifications have they for the station they occupy—what title to the influence they aspire to exert? What but presumption, but madness, can it be to intrust to them the delicate and responsible work of training up the young for the sacred office; of moulding the faith and forming the character of the future teachers and guides of the church!

Such are the reflections and apprehensions, sir, which the consideration of the subject must resistlessly force on every conscientious mind; such is the position in which you and your co-laborers at New Haven have placed yourselves, in respect to the friends of truth and piety;—a position from which you are to extricate yourselves; convictions and apprehensions which you are to meet and successfully obviate; or necessarily become the objects of general distrust, and reprobation; as be assured you are, of the profound commiseration of your well-wisher,

THE AUTHOR OF

VIEWS IN THEOLOGY.

REV. N. PORTER, D. D.







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